

## *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.**

There are many references in Scripture to the Lord God being as a rock. The sense of such references is that of strength and solidity. In fact, this same root word is elsewhere translated “strong”; see, e.g. Psalms 60:9 and 71:3.

The Lord our rock is unique to his chosen people. Others may think they have a solid rock for a foundation, but they are wrong. **How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah[.]** (Deuteronomy 32:30-32). **There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.** (1 Samuel 2:2).

The word translated “silent” has the double meaning of deaf and dumb; the supplicant is asking that God not turn a deaf ear to his prayers, or not turn away in silence, thereby affording no relief or response. Benson says *and return no answer to my petitions*. God is not inattentive to our prayers.

There is a pit, and people go down into that pit. A while back I shared a short video with you wherein the famous singer Paul Simon was being interviewed by the also-famous Howard Stern, and they ventured into the serious issue of what happens when one dies. Those two older gentlemen – Simon now in his 80s and having traveled the world – concluded in their combined wisdom that when one dies, that’s the end. Period!

Most of this frail human race will end up in this pit. The sheep of God are excepted from that end. **O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.** (Psalm 30:2, 3).

Here, David is saying that if God turns a deaf ear to his pleas, he is as one that has no hope and is headed for the pit. Psalm 88:3 and 4 gives another description of this condition: **For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength[.]** *That is, lest I be in the same condition with them, a dead, lost, undone creature, as I certainly shall be if thou do not succour me. If God be not my friend, and appear not for me, my help and hope are perished.* (Benson).

To be clear, this pit is hell. **Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.** (Isaiah 14:15). **[T]hey that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.** (Isaiah 38:18).

**<sup>2</sup>Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.**

Please see that prayers and supplications to God have a voice and they audibly cry out. Obviously our prayers during formal church meetings are such. But our private prayers and petitions can be, and sometimes should be, uttered out loud. Here's the directive: **But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.** (Matthew 6:6). Certainly some of our prayers are quiet and internal, but it is often helpful to express those prayers vocally where you can hear it; there's something about that approach that seems to help facilitate praying.

The lifting up of hands seems to have been a custom during Bible days but is not necessary in this day and age, although not prohibited. Here are some samples: **And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's.** (Exodus 9:29). **And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven[.]** (1 Kings 8:22). **I will lift up my hands in thy name.** (Psalm 63:4).

As to the holy oracle, this is a reference to the most holy place within the veil where the ark of the covenant was found. **And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord.** (1 Kings 6:19). *This was a type of Christ, and it is to him that we must lift up our eyes and hands, for through him all good comes from God to us.* (Benson). This also would encompass a reference to heaven, such as we see in Hebrews 9:24: **For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us[.]**

**<sup>3</sup> Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.**

The supplicant pleads that he not be drawn or sucked into the evil courses and behaviors of the wicked, either by their counsel or their behavior. This concept takes us straightaway to Psalm 1:1: **Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.** This language connotes a strong desire not to be united with wicked people in feeling or in destiny, in life or in death, on earth or in the future world. Bad company makes for bad behavior, in all times and places.

Here we run across that phrase again that we have looked at before, *viz.* “workers of iniquity.” They that work industriously at evil *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* (Gill), referencing Matthew 7:23: **And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

The last clause (“ye that work iniquity”) is generally self-explanatory, and describes that portion of humankind that is phony, hypocritical, double minded, pretend to religion but have none and speak fair to the face while inserting the knife in the back. God save us from all such!

**<sup>4</sup> Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.**

News flash! There are wicked and evil people in this world who do bad things, here labeled deeds, endeavors and work of their hands. The request presented in this verse is that those people reap the fruit of their wickedness and that God deal with them as they have dealt with others. In short, this short prayer is that God will deal justly with them.

But, you say, what about not being vindictive, to which we say there is no impropriety in praying that justice be done to violators of the law, and in leaving that to the God of heaven for his glory.

**<sup>5</sup> Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.**

Building on the preceding verse, the “they” here mentioned are those there described. Those persons essentially ignore the providence and sovereignty of God in the fallings out around us.

*Because they regard not the works of the Lord - What the Lord does in creation; in his providence; through His commands and laws; and by His Spirit. 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. (Barnes).*

God will ultimately destroy them, and not build them up, which is to say he will not give them health, happiness and salvation. Listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah in this regard: **If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: . . . for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you[.]** (Jeremiah 42:10, 11). But, he continues, if you are hell bent on going back to Egypt -- that is being of this world and not of the good land – then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close

after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. (Jeremiah 42:16). Words to live by in these end times.

**<sup>6</sup> Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.**

Behold this abrupt change in the Psalmist, going from sober prayer to exclamation and joy. *How soon are the sorrows of the saints turned into joy, and their prayers into praises!* (Benson). Answered prayers should be acknowledged. *Would it not greatly encourage others, and strengthen ourselves, if we faithfully recorded divine goodness, and made a point of extolling it with our tongue? God's mercy is not such an inconsiderable thing that we may safely venture to receive it without so much as thanks. We should shun ingratitude, and live daily in the heavenly atmosphere of thankful love.* (The Treasury of David).

