

Psalm 28

[A Psalm] of David.

Psalm 28 is another prayer by David for deliverance, one of many which he prayed when pursued by one enemy or another. It contains a petition both for deliverance (verses 1-3), and for divine retribution (verses 4-5), before suddenly shifting to an unshakable tone of thanksgiving for the anticipated answer (verses 6-9).

Verses 1-9: We encounter a radical shift from lamentation and prayer to thanksgiving. The psalmist, without regard for his unchanged circumstances, shows confidence in crisis. David, moving through two cycles of crisis and confidence, magnifies the justice of God.

- I. First Cycle: Individual in Outlook, and Terminates in Praise (28:1-7);
 - A. His Personal Crisis (28:1-5b);
 - B. His Personal Confidence (28:5c-7).
- II. Second Cycle: Corporate in Outlook, and Terminates in Prayer (28:8-9);
 - A. His Reassurance in the Light of Corporate Confidence (28:8);
 - B. His Request in the Face of Corporate Crisis (28:9).

Psalm 28:1 "Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, [if] thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit."

“Silent ... silent”: On the striking picture of God being silent regarding his situation (compare Psalms 35:22; 83:1; 109:1; Isa. 57:11; 64:12; 65:6; Hab. 1:13).

David is speaking to his Lord Jehovah. We know Him as Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. He is the Rock that we build upon. I have said so many times before that, prayer is a two-way conversation. Many times, we are not silent so that God can speak to us. This is not the case with David here. He says, God speak to me. David is saying if you don't hear my prayer and answer me, I will be like those who are lost. I might even wind up in hell. The voice of God is a very frightening thing to hear, but is much better than thinking that He will not speak to me at all. I must hear from God to know if I am pleasing Him. The best place to hear the voice of God, is alone with Him somewhere. God speaks to us in many ways. Sometimes He speaks to us in the Bible (His Word). Other times God speaks to us in visions and dreams. Then there are those special times when you hear the voice of God in your ear. There is a knowing beyond a shadow of doubt, when it is God speaking.

Psalm 28:2 "Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle."

Which proceed from the Spirit of grace and of supplication. And are put up in a humble manner, under a sense of wants and unworthiness, and on the foot of grace and mercy, and not merit.

"When I cry unto thee": As he now did, and determined he would, and continue so doing, until he was heard.

"When I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle": The Holy of Holies, in the tabernacle and in the temple. Which was sometimes so called (1 Kings 6:23; compare with 2 Chron. 3:10). Where were the Ark, the mercy seat, and cherubim, between which the Lord dwelt, and gave responses to his people. Or heaven itself, which the Holy of Holies was a figure of. Where the throne of God is, and from where he hears the prayers of his people directed to him. Or else Christ himself, who is the most Holy, and the "Debir", or Oracle, who speaks to the Lord for his people. And by whom the Lord speaks to them again, and communes with them. The oracle had its name, "Debir" (identical to a nickname of the Holy of Holies), from speaking. Lifting up of the hands is a prayer gesture, and here designs the performance of that duty to God in heaven, through Christ (see Lam. 3:41); it was frequently used, even by the Heathens, as a prayer gesture (see Psalm 141:2). "When I lift up my hands", this symbolic "posture" representing the heart's attitude in dependent prayer (see Exodus 9:29; 17:11-12; Psalm 63:4; 1 Tim. 2:8).

Supplications in the verse above, means earnest prayer. We see this is a serious prayer. David means business with God. David is not only praying in earnest, but has lifted his hands in praise as a sacrifice of praise to God. The oracle would have been where God dwelt in the sanctuary. We too, should lift our hands in praise when we earnestly pray to God. This prayer of David's is similar to the earnest prayer of a righteous man.

James 5:16 "Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Verses 3-9: The ways of those who work "iniquity" are mentioned. But the Lord never fails to "feed" His people regardless of evil schemes.

The iniquities of the psalmist's (really God's), enemies bring forth sharp imprecations.

Psalm 28:3 "Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief [is] in their hearts."

Compare (Psalm 26:9). The metaphor implied in "draw me not away" is that of a hunter, drawing prey of all kinds to him enclosed within a net. The psalmist prays that he may not share the fate of the workers of iniquity, over whom he seems to see some terrible judgment impending.

"Which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts": Hypocrites, double minded men, who have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it. Pretend to have religion, and have none. And speak fair to the face, but design mischief and ruin; as Saul and his servants did to David (1 Sam. 18:17).

This is speaking of someone who is two-faced. The heart of man is what he really is. If his heart is wicked, he is wicked. All the great speeches and false pretenses may work with men, but God

knows these fakers. The following verse tells us about the workers of iniquity. Jesus is speaking here.

Luke 13:27 "But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

The wicked having flattering tongues which try to draw the believer into their sin with them. The next Scripture tells us of a few sinners we are not to be with.

1 Corinthians 5:11 "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat."

Psalm 28:4 "Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert."

"Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors": The feeling of righteous indignation, naturally implanted in us, causes us to desire the punishment of the wicked. Quite apart from any wrong that they may have done to ourselves.

"Give them after the work of their hands": Reward them according to what they do. A just recompense. This whole verse is a prayer that God would deal "justly" with them. There is no evidence that there is anything of vindictiveness or malice in the prayer. In itself considered, there is no impropriety in praying that "justice" may be done to the violators of law.

