

# PSALM 107

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 107

This psalm, from its style, and from its connection with the preceding psalms, seems to have been written by David. The two foregoing psalms respect the children of Israel; this is generally thought to concern all mankind, and its view to assert a general providence which attends all, in whatsoever condition and circumstance; and to encourage men in their distresses to cry unto the Lord. According to Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and others, four sorts of persons are mentioned, travellers through a wilderness, prisoners, sick persons, and such who use the seas; to which some add a fifth, husbandmen; these are instanced in, not to the exclusion of others, but from them it may be concluded that whatsoever state or condition persons may be in, they are known and taken notice of by the Lord, and are relieved by him when they call upon him. Some restrain the whole to the Israelites, as the Targum, R. Obadiah, Arama, and others, where they make any application; and others apply the psalm to New Testament times; and indeed, though the literal sense should be attended unto and preserved, yet it seems to be applicable to spiritual persons and things. The title of it in the Syriac version is pretty remarkable,

“it is said concerning Joab and Abiah the sons of Samuel, who recited the commandments of the Lord. God gathered the Jews out of captivity, and brought them out from Babylon. Also the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, gathered the Gentiles from the four corners of the world, by preaching to baptism.”

**Ver. 1.** *O give thanks unto the Lord*, etc.] As all men should do, at all times and for all things; the psalm begins as the former does, and gives the same reasons for thanksgiving.

*For he is good*; and does good, and is the author of all good.

*For his mercy endureth for ever*; and men in every age are partakers of it.

**Ver. 2.** *Let the redeemed of the Lord say so*, etc.] That the Lord is good, and his mercy everlasting; since their redemption is a proof of his

goodness, and an instance of his mercy; this is not to be understood of the Israelites redeemed from Egyptian bondage, or from the Babylonish captivity, though they had abundant reason to say as above; but rather of all such who are delivered from any sort of slavery, bondage, and confinement; whether from the power of a disease, or from a prison, or from wicked and unreasonable men; and from captivity in an enemy's country, where they have been used very severely; and as the providence of God is concerned in all such deliverances, thanks should be given him: it seems best to understand it of those who are spiritually redeemed by Christ, this phrase being frequently used of such, (<sup>2350</sup> Isaiah 35:10 51:11 52:12), who may be said to be so, since Christ is the author of their redemption; they are redeemed, not by themselves, nor by any creature, but by the Lord; who being their God, and near kinsman, had a right to redeem them, and, being God, was able to do it, and who has effected it by his precious blood; so that he has a right unto them and a property in them, which this phrase also suggests; and for all which they have great reason to praise the Lord and his goodness, and sing the new song of redeeming love. Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy from all their sins which war against their souls; from Satan their implacable adversary, who is stronger than they; from the law, which curses and threatens them with damnation and death; from death itself, the last enemy, and indeed from the hand of all their enemies, be they who they may.

**Ver. 3.** *And gathered them out of the lands*, etc.] This cannot have respect to the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt; for they were not then brought out of several countries, but from one land only: nor to the Babylonish captivity; for, though some might be gathered out of different provinces, yet not from east, west, north, and south, as here expressed. It best suits with the gathering of the redeemed in the effectual calling, and particularly the calling of the Gentiles in Gospel times; to which the title of the Syriac version before mentioned has respect. The elect of God are gathered in consequence of being redeemed, (<sup>3808</sup> Zechariah 10:8), they are gathered out of the world, and from among the men of it; they are gathered to Christ, and by him; they are gathered into his churches, and to communion with them, and to a participation of all privileges and ordinances: and this is usually done by the ministering of the Gospel, which is sent into all the world for this purpose; and a distinguishing blessing of grace it is to be gathered out from the rest of the world, and favoured with such rich mercies. Such have reason to adore the grace of God, and to

show forth his praise, who has called them by his grace, and separated them from others for himself.

*From the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south;* or, “from the sea”<sup>f1537</sup>; the southern sea, as the Targum; or the Red sea, the Arabian or Persian sea. The elect of God, and redeemed of the Lord, lie in all parts of the world; and from thence they are gathered by the ministry of the word unto Christ: this was fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel, and will be more so in the latter day; (see <sup>2885</sup>Isaiah 43:5,6).

**Ver. 4.** *They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way*, etc.] Not the people of Israel, as the Targum. These seem not to be particularly intended, whatever allusion there may be to their passage through the wilderness to Canaan’s land; but rather, in general, travellers through waste places, especially the wild deserts of Arabia; where the wind blowing the sand, covers the roads with it, so that frequently travellers lose their way, and wander about, till directed to it by one providence or another. Some compare this with the case of the Old Testament saints, mentioned in (<sup>8137</sup>Hebrews 11:37,38) others with the church in the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, (<sup>6102</sup>Revelation 11:2 12:14). But it is certain that the redeemed and gathered are here meant; and this fitly describes their case, before and at effectual calling: they are in the wilderness of the people, (<sup>3515</sup>Ezekiel 20:35), from whence they are gathered; are in a state of error and ignorance; are like straying sheep, gone out of the right way; and are as lost sheep, they have lost their way; and though there may be many ways that present unto them, and which they think bid fair to be the right way; yet the true way of peace, life, and salvation by Christ, they know not, while in a state of nature and unregeneracy; and when they come to be effectually called, they see themselves to be in a bewildered state and condition.

