

PSALM 68

This is a most excellent psalm, but in many places the genuine sense is not easy to come at; for in this, as in some other scriptures, there are things dark and hard to be understood. It does not appear when, or upon what occasion, David penned this psalm; but probably it was when, God having given him rest from all his enemies round about, he brought the ark (which was both the token of God's presence and a type of Christ's mediation) from the house of Obed-edom to the tent he had pitched for it in Zion; for the first words are the prayer which Moses used at the removing of the ark, ^{Gen 15}Numbers 10:35. From this he is led, by the Spirit of prophecy, to speak glorious things concerning the Messiah, his ascension into heaven, and the setting up of his kingdom in the world.

I. He begins with prayer, both against God's enemies (v. 1, 2) and for his people (v. 3).

II. He proceeds to praise, which takes up the rest of the psalm, calling upon all to praise God (v. 4, 26, 32) and suggesting many things as matter for praise.

1. The greatness and goodness of God (v. 4-6).
2. The wonderful works God had wrought for his people formerly, bringing them through the wilderness (v. 7, 8), settling them in Canaan (v. 9, 10), giving them victory over their enemies (v. 11, 12), and delivering them out of the hands of their oppressors (v. 13, 14).
3. The special presence of God in his church (v. 15-17).
4. The ascension of Christ (v. 18) and the salvation of his people by him (v. 19, 20).
5. The victories which Christ would obtain over his enemies, and the favours he would bestow upon his church (v. 21-28).
6. The enlargement of the church by the accession of the Gentiles to it (v. 29-31). And so he concludes the psalm with an awful acknowledgment of the glory and grace of God (v. 32-35). With all these great things we should endeavour to be duly affected in singing this psalm.

PSALM 68:1-6

THANKFUL PRAISES TO GOD

To the chief musician. A psalm or song of David.

In these verses,

I. David prays that God would appear in his glory,

1. For the confusion of his enemies (v. 1, 2): “*Let God arise*, as a judge to pass sentence upon them, as a general to take the field and do execution upon them; *and let them be scattered*, and flee before him, as unable to keep their ground, much less to make head against him. Let God arise, as the sun when he goes forth in his strength; and the children of darkness shall be scattered, as the shadows of the evening flee before the rising sun. Let them be driven away as smoke by the wind, which ascends as if it would eclipse the sun, but is presently dispelled, and there appears to remainder of it. Let them melt *as wax before the fire*, which is quickly dissolved.” Thus does David comment upon Moses's prayer, and not only repeat it with application to himself and his own times, but enlarge upon it, to direct us how to make use of scripture-prayers. Nay, it looks further, to the Redeemer's victory over the enemies of this kingdom, for he was the angel of the covenant, that guided Israel through the wilderness. Note,

(1.) There are, and have been, and ever will be, such as are enemies to God and hate him, that join in with the old serpent against the kingdom of God among men and against the seed of the woman.

(2.) They are the wicked, and none but the wicked, that are enemies to God, the children of the wicked one.

(3.) Though we are to pray for our enemies as such, yet we are to pray against God's enemies as such, against their enmity to him and all their attempts upon his kingdom.

(4.) If God but arise, all his impenitent and implacable enemies, that will not repent to give him glory, will certainly and speedily be scattered, and driven away, and made to perish at his presence; for none ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. The day of judgment will be the day of the complete and final *perdition of ungodly men* (~~CRV~~ 2 Peter 3:7), who

shall melt like wax before that flaming fire in which the Lord shall then appear, ⁵⁰⁸2 Thessalonians 1:8.

2. For the comfort and joy of his own people (v. 3): “*Let the righteous be glad, that are now in sorrow; let them rejoice before God in his favourable presence. God is the joy of his people; let them rejoice whenever they come before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice, let them rejoice with gladness.*” Note, Those who rejoice in God have reason to rejoice with exceeding joy; and this joy we ought to wish to all the saints, for it belongs to them. *Light is sown for the righteous.*

II. He praises God for his glorious appearances, and calls upon us to praise him, to sing to his name, and extol him,

1. As a great God, infinitely great (v. 4): He *rides upon the heavens, by his name JAH*. He is the spring of all the motions of the heavenly bodies, directs and manages them, as he that rides in the chariot sets it a-going, has a supreme command of the influences of heaven; he rides upon the heavens for the help of his people (⁵⁰⁹Deuteronomy 33:26), so swiftly, so strongly, and so much above the reach of opposition. He rules these by his name *Jah*, or *Jehovah*, a self-existent self-sufficient being; the fountain of all being, power, motion, and perfection; this is his name for ever. When we thus extol God we must *rejoice before him*. Holy joy in God will very well consist with that reverence and godly fear wherewith we ought to worship him.

