

Out of the Silence—Justice!
Psalm 28

<p>1 לְדָוִד</p> <p>אֲלֵיךָ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא צוּרֵי אֶל־תִּתְחַרְשׁ לִמְנֵי פֶן־תִּחַשֶׁה מִמְּנֵי וְנִמְשַׁלְתִּי עִם־יֹדְדֵי בֹרַח :</p> <p>2 שָׁמַע קוֹל תְּחִנּוּנָי בְּשׁוֹעֵי אֲלֵיךָ בְּנִשְׂאֵי יָדַי אֶל־דְּבִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ :</p> <p>3 אֶל־תִּמְשַׁכְנֵי עִם־רָשָׁעִים וְעִם־פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן דֹּבְרֵי שְׁלוֹם עִם־רְעֵיהֶם וְרָעָה בְּלִבָּבָם :</p> <p>4 תִּן־לָהֶם כַּפְּעֻלָּם וּכְרָע מִעַלְלֵיהֶם כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם תֵּן לָהֶם הֲשִׁב גַּמוּלָם לָהֶם :</p>	<p>1 By David.</p> <p>To you, I AM, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.</p> <p>2 Hear the voice of my cries for mercy, when I cry out to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary. (1 Kgs 8:6)</p> <p>3 Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of iniquity, who speak peace with their neighbors, while evil is in their hearts.</p> <p>4 Give to them according to their work and according to the evil of their deeds; according to the work of their hands give to them; return their recompense to them.</p>	<p>I. The King's Petition and Lament</p> <p>A. The cry to be heard</p> <p>1. The sounds of silence</p> <p>The fear of I AM's silence is that there will be no distinction b/c the fate of the righteous and the wicked and the king will die with unmerited disgrace.</p> <p>"pit" – "well, cistern, grave," "like a dungeon for worst offenders" (Kidner)</p> <p>2. The voice of trust</p> <p>As king, David is fulfilling his covenant obligation to turn to God in distress, his cries are pronounced, his trust is absolute (lifting up empty hands signifies he places no confidence in himself), and his focus is singular, eyes fixed on God's throne in the innermost sanctuary.</p> <p>B. The plea for justice</p> <p>1. For himself: rescue me from the fate of the wicked "Even worse than consignment to the will of the wicked is consignment with them to the disgrace they have earned...here it suggests dragging of prisoners away to punishment." (Kidner)</p> <p>2. For the wicked: "according to their work...evil hearts"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their nature: "wicked" – seeking to benefit themselves at the expense of the community • Their impact: "workers of iniquity" – they corrupt everything good and leave a wreckage of relationships in their wake • Their method: "speak <i>shalom</i>...with evil in their hearts" – bold-faced hypocrisy and outright lies, signifying their conscience is seared <p>"deeds" – "repayment and requital" i.e. the full measure of their deeds.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">5 כִּי לֹא יִבְיִנוּ אֶל־פְּעֻלַּת יְהוָה וְאֶל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִהָרְסוּם וְלֹא יִבְנֶם :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6 בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה כִּי־שָׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7 יְהוָה עֵזִי וּמִגְדִּי בּוֹ בָטַח לִבִּי וְנִיעַוְרָתִי וַיַּעֲלֵז לִבִּי וּמְשִׁירֵי אֱהוֹדְנֵנִי :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8 יְהוָה עֵז־לְמוֹ וּמְעוֹז יְשׁוּעוֹת מְשִׁיתוֹ הוּא :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9 הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת־עַמּוֹךְ וּבְרַךְ אֶת־נַחְלָתְךָ וְרַעַם וְנָשָׂאם עַד־הָעוֹלָם :</p>	<p>5 Because they do not regard the works of I AM, nor the work of his hands, he will tear them down and not build them up.</p> <p>6 Blessed be I AM, for he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.</p> <p>7 I AM is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; therefore I am helped and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.</p> <p>8 I AM is the strength of him, and a fortress of salvation for his anointed.</p> <p>9 Save your people, [= “strength” & shield] and bless your inheritance; shepherd them and carry them forever.</p>	<p>II. The Center: Confidence in a Just God</p> <p>Evil doers are condemned not simply because of “the work of their hands,” but also because of their utter disregard of “the works of I AM.”</p> <p>“the works of his hands” are not just God’s handiwork of creation, but more significantly his “saving” works rescuing his people, specifically in this case through this anointed king, David (Psalm 2; compare Jesus words in John 8.12-19).</p> <p>III. The King and People Give Praise</p> <p>A. The king worships: blessing the God of his salvation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidence ignites hope that God has heard 2. I AM’s salvation deepens his trust and magnifies his worship <p>“exults” – jubilant and enthusiastic expressions of rejoicing. It is used once of I AM in Ps 60:6 describing the resounding joy he experienced apportioning out his inheritance to his people.</p> <p>B. The congregation worships</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledging I AM’s saving work on behalf of his anointed king 2. Appropriating the king’s faith for themselves unto a life of blessing, where I AM is their shepherd and pursues them with “goodness and loyal-love” until they are safely home” (Ps 23:6). <p>“forever” – God “has the last word, not to mention the silence after.”</p>
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Reflection: The repeated image of “**hands**” is skilfully nuanced by the poet to describe the evil “actions” and just punishment of the wicked (“*according to the works of their hands*”), the saving “work” of I AM (“*the work of his hands*”), and the “raised hands” of the poet, who humbly approaches God in complete dependence with nothing to give. The image that not only unifies the poem, it also unlocks the key to surviving injustice.