

Psalm 28 -- Render to Them Their Desert! (Part 2 of 2)

III. **An Answer (28:6)** – David blessed the LORD. Who are we to bless the LORD? Does God require our blessing? It is understandable when it is God who blesses us. He is God. However, we have in this psalm a revelation that we too can bless God. David blessed the LORD! When believers bless the LORD like David here, it means that they worship Him. They praise Him. They bow down to Him. They serve Him. They thank Him. This is all based upon what the LORD has done. Only children of God can bless the LORD. Sinners cannot bless God because they are enemies of God. Not that they would want to because they do not know Him at all. But even if they want to, they can't. They do not have the ability to do so. Their "blessings" are filthy rags in the sight of God! On the other hand, the blessings upon God bring pleasure to Him. He is pleased with His children when they bless Him. This means that they are consciously aware of what He is doing in their lives. When their "blessing" becomes perfunctory, they do not concentrate and mean what they say or sing, they go through the motion as a ritual, the LORD will reject it. This was true in OT times and NT times. The difference is the manner in which the blessing is done. In NT times, believers go to church to bless His holy Name in worship. The worship includes prayers, praises in songs, and giving. When the worship service is pedantic and listless and the heart and mind are absent, the "blessing" to God will not rise higher than the ceiling of the sanctuary. This is the bane of worship today. We are not referring to the Charismatic kind of worship where it is obviously rejected by God with their emphasis on carnality and man-centred worship. We are referring to proper biblical worship in God honouring churches where the people gather in body only but not in heart and soul. They worship because they are able to worship as God's children; but they throw everything away because of their failure to walk with God and to see the hand of God in their lives. This was not true of David. David had just experienced the deliverance of God through answered prayer. David cried to God in worship and praise, i.e. blessing!

God hears the cry of His children only, no one else. In this imprecatory psalm, David was comforted to know that in his heart of hearts his Lord has heard his prayer for the justice of God to fall upon his enemies who tried to prevent the will of God from being fulfilled in his life. These enemies were hindering the will of God through David. David prayed for God's intervention to stop them and to punish them. David testified that the LORD heard the voice of his supplication. The word for "supplication" comes from the root word which means "to stoop or bend in kindness to an inferior." David did not deserve to be heard by the LORD. With true humility he approached the LORD for help and intervention. This is how every child of God ought to pray and approach God. Sometimes believers forget that even though God gave them the privilege to call Him "Abba" and to enter into His presence boldly, they do not have the "right" to enter in. They think that God has no option but to answer and thus approach God arrogantly

and any way they like. Most of the time, they would approach God with callousness and disrespect. How can believers praise and thank the LORD with these kinds of attitude? David, a man after God's own heart, knew the proper way to approach God with his supplication.

Therefore David blessed the LORD for what He has done in his life. As long as David remembered this humble relationship he had with the LORD, he was well. David took off his kingly robe when he led the people of Israel dancing and singing as they approached the city of Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant. David wanted to make Jerusalem the spiritual capital of Israel, not just the political and economic capital. He was right. His humility, whereby he dressed like a commoner just like the rest of Israel, did not go well with David's wife Michal who rebuked David through sarcasm. David's reply in **2 Samuel 6:21-22** is most revealing (KJV), "*And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD. 22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.*" Before the LORD, David was no king. David knew that he was king only to the people of Israel but not before God. He testified to Michal that he was prepared to humble himself before the LORD even more than just taking off his kingly garment. When David forgot who he was and filled himself with pride, he sinned against God. During the final years of David's reign and before he died, he demanded that Joab, his general, numbered the people of Israel. David did this because he wanted to know how great a kingdom he had achieved since he took over as king from Saul. He was definitely much better than Saul. However, after he numbered the people, God punished him for his sin of pride. David repented of his sin immediately but the consequences of his sin had to be faced. Seventy thousand Israelites died because of his sin (cf. 2 Samuel 24).

As long as humility prevails in the believer's heart, he will walk right with God in prayer.