2. As a gracious God, a God of mercy and tender compassion. He is great, but he despises not any, no, not the meanest; nay, being a God of great power, he uses his power for the relief of those that are distressed, v. 5, 6. The fatherless, the widows, the solitary, find him a God all-sufficient to them. Observe how much God's goodness is his glory. He that *rides on the heavens by his name Jah*, one would think should immediately have been adored as King of kings and Lord of lords, and the sovereign director of all the affairs of states and nations; he is so, but this he rather glories in, that he is a *Father of the fatherless. Though God be high, yet has he respect unto the lowly*. Happy are those that have an interest in such a God as this. He that *rides upon the heavens* is a Father worth having; thrice *happy are the people whose God is the Lord*.

(1.) When families are bereaved of their head God takes care of them, and is himself their head; and the widows and the fatherless children shall find

that in him which they have lost in the relation that is removed, and infinitely more and better. He is a *Father of the fatherless*, to pity them, to bless them, to teach them, to provide for them, to portion them. He will *preserve them alive* (^{<2491>}Jeremiah 49:11), and with him they shall *find mercy*, ^{<2443>}Hosea 14:3. They have liberty to call him Father, and to plead their relation to him as their guardian, ^{<1169>}Psalm 146:9; 10:14, 18. He is a judge or patron of the widows, to give them counsel and to redress their grievances, to own them and plead their cause, ^{<1223>}Proverbs 22:23. He has an ear open to all their complaints and a hand open to all their wants. He is so *in his holy habitation*, which may be understood either of the habitation of his glory in heaven (there he has prepared his throne of judgment, which the fatherless and widow have free recourse to, and are taken under the protection of, ^{<1104>}Psalm 9:4, 7), or of the habitation of his grace on earth; and so it is a direction to the widows and fatherless how to apply to God; let them go to his holy habitation, to his word and ordinances; there they may find him and find comfort in him.

(2.) When families are to be built up he is the founder of them: *God sets the solitary in families*, brings those into comfortable relations that were lonely, gives those a convenient settlement that were unsettled (^{<1319>}Psalm 113:9); he *makes those dwell at home that were forced to seek for relief abroad* (so Dr. Hammond), putting those that were destitute into a way of getting their livelihood, which is a very good way for man's charity, as it is of God's bounty.

3. As a righteous God,

(1.) In relieving the oppressed. He *brings out those that are bound with chains*, and sets those at liberty who were unjustly imprisoned and brought into servitude. No chains can detain those whom God will make free.

(2.) In reckoning with the oppressors: *The rebellious dwell in a dry land* and have no comfort in that which they have got by fraud and injury. The best land will be a dry land to those that by their rebellion have forfeited the blessing of God, which is the juice and fatness of all our enjoyments. The Israelites were brought out of Egypt into the wilderness, but were there better provided for than the Egyptians themselves, whose land, if Nilus failed them, as it sometimes did, was a dry land.

PSALM 68:7-14

MERCIES RECOLLECTED

The psalmist here, having occasion to give God thanks for the great things he had done for him and his people of late, takes occasion thence to praise him for what he had done for their fathers in the days of old. Fresh mercies should put us in mind of former mercies and revive our grateful sense of them. Let it never be forgotten,

I. That God himself was the guide of Israel through the wilderness; when he had brought them out of their chains he did not leave them in the dry land, but he himself went before them in a *march through the wilderness*, v. 7. It was not a journey, but a march, for they went as soldiers, as an army with banners. The Egyptians promised themselves that the wilderness had shut them in, but they were deceived; God's Israel, having him for their leader, marched through the wilderness and were not lost in it. Note, If God bring his people into a wilderness, he will be sure to go before them in it and bring them out of it. ^{<BIB>}Song of Solomon 8:5.

II. That he manifested his glorious presence with them at Mount Sinai, v. 8. Never did any people see the glory of God, nor hear his voice, as Israel did, ^{<BIB>}Deuteronomy 4:32, 33. Never had any people such an excellent law given them, so expounded, so enforced. Then the *earth shook*, and the neighbouring countries, it is likely, felt the shock; terrible thunders there were, accompanied no doubt with thunder-showers, in which the heavens seemed to drop; while the divine doctrine *dropped as the rain*, ^{<BIB>}Deuteronomy 32:2. *Sinai itself*, that vast mountain, that long ridge of mountains, *was moved at the presence of God*; see ^{<BIB>}Judges 5:4, 5; ^{<BIB>}Deuteronomy 33:2; ^{<BIB>}Habakkuk 3:3. This terrible appearance of the Divine Majesty, as it would possess them with a fear and dread of him, so it would encourage their faith in him and dependence upon him. Whatever mountains of difficulty lay in the way of their happy settlement, he that could move Sinai itself could remove them, could get over them.