*They found no city to dwell in;* nor even to call at or lodge in, for miles together; which is the case of travellers in some parts, particularly in the deserts of Arabia. Spiritual travellers find no settlement, rest, peace, joy, and comfort, but in Christ; nor any indeed in this world, and the things of it; here they have no continuing city, (<sup>3134</sup>Hebrews 13:14).

**Ver. 5.** *Hungry and thirsty*, etc.] As travellers in deserts sometimes are; their provisions being spent they bring with them, and none to be had on the road; there being no inns to stop at, nor any sort of food to eat, nor springs of water to drink of. In such a condition are souls, when, like the

prodigal, they come to themselves, and are thoroughly convinced of their state and condition by nature; they find themselves starving and famishing, and no provision to be had from themselves or the creature: they hunger after Christ, the bread of life, and thirst after his grace, the water of life, and the blessings of it; they hunger and thirst after his righteousness, and justification by it; after the pardon of their sins through his blood, and after salvation by him, and an interest in it; after more knowledge of him, and communion with him.

*Their soul fainted in them*; for want of food and drink; as men do, in a spiritual sense, for want of Christ, the blessings of his grace, particularly salvation; for want of views of interest in it, of the joys and comforts of it; (see ~~BBB~~ Psalm 119:81). Some refer all this to the apostles and apostolic men, wandering in the Gentile world, hungry, thirsty, and without any certain dwelling place; (see ~~HHH~~ 1 Corinthians 4:11).

**Ver. 6.** *Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble*, etc.] To be directed in their way, and for food and drink, as travellers do when in such distress. Natural men, even the very Heathens, when in distress, will cry unto God for relief, as Jonah's mariners did, (Jon 1:5). It is a time of trouble with awakened sinners, when they are convinced of sin by the Spirit of God; when they are pricked to the heart with a sense of it; when the terrors of death and hell get hold of them; when they see themselves lost and undone, and in a wrong way, and know not what to do; when they find themselves starving and ready to perish; and then they cry, that is, pray, unto the Lord, the God of their lives, whose ears are open to their cries.

*And he delivered them out of their distresses*; by leading them in a right way, and by satisfying and filling their hungry souls with good things, as it is explained, (~~QATJ~~ Psalm 107:7,9).

**Ver. 7.** *And he led them forth by the right way*, etc.] Thus God by his providence directs travellers that have lost their way, and puts them into the right way. There is no doubt a very great concern of Providence in such a case, and which ought to be acknowledged with thankfulness. And thus the Lord leads awakened and inquiring souls to the right way of salvation; to Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and directs and enables them to believe in him, to walk by faith, and to continue to walk in him, as they have received him; and which is a plain and straight way, in which they shall not stumble; yea, in which men, though fools, shall not err, wander, or lose themselves: and though this way is attended with many

afflictions and tribulations, and so may be said to be a narrow and a rough way; yet it is a right one, and a safe one, it brings at last to eternal life: the Syriac version renders it, “by the way of truth”.

*That they might go to a city of habitation*; a city to dwell in; the Targum is, “to Jerusalem, a city to dwell in:”

but any city nearest for travellers is here meant; and in a spiritual sense may be intended, either Christ, the city of refuge, where awakened sinners are directed to flee to, and where they find safety and plenty of provisions; or the church of God, the strong city, about which salvation is as walls and bulwarks; and to which they come when effectually called, and become citizens of it; or the New Jerusalem church state, in which the tabernacle of God will be, and he will dwell with men, and they with him; or the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints in heaven, that city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God; in which are everlasting habitations, and mansions of peace and rest for the people of God to dwell in, after they have gone through their troublesome passage in this wilderness.

**Ver. 8.** *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness*, etc.] For his providential goodness, in providing food and drink for them, when fainting; in directing them to their right way, when they had lost it; and in bringing them safe to the place they were bound for: and particularly for his special grace and goodness, in redemption and effectual calling; for bringing out of a wilderness state and condition, and supplying them with all spiritual provisions, and putting them in the right way to eternal glory and happiness.

*And for his wonderful works to the children of men!* as all the above things are wonderful ones, both in providence and grace. This verse is repeated at the close of each of the instances produced; in which the goodness of God appears to persons in distress, and who being delivered, ought to acknowledge it, and be thankful for it: or “confess”: that is, declare to God his goodness, and to the children of men his wonderful works; so the Targum.

**Ver. 9.** *For he satisfieth the longing soul*, etc.] The soul that is hungry and thirsty, and longs for food and drink, when nature in such circumstances craves. And so such who long for Christ and his grace, for an interest in

him, and fellowship with him, the Lord satisfies with these things, as with marrow and fatness.

*And filleth the hungry soul with goodness;* with the goodness and fatness of his house; with good things; with the good things laid up in Christ and in the covenant; with the good things of the Gospel; with the grace and goodness of God in Christ; (see <sup><1070></sup>Psalm 65:4 103:5).