- IV. A Great Rejoicing (28:7)** – The content of David's praise of the LORD is: he acknowledged that the LORD was his strength, i.e. power and might. The personal relationship is emphasized here. The LORD was not just a strong, i.e. almighty, God, but He was "David's" strength. This is very important. There is no point believing that God is almighty and at the same time that He does not come to help in time of need. This knowledge of God's power is thus useless. David had experienced the power of the LORD since his childhood days when he watched over his father's sheep. The LORD helped him defeat lions and bears that attacked his father's flock. As an adult, David

faced greater problems than four-legged animals. The two-legged “animals” were far worse. They were powerful and relentless in their pursuit of David. When David was weak from running and hiding and without food, he found that the LORD was the source of great and genuine strength. This strength is within the soul. It gives moral courage that the world cannot give or know. This strength is not physical but moral and spiritual. This is the kind of strength needed to obey the Bible. A lesser person would capitulate under the threats of death or loss from the materialistic world. But not so the man of God whose LORD is his strength. He will not buckle under any load no matter how heavy!

The LORD was also David's shield. The word "shield" comes from a root word which means "to hedge about." This refers to total protection. David knew that the LORD would protect him from harm and danger as He deemed worthy. David had a mission. The mission was from God. David would not be harmed or hurt. The LORD would set a hedge around him to ensure that. The example of David's flight and life as a fugitive because King Saul found out that David would be the next King of Israel is known to all Bible students. No matter what King Saul did in order to capture and kill David and to prevent him from becoming king, he failed. King Saul was fighting against God. David did not want to be king or to make himself king. The LORD appointed and anointed him King of Israel and he would become king in God's time. Till then, King Saul could do whatever he wanted to stop the LORD but he would fail. The hedge was set around David. It was not a hedge of blind protection. When David sinned against God by committing adultery with Bathsheba and having Uriah killed to cover up his adultery, the LORD intervened to expose him.

David experienced trust in the LORD in his heart. This is the seed of all trust. It begins in the heart. He refused to allow the external circumstances, with all the mockers and persecutors, to quell the trust he had in the LORD within his heart. This is a precious and priceless experience. Perseverance to the end of the trial will result in true joy because the child of God has experienced being helped by his LORD. His relationship with his LORD is more than just in the head; it has become heart. Regardless of the great attempts by evil men to stop him, David came out victorious. It was for not the victory over his physical well being that David rejoiced; but it was the knowledge that he trusted in the LORD and kept on trusting the LORD that gave him the greatest joy. His faith and trust in the LORD had deepened. This was real joy. He testified that his heart greatly rejoiceth.

Therefore David was able to sing and praise the LORD from within his heart. There was no stopping David from praising the LORD. It was spontaneous. David wrote the greatest number of psalms in praise of the LORD. The inspiration of God was definitely

there but it was not without a genuine heart of praise from within David's soul that these psalms of praise were written. When David's life with his LORD was true and genuine, there was no need to falsify or pretend to praise. Wild horses could not stop David from praising the LORD! This is the kind of genuine and sincere praise that believers need today. The reason that worship and praise of the LORD are lacklustre today is there is no heart. The reason there is no heart is because there is no experience of the LORD's presence. The reason there is no experience of the LORD's presence is because believers today do not live for Christ so that they can suffer for Christ! They prefer the joy of the world than the joy of walking with Christ, like David. Believers need to be coaxed into praising the LORD. When the worship is dull, they blame the externals. Change the music and jazz it up is the way of the Charismatics. The result is worldliness and carnality. Some complain about the timing and the beat, the order of service, but the real problem is the believer's walk with the LORD. There is no nearness and experiencing the closeness with God that comes only through trusting Him in times of being persecuted for the faith.

- V. A Saving Strength (28:8-9)** – Suddenly, David changed the personal pronoun from the first person singular to third person plural! He says that this experience is not for him only but also for all who trust in Him. As long as one is a child of God he is the LORD's anointed. The LORD anointed David as the next king of Israel. The LORD has a different anointing for all His children throughout the ages. That is why after salvation, the LORD allows them to remain on earth to do His will. Doing the will of God is to fulfil the LORD's anointing. It is important that the child of God finds out what the will of God is. He needs the strength of the LORD to succeed in doing God's will, like David. David had just experienced the strength of the LORD in his life when he did not sin against the LORD regardless of how he was persecuted, hunted down and mocked by his enemies. The strength was not in getting rid of his enemies, which would result in the cessation of his persecution. David instructed his men who hid with him to not touch King Saul whom God had anointed as the first king of Israel. David knew that to touch the LORD's anointed would make him guilty of sinning against the LORD. **1 Samuel 26:6-11** (KJV), *"Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. 7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. 8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. 9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless? 10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall*

come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. 11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go."

