

PSALM 28

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 28

[A Psalm] of David

This psalm, Aben Ezra says, David either composed himself, or one of the singers for him; the former seems most likely; and it might be made by him when he was persecuted by Saul, or when delivered from him; or at least when he had faith and hope that he should be delivered: the psalm consists of two parts, petitions and thanksgivings.

Ver. 1. *Unto thee will I cry*, etc.] This denotes the distress the psalmist was in, fervency and ardour in prayer, resolution to continue in it, and singularity with respect to the object of it; determining to cry to the Lord only; to which he was encouraged by what follows;

O Lord my rock; he being a strong tower and place of defence to him, in whom were all his safety, and his trust and confidence, and in whom he had an interest;

be not silent to me; or “deaf”^{f434}; persons that do not hear are silent, and make no answer; as the Lord seems to be, when he returns no answer to the cries of his people; when he does not arise and help them; when he seems not to take any notice of his and their enemies, but stands at a distance from them, and as if he had forsaken them; (see ^{<1392>}Psalm 39:12 35:22,23 50:3,21 ^{<2366>}Isaiah 65:6); the words may be considered, as they are by some, as an address to Christ his rock, his advocate and intercessor; that he would not be silent, but speak for him, and present his supplications to God, with the much incense of his mediation; (see ^{<1008>}1 Samuel 7:8);

lest, [if] thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit; either like such that fall into a ditch, and cannot help themselves out, and they cry, and there is none to take them out from thence; or like such that die in battle, and are cast into a pit, and there buried in common with others; which David might fear would be his case, through Saul’s violent pursuit after him; or lest he should be like the dead, who are not regarded, and are remembered no more; or lest he should really die by the hands of

his enemies, and so be laid in the grave, the pit of corruption; or be in such distress and despair as even the damned in hell be, the pit out of which there is no deliverance.

Ver. 2. *Hear the voice of my supplications*, etc.] Which proceed from the Spirit of grace and of supplication, and are put up in an 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, (^{<4162>}1 Kings 6:23); compared with (^{<4480>}2 Chronicles 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 is the throne of God, and from whence 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”, 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 ^{<2814>}Lamentations 3:41 ^{<5018>}1 Timothy 2:8); it was frequently used, even by the Heathens, as a prayer gesture ^{f435}; (see ^{<1110>}Psalms 141:2).

Ver. 3. *Draw me not away with the wicked*, etc.] That is, with those who are notoriously wicked; who are inwardly and outwardly wicked; whose inward part is very wickedness, and who sell themselves and give up themselves to work wickedness: the sense is, that God would not suffer him to be drawn away, or drawn aside by wicked men, but that he would deliver him from temptation; or that he would not give him up into their hands, to be at their mercy; who he knew would not spare him, if they had him in their power; or that he might not die the death of the wicked, and perish with them; (see ^{<1219>}Psalms 26:9,10);

and with the workers of iniquity; who make it the trade and business of their lives to commit sin; and which may be applied, not only to profane sinners, but to professors of religion, (^{<4023>}Matthew 7:23); since it follows,

which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief [is] in their hearts; hypocrites, double minded men, who have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it; pretend to religion, and have none; and speak fair to the face, but design mischief and ruin; as Saul and his servants did to David, (^{<0817>}1 Samuel 18:17,22).

Ver. 4. *Give them according to their deeds,* etc.] According to the demerit of them, which is death, even death eternal;

and according to the wickedness of their endeavours; for though wicked men do not always succeed; yet their want of success does not excuse their wickedness;

give them after the work of their hands; (see ^{<3044>}2 Timothy 4:14);

render to them their desert; what their iniquities, in thought, word, and deed, deserve: such petitions are not contrary to that Christian charity which the Gospel recommends; nor do they savour of a spirit of revenge, which is condemned by the word of God; for it should be observed, that these things are said with respect to men given up to a reprobate mind; and that the psalmist does not seek to avenge himself, nor to gratify his own mind; but he sought the glory of God, and moreover spoke by a prophetic spirit, knowing what was the will of God in this case; (see ^{<0926>}Psalm 28:5); and therefore these petitions of his are not to be drawn into an example in common and ordinary cases.

