

## Psalm 27

Written by K B Napier  
Tuesday, 03 May 2011 09:41

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As a Christian, do you fear anything or anybody? If you say no – have you ever known real fear or real distress? If yes, then you are one of the few Christians to know God in a genuine way.

Many claim to trust God and to fear nothing because God is their strength. Yet, those same people tend to lack credibility when they come across situations or people who are so wicked or bad, their claimed trust and strength evaporates.

Such strength *is* possible, and *is* given, by our God, whose response to genuine faith (which is given by Him anyway) is absolute. In this Psalm we see David showing this genuine and utter faith in his living Lord. You are commended to have the same relationship with God, that your life will be vibrant and real.

### Verse 1

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?

What, or who, is your major love? What drives you the most? To what do you attribute the best days of your life? Few can answer the way David did: “The LORD is my light and my salvation.” For him, God was his mainstay and help; God was his light and salvation, his reason for living. David, mighty king and warrior, did not rest on anything he had himself done. Instead, he says to the whole nation (via his psalms, proclaimed publicly in the Temple) that it is God, not himself, who rules.

The LORD (Jehovah) was his “light”, ‘owr. That is, God was his ‘light of life’, who also gave him his prosperity; He was Israel’s guide in everything, instructing them in what was right, good and holy. It is God Who alone lights our lives to show us how to live and act. It is exactly the same “light” mentioned in Genesis 1:3, the light that existed before the sun was made, simply because God said so. This non-explainable source of illumination is the same power of God given to David, to allow him to live, prosper and rule.

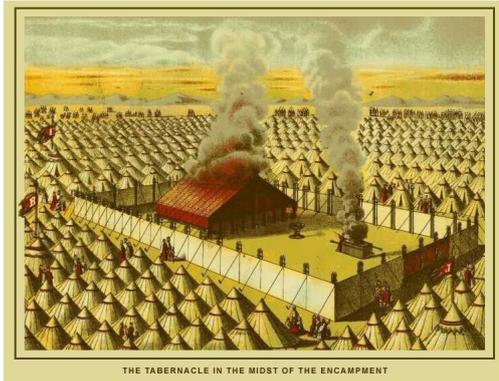
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Do you understand that your life is not your own? That God has a plan just for you? That when you do not follow that plan, your life takes a downturn? That when this happens, even if you seem to prosper, your life is without God and is thus worthless? That any help you get is from Him alone, even if it appears to come from other human beings or your own efforts? God is our light – the way of life designed for us. He is our salvation: David was referring to military, political and social help, but he also knew that his life and heavenly future was in God only.



At that time the whole camp of Israel had the tabernacle at its centre, because it was where God resided in their midst. He was central to everything they thought, said and did. Can you say the same? For you, is God central to everything? Do you show it in your everyday life, when talking to friends and others, and when making decisions?

Because God was central, and David knew God was his champion, he was able to say “whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” When faced with what seem to be overwhelming odds, we can feel alone and fearful, even terrified. I know this from personal experience. Yet, at the same time, I knew I should NOT be afraid! It is part of our humanity to fear even when we know God is there for us. It ought not to be, but it is.

The LORD is our strength – our refuge, fortress and place of safety (the ‘rock’); He protects us. For this reason we can be *‘azaz* – strong and can prevail. So, why should we *pachad* – be in dread of the enemy and circumstances? David himself knew this dread and fear. Yet, at the same time, he knew God was his strength and rock. It is my opinion that this human frailty, with its root in our ‘old man’, is part of our dependence on God alone. That is, by fearing we are driven back to God alone, because we see neither our fear nor our own strength are enough. In the New Testament we are urged to stand together as believers, to seek each other’s comfort and prayers for support. Even this is part of God’s provision.

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No matter what the circumstance, God is with us! No matter how frail we feel, He is with us. No matter how far down the road of agony we go, Christ has been there before us. No matter how afraid we are, God is already with us – we are kept safe in His hand, though we tend not to realise it fully because of our failure to see.

### Verses 2&3

1.

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

2.

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

The wicked are in two groups as far as each Christian is concerned: those who are generally wicked, and those who are personal enemies who make it their business to attack individual believers. David speaks about both kinds, but especially about those who see him as a target, one to be destroyed. They are his personal enemies and foes. It is true of most Christians that when enemies attack them they do so not because the Christian has done anything wrong, but simply because he or she is a believer. As I have said before, I do not make myself an enemy to anyone, but many make themselves *my* enemy!

