

# PSALM 149

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 149

This psalm is thought by Calvin and others to have been written for the sake of the Jews that returned from the Babylonish captivity; and is a prediction of great and famous things done in the times of the Maccabees to Heathens and their princes, so Theodoret; the Syriac version entitles it,

“concerning the new temple;”

that is, the second temple, built by Zerubbabel, and the things done under that; but it rather seems to have been written by David in the beginning of his reign, when he obtained victories over the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Syrians; and refers to the times of the Messiah, as Kimchi, R. Obadiah Gaon, and others think; not of the Jews’ vainly expected Messiah, but of the true Messiah, who is come, and will come again, spiritually and personally; and there are many things in it applicable both to the first and latter part of his days.

**Ver. 1.** *Praise ye the Lord*, etc.] Or “hallelujah”; the title of the psalm, according to many;

*sing unto the Lord a new song*; for a new mercy received, a new victory obtained, or a new salvation wrought; more particularly the new song of redeeming grace through Jesus Christ, the song of the Lamb, in distinction from the old song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red sea, on account of their deliverance, which was typical of salvation by Christ, the oldest, being the first song we read of; but this is a new one, which none but the redeemed of the Lamb can sing; a song suited to Gospel times, in which all things are new, a new church state, new ordinances, a new covenant, and a new and living way to the holiest of all; a song proper for renewed persons to sing, who have new favours continually to bless and praise the Lord for;

*[and] his praise in the congregation of saints*: such who are partakers of the blessings of divine goodness; are separated and distinguished from others by the grace of God; are sanctified and brought into a Gospel

church state; and who gather and assemble together to worship God, and attend upon him in his word and ordinances, and in such assemblies the praises of God are to be sung; which being done socially, the saints are assisting to one another in this service; and it is done with greater solemnity, and is more to the public honour and glory of God; thus Gospel churches are called upon to sing the praises of God among themselves, (<sup><4059></sup>Ephesians 5:19 <sup><5086></sup>Colossians 3:16); and have Christ for an example going before them, (<sup><4922></sup>Psalm 22:22,25).

**Ver. 2.** *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him*, etc.] Or, “in his Makers”<sup>f1972</sup>, Father, Son, and Spirit; as in (<sup><8510></sup>Job 35:10 <sup><2546></sup>Isaiah 54:5); see also (<sup><2120></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:1); for all three Persons had a concern in the creation of man at first, “let us make man”, etc. (<sup><0025></sup>Genesis 1:26); and have in the formation of every individual man; of the Israelites as men, and of them as a body politic and ecclesiastic, being raised up, constituted, and formed by the Lord in their civil and church state, and therefore had reason to rejoice in him, (<sup><6316></sup>Deuteronomy 32:6); and so have all the spiritual Israel of God, whom he has chosen, redeemed, and called; every Israelite indeed, all who are the workmanship of God, the people he has formed for himself, and to show forth his praise: these should rejoice in God the Father, who has chosen them in Christ, blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him, sent him to redeem them, has justified them by his righteousness, pardoned their sins through his blood, adopted them and made them heirs of glory; and in the Son of God their Redeemer, they should rejoice in his person, in his righteousness, sacrifice, and fulness; and in the Holy Spirit, who has regenerated and sanctified them, is their Comforter, and the earnest of their future glory;

*let the children of Zion be joyful in their King*: not in David, unless as a type, but in his Son, the King Messiah, who is King of Zion; and therefore the children of Zion, the church, who are born of her, the mother of us all, and born in her through the ministry of the word, and brought up there by means of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; such as are regenerate persons, sons of God, and members of Gospel churches, should rejoice in Christ, the King of saints; that they have such a King over them, who is the greatest of Kings, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; so righteous in the administration of his government, so wise in making laws for them, so powerful to protect and defend them; and who must reign till all enemies are put under his feet, even for ever and ever. Every appearance of Christ’s kingdom is matter of joy to saints; his first coming was as a King, though

in a mean and lowly manner; yet joyful to Zion and her children, (<sup><300></sup>Zechariah 9:9); his ascension to heaven, when he was declared Lord and Christ; the pouring forth of his Spirit, and the success of his Gospel in the Gentile world, to the overthrow of Paganism in it, (<sup><620></sup>Revelation 12:10); and especially it will be an occasion of great joy to his subjects, when he takes to himself his great power, and reigns, (<sup><615></sup>Revelation 11:15-17 19:6).