Sometimes when we see terrible crimes against society and against God, we feel a righteous anger. We are jealous for God. It truly hurts my heart, when I hear someone cursing and using the name of the Lord. I Believe this perhaps is what David is saying here. It is not that he hates the people. He hates their evil deeds. He is saying, the punishment you have in store for these sins is just.

Psalm 28:5 "Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up."

They do not note God's providential workings. If they did, they would see that judgment falls upon the wicked, and, seeing this, they would fear and abstain from evil. But they take no notice, God is not in all their thoughts. They do not find pleasure in His works; they do not give heed to the intimations of His will in His providential dealings; they do not listen to His commands; they do not yield to the influences of His Spirit.

"Nor the operation of his hands." What He is now doing. The sense is essentially the same as in the former sentence.

"He shall destroy them, and not build them up": He will pull them down, instead of building them up. They expose themselves to His displeasure, and He will bring deserved punishment

upon them. I.e. destroy them utterly and irrecoverably, because they willfully shut their eyes against the light of God's word and works.

This is like prophecy. David is looking ahead to the time when God shall judge and punish them for their evil deeds. The amazing thing to me, is how anyone can look at God's creation around him and say there is no God. Those who totally reject the Lord, in the face of all the evidence around them, shall be utterly destroyed in the lake of fire.

Psalm 28:6 "Blessed [be] the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications."

"Because he hath heard the voice of my supplications" (contrast verses 1-2). Through faith, the psalmist will live his life as though God has already intervened. He speaks of it as past, either because God had in part heard and answered him already, or because God assured him by his Spirit that he had heard and accepted his prayers, and would assuredly answer him in due time.

We see now David praising the Lord, because He has heard and answered David's prayer. Praise and answered prayer go hand in hand.

Psalm 28:7 "The LORD [is] my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him."

As far as feeling goes, David is already "helped." He feels himself delivered out of his peril. Therefore, he says, my heart greatly rejoiceth. And with my song, literally, out of my song, which is explained to mean "out of my store of song", will I praise him. He is ready to offer thanksgiving for a mercy not yet received (see the notes at Psalm 18:1).

"My heart trusted in him": I trusted or confided in him (see Psalm 13:5).

"And I am helped": I have found the assistance which I desired.

"Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth": I greatly rejoice. I am happy. He had found the assurance of the divine favor which he desired, and his heart was glad.

"And with my song will I praise him": I will sing praises to Him (compare Psalm 22:25).

I would like to give another Scripture from Psalms that shows what our reaction should be to answered prayer.

Psalms 103:1 "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, [bless] his holy name."

I have no strength, except the strength of Christ within me.

Ephesians 6:16 "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

We could take a lesson from David. He went against Goliath with nothing but the Lord to cover him. The shield of Saul was too heavy to wear, but David came with the shield of faith in His God to protect him. There is no better way to praise God than with beautiful songs of praise.

Psalm 28:8 "The LORD [is] their strength, and he [is] the saving strength of his anointed."

The strength of his people, mentioned in (Psalm 28:9): Not only the strength of David in particular, but of all his people in general (see Psalm 37:39).

Meaning either himself, as before, who was anointed by Samuel, king of Israel. And therefore, had not invaded and thrust himself into an office he had no call and right unto. Or the Messiah, the Lord's Anointed, whom he heard, helped, and strengthened in the day of salvation. And delivered him from the power of death and the grave, and raised him from thence, and gave him glory (see Psalm 20:6).

David is bringing this prophetically to our day. The Lord is our strength. We all know that Jesus was the anointed of God, but we can see in the next Scriptures that the believers in Christ are His anointed.

2 Corinthians 1:21 "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, [is] God;"

Hebrews 1:9 "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, [even] thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Psalm 28:9 "Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever."

"Thine inheritance": God amazingly considers His people a most precious possession (compare Deut. 7:6-16; 9:29; 1 Sam. 10:1; Psalms 33:12; 94:5; Eph. 1:18).

Colossians 3:24 "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

This leaves no doubt, that the inheritance is for those who serve the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, Christians are to receive the inheritance through Jesus. We are His inheritance. The Father has given us to Him.

Revelation 2:7 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

These words were spoken by Jesus who lifts us up, saves us, feeds us and gives us eternal life in Him.

Psalm 28 Questions

1. In verse 1 David says, O Lord my _____.
2. Who is the Rock that we build upon?
3. Many times we talk so much in prayer, that what happens?
4. What is the worst thing David thinks might happen, if God does not speak to him?
5. Where is the best place to be, if you want to hear from God?
6. Name some of the different ways God speaks to us.
7. What does supplications mean?
8. What does Holy Oracle mean in verse 2?
9. David is not only crying out to God in earnest prayer, but does what to show even more desire for God to hear this prayer?
10. Who is verse 3 of this lesson speaking of?
11. In Luke 13:27, who does Jesus tell to get away from him?
12. Do not associate with a brother that is called a _____, or _____, or an _____, or a _____, or a _____, or an _____.
13. What is righteous anger?
14. How can anyone look at all of God's creation and say there is no God?
15. Verse 6 is not prayer but what?
16. Praise and _____ go hand in hand.
17. The Lord is my strength and my _____.
18. What should be our reaction to answered prayer?
19. How shall we be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil?
20. What protection did David have for his body, when he came against Goliath?
21. What is one of the best ways to praise God?
22. Who, besides Jesus, are the anointed of God?
23. Why do we Christians receive the reward of inheritance?
24. Who gets to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God?