But note this – when our enemies run full-speed to destroy us, they anger God, Who ensures they stumble and fall. They are not interested in merely ruining us; they want to “eat up my flesh”! They want to obliterate every sign of us from the face of the earth. It also means to oppress and cause injury... note the actions against Christians, of both homosexuals and radical Muslims today. However, they are in such a rush to attack, they forget ordinary sense, so they stumble and fall... they defeat themselves. It might not seem that way to some, but I know it is true. In the past, a raging enemy, foaming at the mouth, was stopped suddenly by God’s mercy towards me. Yes, I was still afraid, but God gave me proof of His presence!

Here, David was in a time of knowing God’s hand against the enemy, thus, he could say, “my

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heart shall not fear". It was a strange thing, in my last series of attacks from very real enemies, I knew God would help me and yet I feared! It was my initial reaction to the situation, but God graciously replaced the fear with a quiet acceptance of the problem, so that He could do His unique work. It was a work that took me painfully from the workplace and set me down in what I ought to be doing – the ministry full-time. The attacks were only a path I had to endure until I got there! Very often we enter into fearful or distressing situations, only to find a far better one at the end of the awful period, though, during the awfulness, we do not see it.

Though war arose against David and the nation, David was confident in God's help. And, as I have said, this can often be mingled with intense fear or distress. This occurs even when we know, in the depth of our soul, that God is with us. Do not speak disparagingly against those who know this fear – God will give them the strength they need, but they must go through the shadow of the valley of death first. Only those who have not gone through this shadow will speak against such brethren.

### Verses 4-6

1.

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 inquire in his temple.

2.

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

3.

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.

What is your deepest, most ardent, desire? Think carefully, because whatever it is, it will be the driver of your soul. David said, "One thing have I desired of the LORD". It had nothing to do with his kingship, his wealth, his power. All David really wanted was to "dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of (his) life." I cannot think of many believers who want this as a life's ambition! David, however, actually *sought* after this desire, to walk with God perpetually.

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He was talking about the Temple. It was God's abode. Therefore, David was really saying he wanted to live entirely in God's presence. The Holy Spirit lives within each saved man and woman, so the Temple has come to us. We already know His presence... even though most do not realise it, by their sinful actions and thoughts. How many want to live entirely in God's presence today? Not many, if we watch and observe the lives of those who claim to be believers!

By ignoring this presence, today's believers do not find their lives to be 'real', nor do they know God as they ought. They do not see the "beauty of the LORD". The LORD's "beauty" is his *no'am*, his favour, kindness, everything suitable and good He does for us. It is when we are "in his temple", or, close to God, that we hear His voice and know what to do in any situation. Obviously, if we do not listen or bother with Him, we will not know these wondrous times and answers.

To be Christians full of God's presence we must actively seek after Him, *baqar*. We must listen and then act on what we are told. Sadly, most Christians are a 'law unto themselves' and irrationally and arrogantly believe they can think and act as they wish, even when it is against scripture.

David knows God is his help, so he rests his whole life in God's hands. "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion". God's 'pavilion', in this text, means his tabernacle. To unbelievers this *cakak* covers David inside and screens itself, and him, from the enemy. Just being in God's house (or, in His presence) is itself a defence. We might not have the answers, or know what is going on, but simply being in God's presence is enough to protect us. This is genuine 'simple faith'.

The enemy knows where we are, but they cannot touch us because we are protected by God. They can rail and foam all they like, but they cannot harm us. We are hidden in His pavilion! Or, as the text self-explains: "in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock". The rock is God, and God protects us from our enemy, who is, really, His enemy. It does not matter how nice we are towards wicked people – their ultimate goal is to destroy us. Why? Because we are not as they are. Nothing causes more howling evil in the wicked than to be faced with a saved person! The saved man and woman is seen to be a light shining into their own dark intent and unsaved state. So, they hate us. But, their attempts to 'get us' is thwarted because God places us on a rock – in His hand of safety and protection.

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Then, when we are made safe, there comes a time when God lifts our head above our enemies. I have often described being in God's hand as being above the earthly situations that can cause us distress, as if watching what is happening from above the earth. I do not mean it is a psychic activity! I mean that God elevates us above our distress so that we only see God's help and not our own problems. It is a wonderful place to be. God exalts us, so that our enemies are seen for what they are – mealy-mouthed, vicious, wicked men and women who hate the Lord and us. They are as so many ants scurrying about in the dirt, soon to be crushed by Almighty God. They are as nothing to Him, and He says so; whereas we, His elect, are special and to be protected.