**Ver. 10.** *Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death,* etc.] This is the second instance of persons in distress calling on the name of the Lord; and who, being delivered, are under obligation to praise him, such as are captives and prisoners. The Targum applies it to the Israelites in the Babylonish captivity; but it is much better to interpret it of prisoners in common; whose prisons are generally dark cells or dungeons, and where they are alone, and deprived of the company of the living; and so are not only in darkness, but seem as if they were in the state of the dead; their condition is the shadow of it, and bears some resemblance to it. And it may be applied, in a spiritual sense, to the case and condition of the people of God in a state of unregeneracy, which is described in the same language, (<sup><200></sup>Isaiah 9:2 42:7 49:9 <sup><107></sup>Luke 1:79), and which is a state of darkness and ignorance; they are darkness itself, and are ignorant of themselves and their case; of the nature of sin, and the evil of it; of the spirituality of the law; of God in Christ; of Christ, and the way of salvation by him; of the Spirit, and his work; of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel contained in them; and, like persons in a dark prison, cannot behold the sun, nor see to read nor work; and are like those that are in the state of the dead; and indeed are dead in Adam, dead in law, dead in trespasses and sins; having no spiritual life, sense, nor motion. And here they sit, continue and remain, during the time of their ignorance, till it pleases the Lord to enlighten, quicken, and convert them. These phrases are used of the people of God after conversion, when in darkness and desertion, and under afflictive providences, (<sup><20></sup>Psalm 23:4 44:19 88:5,6 <sup><30></sup>Micah 7:9). Being bound in affliction and iron; that is, with fetters of iron, which is very afflicting; (see <sup><1518></sup>Psalm 105:18), and fitly describes the people of God in a state of nature, who are led captive by Satan, at his will; are held with the cords and fetters of their own sins, and are shut up under the law, as a ministering of condemnation and death: or, bound with affliction, as with iron; hence we read of fetters and cords of affliction, (<sup><1318></sup>Job 36:8), with which good men may be held for their iniquities; or, however, are

chastened with them for their good, Some refer all this to the state of the Christian church under the ten persecutions, (~~4120~~ Revelation 2:10).

**Ver. 11.** *Because they rebelled against the words of God*, etc.] All afflictions, as captivity and imprisonment, are generally for sin; which is a rebellion against God, and a transgression of his laws. Adam rebelled against the words of God, not giving credit to them, but believing the words of the devil; and so brought himself and all his posterity into that state of darkness, captivity, and death, before described. Some understand this only of the light of nature, and the dictates of it, against which men rebel; but rather it designs any and every revelation of the will of God, either in the law or in the Gospel; disobedience to which is rebellion against the words of God, and is highly resented by him.

*And contemned the counsel of the most High*; the advice he gives in his law, and by his prophets, what to do, and what to avoid: and which he gives by the ministers of the word, in his Gospel and in his ordinances; which are both called his counsel, (~~4173~~ Luke 7:30 ~~4177~~ Acts 20:27), the contempt of which is very displeasing to him, (~~4125~~ Proverbs 1:25).

**Ver. 12.** *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour*, etc.] Humbled them under his mighty hand; brought down their haughty spirits and proud stomachs by one afflictive providence or another; by which the Lord humbles men, as he did the Israelites in the wilderness, and hides pride from them: or with trouble of mind, under a conviction of sin; when pride, which is the cause of rebellion against God, and of contempt of his counsel, is brought down, and the haughtiness of man laid low; and when men, humbled under a sense of sin, are made willing to submit to Christ and his righteousness, to God's way of saving sinners by him, to the law of God, and to the Gospel of Christ.

*They fell down*; they threw themselves prostrate at his feet for mercy; their heart and strength failed them, as the word signifies, and is used in (~~4310~~ Psalm 31:10), terrified with a sense of divine wrath, they could not stand before the Lord, nor brave it out against him.

*And there was none to help*; they could not help themselves, nor was there any creature that could. There is salvation in no other than in Christ; when he saw there was none to help him in that work, his own arm brought salvation to him; and when sinners see there is help in no other, they apply to him, as follows.

**Ver. 13.** *Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble*, etc.] Their affliction, their hearts being brought down with labour, and they being and finding themselves in a state of darkness, in the shadow of death, in affliction and iron; or in soul troubles, under a sense of sin, and in a view of wrath and displeasure; under apprehensions of imminent danger, as the disciples in the storm; and therefore cry to the Lord, as they did,

*Lord, save us, we perish*, (<sup><418D></sup>Matthew 8:2,5).

*And he saved them out of their distresses*; from all their sins; from the curse of the law; from wrath to come; from hell and death; being both able and willing. The following verse further explains this.

**Ver. 14.** *He brought them out of darkness*, etc.] In which they were by nature, into marvellous light; to see their interest in Christ, and his salvation; and to have the light of joy and comfort in him.

*And the shadow of death*; quickening them by his Spirit and grace; causing them to live by faith upon him; entitling them to eternal life, and securing them from eternal death.

*And brake their bands in sunder*; their cords and fetters of affliction; or their bands of sin, and the power of it; and loosed them whom Satan had bound and kept so for many years, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

**Ver. 15.** *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness*, etc.] Or, “confess to the Lord his goodness or grace”, or “mercy”<sup>f1538</sup>; own and acknowledge it, in delivering them from such a state of darkness and death, of thralldom and captivity; (see <sup><4167></sup>Romans 6:17).