**Ver. 3.** *Let them praise his name in the dance*, etc.] In a chorus of saints, joining together in their expressions of joy, by words and gestures; an ancient practice that went along with singing praises, (<sup><20></sup>Exodus 15:20); or rather, “with the pipe”<sup>f1973</sup>, as some render it; a musical instrument used in former times in the worship of God, in this part of it, praising his name, with those that follow;

*let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp*; the former of these was a vessel of brass, a drum or tabret, on which they beat, perhaps like one of our kettle drums; the other was a stringed instrument of music much used, and in playing on which David was very skilful: the music of these was typical of the spiritual melody made in the heart to the Lord in singing his praises, to which there are allusions in Gospel times; though the instruments themselves are now laid aside, being only suited to the church in her infant state, when under tutors and governors; (see <sup><85></sup>Psalms 68:25 <sup><10></sup>Revelation 5:9 14:2 15:2).

**Ver. 4.** *For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people*, etc.] Not all mankind; though they are all his people by creation, and are under the care of his providence; yet they are not all acceptable to him; some are abhorred by him for their sins and transgressions: but these are a special and peculiar people, whom he has foreknown and chosen, taken into the covenant of his grace, and provided in it blessings for them; whom he has given to Christ, and he has redeemed; and who are called by the Spirit and grace of God, whereby they appear to be his people. These the Lord loves with a love of complacency and delight; he takes pleasure in their persons, as considered in Christ, in whom they are accepted with him; as they are clothed with his righteousness, and made comely through his comeliness; as washed in his precious blood, and adorned with the graces of his spirit: yea, he takes pleasure in their services done in faith, and from love, and to his glory; in their sacrifices of prayer and praise, as offered up through Christ; in the

company of them and communion with them; and in their prosperity and happiness, here and hereafter;

*he will beautify the meek with salvation;* humble and lowly souls, who have been truly humbled under a sense of sin; brought to submit to the righteousness of Christ, and to depend upon the grace of God for salvation; are subject to the yoke of Christ, and patiently submit to the will of God under every dispensation of Providence; are not easily provoked to wrath; are free from envy and malice; have mean thoughts of themselves, and high ones of other saints; these the Lord beautifies now with more grace, with which salvation is connected; with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the garments of his salvation, which are beautiful ones; and he will beautify them with eternal salvation, with the white robes of immortality and bliss, when they will shine as the sun in the kingdom of heaven.

**Ver. 5.** *Let the saints be joyful in glory,* etc.] In the glory put upon them now, being beautified with salvation; in the righteousness of Christ on them, and the grace of Christ in them, which makes them all glorious within; and in the glory they expect to have hereafter, both upon their bodies and souls, and in the hope of that, (~~418B~~Romans 5:2). Some copies of the Ethiopic version render it, "in his glory"; in the glory of Christ, as a divine Person and as Mediator, seen now in the glass of the Gospel, and will be the object of the beautiful vision hereafter; and now is, and then will be, matter of joy unspeakable, (~~418B~~2 Corinthians 3:18 ~~417B~~John 17:24). Or "gloriously"<sup>f1974</sup>, in a glorious manner; as saints do rejoice, when they ascribe all the glory of salvation to the free grace of God and death of Christ, and rejoice on that account; saints have reason to rejoice, and indeed none but they; who being regenerated and sanctified, are meet for and shall partake of eternal glory;