Ver. 5. *Because they regard not the works of the Lord,* etc.] Neither the work of creation, as if there was no first cause of all things; nor the work of Providence, taking no notice either of the judgments or of the mercies of God; as though they believed that God had forsaken the earth, and would do neither good nor evil; and still less the work of redemption, which in covenant, promise, and prophecy, was appointed for the Messiah to work out; and as for the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, they had no notion of that, of the nature and necessity of it; the things of the Spirit of God being foolishness to them, and undiscernible by them; (see ^{<2162>}Isaiah 5:12). Perhaps the psalmist may have some regard to his being anointed by Samuel, according to the will of God, and to the victory which he obtained over Goliath, and over others, which justly gained him great esteem among some, and created envy in others; and also the wonderful protection of him from time to time; the Chaldee paraphrase is, “because they do not understand the law of the Lord”. It follows,

nor the operation of his hands; in which his hand was so very apparent, that nothing less could be said than that this was the finger of God; wherefore,

he shall destroy them, and not build them up; that is, they shall be irrecoverably lost; they shall be punished with everlasting destruction; there will be no help or remedy for them: some ^{f436} understand this as a prayer, that God would destroy them in such a manner, and render it, “let him destroy them”, etc. ^{f437}.

Ver. 6. *Blessed [be] the Lord*, etc.] Which must be understood, not as invoking nor as conferring a blessing on him, neither of which can be done by a creature; nor does he stand in need of any, he being Elshaddai, God all sufficient, God over all, blessed for ever; but as ascribing all blessedness to him, congratulating his greatness and happiness, and giving him praise and glory for mercies received; and particularly for the following:

because he hath heard the voice of my supplications; what he had prayed for, (^{<BRD>}Psalm 28:2); an answer was quickly returned, even while he was speaking, (^{<28f4>}Isaiah 65:24); though this may be an expression of faith, being fully persuaded and assured that he was heard, and would be answered, and may be said by a prophetic spirit; knowing that what he had humbly asked for would be granted; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi understand it in a way of prophecy.

Ver. 7. *The Lord [is] my strength*, etc.] That is, the author both of natural and spiritual strength; that gave him strength of body, and fortitude of mind, to bear up under all the exercises he was tried with; the strength of his life, spiritual and temporal, and of his salvation; the strength of his heart under present distresses, and who he knew would be so in the hour of death, when his heart and strength would fail;

and my shield; to protect and defend him; as were the love, power, and faithfulness of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, his power and fulness, his blood, righteousness, and salvation;

my heart trusted in him; in the Lord as his strength and shield; not in any creature, nor in his own strength and righteousness; but in the Lord God, in whom are righteousness and strength: and it is plain he did not trust in his own heart, since his heart trusted in the Lord; and which shows that his trust was an hearty one, his faith was a faith unfeigned, he believed with the heart unto righteousness;

and I am helped: this was the fruit of his trust, even a gracious experience of divine assistance: saints are helpless in themselves, and are also as to the help of man; God is the only helper of them; he helps them out of all their troubles; in whatsoever he calls them unto, and to what they want; and the help he affords is sometimes quick, and always seasonable; and sometimes by means, and sometimes without them;

therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; that is, in the Lord, the ground of which was the help he had from him; and this joy was very great, a joy unspeakable, and full of glory; it was not carnal, but spiritual, a heart joy, joy in the Holy Ghost;

and with my song will I praise him; praise is due to God, what glorifies him, and is acceptable to him; it becomes the saints, is comely for them, and it is pleasant work to them, when grace is in exercise; (see ^{<4980>}Psalm 69:30,31); this may be understood of one of his songs, and one of the best of them, and of one better than this, as a Jewish writer ^{f438} observes.

Ver. 8. *The Lord [is] their strength*, etc.] The strength of his people, mentioned in (^{<4980>}Psalm 28:9); not only the strength of David in particular, but of all his people in general; (see ^{<4973>}Psalm 37:39);

and he [is] the saving strength of his anointed; 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 ^{<4916>}Psalm 20:6).

Ver. 9. *Save thy people*, etc.] The psalmist begins the psalm with petitions for himself, and closes it with prayers for the people of God; whom God has chosen for his people, taken into covenant to be his people, and given them to his son as such; these he has resolved to save, and has appointed Christ, and sent him into the world, to be the Saviour of them; and to them he makes known and applies the great salvation by his Spirit: so that this prayer was a prayer of faith, as are also the following petitions;

and bless thine inheritance; the people whom the Lord has chosen for his inheritance, and has given to Christ as his portion, and are his peculiar possession; and these he blesses with all spiritual blessings, with grace here, and glory hereafter, as is requested;

feed them also; as the shepherd does his flock, by leading them into green pastures, by giving them the bread of life, by nourishing them with the word and ordinances, by the means of his ministering servants, who are under-shepherds appointed to feed the saints with knowledge and understanding;

and lift them up for ever; above their enemies, and out of the reach of them; bear and carry them now, as the shepherd does his lambs, in his arms and bosom; and raise them out of their graves, and give them the dominion in the morning of the resurrection, and cause them to reign as kings and priests with Christ, as they ever will.