Do not take matters in our own hands. Trust in the sovereignty of God. The LORD allowed King Saul to hunt David down. If David had stopped him by killing him, then David would have been charged for going against the LORD. The servant of God must not sin to ease his trial. He must persevere to the end and not flinch one bit in his trust in the LORD. To do this he needs the strength of the LORD. It is not just the strength of the LORD but His saving strength! The strength of the LORD that saves belongs only to those who are His children and who cry to Him for help in time of need. They will experience what David experienced. They will also praise and bless the LORD as David blessed the LORD. They will be able to identify themselves with this psalm.

The One who anoints His children to serve Him on this earth will watch over them. They must learn to trust and not take matters into their own hands.

Verse 9 -- David's cry here was for the LORD to save His people. David had an anointed task that also affected the spiritual well being and future of Israel. He now cried to the LORD to save Israel. His calling was intertwined with the future of Israel, having been appointed to replace King Saul as the next king. David's life and death would surely affect Israel. His cry to the LORD to save His people is significant because we see that David did not ask God to save him so that he could enjoy life and play the fool. He had a spiritual purpose. The reason he remained on earth was not for personal gain to glory. It was to do the work of God and thus he supplicated to the LORD for intervention and deliverance. This is something believers need to learn very urgently. Very often, believers today ask God to give them good health and protection in travel but for selfish reasons and personal gain. It is not asked for God's glory whereby their lives could be spent serving God and helping other Christians grow in the Lord. David asked God for deliverance for God's people's sake. Therefore David asked the LORD to bless them. The blessing here includes saving, providing and comfort for all their needs, spiritual, material and emotional. Israel was God's people and inheritance. They had a very important spiritual function to fulfil in God's plan of salvation for mankind. That was the significance of David's description of Israel. Israel bears God's Name. They will still be God's people after all the people of the world have disappeared from the face of the earth. Israel will have a remnant that God will save and be with Him for eternity.

Feed them and lift them up forever. Do not let them be like orphans with no one to care for them. When Israel is well fed, it means that they are blessed of God spiritually

because God promised Israel that when they obeyed God as a nation, they and their land would be blessed. This was the manner in which God dealt with His national witness. In today's context, this is not the arrangement God has with the church because the church is not married to the land, like Israel. The blessing of the church today is only spiritual and not material. When Israel was blessed by God in OT times, material wealth followed. Today, God's church could be languishing in prison and would be considered very blessed by God, like the apostle Paul when he was in prison just before his death.

To "feed and to lift up" Israel means that whenever Israel is down, the LORD will be there to "pick her up". When Israel strays away from Him, He will punish her. Israel will be struck down either by enemies or by pestilence. Either way, Israel needs help to be picked up. When Israel repents of her sins, the LORD will pick her up. This will continue forever as David prayed. The testimony of Israel for God's glory was David's main concern. When Israel falls, the LORD's name will fall. There is no separation of the LORD's Name from Israel's name. Therefore when David prayed for the LORD to deliver Israel, and to feed and pick her up when she falls, it was for the glory of God. David's cry for his own salvation, which is intertwined with Israel, is also for the same reason . . . the glory of God.

CONCLUSION – Psalm 28 is an imprecatory psalm. The prayer was not for revenge but for God's justice. It was not for David's personal gain or glory but for the glory of God that the imprecation was made.

This was David's prayer for deliverance from his enemies who tried to harm and kill him. David's prayer was not for his own salvation's sake so that he could live for leisure and personal gain. His cry for deliverance was based upon the LORD's glory. The LORD's will in David's life was not completed yet. He needed to do God's will for God's glory. He was to be the next king of Israel. He also asked God to save Israel who are God's people because Israel was God's testimony on earth of His grace and mercy. They were to see Christ by the way they lived in Israel. David wanted to help Israel be a godly nation. When his enemies attacked him, they were in fact attacking God. David prayed for God's help to save him and Israel, and God did. God can do the same for His people today as long as they seek Him for His glory and do His will in their lives. Amen.