

On the Psalms. The Argument Prefixed by Hippolytus, Bishop of Rome, to His *Exposition of the Psalms*.¹²⁰³

The book of Psalms contains new doctrine after the law of Moses. And after the writing of Moses, it is the second book of doctrine. Now, after the death of Moses and Joshua, and after the judges, arose David, who was deemed worthy of bearing the name of father of the Saviour himself; and he first gave to the Hebrews a new style of psalmody, by which he abrogates the ordinances established by Moses with respect to sacrifices, and introduces the new hymn and a new style of jubilant praise in the worship of God; and throughout his whole ministry he teaches very many other things that went beyond the law of Moses.¹²⁰⁴

1203 From Gallandi.

1204 [i.e., Samuel prepares for the Christian era, introducing the “schools of the prophets,” and the synagogue service, which God raised up David to complete, by furnishing the Psalter. Compare [Acts iii. 24](#), where Samuel’s position in the “goodly fellowship” is marked. See Payne Smith’s *Prophecy a Preparation for Christ*.]

On **Psalm II.**¹²⁰⁵ From the Exposition of the Second Psalm, by the Holy Bishop Hippolytus.

When he came into the world, He was manifested as God and man. And it is easy to perceive the man in Him, when He hungers and shows exhaustion, and is weary and athirst, and withdraws in fear, and is in prayer and in grief, and sleeps on a boat's pillow, and entreats the removal of the cup of suffering, and sweats in an agony, and is strengthened by an angel, and betrayed by a Judas, and mocked by Caiaphas, and set at nought by Herod, and scourged by Pilate, and derided by the soldiers, and nailed to the tree by the Jews, and with a cry commits His spirit to His Father, and drops His head and gives up the ghost, and has His side pierced with a spear, and is wrapped in linen and laid in a tomb, and is raised by the Father on the third day. And the divine in Him, on the other hand, is equally manifest, when He is worshipped by angels, and seen by shepherds, and waited for by Simeon, and testified of by Anna, and inquired after by wise men, and pointed out by a star, and at a marriage makes wine of water, and chides the sea when tossed by the violence of winds, and walks upon the deep, and makes one see who was blind from birth, and raises Lazarus when dead for four days, and works many wonders, and forgives sins, and grants power to His disciples.

1205 i.e., in our version the third. From Theodoret, Dialogue Second, entitled 'Ασύγχυτος, p. 167.

On [Psalm XXII](#). Or [XXIII](#). From the Commentary by the Holy Bishop and Martyr Hippolytus, on “The Lord is My Shepherd.”¹²⁰⁶

And, moreover, the ark made of imperishable wood was the Saviour Himself. For by this was signified the imperishable and incorruptible tabernacle of (the Lord) Himself, which gendered no corruption of sin. For the sinner, indeed, makes this confession: “My wounds stank, and were corrupt, because of my foolishness.”¹²⁰⁷ But the Lord was without sin, made of imperishable wood, as regards His humanity; that is, of the virgin and the Holy Ghost inwardly, and outwardly of the word of God, like an ark overlaid with purest gold.

1206 Theodoret, in his First Dialogue.

1207 [Ps. xxxviii. 6.](#)

On [Psalm XXIII. Or XXIV.](#) From the Commentary by the Same, on [Ps. xxiii.](#)¹²⁰⁸

He comes to the heavenly gates: angels accompany Him: and the gates of heaven were closed. For He has not yet ascended into heaven. Now first does He appear to the powers of heaven as flesh ascending. Therefore to these powers it is said by the angels, who are the couriers of the Saviour and Lord: "Lift up your gates, ye princes; and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in."¹²⁰⁹

1208 Theodoret, in his First Dialogue.

1209 [Ps. xxiv. 7.](#)

On [Psalm CIX. Or CX.](#) From the Commentary by the Same on the Great Song.¹²¹⁰

1. He who delivered from the lowest hell the man first made of earth, when lost and bound by the chains of death; He who came down from above, and exalted earth-born man on high; He who is become the preacher of the Gospel to the dead, the redeemer of souls, and the resurrection of the buried;—He became the helper of man in his defeat, and appeared in his likeness, the first-born Word, and took upon Himself the first Adam in the Virgin; and though spiritual Himself, He made acquaintance with the earthy in the womb; though Himself the ever-living One, He made acquaintance with the dead in transgressions; Himself the heavenly One, He bore the terrestrial on high; Himself of lofty extraction, He chose, by His own subjection, to set the slave free; and making man, who turns to dust, and forms food for the serpent, unconquerable as adamant, and that, too, when hung upon the tree, He declared him lord over his victor, and is thus Himself proved conqueror by the tree.

2. Those, indeed, who do not acknowledge the incarnate Son of God now, shall have to acknowledge Him as Judge, when He who is now despised in His inglorious body, comes in His glory.