*let them sing aloud upon their beds;* while others are taking their rest and ease, let them meditate on the word of God; commune with their own hearts about their state and condition; remember the Lord, and his goodness to them; all which give an occasion to give thanks unto him, and sing aloud his praise, (~~418B~~Psalm 63:5,6 119:62); and when they awake on their beds in a morning, after sound sleep and a good repose, it becomes them to praise the Lord, who gives his beloved sleep; and who only makes them sleep, and dwell in safety, (~~418B~~Psalm 4:8). And the phrase denotes the safe and secure state of the saints upon their beds, lying down and sleeping

comfortably, having nothing to fear, the Lord sustaining them; and so may and should sing upon their beds, (<sup><498B></sup>Psalm 3:5,6); Yea, saints may sing upon their sick beds; since the Lord is with them there, and strengthens them on a bed of languishing, and makes all their bed in their sickness, (<sup><494B></sup>Psalm 41:3); and even upon their death beds may sing aloud the triumphant song, “O death, where is thy sting?” etc. (<sup><465B></sup>1 Corinthians 15:55-57). Saints in a future state are on beds; the grave is a bed, where their flesh rests in hope; and the bosom and arms of Jesus are the bed in which their souls rest; and where they are, not in a state of insensibility and inactivity, but are walking and talking, and singing aloud the praises of electing, redeeming, and calling grace, (<sup><257D></sup>Isaiah 57:1,2). So Arama interprets the saints on their beds, those that lie in the grave, when they shall rise from thence,

**Ver. 6.** [*Let the high [praises] of God [be] in their mouth*, etc.] Or “throats”<sup>f1975</sup>; loudly declared by them. The word “praises” is not in the text, and so may be read, “the high things of God”<sup>f1976</sup>; or, “the heights of God”, as the Septuagint: and these are the perfections of God; as his omniscience, which is knowledge too high for a creature to attain unto, and even to conceive of; his omnipotence, for high is his right hand; his omnipresence, this is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea; his love, grace, and mercy, which are in the heavens; and his truth and faithfulness, which reach to the clouds; his eternity, immutability, and other attributes; all which should be often talked of and celebrated: also the high acts and works of God, those more inward and secret; as the thoughts of his heart, which are higher than ours, as the heavens than the earth; the everlasting love of God, which has an height not to be reached; the eternal choice of persons to grace and glory, before all time; the covenant of grace, which exceeds the mountains for height, as well as duration; and the glorious scheme of our peace, reconciliation, and redemption, contrived in the divine mind, and formed in Christ from everlasting: and others more outward, open, and manifest; as the works of creation and providence; of redemption by Christ; the operations of the Spirit, and the powerful success of the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles. The Vulgate Latin version and others render it, “the exaltations of God”<sup>f1977</sup>; Father, Son, and Spirit: Jehovah the Father should be exalted in the mouths of his saints, for his love to them, choice of them, covenant with them, the mission of his Son on their account, and the regeneration of them according to his abundant mercy; and Jehovah the

Son should be exalted by them with their mouths and lips, as well as in their hearts, in his person, by honouring him as they do the Father, in his offices, kingly, priestly, and prophetic; and the Holy Spirit should be exalted, by ascribing the work of grace to him, the beginning, carrying on, and finishing of it;

*and a twoedged sword in their hand*; which is no other than the word of God, (~~40R17~~Ephesians 6:17 ~~50H12~~Hebrews 4:12); one of its edges is the law, which sharply reproves and menaces for sin, threatening with curses, condemnation, and death; and which, in the Spirit's hand, cuts deep into the hearts of men, lays open the corruption of their nature, and the swarms of sin which are in them; it causes pain and grief, working wrath in the conscience; it wounds and kills, and is therefore called the letter that kills, (~~44R16~~2 Corinthians 3:6). The other edge is the Gospel, which cuts in pieces the best of men; all their works of righteousness, which it removes from their justification and salvation; and all their wisdom, holiness, freewill power, and creature abilities; and it cuts down the worst in man, his sinful as well as his righteous self; it teaches him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; it is useful to refute errors, and defend truth: and it is an instrument, and only a passive instrument, used by the Lord, as his power unto salvation; it is a sword, but only effectual as it is the sword of the Spirit; it is a part of the weapons of our warfare, and it is mighty, but only through God; it can do nothing of itself, but as it is in the hand of another; and it should be in the hands of all the saints in common, as well as in the hands of Gospel ministers, to withstand error, maintain truth, and repel the temptations of Satan. The Targum is,

“the praises of God in their throats, and as twoedged swords in their hands;”

making the praises of God and the twoedged swords to be the same: and so Jarchi and R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra interpret them.