*And for his wonderful works to the children of men!* or, “confess” them before them; relate and declare them to them, what wonderful things he has done for them; that they may be affected with them, and that they may praise his name together; (see Gill on <sup><4170></sup>Psalm 107:9”).

**Ver. 16.** *For he hath broken the gates of brass*, etc.] The prison doors made of brass, as sometimes of iron, for the security of the prisoners; (see <sup><4120></sup>Acts 12:10). And cut the bars of iron in sunder; with which they were barred and secured. Hyperbolical phrases these, as Kimchi, expressing how exceeding strong the prison doors were, and the impossibility of an escape out of them, unless the Lord had delivered them; but when he works, none



can let; all obstructions are easily removed by him; which is the sense of the words, (see <sup><238P></sup>Isaiah 45:2). Vitringa, on (<sup><661P></sup>Revelation 12:2), interprets this of the subjection of the Roman emperors to the faith and obedience of Christ.

**Ver. 17.** *Fools, because of their transgression*, etc.] Or, “because of the way” <sup>f1539</sup> “of it”; their sinful course of life; for it is not for a single transgression they are afflicted, but for a continued series of sinning, which is a transgression of the law of God. By “fools” are meant not idiots, men devoid of common sense and natural understanding, but immoral persons; such who have no understanding of divine and spiritual things; are destitute of the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom; without the true knowledge of God himself; place their happiness in sensual enjoyments; seek only the gratification of their lust; scoff at religion, make a mock at sin, and have no concern about a future state, and the welfare of their immortal souls.

*And because of their iniquities, are afflicted*; or “afflict themselves”, or “find themselves afflicted” <sup>f1540</sup>; rather “bring affliction on themselves” <sup>f1541</sup>.

Not that these are the only persons that are afflicted; for many truly wise, good, and gracious persons, have a large share of afflictions; though not in a way of punishment for sin, or in wrath and hot displeasure, but in a way of fatherly chastisement, and in love: nor are fools for the most part afflicted, nor so much as others; they are not in trouble and plagued as other men; which has been a stumbling to good men: however, sometimes they are afflicted in this life, and in a way of punishment for sin; and very often are but the more hardened by it; though to some it is an ordinance for good; they are awakened by it to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it, and to seek for pardoning grace and mercy. This is the “third” instance of persons in distress calling on the Lord, and finding relief <sup>f1542</sup>, and being under obligation to praise him.

**Ver. 18.** *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat*, etc.] Not only bread and common food, but dainty meat, the most delicious fare, (<sup><833P></sup>Job 33:20), in which they most delighted in time of health, and too much indulged themselves in; and by that means brought diseases upon them, which caused this loathing in them, as is common. Thus to those who are distempered with sin, whose taste is not changed, nor can it discern perverse things, the word of God, the Gospel of Christ, which is delicious

food, is not relished by them; the doctrines of it are insipid things, they loath them as light bread, as the Israelites did the manna.

*And they draw near unto the gates of death;* that is, the grave; the house appointed for all living; the dwelling place of men till the resurrection; and so is said to have gates and doors; (see <sup><48B2></sup>Job 33:22 30:23) and men sometimes are brought so low by affliction as that they seem to be near to death, just upon the brink of eternity, ready to enter into the grave, and lie down among the dead.

**Ver. 19.** *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,* etc.] A time of affliction is a time of trouble, and a proper season for prayer; and by it persons are brought to the throne of grace, when humbled under the mighty hand of God, to seek for relief. Hezekiah in his affliction prayed to the Lord, though Asa sought to the physicians only, and not to the Lord; this is to be understood of such who are convinced of their folly, brought to a sense of sin and danger, and therefore cry to the Lord for his sparing mercy, and pardoning grace.

*And he saveth them out of their distresses:* their afflictions, which were distressing to them, by removing their disorders and restoring them to health again; as follows.

**Ver. 20.** *He sent his word, and healed them,* etc.] It was his will and pleasure they should be healed, and accordingly they were; he issued his orders for the removal of the affliction, and it was done; diseases are his servants, which come and go at his command; so Christ, in the days of his flesh, healed by speaking a word, (<sup><48B></sup>Matthew 8:3,8). This is true of Christ the essential Word, who was sent in the fulness of time, and was made flesh and dwelt among men, and went about healing all manner of diseases among the people; and who is also the physician of souls who came with healing in his wings; that is, with pardon of sin, for which his blood was shed: he is the only physician, the skilful, universal, and infallible one, and does all freely, and in a most marvellous manner, by his stripes, blood and wounds, and by an application of these to diseased persons sensible of their case. It may also be applied to the word of the Gospel; the law is the means of wounding, it is the killing letter; the Gospel is the means of healing, the doctrines of it are the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations; it is the doctrine of remission of sins by the blood of Christ, and by it Christ speaks peace and pardon to wounded consciences.

*And delivered them from their destructions*; from the destruction of the body, of the beauty and strength of it by diseases; restoring to health is a redeeming of the life from destruction; from the grave, the pit of corruption and destruction, so called because in it bodies corrupt, putrefy, and are destroyed by worms; and such who are savingly convinced of sin, and blessed with pardoning grace and mercy, are delivered from the everlasting destruction of body and soul in hell.