III. That he provided very comfortably for them both in the wilderness and in Canaan (v. 9, 10): *Thou didst send a plentiful rain and hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor*. This may refer,

1. To the victualling of their camp with manna in the wilderness, which was rained upon them, as were also the quails (^{498B}Psalm 78:24, 27), and it might be fitly called a rain of liberality or munificence, for it was a memorable instance of the divine bounty. This confirmed the camp of Israel (here called *God's inheritance*, because he had chosen them to be a peculiar treasure to himself) *when it was weary* and ready to perish: this confirmed their faith, and was a standing proof of God's power and goodness. Even in the wilderness God found a comfortable dwelling for Israel, which was his congregation. Or,

2. To the seasonable supplies granted them in Canaan, that land *flowing with mild and honey*, which is said to *drink water of the rain of heaven*, ^{451B}Deuteronomy 11:11. When sometimes that fruitful land was ready to be turned into barrenness, for the iniquity of those that dwelt therein, God, in judgment, remembered mercy, and sent them a plentiful rain, which refreshed it again, so that the congregation of Israel dwelt therein, and there was provision enough, even to satisfy their poor with bread. This looks further to the spiritual provision made for God's Israel; the Spirit of grace and the gospel of grace are the plentiful rain with which God confirms his inheritance, and from which their fruit is found, ^{281B}Isaiah 45:8. Christ himself is this rain, ^{471B}Psalm 72:6. *He shall come as showers that water the earth.*

IV. That he often gave them victory over their enemies; armies, and kings of armies, appeared against them, from their first coming into Canaan, and all along in the times of the judges, till David's days, but, first or last, they gained their point against them, v. 11, 12, 14. Observe here,

1. That God was their commander-in-chief: *The Lord gave the word*, as general of their armies. He raised up judges for them, gave them their commissions and instructions, and assured them of success. *God spoke in his holiness*, and then *Gilead is mine*.

2. That they had prophets, as God's messengers, to make known his mind to them. God gave them his word (*the word of the Lord* came unto them) and then *great was the company of the preachers* — prophets and *prophetesses*, for the word is feminine. When God has messages to send he will not want messengers. Or perhaps it may allude to the women's joining in the triumph when the victory was obtained, as was usual

(~~1251~~) Exodus 15:20, (~~1252~~) 1 Samuel 18:7), in which they took notice of the word of God, triumphing in that as much as in his works.

3. That their enemies were defeated, and put to confusion: *Kings of armies did flee*, did flee with the greatest terror and precipitation imaginable, did not fight and flee, but flee and flee, retired without striking a stroke; they fled apace, fled and never rallied again.

4. That they were enriched with the plunder of the field: *She that tarried at home divided the spoil*. Not only the men, the soldiers that abode by the stuff, who were, by a statute of distributions, to share the prey (~~1253~~) 1 Samuel 30:24), but even the women that tarried at home had a share, which intimates the abundance of spoil that should be taken.

5. That these great things which God did for them were sanctified to them and contributed to their reformation (v. 14): *When the Almighty scattered kings for her* (for the church) *she was white as snow in Salmon*, purified and refined by the mercies of God; *when the host went forth against the enemy they kept themselves from every wicked thing*, and so the host returned victorious, and Israel by the victory were confirmed in their purity and piety. This account of Israel's victories is applicable to the victories obtained by the exalted Redeemer for those that are his, over death and hell. By the resurrection of Christ our spiritual enemies were made to flee, their power was broken, and they were for ever disabled to hurt any of God's people. This victory was first notified by the women (the she-publishers) to the disciples (~~1254~~) Matthew 28:7) and by them it was preached to all the world, while believers that tarry at home, that did not themselves contribute any thing towards it, enjoy the benefit of it, and divide the spoil.

V. That from a low and despised condition they had been advanced to splendour and prosperity. When they were bond-slaves in Egypt, and afterwards when they were oppressed sometimes by one potent neighbour and sometimes by another, they did, as it were, *lie among the pots* or rubbish, as despised broken vessels, or as vessels in which there was no pleasure — they were black, and dirty, and discoloured. But God, at length, *delivered them from the pots* (~~1255~~) Psalm 81:6), and in David's time they were in a fair way to be one of the most prosperous kingdoms in the world, amiable in the eyes of all about them, *like the wings of a dove covered with silver*, v. 13. “And so,” says Dr. Hammond, “under Christ's

kingdom, the heathen idolaters that were brought to the basest and most despicable condition of any creatures, worshipping wood and stone, and given up to the vilest lusts, should from that detestable condition be advanced to the service of Christ, and the practice of all Christian virtues, the greatest inward beauties in the world.” It may be applied also to the deliverance of the church out of a suffering state and the comforts of particular believers after their despondencies.