In other words, and to use today's parlance, we should quickly, vocally and frequently give God a shout out when our prayers are answered. The Song of Moses is a classic example. (See attachment).

Dr. Gill is spot on when he says concerning this short verse: *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 especially when and because he has heard our prayers and supplications.

**<sup>7</sup> 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.**

Strength is abstract; it is hard to define but you know when you have it. Athletic trainers often say: "Listen to your body." Your body talks to you in many ways, and it is through that medium that physical or bodily strength presents itself.

Whatever strength we have, and howsoever much strength we have, it comes from the Lord. Our Lord is the author of both natural (or physical) strength and spiritual strength. He gives us strength of body and fortitude of mind to bear up under what this life presents to us.

Moreover, the Lord is our shield or protector against all things. This notion appears frequently throughout Scripture, and especially in the Psalms. For example, Psalm 33:20: **Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.** And again: **Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.** (Psalm 84:9). But it goes back to the wellspring, as we read from the genesis of all things: **After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.** (Genesis 15:1). This ever-present shielding is one of God's gifts to his chosen people.

All of this provokes the recipients of such kindness to greatly rejoice and sing praises to God. Ellicott tells us the better translation is dancing for joy: "When I have been helped my heart will dance for joy." I am sorry for you if you have not had that wondrous experience.

**<sup>8</sup>The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.**

Here we read more of "strength." The Lord is the strength of the preservations, deliverances, victories and salvations of his various and individual sheep. The guarantee set forth in this verse applies only to his "anointed."

These words may be properly rendered "strength belongs to thee Lord." Expositors say this verse contains a pleonasm, which means the use of more words than are necessary to convey meaning for emphasis. Psalm 27:1 succinctly yet fully captures the meaning when it says **the Lord is the strength of my life** – a truism that each one of God's elect can confidently state.

**<sup>9</sup>Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.**

The Lord's inheritance refers to his people; living, breathing human beings making their way through this dark forest. Some are babes and children. **And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.** (Matthew 21:16). Samuel ministered unto the Lord when he was but a child (1 Samuel 2:18). Of Timothy it is said that he knew the scripture from a child (2 Timothy 3:15).

Some are young men and women, such as Timothy and his mother (2 Timothy 1:5) and the young man described at Ecclesiastes 11:9, 10 and 12:1: **Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them[.]** King Josiah is another example, who morphed from a child of eight years to a young man while ruling. (2 Chronicles 34:1, 2).

And some are old men and women, such as Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Moses, David, Zacharias and Elizabeth. And, of course, many more examples could be provided.

John affixes these labels to God's jewels: **Little children; fathers; young men.** (1 John 2:1, 13, 14)

For all of these sheepfold members, this verse prays for their salvation, blessing, feeding and uplifting. Here's the prayer otherwise stated: **He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.** (Isaiah 40:11). And this from the same prophet: **For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.** (Isaiah 63:8, 9).

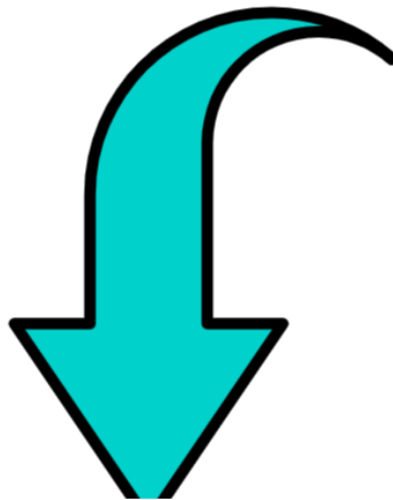
And speaking of 1 John, let's close with these comforting verses: **And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the**

**truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. (1 John 2:3-5).**

Why do I say this passage is comforting? Because keeping God's commandments is one way of making your calling and election sure. What's involved in this process? To keep God's commandments, you first must have a desire to do so. Then, you must fully acquaint yourself with those commandments. Only then can you keep those commandments. Doing so gives us knowledge that makes us to trust in him, fear him, honor him, serve him, cleave to him and yield obedience to him.

John Cotton writes of the practical use of this passage: *To refute that Popish doctrine which teaches that none can be certain of his salvation. They say it is heretical presumption; many worldlings think it is impossible, and other think it needless to be obtained; but such may be convinced (of their salvation) by this doctrine. \* \* \* John speaks it here of little children, that they may know it (their salvation); thus this knowledge is both possible and necessary, and may be certain.*

**Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.**  
(3 John 14)



**SONG OF MOSES**



## [Exodus 15]

**15** Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.

<sup>4</sup> Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.

<sup>5</sup> The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

<sup>6</sup> Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

<sup>7</sup> And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.

<sup>8</sup> And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

<sup>9</sup> The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

<sup>10</sup> Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

<sup>11</sup> Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

<sup>12</sup> Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.

<sup>13</sup> Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

<sup>14</sup> The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.

<sup>15</sup> Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

<sup>16</sup> Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

<sup>17</sup> Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

<sup>19</sup> For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.