**Ver. 21.** *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness*, etc.] Both in restoring to bodily health, which is an instance of divine goodness; and in healing the diseases of the soul, or in the pardon of sin, which is according to the multitude of his mercies, and the riches of his grace.

*And for his wonderful works to the children of men*; bodily health is sometimes restored in a wonderful manner, when all means used are without success, and the prescriptions of doctors fail; and pardon of sin is a wonder of grace now, and will be to all eternity; and for these things praise ought to be given to the Lord, and they should be declared to men for his glory.

**Ver. 22.** *And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving*, etc.] Not legal sacrifices, but spiritual and evangelical ones, the sacrifices of praise and thankfulness which God has enjoined are well pleasing to him through Christ, glorify him, and are but our reasonable service; (see <sup><31315></sup>Hebrews 13:15).

*And declare his works with rejoicing*: tell them to the children of men, what he has done for them, for soul and body; let them come to Zion with joy and everlasting joy on their heads; to the gates thereof, or to the public assemblies of the saints, and there declare what great things the Lord has done for them; and has had compassion upon them in healing their bodily diseases, and curing them of their soul maladies.

**Ver. 23.** *They that go down to the sea in ships*, etc.] This is the fourth instance of persons in distress crying to the Lord for help, and, having it, are laid under obligation to praise him; the case of seafaring men: so the Targum introduces it,

“mariners that go down to the sea in ships;”

the same form of expression as here is used in (<sup><23210></sup>Isaiah 42:10). Some affirm the sea to be higher than the earth, but by this it should be lower;

besides the earth is said to be founded on the seas, which suggests superiority; and all the rivers run into the sea, which supposes a declivity; but, be it so that it is higher than the earth, yet this phrase is to be justified by the shores being higher than the sea, from whence men go down to take shipping, as Kimchi observes; though Kimchi's father is of opinion that it respects persons going down into the ship, which is deep, as Jonah is said to do, (Jon 1:3).

*That do business in great waters:* which refers either to the steering and working of the ship, and everything relating to the management of the ropes and sails, and other affairs; and in a storm much business is done, all hands are employed: or else to the business they go to sea about, as catching fish, curing them, and carrying them to market; or else to traffic and merchandise of goods, they convey from place to place. The phrase is much like that, "as many as trade by sea", (~~18:17~~ Revelation 18:17).

**Ver. 24.** *These see the works of the Lord*, etc.] In creation, the sea itself, its flux and reflux; the creatures in it, fishes of various forms and sizes: and in providence, in preserving ships and men in the most imminent danger, and even to a miracle; sometimes causing the wind to change or to subside in a moment, whereby deliverance is wrought.

*And his wonders in the deep;* the strange and wonderful creatures that are in the deep waters of the sea, and to be seen nowhere else; and the amazing appearances of divine providence, in delivering when in the greatest distress, and none at hand to help, and all hope of salvation gone.

**Ver. 25.** *For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind*, etc.] Winds are not raised by men, nor by devils, nor by angels, but by the Lord himself; who has created them, holds them in his fist, brings them out of his treasures, and sends them forth to do his will; if he speaks the word, gives but the order, a storm arises at once, and executes what he pleases, (~~148:8~~ Psalm 148:8).

*Which lifteth up the waves thereof;* that is, the waves of the sea; it comes down into it, and causes surges; which rise above the ship, and sometimes cover it, and ready to sink it; yea, even they are lifted up to the heavens, as it follows.

**Ver. 26.** *They mount up to the heaven*, etc.] The waves which are lifted up by the stormy wind, and the ships which are upon them, and the men in them.

*They go down again to the depths*: one while they seem to reach the skies, and presently they are down, as it were, in the bottom of the sea, and are threatened to be buried in the midst of it; distress at sea is described in much the same language by Virgil and Ovid <sup>f1543</sup>.

*Their soul is melted because of trouble*; because of the danger of being cast away; so it was with Jonah's mariner's, and with the disciples in the storm; sea roaring, and men's hearts failing for fear, are joined together in (~~2125~~ Luke 21:25,26)

**Ver. 27.** *They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man*, etc.] Through the agitation of the water, and motion of the ship, not being able to stand upon deck.

*And are at their wit's end*; or, "all their wisdom is swallowed up" <sup>f1544</sup>; their wisdom in naval affairs, their art of navigation, their skill in managing ships, all nonplussed and baffled; they know not what method to take to save the vessel and themselves; their knowledge fails them, they are quite confounded and almost distracted. So Apollinarius paraphrases it,

"they forget navigation, and their wise art does not appear;"

so Ovid, describing a storm, uses the same phrase, "deficit ars",

"art fails."

**Ver. 28.** *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble*, etc.] As in a storm seafaring persons are used to do; so did Jonah's mariners, though Heathens, everyone cried to his god. With the Romans <sup>f1545</sup> tempests were reckoned deities, and had temples erected, and sacrifices offered to them; but these persons were such as knew and owned the true Jehovah, and called upon him in their distress: so did the apostles of Christ.

*And he bringeth them out of their distresses*; by stilling the winds and the waves, causing them to proceed on their voyage with pleasure, and landing them safe on shore, as follows.