**Ver. 7.** *To execute vengeance upon the Heathen*, etc.] Either upon the Gentile world, in the first times of the Gospel; when the apostles, going there with the twoedged sword of the word, vehemently inveighed against the idolatry of the Heathens, and exhorted them to turn from their idols to serve the living God; and divine power going along with their ministry, multitudes were turned from them; through the success of the Gospel, the oracles of the Heathen were struck dumb, their priests were despised, their idol temples were forsaken, and idols rejected; now were the judgment of

the Heathen world, and the prince of it, cast out, and vengeance in this way taken upon it, or their disobedience to God revenged, (<sup><6123></sup>John 12:31 <sup><4706></sup>2 Corinthians 10:6). Or else upon the Papists, as will be in the latter times of the Gospel; who are sometimes called Heathens and Gentiles, (<sup><1906></sup>Psalm 10:16 <sup><6112></sup>Revelation 11:2); on whom vengeance will be taken for all their idolatry, superstition, and bloodshed of the saints; and they will be smitten and slain by the twoedged sword, proceeding out of the mouth of Christ, and as in the hands of his servants, (<sup><6695></sup>Revelation 19:15,21);

*[and] punishments upon the people*; or “reproofs”<sup>f1978</sup>; sharp and piercing ones; such as the convictions the word of God will strike in the minds of men, and will be very distressing and afflicting to them; as the fire out of the mouths of the witnesses, which is their doctrine, will be to their enemies the Papists; and will torment and kill them, and be the savour of death unto death unto them, (<sup><6610></sup>Revelation 11:5).

**Ver. 8.** *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.*] Which is thought to allude to what was done to the Canaanitish kings, in the times of Joshua; and to the princes of Midian by Gideon; and to Agag by Saul; and to the Ammonites, Syrians, and others, by David: but it refers either to the first times of the Gospel, and the influence of the sword of the Spirit over the hearts of men; and on some very great personages, as kings and nobles, brought to Christ and his churches, in chains of powerful and efficacious grace, declaring a ready and cheerful subjection to his Gospel and ordinances; such as Constantine, Theodosius, and others; and who were instruments in subduing, conquering, and destroying tyrannical and persecuting emperors and princes, as Maximilian, Licinius, and others; see (<sup><2354></sup>Isaiah 45:14); and more instances of the power of the Gospel, and the influence of divine grace on such persons, there will be in the latter day; (see <sup><2423></sup>Isaiah 49:23 60:3,11 <sup><1920></sup>Psalm 72:10,11). It may also respect the use of the Gospel ministry, compared to a twoedged sword on the hearts of men in common; whereby Satan, the strong man armed, who keeps the palace as a king or prince, is dispossessed; and sin, which reigns like a king unto death, is dethroned, and grace is set up as a governing principle. But it may chiefly regard the destruction of antichristian kings and nobles, and their states, through the prevalence of the Gospel and the power of Christ, and the twoedged sword coming out of his mouth, (<sup><6674></sup>Revelation 17:14 19:19-21).

**Ver. 9.** *To execute upon them the judgment written*, etc.] In the law, according to the Targum; either upon the seven nations of the land of Canaan, (<sup><48072></sup>Deuteronomy 7:12); or upon all the enemies of God and his people, (<sup><45941></sup>Deuteronomy 32:41); or rather in the Gospel; which declares, that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, but whoever believes not shall be damned, (<sup><41166></sup>Mark 16:16). And according to this twoedged sword or word of God, and the sentence pronounced by it, and judgment written in it, things will everlastingly take place. Or it may principally have regard to the judgment upon antichrist in the latter day, written in the word of God; and which will be executed by the saints, with the twoedged sword in their hands, (<sup><61416></sup>Revelation 16:6 17:8,16 18:6,7);

*this honour have all his saints*; which is spoken of throughout the psalm; as to be acceptable unto God, and well pleasing in his sight; to be adorned with grace, and beautified with salvation; to have the high praises of God in their mouths, and a twoedged sword in their hands, and to do the execution with it above mentioned;

*praise ye the Lord*; even all his saints; who of all men have most reason to do it, for the grace that is given them, and the honour put upon them.