

# PSALM 131

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 131

### *A Song of degrees of David.*

This psalm was written by David in his younger days, before he came to the throne; while he was in Saul's court, or persecuted by him. The occasion of it, as is generally thought, was a calumny cast upon him, as if he had some ill designs against Saul; was ambitious of the crown, and aspiring to the throne, and was plotting and forming measures to get the government into his hand; (see ~~1~~1 Samuel 24:9,14 26:18,20); with respect to all which he declares himself as innocent as a weaned child; and was as far from any such ambitious views as he was when in such a state; for the truth of which he appealed to God. Kimchi thinks that David, by his example, taught the Jews how to behave in captivity; that as he behaved, so should they, in great humility. The Syriac inscription is,

“it is said concerning Jesus the son of Josedech the high priest; and concerning humility.”

But the psalm no doubt was written by David of himself.

**Ver. 1.** *Lord, my heart is not haughty*, etc.] The heart of every man is naturally so, and everything in civil life tends to make it more so; as riches and honour, birth and blood, wisdom, knowledge, and learning, strength and beauty, especially where there is a superiority of those to others; and in religious if persons have not the true grace of God, their hearts will be haughty; if they have a notion of the purity of human nature, and the goodness of their hearts, and are pure in their own eyes, and of the power of their free will to do this and the other, and of their perfection in good works, and are full of their own righteousness, and have some external gifts, and some degree of notional knowledge; but if the heart is made truly contrite under a sense of sin, and is melted with discoveries of pardoning love, it will be humble and not haughty: and those have such hearts who have seen the haughtiness of their hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; their impotency to that which is spiritually good; their imperfection in all they do; the excellency and suitableness of Christ's righteousness, and

that all their salvation is of grace, and that grace is entirely free; and the more spiritual knowledge and experience they have, the more humble they are: and this was David's case, and what he here said was no doubt true, since he hated lying; and besides he speaks this in the presence of and to God the searcher of hearts; though he had been anointed by Samuel, and knew that he was to be successor in the kingdom, yet his heart was not elated with it;

*nor mine eyes lofty*; or "lifted up"<sup>f1783</sup>, they were lifted up to God in prayer often, out not above his fellow creatures; he behaved himself humbly as well as wisely in Saul's court, where he was raised to great dignity, which gained him the affections of the court, and of all Israel; but there are too many whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids lifted up, who disdain to look upon those that are inferior to them, as the rich on the poor, the Pharisee on the publican; (see ~~<1813>~~ Proverbs 30:13). This is the character of antichrist, that his look is more stout than his fellows, and is abominable in the sight of God, even a proud look as well as a proud heart, (~~<1817>~~ Proverbs 6:17 16:5). But this was not David's case; as he could not bear this in others he would not suffer it in himself, (~~<1815>~~ Psalm 101:5);

*neither do I exercise myself in great matters*; or, "walk"<sup>f1784</sup> in them; these were not the subject of his employment and conversation; he did many great things, in killing the lion and the bear that came into his father's flock; in slaying Goliath with a sling and stone only; in leading out the armies of Israel, and slaying his ten thousands; and he exercised himself in the great things of the law, which he was careful to observe, and studied the great things of the Gospel, which he had the highest esteem of, and desired to understand; but he did not seek human greatness, or the great things of this world, for himself; he had no ambitious views, or was desirous of the kingdom he was anointed to, before the proper time; (see ~~<1818>~~ 1 Samuel 18:18,23);

*or in things too high for me*: or "too wonderful"<sup>f1785</sup>; (see ~~<1819>~~ Job 42:3). He contemplated the wonderful make and frame of his body, the texture, symmetry, and use of each of its parts; he observed the wonderful providences of God towards him ever since he had a being; and particularly he took notice of the wonderful love of God to him, and remembered and talked of, and declared, the wonderful works of grace and redemption; but not things above his capacity, out of his reach, and which are secret, or not clearly revealed: and such things we should be content to be ignorant of, or

not to have adequate ideas of, or be capable of accounting for; as the being and perfections of God, particularly his immensity and eternity; the mode of subsisting of the Persons in the Godhead; the generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ, and the union of the two natures in him; present providences, unsearchable and past finding out; and future things, especially the times and seasons of them; (see <sup><3D06></sup>Psalm 139:6).

**Ver. 2.** *Surely I have behaved and quieted myself*, etc.] Or “my soul”<sup>f1786</sup>; behaved quietly and peaceably towards all men, even his inferiors in Saul’s court and elsewhere, and had given no tokens of a restless, turbulent, and ambitious spirit; as well as behaved patiently under all his troubles and afflictions, reproaches and calumnies: or “if I have not”<sup>f1787</sup>, being in the form of an oath or imprecation, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra observe; if I have not thus behaved, let it come to me so and so, or let me be as a weaned child. Noldius renders it by way of interrogation, “have I not composed and quieted myself?” etc. The Targum is,

“if I have not put the hand to the mouth, and caused my soul to be silent, until it heard the words of the law;”

*as a child that is weaned of his mother*: and, for the further confirmation of it, it is added,

*my soul [is] even as a weaned child*; innocent and harmless, had no more ill designs against Saul than a weaned child; humble, meek, and lowly, and had no more aspiring and ambitious views than such an one; like that, weaned from the world, the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it; as well as from nature, from self, from his own righteousness, and from all dependence on it; and as a child that is weaned from the breast wholly depends on its nurse for sustenance, so did he wholly depend upon God, his providence, grace, and strength; and as to the kingdom, he had no more covetous desires after it than a weaned child has to the breast, and was very willing to wait the due time for the enjoyment of it. The Targum,

“as one weaned on the breasts of its mother, I am strengthened in the law.”

This is to be understood not of a child while weaning, when it is usually peevish, fretful, and froward; but when weaned, and is quiet and easy in its mother’s arms without the breast.

**Ver. 3.** *Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.*] What he did himself, and found it good for him to do, that he knew was good for others, and therefore exhorts and encourages to it, to hope in the Lord and wait for his salvation; and which should be done constantly, and to the end of life, or till the thing hoped for is enjoyed; (see <sup><SRB></sup>Hebrews 3:6 <sup><GIB></sup>1 Peter 1:13). Perhaps some respect is here had to the people of Israel, especially the friends of David, who were weary of Saul's government, and impatient to have David on the throne; whom he advises to wait patiently, and not take any indirect steps to bring it about, but leave it with God, and hope and trust in him; compare with this (<sup><QBI></sup>1 Samuel 24:7 26:8,9); (see Gill on "<sup><SDI></sup>Psalm 130:7").