**Ver. 29.** *He maketh the storm a calm*, etc.] As Christ did by a word speaking, (~~4049~~ Mark 4:39).

*So that the waves thereof are still*; and roar and toss no more, but subside; and the sea becomes smooth and quiet, its raging ceases: the angry sea, as Horace <sup>f1546</sup> calls it, becomes calm and peaceable; (see ~~4889~~ Psalm 89:9).

**Ver. 30.** *Then are they glad because they be quiet*, etc.] The mariners are glad that the waves are quiet, and they free from danger, and at ease and in repose themselves.

*So he bringeth them unto their desired haven*; the port, city, border or tract of land <sup>f1547</sup>, they are bound to; which they desire to be at, and eagerly look out for, and rejoice when arrived at it. This is all the Lord's work in providence: mariners too often take it to themselves, as if it was owing to their own skill and management that they have brought home the ship safe to the appointed port; but it is owing to the secret guidance and protection of divine Providence, which should be acknowledged. The late Mr. Hussey <sup>f1548</sup> thinks, that all this is not to be understood of seamen and naval affairs in common, but is a prophecy of what should befall the disciples of Christ, when on shipboard with him; who are the persons that went "down to the sea of Galilee" in a ship;

*whose business in the great waters was fishing*; when, by the will of God, there came down a "stormy wind", which "lifted up the waves" of the sea, so that the ship in which they were was filled with them, and in danger of being sunk; when they went up and down, as here described, and reeled as they went along on the deck, to awake their Master their hearts melting, and they at their wit's end through fear, when they saw such wonders, what no common mariner ever did; the Godman and Mediator rising and in a majestic manner rebuked the winds and waves, and caused a calm, and so brought them to the country of the Gadarenes, whither they were bound; (see <sup>4023</sup>Luke 8:23-26). But it may be applied, in a more spiritual manner, to the people of God in common who are embarked in the cause of Christ, and in a church state, comparable to a ship, of which Christ is the master, governor, and pilot; and who are sailing through the tempestuous sea of this world, and are tossed with tempests in it; and have business to do here, not only of a civil, but of a spiritual nature and who not only see the wondrous works of creation and providence, but of grace and redemption; the deep things of God, the mysteries of his grace and love: and who sometimes are covered with the billows and waves of affliction, and in the utmost distress; which are all under the direction and at the command of God, to whom they apply for relief; and he commands a calm in their breasts, and causes their afflictions to cease, which produce joy and gladness in them; and at last they are brought safe to heaven, their desired haven, which they are bound unto, are seeking after, and desirous of; and where they are at entire rest, brought hither by the Lord himself.

**Ver. 31.** *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, etc.]*

Seafaring men particularly, before mentioned, as Jonah's mariners did, (Jon 1:16), or all the four sorts of persons instanced in, as Kimchi thinks: and even all men whatsoever should do this, high and low, rich and poor, of every age, sex, and condition; since they all receive favours from the Lord, and should return thanks to him; and especially good men, who are blessed with spiritual blessings by him: these should all

*confess to the Lord his goodness*; as it may be rendered, (see Gill on <sup><19A75></sup>Psalm 107:15"), they should own the mercy received as the Lord's doing, and acknowledge their unworthiness of it, and give him the glory of it.

*And for his wonderful works to the children of men!* or, "confess and declare his wonderful works to the children of men": the wonderful works of creation and providence, which those that go to sea, see in the deeps, and everything of the same kind which others observe; and especially the wonderful works of grace, or what God has done in a wonderful manner for the souls of his people; (see <sup><366></sup>Psalm 66:16 107:8,15,21 <sup><4059></sup>Mark 5:19).

**Ver. 32.** *Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, etc.]*

Of the people of God, who are gathered out of the world into a church state; and who gather themselves together to attend the worship and service of God in some one place; and here the Lord should be praised, and his name exalted, by those who have received favours from him; (see <sup><310></sup>Psalm 111:1), the Targum explains it,

"in the congregation of the people of the house of Israel."

*And praise him in the assembly of the elders*; or, "in the seat", or "chair of the elders" <sup>f1549</sup>: not of the Scribes and Pharisees, and elders of the people, that sat in Moses's chair; but rather of the four and twenty elders, who are said to have four and twenty seats round the throne, where they worship and praise God; and which are emblems of Gospel churches; the members of which, for their grace, gravity, and prudence, are called elders; and over which elders in office preside, and who rule well, and labour in the word and doctrine; (see <sup><600></sup>Revelation 4:4 <sup><5057></sup>1 Timothy 5:17). The Targum renders it,

"the sanhedrim of the wise men."

**Ver. 33.** *He turneth rivers into a wilderness*, etc.] A country abounding with rivers, as the country round about Sodom and the land of Canaan were, (<sup><0130></sup>Genesis 13:10 <sup><0137></sup>Deuteronomy 8:7). Such an one is sometimes, by the just judgment of God, turned into a desert.

*And the water springs into dry ground*: what was like a well watered garden becomes like dry and barren earth, on which nothing grows.

**Ver. 34.** *A fruitful land into barrenness*, etc.] Or, “into saltness”<sup>f1550</sup>; as Sodom and the land adjacent became a salt sea; and the land of Canaan was threatened to become brimstone, salt and burning, like Sodom; in which nothing was sown, and which bore no grass; (see <sup><0143></sup>Genesis 14:3 <sup><0148></sup>Deuteronomy 29:3) and so the Targum, “the land of Israel, which brought forth fruit, he hath destroyed, as Sodom was overthrown.”

