

Title: **FOUR CHOICE BLESSINGS SOUGHT**
FOR GOD'S ELECT

Text: Psalm 28:9

Subject: *Four Blessings Sought for God's Elect*

Reading: *Psalm 27:1-14*

PSALM 27:1-14

A Psalm of David

1 **The LORD [is] my light and my salvation;**
whom shall I fear? the LORD [is] the strength
of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, [even] mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this [will] I [be] confident.

4 **One [thing] have I desired of the LORD,**
that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the
house of the LORD all the days of my life, to
behold the beauty of the LORD, and to
enquire in his temple.

5 **For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in**
his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle

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shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.”

7 ¶**Hear, O LORD, [when] I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.**

8 [When thou saidst], Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face [far] from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 **When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.**

11 **Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.**

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

13 **[I had fainted], unless I had believed to see**

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the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been my custom for a good many years to bring a message to you in anticipation of our annual Bible conference, a message in which I try to communicate to you something of my heart's burden as we anticipate the conference. If you will open your Bibles to Psalm 28, I will show you a text that has been on my heart since the beginning of the year. I have attached this text to almost every letter and almost every email correspondence I have written this year. This text is the burden of my heart. It expresses what I have been asking God to do during our Bible conference and as the result of the conference in the days ahead. The title of my message is **FOUR CHOICE BLESSINGS**. You will find my text in Psalm 28:9.

“Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance:
feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”

(Psalms 28:9)

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Let’s go back to the beginning of Psalm 28 and work our way down to our text.

A CRY FOR HELP

First, in verses 1-3, this Psalm opens with a cry for help. Here is David, the man after God’s own heart, crying to the Lord, Jehovah, to help him. He cries to the Lord God as a man in a time of great fear. The Psalm is David’s Psalm and the cry is David’s cry; but we must not forget that David, throughout the Psalms, is typical of our Lord Jesus Christ, — “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Hebrews 5:7).

Verses 1-3 — “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. 2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle. 3 Draw me

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not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief [is] in their hearts.”

“**Unto thee will I cry, O LORD, my Rock!**” — A cry is an expression of sorrow, grief, or pain. Here is a child of God, a believer, in desperate need. His need was the need of one in fear. Some great trial was upon him. Some trouble shook him. Something alarmed him. He cries unto the Lord, — “**O LORD my Rock!**” The Lord, Jehovah, is our Rock of Salvation and Rock of Refuge. He is the Rock in whom we take refuge, our Strong Tower in whom we are always safe.

“**Be not silent unto me!**” — The psalmist begs the Lord God not to turn a deaf ear to his petitions. **John Trapp** wrote, “If God seem to be deaf to us, we must cry the louder; that, having prepared our hearts by such a seeming silence, he may cause his ears to hear.” **Next David urges his prayer with a very strong plea.** — “*Lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit!*”

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- The Grave — The Pit of Death
- Hell — The Pit of the Damned

Look at verse 2. — *“Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.”* Here David continues to press his suit at the throne of grace. — The phrase, *“when I lift up my hands”* does not suggest that we ought to pray with our hands stretched out toward heaven. It is a symbolic expression of the lifting of our hearts to God as empty handed, needy sinners (Lamentations 3:41; 1 Timothy 2:8; Psalm 141:2).

(Lamentations 3:41) “Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.”

(2 Timothy 2:8) “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.”

(Psalms 141:2) “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”

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Notice: David prayed lifting his heart (hands) “toward Thy Holy Oracle.” That Holy Oracle refers to the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant with its Mercy-Seat were, the place of atonement, upon which God promised to meet and commune with his people (Exodus 25:22).

(Exodus 25:22) “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

And that Ark and that Mercy-Seat represented Christ our Propitiation and our Ark of Salvation.

So, when God’s saints in the Old Testament prayed toward Jerusalem, or lifted their hands toward to Mercy-Seat, that outward act was itself a portrayal of faith in Christ...

- Our Sin-atonement Sacrifice.
- Our Ark of Salvation.

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- Our Mercy-Seat.

Then David prays for the Lord God to keep him from being led away with the wicked and perishing with hypocrites. — *“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”* (v. 3).