Because of this, David could at last see that God was in control, so he offered “in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy”. You might think I am using poetic licence when I say the tabernacle is now in our own selves, but it is not – it is the truth. God is within us, so we are able to access Him any time through our Saviour Jesus Christ. This is what we are told time and again in the New Testament. David, too, knew of this personal relationship with God, so he sang his psalms daily to God in the Temple. If you have this personal relationship then you, too, will sing praises to God daily. If you do not, then I question your claimed faith, just as I would question my own.

### Verses 7-10

1.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

2.

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

3.

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.

4.

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

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David is now using rhetoric, for he knows how real God's presence is. "Hear me, O LORD"! He knows God hears him... and knows that hearing also means receiving an answer. He calls for God's mercy, not because he does not see it, but because that is how we ought to speak to God: we should never presume, even when God has promised. It is a way of making sure we never overstep the mark, or become proud in our godly standing. God told David to seek His face, so that is what David did. Many do this as a duty, not from the heart, so they never come to see the things they seek, and this is why they have no real faith.

Again, though David KNOWS God hears him, he nevertheless pleads "Hide not thy face far from me." It does not matter how much faith we have – we must never presume. This is because God is above His creation and can do whatever He wishes with us. This is why we must always have a foundation of fear of the Lord. This will not make us terrified of Him, but will ensure we do not think more of ourselves than we should. If we live righteously, we can rightly look to God and expect Him to see us favourably. But, if not, we will know his anger. David knows he is living righteously, so he asks the God Who protects and saves him to show him favour and help, never to forsake him.

Even when all others forsake or forget and leave him, God will not. David does not mean his own parents forsook him; this is just a way of showing that even the most loved and loving persons we know can let us down or leave us, but God will not. Rather, God will pick us up and protect us at times of our worst dismay.

### Verses 11-14

1.

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

2.

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

3.

I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

4.

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

The enemies of our soul are watched by God. He knows what they are up to. He shows us what to do, teaching us his way of life and placing us on a “plain path”; a way of life that is righteous and upright. When we live such a life we can expect truth to shine and our way to be made obvious. We must live transparent lives so that enemies cannot find anything hidden that should not be there.

In David’s time, as now, enemies used lies and violence to get their way. So, David asks God to keep him safe from his enemies’ “will”, their *nephesh*. It is not so much what enemies do physically that should concern us, hard or nasty as that can be, but their influence. In this context *nephesh* refers to the seat of their emotions, their evil reasons, their wicked passions and godless ideas. Compared to these more subtle influences an open wound or violent act is as nothing. I can vouch for that!

If God did not exist and was not his friend, David says he would have succumbed long ago. It is a truism that if God did not exist there is nothing to live for, or to be holy about. David would have failed if he had not seen God himself, and had not known His protection in the “land of the living”. This means Israel, a land that breathed the life of God, and was refreshed and refreshing. David believed in God because he saw God’s handiwork in Israel and in his own life. Today, many Christians do not really believe in God or His protection (therefore, some have called them ‘atheistic Christians’), and so their lives are low, miserable and untrue.

This is why David makes a statement: “Wait on the LORD”. That is, believe and look for God to act; *expect* Him to act on your behalf, in His own time. Do you really do that, or are you like the countless ‘believers’ who can fit their actual belief into a pea-pod? If you truly believe, you will be of good courage, no matter what is happening. And then God will give you inner strength. “wait, I say, on the LORD”!

At my most dire times, though I have feared, and though I have sought the prayers of the brethren, I have always believed in God and His will. No matter how low I have felt, I always know God is with me, working a work I cannot yet see. Those who are genuinely the Lord’s will experience this inner quiet, whilst all around is raging. For those who have yet to put their faith

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truly in God, “wait, I say, on the Lord”.

As some battle with disease, or trying circumstances, or suffer something for a long time, they might secretly think God is not with them. Yet, for the sake of others, they smile and claim to be at peace. Do not do this. It is better to face your inner feelings and thoughts and to give them to God, than to pretend. Do you not know that God is your Father, and will listen, even if you complain bitterly, or sometimes get angry?

Be honest and be ready to hand everything over to your Father! When He knows you are genuine and honest, He can at last work in your life. If we see total freedom from sickness and circumstances as real goals in life, we will miss the truth, that these things will occur until we meet God in glory. Many who suffer in this life are given joy and peace beyond understanding, if they only believe and trust.

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