~~185~~ PSALM 68:15-21

GLORY OF ZION

David, having given God praise for what he had done for Israel in general, as the God of Israel (v. 8), here comes to give him praise as Zion's God in a special manner; compare ~~181~~ Psalm 9:11. *Sing praises to the Lord who dwelleth in Zion*, for which reason Zion is called *the hill of God*.

I. He compares it with the hill of Bashan and other high and fruitful hills, and prefers it before them, v. 15, 16. It is true, Zion was but little and low in comparison with them, and was not covered over with flocks and herds as they were, yet, upon this account, it has the pre-eminence above them all, that it is *the hill of God*, the hill *which he desires to dwell in*, and where he chooses to manifest the tokens of his peculiar presence, ~~182~~ Psalm 132:13, 14. Note, It is much more honourable to be holy to God than to be high and great in the world. “*Why leap you, you high hills? Why do you insult over poor Zion, and boast of your own height? This is the hill which God has chosen, and therefore though you exceed it in bulk, and be first-rates, yet, because on this the royal flag is hoisted, you must all strike sail to it.*” Zion was especially honourable because it was a type of the gospel church, which is therefore called Mount Zion (~~182~~ Hebrews 12:22), and this is intimated here, when he said, *The Lord will dwell in it for ever*, which must have its accomplishment in the gospel Zion. There is no kingdom in the world comparable to the kingdom of the Redeemer, no city comparable to that which is incorporated by the gospel charter, for there God dwells and will dwell for ever.

II. He compares it with Mount Sinai, of which he had spoken (v. 8), and shows that it has the Shechinah or divine presence in it as really, though

not as sensibly, as Sinai itself had, v. 17. Angels are *the chariots of God*, his chariots of war, which he make use of against his enemies, his chariots of conveyance, which he sends for his friends, as he did for Elijah (and Lazarus is said to be carried by the angels), his chariots of state, in the midst of which he shows his glory and power. They are vastly numerous: *Twenty thousands*, even thousands multiplied. There is an *innumerable company of angels* in the heavenly Jerusalem, ^{<402>}Hebrews 12:22. The enemies David fought with had chariots (^{<408>}2 Samuel 8:4), but what were they, for number or strength, to the chariots of God? While David had these on his side he needed not to fear those that trusted in *chariots and horses*, ^{<409>}Psalm 20:7. God appeared on Mount Sinai, attended with myriads of angels, by whose dispensation the law was given, ^{<405>}Acts 7:53. *He comes with ten thousands of saints*, ^{<406>}Deuteronomy 33:2. And still in Zion God manifests his glory, and is really present, with a numerous retinue of his heavenly hosts, signified by the cherubim between which God is said *to dwell*. So that, as some read the last words of the verse, *Sinai is in the sanctuary*; that is, the sanctuary was to Israel instead of Mount Sinai, whence they received divine oracles. Our Lord Jesus has these chariots at command. When the first-begotten was brought into the world it was with this charge, *Let all the angels of God worship him* (^{<406>}Hebrews 1:6); they attended him upon all occasions, and he is now among them, *angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject to him*, ^{<402>}1 Peter 3:22. And it is intimated in the New Testament that the angels are present in the solemn religious assemblies of Christians, ^{<411>}1 Corinthians 11:10. Let the woman have a veil on her head *because of the angels*; and see ^{<408>}Ephesians 3:10.

III. The glory of Mount Zion was the King whom God *set on that holy hill* (^{<406>}Psalm 2:6), who *came to the daughter of Zion*, ^{<406>}Matthew 21:5. Of his ascension the psalmist here speaks, and to it his language is expressly applied (^{<408>}Ephesians 4:8): *Thou hast ascended on high* (v. 18); compare ^{<406>}Psalm 47:5, 6. Christ's ascending on high is here spoken of as a thing past, so sure was it; and spoken of to his honour, so great was it. It may include his whole exalted state, but points especially at his ascension into heaven to the right hand of the Father, which was as much our advantage as his advancement. For,

1. He then triumphed over the gates of hell. He led *captivity captive*; that is, he led his captives in triumph, as great conquerors used to do, *making a show of them openly*, ^{<405>}Colossians 2:15. He led those captive who had

led us captive, and who, if he had not interposed, would have held us captive for ever. Nay, he *led captivity itself captive*, having quite broken the power of sin and Satan. As he was the death of death, so he was the captivity of captivity, ^{<334>}Hosea 13:14. This intimates the complete victory which Jesus Christ obtained over our spiritual enemies; it was such that through him *we also are more than conquerors*, that is, triumphers, ^{<487>}Romans 8:37.