*For the wickedness of them that dwell therein*; this was the cause of the overthrow of Sodom, and of the destruction of that fine country, as also of Canaan afterwards; (see <sup><0133></sup>Genesis 13:13 <sup><0132></sup>Deuteronomy 29:22,23). The very Heathens had a notion that barrenness and unfruitfulness in countries were owing to the sins of men; hence the sterility and famine at Mycenae were attributed to the wickedness of Atreus<sup>f1551</sup>. This may figuratively be understood of the present state and condition of the Jews; who were once a people well watered with the word and ordinances, and had the first preaching of the Gospel among them; but, rejecting and despising it, are now become like a desert, barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of divine things: and it might be illustrated by the case of several Christian churches; the seven churches of Asia, and others, once as well watered gardens, but now are no more; and the places where they stood are destitute of spiritual knowledge, and the means of it.

**Ver. 35.** *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water*, etc.] On the other hand, when it is the pleasure of God, a country uncultivated and like a desert, he makes it fruitful as one that is well watered and tilled; as this country of ours, and the land in America, once waste places, now fruitful ones.

*And dry ground into water springs*: which is expressive of the same thing, and may be figuratively understood of the Gentile world; which, before the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel, and the pouring down of the Spirit, was like a wilderness and dry ground; but now watered with the word and ordinances, and the grace of God, and in many places has



become fruitful in grace and good works. The Targum prefaces this verse thus,

“when they return unto the law, he turneth, etc.”

**Ver. 36.** *And there he maketh the hungry to dwell*, etc.] In those fruitful places which they find agreeable to them, and so fix upon them as the places of their abode, and build houses, and dwell there; having all the conveniences of life, which they wanted elsewhere: so such as hunger and thirst after righteousness make to such places where the waters are, the word is preached, and ordinances administered; and here they take up their dwelling, their bread being given them, and their waters sure unto them.

*That they may prepare a city for habitation*; those poor necessitous persons, as they were when they first came; building houses, and others continually coming to them, by degrees form a well regulated city, which are a large number of inhabitants: which may be considered as an emblem of the church of God, often compared to a city; and is an habitation for God, and where saints desire and delight to dwell.

**Ver. 37.** *And sow the fields, and plant vineyards*, etc.] And so raise a sufficient supply of corn and wine for the support of themselves and families. In a spiritual sense the “fields” are the world, and the seed which is sown is the word; the persons that sow it are the ministers of the Gospel, which, by a divine blessing, brings forth fruit, in some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold: the “vineyards” are the churches, planted by Christ and by his ministers, as his instruments; believers are the pleasant plants in them, and young converts are the tender grapes

*Which may yield fruits of increase*; or “fruit” and “increase”; the fields yield all sorts of grain for food, and the vineyards wine for drink. So the seed of the word being sown, and churches planted, they increase with the increase of God, and bring forth fruits of righteousness to the glory of his name.

**Ver. 38.** *He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly*, etc.] Not only their fields and vineyards are blessed with an increase, but these husbandmen themselves; as man at his first creation was bid to do, being blessed of God; and as the Israelites were in Egypt, (<sup>10028</sup>Genesis 1:28 <sup>10007</sup>Exodus 1:7) and which may spiritually denote the great number of converts to Christian churches, especially in the latter day, (<sup>2409</sup>Jeremiah 30:19).

*And suffereth not their cattle to decrease*; their sheep and oxen, which is reckoned a great temporal happiness, (<sup><494B></sup>Psalm 144:13,14), and may signify that God does and will give a sufficient number of Gospel ministers, comparable to oxen for their laboriousness, that shall in all ages minister to his churches; (see <sup><499></sup>1 Corinthians 9:9,10 <sup><5157></sup>1 Timothy 5:17).

**Ver. 39.** *Again they are minished*, etc.] Or “lessened”, in their families, cattle, and substance; either the same persons as before, or others. The Targum paraphrases it,

“but when they sin, they are lessened:”

for sin is the cause of it, as follows:

*and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow*; either because of their oppression of the poor, the evil they do to them, and the sorrow they bring upon them; or they are brought into a low estate through the tyranny and oppression of others, and by the afflictions and sorrows they are brought into by them. This may be applied to the Jews, at their destruction by the Romans, when they were greatly lessened and brought low by their oppression of them: or rather to the Christians; not under the Heathen persecutions, for then they increased more and more; but under antichristian tyranny, when the beast had power over them, and overcame and slew them; and their numbers were so reduced, that the whole world is said to wonder after the beast, (<sup><663B></sup>Revelation 13:3,7,8), and which will be the case again, when the witnesses will be slain: the number of Christians is greatly lessening now; there are but a few names in Sardis; Jacob is small, but will be smaller and fewer still.