3. And when the apostles came to the sepulchre on the third day, they did not find the body of Jesus; just as the children of Israel went up the mount to seek the tomb of Moses, and did not find it.



1210 Theodoret, in his Second Dialogue.

On Psalm LXXVII. Or LXXVIII.¹²¹¹

45. He sent the dog-fly among them, and consumed them; and the frog, and destroyed them.

46. He gave also their fruits to the mildew, and their labours to the locust.

47. He destroyed their vine with hail, and their sycamines with frost.

Now, just as, in consequence of an irregular mode of living, a deadly bilious humour may be formed in the inwards, which the physician by his art may bring on to be a sick-vomiting, without being himself chargeable with producing the sick humour in the man's body; for excess in diet was what produced it, while the physician's science only made it show itself; so, although it may be said that the painful retribution that falls upon those who are by choice wicked comes from God, it would be only in accordance with right reason, to think that ills of that kind find both their beginnings and their causes in ourselves. For to one who lives without sin there is no darkness, no worm, no hell (Gehenna), no fire, nor any other of these words or things of terror; just as the plagues of Egypt were not for the Hebrews,—those fine lice annoying with invisible bites, the dog-fly fastening on the body with its painful sting, the hurricanes from heaven falling upon them with hailstones, the husbandman's labours devoured by the locusts, the darkened sky, and the rest. It is God's counsel, indeed, to tend the true vine, and to destroy the Egyptian, while sparing those who are to "eat the grape of gall, and drink the deadly venom of asps."¹²¹² And the sycamine of Egypt is utterly destroyed; not, however, that one which Zaccheus climbed that he might be able to see my Lord. And the fruits of Egypt are wasted, that is, the works of the flesh, but not the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace.¹²¹³

48. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their substance to the fire.

Symmachus renders it: "Who gave up their cattle to the plague, and their possessions to birds." For, having met an overwhelming overthrow, they became a prey for carnivorous birds. But, according to the Seventy, the sense is not that the hail destroyed their cattle, and the fire the rest of their substance, but that hail, falling in an extraordinary manner along with fire, destroyed utterly their vines and sycamines first of all, which were entirely unable to stand out against the first attack; then the cattle which grazed on the plains; and then every herb and tree, which the fire accompanying the hail consumed; and the affair was altogether portentous, as fire ran with the water, and was commingled with it. "For fire ran in the hail," he says; and it was thus hail, and fire burning in the hail. David also calls the cattle and the fruit of the trees "substance," or "riches." And it should be observed that, though the hail is recorded to have destroyed every herb and every tree, yet there were left

1211 Bandini, *Catalog. Codd. Græc. Biblioth. Mediceo-Laurent.*, i. p. 91.

1212 Deut. xxxii. 33.

1213 Gal. v. 22.

some which the locust, as it came upon them after the fiery hail, consumed; of which it is said, that it eats up every herb, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail left behind it. Now, in a spiritual sense, there are some sheep belonging to Christ, and others belonging to the Egyptians. Those, however, which once belonged to others may become His, as the sheep of Laban became Jacob's; and contrariwise. Whichever of the sheep, moreover, Jacob rejected, he made over to Esau. Beware, then, lest, being found in the flock of Jesus, you be set apart when gifts are sent to Esau, and be given over to Esau as reprobate and unworthy of the spiritual Jacob. The single-minded are the sheep of Christ, and these God saves according to the word: "O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast."¹²¹⁴ They who in their folly attach themselves to godless doctrine, are the sheep of the Egyptians, and these, too, are destroyed by the hail. And whatsoever the Egyptians possess is given over to the fire, but Abraham's substance is given to Isaac.

49. He discharged upon them the wrath of His anger;—anger, and wrath, and tribulation, a visitation by evil angels.

Under anger, wrath, and tribulation, he intended bitter punishments; for God is without passion. And by anger you will understand the lesser penalties, and by wrath the greater, and by tribulation the greatest.¹²¹⁵ The angels also are called evil, not because they are so in their nature, or by their own will, but because they have this office, and are appointed to produce pains and sufferings,—being so called, therefore, with reference to the disposition of those who endure such things; just as the day of judgment is called the evil day, as being laden with miseries and pains for sinners. To the same effect is the word of Isaiah, "I, the Lord, make peace, and create evil;"¹²¹⁶ meaning by that, I maintain peace, and permit war.



1214 Ps. xxxvi. 6.

1215 Theodoret also, following Hippolytus, understood by "evil angels" here, not "demons," but the ministers of temporal punishment. See on Ps. lxxviii. 54, and on Jer. xlix. 14. So, too, others, as may be seen in *Poli Synops.*, ii. col. 1113.

1216 Isa. xlv. 7.