2. He then opened the gates of heaven to all believers: *Thou hast received gifts for men*. He *gave gifts to men*, so the apostle reads it, ^{<408>}Ephesians 4:8. For he received that he might give; on his head the anointing of the Spirit was poured, that from him it might descend to the skirts of his garments. And he gave what he had received; having received power to give eternal life, he bestows it upon *as many as were given him*, ^{<472>}John 17:2. *Thou hast received gifts for men*, not for angels; fallen angels were not to be made saints, nor standing angels made gospel ministers, ^{<305>}Hebrews 2:5. Not for Jews only, but for all men; whoever will may reap the benefit of these gifts. The apostle tells us what these gifts were (^{<404>}Ephesians 4:11), *prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers*, the institution of a gospel ministry and the qualification of men for it, both which are to be valued as the gifts of heaven and the fruits of Christ's ascension. *Thou hast received gifts in man* (so the margin), that is, in the human nature which Christ was pleased to clothe himself with, that he might be a *merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God*. In him, as Mediator, *all fulness dwells*, that *from his fulness we might receive*. To magnify the kindness and love of Christ to us in receiving these gifts for us, the psalmist observes,

(1.) The forfeiture we had made of them. He received them for the *rebellious also*, for those that had been rebellious; so all the children of men had been in their fallen state. Perhaps it is especially meant of the Gentiles, that had been *enemies in their minds by wicked works*, ^{<302>}Colossians 1:21. For them these gifts are received, to them they are given, that they might lay down their arms, that their enmity might be slain, and that they might return to their allegiance. This magnifies the grace of Christ exceedingly that through him rebels are, upon their submission, not only pardoned, but preferred. They have commissions given them under Christ, which some say, in our law, amounts to the reversing of an attainder. Christ came to a rebellious world, not to condemn it, but that through him it might be saved.

(2.) The favour designed us in them: He *received gifts for the rebellious*, that *the Lord God might dwell among them*, that he might set up a church in a rebellious world, in which he would dwell by his word and ordinances, as of old in the sanctuary, that he might set up his throne, and Christ might dwell in the hearts of particular persons that had been rebellious. The gracious intention of Christ's undertaking was to rear up the *tabernacle of God among men*, that he might dwell with them and they might themselves be living temples to his praise, ^{<367>}Ezekiel 37:27.

IV. The glory of Zion's King is that he is a Saviour and benefactor to all his willing people and a consuming fire to all those that persist in rebellion against him, v. 19-21. We have here good and evil, life and death, the blessing and the curse, set before us, like that (^{<416>}Mark 16:16), *He that believes shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned.*

1. Those that take God for their God, and so give up themselves to him to be his people, shall be loaded with his benefits, and to them he will be a God of salvation. If in sincerity we avouch God to be our God, and seek to him as such,

(1.) He will continually do us good and furnish us with occasion for praise. Having mentioned the gifts Christ received for us (v. 18), fitly does he subjoin, in the next words, *Blessed be the Lord*; for it is owing to the mediation of Christ that we live, and live comfortably, and are daily loaded with benefits. So many, so weighty, are the gifts of God's bounty to us that he may be truly said to *load us* with them; he *pours out blessings till there is no room to receive them*, ^{<380>}Malachi 3:10. So constant are they, and so unwearied is he in doing us good, that he *daily* loads us with them, according as the necessity of every day requires.

(2.) He will at length be unto us the God of salvation, of everlasting salvation, the *salvation of God*, which he will *show to those that order their conversation aright* (^{<413>}Psalm 50:23), the salvation of the soul. He that *daily loads us with benefits* will not put us off with present things for a portion, but will be the God of our salvation; and what he gives us now he gives as the God of salvation, pursuant to the great design of our salvation. *He is our God*, and therefore he will be the God of eternal salvation to us; for that only will answer the vast extent of his covenant-relation to us as our God. But has he power to complete this salvation? Yes, certainly; *for unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.* The

keys of hell and death are put into the hand of the Lord Jesus, ^{<618>}Revelation 1:18. He, having made an escape from death himself in his resurrection, has both authority and power to rescue those that are his from the dominion of death, by altering the property of it to them when they die and giving them a complete victory over it when they shall rise again; for *the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*. And to those that shall thus for ever escape death, and shall find such an outlet from it as not to be hurt of the second death, to them surely deliverances from temporal death are mercies indeed and come from God as the God of their salvation. ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 1:10.