**Ver. 40.** *He poureth contempt upon princes*, etc.] That is, the Lord does, who is above them; he laughs at them, and has them in derision, when they are raging against his people, cause, and interest; he sets them up and pulls them down at his pleasure; he hurls them from their seats and thrones, and makes them contemptible to their subjects; he sometimes brings them to a shameful end, as Herod, who was eaten with worms; and wicked princes, if they are not brought to disgrace in this world, they will rise to shame and everlasting contempt in the other; and will stand with the meanest and lowest before the Judge of the whole earth; and seek to the rocks and mountains to cover them from his wrath. This particularly will be true of the antichristian princes, when the vials of God’s wrath will be poured out upon them, (<sup><660></sup>Revelation 16:1).

*And causeth them to wander in the wilderness; where there is no way;* no beaten track or path; whither being driven out of their kingdoms, they flee for shelter, and wander about in untrodden paths; as Nebuchadnezzar, when he was driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beasts of the field: or this may be interpreted, as it is by Aben Ezra and Kimchi, the infatuation of their wisdom, and of their being left without counsel, and erring through it; being at their wits' end, not knowing what step to take, or measures to concert; being in a maze, in a wilderness, at an entire loss what they should do; (see <sup><1827></sup>Job 12:17-21).

**Ver. 41.** *Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction,* etc.] On the other hand, the Lord sometimes exalteth men of low degree, raiseth men of mean extract and parentage, who have made a poor figure in life, to high places of honour, free from adversity and distress; as David from the sheepfold, and from following the ewes great with young, to be king of Israel. This may be applied to the saints and people of God, who for the most part are poor in purse, the poor of this world, whom he chooses, calls, and saves; poor knowledge, capacity, and gifts; poor as to their spiritual circumstances, having neither food nor clothing, nor money to buy either; poor in spirit, and sensible of it; and poor by reason of afflictions: these the Lord sets on high, sets them among the princes of his people, makes them kings and priests; sets them on Christ the Rock, who is higher than they, higher than the angels and than the heavens; sets them above the angels, their nature being advanced above theirs in Christ, and they being represented by him in heavenly places; and standing in the relation of sons to God, and of spouse and bride to Christ, and angels being their ministering servants; and ere long they will be set on thrones, and have a crown of glory, life, and righteousness, put upon them, and be possessed of an everlasting kingdom, and be out of the reach of affliction. They are not clear of it in this world; it is needful for them, they are appointed to it, and through it they must enter the kingdom; but then they will come out of all tribulation, and there will be no more pain, sorrow, and death: it may be rendered, “after affliction”, after their time of affliction is over, then God will exalt and glorify them; (see <sup><1510></sup>1 Peter 5:10), this may respect the prosperity of the church in the latter day; (see <sup><2172></sup>Daniel 7:27).

*And maketh him families like a flock;* that is, the Lord makes the poor families like a flock of sheep, so greatly does he increase them; this is a very apt figure that is here used, since the people of God are often compared to sheep, and to a flock of them; and these are creatures that

greatly increase; and here it denotes the large number of the saints, as in the first times of the Gospel, both in Judea and in the Gentile world; and as it will be in the latter day, when they shall be multiplied and not be few, glorified and not be small; and that they should be branched out into families, or particular churches, which, like families, consist of children, young men, and fathers, of which Christ is master, and ministers stewards; so it has been from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation and will be much more so in the latter day, when the earth will be full of these families every where. The Targum introduces this verse thus,

“when they turn to the law he setteth, etc.”

**Ver. 42.** *The righteous shall see it, and rejoice*, etc.] Shall see the increase and prosperity of the saints, the glory of the church in the latter day, and rejoice at it; the judgments of God upon the wicked, upon antichristian princes and states, and rejoice on that account; (see <sup><6683></sup>Revelation 18:20 19:1,2) and the several deliverances of persons in distress before mentioned, and rejoice with them that rejoice; which is what good men ought to do, ( <sup><6125></sup>Romans 12:15).

*And all iniquity shall stop her mouth*; men of iniquity, very bad men, the man of sin and his followers, and all profane and atheistical persons, who will be silenced and have nothing to say against the providence of God; will be confounded, and through shame lay their hand on their mouths and be struck with admiration at the wonderful things done by the Lord for his people; nor will they have anything to say against their own condemnation.

**Ver. 43.** *Whoso is wise*, etc.] Or as it may be read interrogatively, “who is wise?” as in ( <sup><2492></sup>Jeremiah 9:12 <sup><2849></sup>Hosea 14:9), that is, spiritually wise, wise unto salvation; who is made to know wisdom in the hidden part; for not such as are possessed of natural wisdom, or worldly wise men, much less who are wise to do evil, are here meant.

*And will observe these things*; the remarkable appearances of divine Providence to persons in distress; the various changes and vicissitudes in the world; the several afflictions of God’s people, and their deliverances out of them; the wonderful works of God in nature, providence, and grace; these will be observed, taken notice of, laid up in the mind, and kept by such who are truly wise, who know how to make a right use and proper improvement of them.

*Even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord*; everyone of the wise men; they will perceive the kindness of God unto all men, in the several dispensations of his providence towards them, and his special love and kindness towards his own people, even in all their afflictions; they will perceive this to be at the bottom of every mercy and blessing; they will understand more of the nature and excellency of it, and know more of the love of God and Christ, which passeth knowledge. Or “the kindnesses of the Lord shall be understood”: that is, by wise men; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra renders the words.