

### Separated from the Wicked, and Praising the Lord for His Power

#### Psalms 28-29

**Psalm 28** - *"To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock. Do not be silent to me, lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You, when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary. Do not take me away with the wicked and with the workers of iniquity, who speak peace to their neighbors, but evil is in their hearts. Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors; give them according to the work of their hands. Render to them what they deserve. Because they do not regard the works of the LORD, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them and not build them up.*

*Blessed be the LORD, because He has heard the voice of my supplications! The LORD is my strength and my shield. My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him.*

*The LORD is their strength, and He is the saving refuge of His anointed. Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance. Shepherd them also, and bear them up forever."*

#### Background Notes for Psalm 28

In Psalm 28, David draws a great distinction between himself and the wicked, both in desire and deliverance.

Once again, we need to remember that when we're reading the psalms, we are reading Old Testament Scripture - before the coming of Christ, and before the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell every Christian. So we can see that the first three verses of this psalm are not exactly the kind of prayer that New Testament believers should pray. We don't have to ask the Lord not to turn a deaf ear to us, and we don't have to pray not be dragged away with the wicked. As believers who have been declared righteous and brought into the family of God, we have the assurance that God hears our prayers, and that heaven is our sure future home.

And what about verses 4-5? *"Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors. Give them according to the work of their hands. Render to them what they deserve. Because they do not regard the works of the LORD, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them and not build them up."* Is this the kind of prayer a New Testament believer should pray? We'll discuss it in our doctrinal point.

## **Doctrinal Point for Psalm 28**

### **There is a time and place for “imprecation.”**

The word “imprecation” is derived from a word meaning “to curse.” Certain psalms (and parts of some psalms) are called “imprecatory” because they call for God’s judgment on unbelievers.

How does this line up with the teaching principles of New Testament teaching and principles for prayers - especially what the Lord said in the Sermon on the Mount: “*Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, be good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you*” (Matthew 5:44). Do the “imprecatory prayers” in the Old Testament collide with the Lord’s teaching in the Sermon on the Mount?

The answer is that *there is a time and place for imprecation*. We even find imprecation in the New Testament. In Galatians 1, for example, Paul calls for the judgment of God upon those who distort the Word, and preach another gospel than the gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus alone. Galatians 1:8-9: “*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*” And 1 Corinthians 16:22, Paul exclaimed, “*If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*” So there is imprecation in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

It is extremely important to note that biblical imprecation is not a call for personal revenge. It is a call for **vindication of God’s standards** of righteousness and holiness, because of the evil plans and practices of wicked people. Look again at verses 4-5: *Render to them what they deserve, because they do not regard the works of the LORD...*” So there is a time and place for imprecation.

## **Practical Application for Psalm 28**

### **Praise the Lord, that He is our SSS!**

Can you find three S’s that describe our wonderful Lord in verses 6-9? The Lord is our **Strength** (v7-8), our **Shield** (v7), and our **Shepherd** (v9). As the Lord’s people, we should praise the Lord for being our Strength, our Shield, and our Shepherd. Is there any situation that is too complicated or difficult for the Lord? Of course not! His strength is more than sufficient to meet any need or problem or difficult situation of His people. Financial and other obstacles are no problem if you truly want to do the Lord’s will.

What about the Lord is our shield? Do you think the enemy of our souls can do anything to us that God doesn’t allow? No way. Wait until we get to heaven and look back and see all the situations when we were not even that the Lord protected us as our Shield.

And if you think that the Lord as our strength and shield is not personal enough, then praise the Lord as our Shepherd. As the Shepherd, the Lord cares for us as His individual sheep in His own flock. What more could we ask for? As David said in Psalm 23:1, *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”* Praise the Lord that He’s our SSS!

**Psalm 29** - *“Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name. Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

*The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders. The Lord is over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; The voice of the Lord is full majesty. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars, Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them also skip like a calf - Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness. The Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare, and in His temple everyone says, “Glory!”*

*The LORD sat enthroned at the Flood, and the LORD sits as King forever. The LORD will give strength to His people. The LORD will bless His people with peace.*

## **Background Notes for Psalm 29**

In Psalm 29, David praises the Lord for both His awesome power over nature, and for the awesome strength He gives to His people.

The sons of the might, or “mighty ones”, or “the mighty” (v1) probably refers to angels. They are called to give glory to the Lord and worship Him in the beauty of holiness, or in holy array. There is some question as to whether *“beauty of holiness”* or *“holy array”* refers to the angels for praising the Lord, or to the moral beauty of the Lord Himself. In either case, the phrase has to do with moral quality - not physical appearance. Let us praise and worship the Lord in His moral perfections, and let us aim to be morally blameless in our own character.

## **Doctrinal Point for Psalm 29**

### **God is sovereign over storms.**

In verses 3-9, David described a major storm as it moved inland from the Mediterranean Sea, and swept north of Israel into Lebanon and Syria. “Kadesh” (v8) is north of Damascus. The thunder and lightning are seen as the voice of the Lord causing the earth to tremble and the might cedars of Lebanon to break. We would have run for cover if we had experienced this storm. It was so awesome that it caused the deer to give birth prematurely: *“The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth”* (v9).

Most likely, the *flood* mentioned in verse 10 is the great Flood of Noah's day. Genesis 6-11 - the account of the global Flood of Noah's day - is the only other place in Scripture where this Hebrew word for *flood* is found. This severe storm reminded David of the global Flood of Noah's time, and in both cases David was aware that God is sovereign over nature. What a contrast to the pagan nations surrounding Israel, who believed that heathen gods controlled nature. No way!

And just as the worldwide Flood of Noah's day was under God's sovereign control, and was used by God to accomplish His purposes, so every storm of nature is under God's sovereign control. No storm happens by chance! God can use the storms of nature to accomplish His purposes just as much today as He has always used them in the past.

Did God ever teach you anything from a storm? Maybe humility? Maybe awe and reverence? God is sovereign over the storms in our lives as well. Serious illness or injury, loss of a loved one, ruptures in a relationship, job loss - He uses them to teach us lessons, and to accomplish His purposes in our lives - if we're willing to learn, and let God's will be done.

Are you going through a stormy time in your life right now? Remember - God is sovereign over storms.

## Practical Application

### Let's not complain about the weather!

Do you ever complain about the weather? We all do it - especially when the weather messes up our plans! **Our** plans, from **our** perspective, that is. We want rain if we've just planted a garden or new lawn, but we don't want rain when we're golfing or going to the beach! We want snow if we're going skiing, but we don't want snow when we're traveling. So we complain, and we excuse our complaining because "it's miserable weather."

We might be disappointed if our plans are spoiled - but we shouldn't **complain**. God is sovereign over storms. He has a purpose. Nothing happens by chance, including the weather!

God may have all kinds of reasons that we don't know about for storms, droughts, floods, and hurricanes. For example, the Lord used a severe hailstorm to damage our cars, but insurance coverage for the damage provided the money we needed for our move from the Chicago area to Rhode Island! We didn't get the cars fixed, and they're still pockmarked, but we're not complaining! (And I wish we could say we never complain about the weather...)

The Lord is sovereign over storms. Let's not complain about the weather!