2. Those that persist in their enmity to him will certainly be ruined (v. 21): *God shall wound the head of his enemies*, — of Satan the old serpent (of whom it was by the first promise foretold that *the seed of the woman should break his head*, ^{<075>}Genesis 3:15), — of all the powers of the nations, whether Jews or Gentiles, that oppose him and his kingdom among men (^{<306>}Psalm 110:6, *He shall wound the heads over many countries*), — of all those, whoever they are, that will *not have him to reign over them*, for those he accounts his enemies, and they shall be *brought forth and slain before him*, ^{<027>}Luke 19:27. He will *wound the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses*. Note, Those who go on still in their trespasses, and hate to be reformed, God looks upon as his enemies and will treat them accordingly. In calling the head *the hairy scalp* perhaps there is an allusion to Absalom, whose bushy hair was his halter. Or it denotes either the most fierce and barbarous of his enemies, who let their hair grow, to make themselves look the more frightful, or the most fine and delicate of his enemies, who are nice about their hair: neither the one nor the other can secure themselves from the fatal wounds which divine justice will give to the heads of those that go on in their sins.

^{<062>}PSALM 68:22-31

REDEMPTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

In these verses we have three things: —

I. The gracious promise which God makes of the redemption of his people, and their victory over his and their enemies (v. 22, 23): *The Lord*

said, in his own gracious purpose and promise, “I will do great things for my people, as the God of their salvation,” v. 20. God will not fail the expectations of those who by faith take him for their God. It is promised,

1. That he will set them in safety from their danger, as he had done formerly: “I will *again bring them from the depths of the sea,*” as he did Israel when he brought them out of the slavery of Egypt into the ease and liberty of the wilderness; “and *I will again bring them from Bashan,*” as he did Israel when he brought them from their wants and wanderings in the wilderness into the fulness and settlement of the land of Canaan; for the land of Bashan was on the other side Jordan, where they had wars with Sihon and Og, and whence their next removal was into Canaan. Note, The former appearances of God's power and goodness for his people should encourage their faith and hope in him for the future, that what he has done he will do again. He will *set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people* (²³¹¹¹Isaiah 11:11); and we may perhaps see repeated *all the wonders which our fathers told us of*. But this is not all:

2. That he will make them victorious over their enemies (v. 23): *That thy feet may be dipped, as thou passest along, in the blood of thy enemies, shed like water in great abundance, and the tongue of thy dogs may lap in the same.* Dogs licked the blood of Ahab; and, in the destruction of the anti-christian generation, we read of blood up *to the horses' bridles,* ⁶⁴⁰Revelation 14:20. The victories with which God blessed David's forces over the enemies of Israel are here prophesied of, but as types of Christ's victory over death and the grave for himself and for all believers, in his resurrection (and theirs by virtue of his) out of the earth, and of the destruction of the enemies of Christ and his church, who shall have blood given them to drink, for they are worthy.

II. The welcome entertainment which God's own people shall give to these glorious discoveries of his grace, both in his word and in his works. Has he spoken in his holiness? Has he said he will *bring again from Bashan*? What then is required of us in return to this?

1. That we observe his motions (v. 24): “*They have seen, thy people have seen, thy goings, O God!* While others regard not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, they have seen *the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.*” See here,

(1.) How an active faith appropriates God; he is God and King; but that is not all, he is *my* God and *my* King. Those who thus take him for theirs may see him, in all his outgoings, acting as their God, as their King, for their good, and in answer to their prayers.

(2.) Where God's most remarkable outgoings are, even in the sanctuary, in and by his word and ordinances, and among his people in the gospel church especially, in and by which is made known the manifold wisdom of God. These outgoings of his *in the sanctuary* far outshine the outgoings of the morning and the evening, and more loudly proclaim his eternal power and godhead.

(3.) What is our duty in reference to these outgoings, which is to observe them. *This is the finger of God. Surely God is with us of a truth.*

2. That we give him glory in the most devout and solemn manner. When we see *his goings in his sanctuary*,

(1.) Let those that are immediately employed in the service of the temple praise him, v. 25. It was expected that the Levites, some of whom were singers and others players on instruments, who had the nearest views of his *outgoings in his sanctuary*, should lead in his praises. And, it being a day of extraordinary triumph, *among them were damsels playing with timbrels*, to complete the concert. "Thus (says Dr. Hammond) when Christ has gone up to heaven the apostles shall celebrate and publish it to all the world, and even the women that were witnesses of it shall affectionately join with them in divulging it."

