

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

A righteous man in affliction makes supplication to God, and complains of the malice of his enemies, Psalm 28:1-4; whom he describes as impious, and whose destruction he predicts, Psalm 28:5. He blesses God for hearing his prayers, and for filling him with consolation, Psalm 28:6, Psalm 28:7; then prays for God's people, Psalm 28:8, Psalm 28:9.

This Psalm is of the same complexion with the two preceding; and belongs most probably to the times of the captivity, though some have referred it to David in his persecutions. In the five first verses the author prays for support against his enemies, who appear to have acted treacherously against him. In the sixth and seventh he is supposed to have gained the victory, and returns with songs of triumph. The eighth is a chorus of the people sung to their conquering king. The ninth is the prayer of the king for his people.

Verse 1

O Lord my rock - אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִי (tsuri) not only means my rock, but my fountain, and the origin of all the good I possess.

If thou be silent - If thou do not answer in such a way as to leave no doubt that thou hast heard me, I shall be as a dead man. It is a modern refinement in theology which teaches that no man can know when God hears and answers his prayers, but by an induction of particulars, and by an inference from his promises. And, on this ground, how can any man fairly presume that he is heard or answered at all? May not his inductions be no other than the common occurrences of providence? And may not providence be no more than the necessary occurrence of events? And is it not possible, on this skeptic ground, that there is no God to hear or answer? True religion knows nothing of these abominations; it teaches its votaries to pray to God, to expect an answer from him, and to look for the Holy Spirit to bear witness with their spirits that they are the sons and daughters of God.

Verse 2

Toward thy holy oracle - אֶל־מִקְדָּשְׁךָ (debir kodshecha); (debir) properly means that place in the holy of holies from which God gave oracular answers to the high priest. This is a presumptive proof that there was a temple now standing; and the custom of stretching out the hands in prayer towards the temple, when the Jews were at a distance from it, is here referred to.

Verse 3

Draw file not away - Let me not be involved in the punishment of the wicked.

Verse 4

Give them - Is the same as thou wilt give them; a prophetic declaration of what their lot will be.

Verse 5

They regard not the works of the Lord - They have no knowledge of the true God, either as to his nature, or as to his works.

He shall destroy them, and not build them up - This is a remarkable prophecy, and was literally fulfilled: the Babylonian empire was destroyed by Cyrus, and never built up again; for he founded the Persian empire on its ruins. haven the place where Babylon stood is now no longer known.

Verse 7

The Lord is my strength - I have the fullest persuasion that he hears, will answer, and will save me.

Verse 8

The Lord is their strength - Instead of אֱלֹהֵינוּ (lamo), to them, eight MSS. of Kennicott and De Rossi have אֱלֹהֵינוּ (leammo) to his people; and this reading is confirmed by the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Anglo-Saxon. This makes the passage more precise and intelligible; and of the truth of the reading there can be no reasonable doubt. The Lord is the strength of his People, and the saving strength of his anointed. Both king and people are protected, upheld, and saved by him.

Verse 9

Save thy people - Continue to preserve them from all their enemies; from idolatry, and from sin of every kind.

Bless thine inheritance - They have taken thee for their God; thou hast taken them for thy people.

Feed them - רָאָה (raah) signifies both to feed and to govern. Feed them, as a shepherd does his flock; rule them, as a father does his children.

Lift them up for ever - Maintain thy true Church; let no enemy prevail against it. Preserve and magnify them for ever. Lift them up: as hell is the bottomless pit in which damned spirits sink down for ever; or, as Chaucer says downe all downe; so heaven is an endless height of glory, in which there is an eternal rising or exaltation. Down, all down; up, all up; for ever and ever.