A CALL TO JUDGMENT

Next, in verses 4 and 5, the Psalmist seeks God's just judgment upon the wicked. Here, it is obvious that David represents the Lord Jesus Christ, our Divine Mediator. **These next two verses, calling for God's wrath to fall upon the wicked, are not to be understood as though David as a private man sought revenge for himself and asked God to execute it.** The Scriptures clearly forbid such an attitude.

- David is speaking as a public man, as God's anointed king over Israel.

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- He is speaking of the wicked, not as his enemies, but as God’s enemies.
- He is speaking as one who typified and prophetically portrayed the Lord Jesus Christ, our Mediator, God’s Anointed One.
- He seeks not revenge for himself, but honor for his God, asking God to deal with reprobate men in strict justice, giving each exactly what he deserves.

Verses 4-5 — “**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**. 5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.”

In verse 5 the Holy Spirit specifically tells us why reprobate sinners are judged of God and condemned. It is “**because** (Do you see that?) **they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands.**”

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- They regard not God's work of **creation**, as if there were no first cause of all things. — *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”* (Revelation 4:11)
- They regard not God's 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 does neither good nor evil. — *“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”* (Isaiah 45:7)
- They regard not God's work of **redemption**, trampling under foot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant a common, unholy thing and despising the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29): — (Real Substitution — Christ Being Made Sin — Effectual Atonement). — They have no understanding of the nature and necessity of blood atonement.
- They regard not “the operation” of God's hands, **the mighty operations of God the Holy Spirit**

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in regeneration and sanctification. — (New Creation — New Nature — Imparted Righteousness). — “*They regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands*” (Isaiah 5:12). — They have no regard for and no understanding of the nature and necessity of the Spirit’s work in the new birth (Titus 3:5-7).

(Titus 3:5-7) “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Because of their contempt for God and his mighty works of redemption and grace, the wicked shall be destroyed forever (Psalms 92:5-7).

(Psalms 92:5-7) “O LORD, how great are thy works! [and] thy thoughts are very deep. 6 A

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brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. 7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; [it is] that they shall be destroyed for ever:”

AN ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE

Third, in verses 6-8, the Psalmists bows before the Lord God and ascribes all praise, honor and glory to the God of all grace for great mercy, love and grace, for his free, full salvation in and by Christ Jesus.

Verses 6-8 — “Blessed [be] the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. 7 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. 8 The LORD [is] their strength, and he [is] the saving strength of his anointed.”

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While he was praying, the Lord God answered his prayer, and made David to know that he had heard his supplications (Isaiah 65:24). For that David blessed the Lord Jehovah, his ever-gracious God!

(Isaiah 65:24) “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

- “**The LORD [is] my strength**” — to uphold me and sustain me. —The Lord is the strength of my life. — The Lord is the strength of my soul. — The Lord is the strength of my heart in trouble, distress, sorrow and trial. — The Lord shall be my strength in death.
- “**And my shield**” — to protect and defend me. — The love, power and faithfulness, the grace, truth and mercy of the Triune God is my shield. — The Lord Jesus Christ is my Shield. — His blood, his righteousness, his salvation is a shield round about me.

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- “**My heart trusted in him.**” — I do not trust myself. I do not trust my works. I do not trust my own conscience. I do not trust my own heart. — “*My heart trust in*” the Lord my God, my Savior, my Redeemer.
- “**And I am helped.**” — This is the result, the fruit of trusting Christ. Having trusted him, I am helped. We are helpless in ourselves; and when our souls are really troubled no man can help. — “*Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence*” (Psalms 94:17). — “*My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth*” (Psalms 121:2). — “*Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice*” (Psalms 63:7).
- “**Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth.**” — “*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice!*” This is joy unspeakable, and full of glory. It is not carnal but spiritual joy, heart joy, joy in the Holy

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Ghost. — We serve a great God, let us greatly rejoice in him.

- **“And with my song will I praise him.”** — Nothing pleases and honors our God like the praise of a believing heart. — *“I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. 31 [This] also shall please the LORD better than an ox [or] bullock that hath horns and hoofs”* (Psalms 69:30-31).
- **“The LORD [is] their strength.”** — He is not only my Strength, he is your Strength too, if you are his.
- **“And he [is] the saving strength of his anointed.”** — He is the saving Strength of all his chosen. He was the Strength of David, his anointed king. And the LORD, the Triune Jehovah, is the saving Strength of Christ our Mediator, the LORD’S Anointed. — The LORD, Jehovah, delivered him from the power of death and the grave, and raised him from thence, and gave him glory. — *“Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will*

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hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand” (Psalms 20:6).