(2.) Let all the people of Israel in their solemn religious assembly give glory to God: *Bless God*, not only in temples, but in the synagogues, or schools of the prophets, or wherever there is a congregation of those that *come forth from the fountain of Israel*, that are of the seed of Jacob, let them concur in blessing God. Public mercies, which we jointly share in, call for public thanksgivings, which all should join in. "Thus (says Dr. Hammond) all Christians shall be obliged solemnly to magnify the name of the Messiah, and, to that end, frequently to assemble together in congregations." And,

(3.) Let those among them who, upon any account, are the most eminent, and make a figure, go before the rest in praising God, v. 27. There was *little Benjamin* (that was the royal tribe in Saul's time) *with their rulers*,

the princes of Judah (that was the royal tribe in David's time), and *their council*, their captains or leaders. In the beginning of David's reign there had been long war between Judah and Benjamin, but now they both join in praises for success against the common enemy. But why are the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali particularly mentioned? Perhaps because those tribes, lying towards the north, lay most exposed to the incursions of the Syrians, and other neighbours that molested them, and therefore should be in a particular manner thankful for these victories over them. Dr. Hammond gives another reason, That these were the two learned tribes. *Naphtali giveth goodly words* (^{<042>}Genesis 49:21) and Zebulun had those that *handle the pen of the writer*, ^{<054>}Judges 5:14. These shall join in praising God, their princes especially. It is much for the honour of God when those that are above others in dignity, power, and reputation, go before them in the worship of God and are forward in using their influence and interest for the advancing of any service that is to be done to him. Dr. Hammond notes hence that the kingdom of the Messiah should, at length, be submitted to by all the potentates and learned men in the world.

3. That we seek unto him, and depend upon him, for the perfecting of what he has begun, v. 28. In the former part of the verse the psalmist speaks to Israel: "*Thy God has commanded thy strength*; that is, whatever is done for thee, or whatever strength thou hast to help thyself, it comes from God, his power and grace, and the word which he has commanded; thou hast no reason to fear while thou hast strength of God's commanding, and no reason to boast while thou hast no strength but what is of his commanding." In the latter part he speaks to God, encouraged by his experiences: "*Strengthen, O God! that which thou hast wrought for us.* Lord, confirm what thou hast commanded, perform what thou hast promised, and bring to a happy end that good work which thou hast so gloriously begun." What God has wrought he will strengthen; where he has given true grace he will give more grace. Some make this whole verse to be a believer's address to the Messiah, whom David calls *God*, as he had done, ^{<086>}Psalm 45:6, 8. "*Thy God*" (God the Father) "*has commanded thy strength*, has made thee strong for himself, as the *man of his right hand* (^{<087>}Psalm 80:17), has treasured up strength in thee for us; therefore we pray that thou, *O God the Son!* wilt *strengthen what thou hast wrought for us*, wilt accomplish thy undertaking for us by finishing thy good work in us."

III. The powerful invitation and inducement which would hereby be given to those that are without to come in and join themselves to the church, v. 29-31. This was in part fulfilled by the accession of many proselytes to the Jewish religion in the days of David and Solomon; but it was to have its full accomplishment in the conversion of the Gentile nations to the faith of Christ, and the making of them fellow-heirs, and of the same body, with the seed of Israel, ^{<40R6>}Ephesians 3:6.

1. Some shall submit for fear (v. 30): “*The company of spearmen, that stand it out against Christ and his gospel, that are not willing to be ruled by him, that persecute the preachers and professors of his name, that are furious and outrageous as a multitude of bulls, fat and wanton as the calves of the people*” (which is a description of those Jews and Gentiles that opposed the gospel of Christ and did what they could to prevent the setting up of his kingdom in the world), “Lord, rebuke them, abate their pride, assuage their malice, and confound their devices, till, conquered by the convictions of their consciences and the many checks of providence, they be every one of them brought, at length, to *submit themselves with pieces of silver*, as being glad to make their peace with the church upon any terms.” Even Judas submitted himself with pieces of silver when he returned them with this confession, *I have betrayed innocent blood*. And see ^{<40R9>}Revelation 3:9. Many, by being rebuked, have been happily saved from being ruined. But as for those that will not submit, notwithstanding these rebukes, he prays for their dispersion, which amounts to a prophecy of it: *Scatter thou the people that delight in war*, who take such a pleasure in opposing Christ that they will never be reconciled to him. This may refer to the unbelieving Jews, who delighted in making war upon the holy seed, and would not submit themselves, and were therefore scattered over the face of the earth. David had himself been a man of war, but could appeal to God that he never delighted in war and bloodshed for its own sake; as for those that did, and therefore would not submit to the fairest terms of peace, he does not doubt but God would scatter them. Those are lost to all the sacred principles of humanity, as well as Christianity, that can delight in war and take a pleasure in contention let them expect that, sooner or later, they shall have enough of it, ^{<23R1>}Isaiah 33:1; ^{<63D>}Revelation 13:10.

2. Others shall submit willingly (v. 29, 31): *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem* (this David speaks of in faith, for the temple of Jerusalem was not built in his time, only the materials and model were prepared) *kings*

*shall bring presents unto thee; rich presents shall be brought, such as are fit for kings to bring; even kings themselves, that stand much upon the punctilios of honour and prerogative, shall court the favour of Christ at a great expense. There is that in God's temple, that beauty and benefit in the service of God and in communion with him, and in the gospel of Christ which went forth from Jerusalem, that is enough to invite kings themselves to bring presents to God, to present themselves to him as living sacrifices, and with themselves the best performances. He mentions *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, two countries out of which subjects and suppliants were least to be expected (v. 31): *Princes shall come out of Egypt* as ambassadors to seek God's favour and submit to him; and they shall be accepted, for *the Lord of hosts shall thereupon bless them, saying, Blessed by Egypt my people,* ^{<2405>} Isaiah 19:25. Even Ethiopia, that had stretched out her hands against God's Israel (^{<1449>} 2 Chronicles 14:9), should now *stretch out her hands unto God*, in prayer, in presents, and to take hold on him, and that soon. *Agree with thy adversary quickly.* Out of all nations some shall be gathered in to Christ and be owned by him.*

~~<188>~~ PSALM 68:32-35

PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS SOVEREIGN DOMINION

The psalmist, having prayed for and prophesied of the conversion of the Gentiles, here invites them to come in and join with the devout Israelites in praising God, intimating that their accession to the church would be the matter of their joy and praise (v. 32): Let the *kingdoms of the earth sing praises to the Lord*; they all ought to do it, and, when they become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, they will do it. God is here proposed to them as the proper object of praise upon several accounts:

I. Because of his supreme and sovereign dominion: *He rides upon the heavens of heavens which were of old* (v. 33); compare v. 4. He has from the beginning, nay from before all time, prepared his throne; he sits on the circuit of heaven, guides all the motions of the heavenly bodies; and from the highest heavens, which are the residence of his glory, he dispenses the influences of his power and goodness to this lower world.

II. Because of his awful and terrible majesty: *He sends out his voice, and that a mighty voice.* This may refer either generally to the thunder, which is called *the voice of the Lord* and is said to be *powerful and full of majesty* (^{<48B>}Psalm 29:3, 4), or in particular to that thunder in which God spoke to Israel at Mount Sinai.

III. Because of his mighty power: *Ascribe you strength unto God* (v. 34); acknowledge him to be a God of such irresistible power that it is folly to contend with him and wisdom to submit to him; acknowledge that he has power sufficient both to protect his faithful subjects and to destroy his stubborn adversaries; and give him the glory of all the instances of his omnipotence. *Thine is the kingdom and power, and therefore thine is the glory.* We must acknowledge his power,

1. In the kingdom of grace: *His excellency is over Israel;* he shows his sovereign care in protecting and governing his church; that is the excellency of his power, which is employed for the good of his people.

2. In the kingdom of providence: *His strength is in the clouds,* whence comes the thunder of his power, the *small rain, and the great rain of his strength.* Though God has his strength in the clouds, yet he condescends to gather his Israel under the shadow of his wings, (^{<48B>}Deuteronomy 33:26.

IV. Because of the glory of his sanctuary and the wonders wrought there (v. 35): *O God! thou art terrible out of thy holy places.* God is to be admired and adored with reverence and godly fear by all those that attend him in his holy places, that receive his oracles, that observe his operations according to them, and that pay their homage to him. He displays that out of his holy places which declares aloud that he will be sanctified in those that come nigh unto him. Out of heaven, his holy place above, he does, and will, show himself a terrible God. Nor is any attribute of God more dreadful to sinners than his holiness.

V. Because of the grace bestowed upon his people: *The God of Israel is he that gives strength and power unto his people,* which the gods of the nations, that were vanity and a lie, could not give to their worshippers; how should they help them, when they could not help themselves? All Israel's strength against their enemies came from God; they owned they had *no might of their own,* (^{<48C>}2 Chronicles 20:12. And all our sufficiency for our spiritual work and warfare is from the grace of God. It is through

Christ strengthening us that we can do all things, and not otherwise; and therefore he must have the glory of all we do (~~1811~~ Psalm 115:1) and our humble thanks for enabling us to do it and accepting the work of his own hands in us. If it be the God of Israel that vies strength and power unto his people, they ought to say, *Blessed be God*. If all be from him, let all be to him.