Illustration: Last night I read about the death of a preacher in England many years ago. His name was John Rees. Another preacher, visiting as he was about to die, asked him about his confidence in that hour. The question so roused him that he mustered enough strength to raise himself in the bed and, looking the man in the face, said, “Christ in his person, Christ in the love of his heart and Christ in the power of his arm, is the Rock on which I rest; and now (reclining again gently on his pillow, he said), Death, strike!” As he did, he went to glory.

FOUR BLESSINGS

Now, look at verse 9. Here are four choice blessings sought for God’s elect. These four great boons of grace are the things that are on my heart in anticipation of our conference. Oh, may God be pleased to use the preaching of the Gospel, as it goes

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forth from this pulpit, to perform these four great wonders here and around the world, for the praise of the glory of his rich, free, boundless grace in Christ Jesus!

Verse 9 — “Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”

In this last verse of the Psalm David closes his Psalm a sincere and fervent prayer for God's elect. If you care to do so at your leisure, you might compare this verse with the 17th chapter of John's Gospel. If you do so, you will quickly see that the things sought here for God's elect are the very things for which the Lord Jesus prayed in that great high priestly prayer. He prays for four vital things that we as sinners desperately need and constantly need. — Will you join me in earnestly seeking these four choice blessings for God's Church?

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1. **“Save thy people!”** — Who are these people? They belong to Christ by electing love (John 6:37; Ephesians 1:3-6). — They are his by redeeming blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18-20). — They are his by an effectual, irresistible call of grace (2 Timothy 1:9). — **What do Christ’s people need?** Salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, for “*all we like sheep have gone astray.*” Our Lord came to seek out and to save his lost sheep (Luke 19:10).

- Save them from sin and Satan, from death, hell and the grave. — God save your people, for Christ’s sake!
- Save them from their distresses.
- Save them from Satan’s temptations.
- Save them from their troubles.
- Save them from their falls.
- Save them from themselves!

2. **“Bless thine inheritance!”** — God’s inheritance are those who are the heirs of salvation (Romans 8:17). In Christ we have a blessed and eternal inheritance; “*an inheritance incorruptible, and*

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undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3). Lord, bless your inheritance; the sheep of your hand and the people of thy pasture (Psalm 95:7).

- Bless your people with all spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-6).
- Revive, refresh, enlarge, and sanctify thy church.
- Bless your people with greater confidence and assurance of complete salvation in Christ (Philippians 3:3).
- Bless your people with greater zeal and passion for the gospel of your free and sovereign grace (Philippians 1:27-28).

(Philippians 1:27-28) “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.”

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3. **“Feed them also!”** — What do the sheep need? — They need sheep food. Christ is the Bread of life, (John 6:35). The Scriptures are all about Christ, we feed on him through the Word of life (John 5:39). God’s servants are charged to *“feed the church of God, that He purchased with His own blood”* (Acts 20:28; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; 1 Peter 5:1-3). — The word *“feed”* has the idea of shepherding, guiding, protecting and providing for. As your pastor, I keep praying for you, that the Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, the Great Pastor of the sheep, will pastor you through the gospel I preach to you.

4. **“Lift them up forever!”** — The word used here may mean “sustain them,” or “support them;” but it more properly means “bear them.” As the Good Shepherd carries his lambs in his bosom, as the shepherd carries the feeble, the young and the sickly of his flock in his arms, so I ask, O Lord God, that you will pick up your sheep and carry them everyone through this world in the arms of

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your omnipotent mercy! ————— Carry them in your arms on earth, and then lift them into your bosom in heaven. Elevate their minds and thoughts, spiritualise their affections, make them heavenly, Christlike and full of God. ————— Lord, lift them up from the dungeon of sin, lift them up from the curse of the law, lift them up from the dunghill of works, lift them up and make them one with Christ and lift them up to glory with Christ forever.

- Lift them up in regenerating grace (Ephesians 2:1-4).
- Lift them up in reviving mercy.
- Lift them up in resurrection glory forever!

O Lord God, answer this our prayer, for Christ's sake. — *“Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”*

Amen.