

# Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

**Bereans Sunday School  
Placerita Baptist Church  
2004**

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## Psalm 27 — My Light and My Salvation

### 1.0 Introducing Psalm 27

- Psalms 26–28 each refer to the LORD's house or sanctuary (26:8; 27:4; 28:2) which, as we saw in our study of 23:6 would have been the Tabernacle in David's day.
  - ◆ The earliest uses of the phrase "the house of the LORD" (Exodus 23:19 and 34:26) are with reference to the Tabernacle. See, also, 1 Samuel 1:7, 24 and 2 Samuel 12:20.
  - ◆ The Tabernacle is also called the "temple" in 1 Samuel 1:9 and 3:3.
  - ◆ The Tabernacle is also called the "sanctuary" in Exodus 25:8 (and many other times in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers) and even "holy sanctuary" in Leviticus 16:33.
  - ◆ Read Psalm 27:5-6 ("tabernacle" and "tent").
- The ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) adds "before he was anointed" after "of David" in the psalm's inscription. That could indicate the time of Saul's persecution of David.
- In the Jewish practice, Psalm 27 is recited:
  - ◆ Throughout the 6th month in preparation for Rosh Hashanah (the New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), which take place in the 7th month.
  - ◆ In the "Days of Awe," the ten holy days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur.
- Psalm 27 speaks of the permanence and dependability of the believer's relationship with God. Human relationships too often fail (even the closest ones), but God never fails us nor forsakes us.

## 2.0 Reading Psalm 27 (NAU)

27:1 *A Psalm* of David.

The LORD is my light and **my salvation**;

Whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the defense of my life;

Whom shall I dread?

27:2 When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh,

My adversaries and my enemies,

they stumbled and fell.

27:3 Though a host encamp against me,

My heart will not fear;

Though war rise against me,

In *spite of* this I shall be confident.

27:4 One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek:

**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 meditate in His temple.**

27:5 For in the day of trouble

He will conceal me **in His tabernacle**;

**In the secret place of His tent** He will hide me;

He will lift me up on a rock.

27:6 And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me,

And **I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy**;

I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

27:7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice,

And be gracious to me and answer me.

27:8 *When You said*, "Seek My face," my heart said to You,

"Your face, O LORD, I shall seek."

27:9 Do not hide Your face from me,

Do not turn Your servant away in anger;

You have been my help;

Do not abandon me nor forsake me,

O God of **my salvation**!

27:10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me,

But the LORD will take me up.

27:11 Teach me Your way, O LORD,

And lead me in a level path

Because of my foes.

27:12 Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,

For false witnesses have risen against me,

And such as breathe out violence.



**27:13** *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the  
LORD  
In the land of the living.

**27:14** **Wait for the LORD;**

Be strong and let your heart take courage;

Yes, **wait for the LORD.**

### 3.0 **Understanding Psalm 27**

#### 3.1 **Outline**

- I. Declaring Confidence in the LORD (vv. 1-3)
- II. Desiring the Presence of the LORD (vv. 4-6)
- III. Deepening Dependence on the LORD (vv. 7-13)
- IV. Declaring Patience in the LORD (v. 14)



#### 3.2 **Notes**

- **v. 1** “The LORD is my light”
  - This is the only direct reference to God as light in the Old Testament.
    - Psalm 18:28; 104:1-2
    - Isaiah 10:17; 60:1-2
    - John 1:4-9; 8:12
    - 1 Timothy 6:16
    - 1 John 1:5
  - The meaning and/or function of light:
    - Gives life.
    - Provides knowledge and understanding.
    - Dispels fear.
- **v. 2** “to devour my flesh”
  - This phrase could refer to slander or accusation.
    - Cf. the Aramaic idiom, “eat the pieces of” (see marginal notes in NAU for Daniel 3:8; 6:24).
  - It could be a metaphor using dangerous ferocious wild animals to picture the danger which David faces (cf. Psalms 7:2; 14:4; 17:12).
- **v. 3** “I shall be confident”
  - The same verb is employed here as for “trust” in Psalms 25:2 and 26:1.
  - It is unfortunate that the translation here in both NAU and NIV obscures the connection.
  - “Trust is possible for those who know the LORD as the savior of their life. ... Trust is the practice of the knowledge of God as savior in all our living.” — James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1994), 132, 133.

- v. 4 “One thing ... To behold the beauty of the LORD”
  - “Note the singleness of purpose (*one thing*)—the best answer to distracting fears (*cf.* 1-3)—and the priorities within that purpose: *to behold* and *to inquire*; a preoccupation with God’s Person and His will. It is the essence of worship; indeed of discipleship.” — Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 121.
  - It is the Lord Himself who is the object of David’s desire to be in the Tabernacle.
    - Same Hebrew word: Psalm 90:17 (“favor”)
      - The beauty of the LORD refers to His gracious kindness (Wilson) or His beneficent fellowship (VanGemeren).
    - Cf. Ezekiel 32:19 (related Hebrew word)
    - Cf. Isaiah 33:17 (a different Hebrew word for “beauty”)
  - See Psalm 26:8.
  
- v. 4 “to meditate”
  - The Hebrew word is interesting because it is difficult to nail down its exact meaning.
    - It is related to a root referring to the examination of the entrails of sacrificed animals. That might indicate that in this verse it could mean seeking God’s will.
    - It is also related to the noun “morning.” This association could indicate an early visit to the Tabernacle.
  
- v. 10 “my father and my mother”
  - What do parents provide for their children?
    - Acceptance
    - Listening
    - Guidance
    - Protection
  - What does God provide for His children?
  
- v. 13 “*I would have despaired unless*”
  - Translators supply words in italics in an attempt to represent what might have been included in the unspoken thought of the psalmist.
  - This is called anacoluthon or ellipsis. It is an incomplete sentence due to emotion or because the implied thought was considered obvious.
  - “[T]he incomplete sentence bears witness all the more powerfully to the wonder of assurance.” — Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, trans. by Hilton C. Oswald, Continental Commentary (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1993), 336.



- v. 14 “Be strong and ... take courage”
  - This phraseology is a favorite combination in the Old Testament.
    - Deuteronomy 31:6-8, 23
    - Joshua 1:6-9, 18
    - 1 Chronicles 22:13; 28:20
    - Psalm 31:24
  - “These words are frequently found in connection with some great and difficult enterprise, in prospect of the combat with the power of strong enemies, and the utter insufficiency of all human strength. Is waiting on God a work so difficult, that such words are needed ... ? Yes, indeed. The deliverance for which we often have to wait is from enemies, in whose presence we are weak. The blessings for which we plead are spiritual and all unseen—things impossible with men—heavenly, supernatural, divine realities. Our heart may well faint and fail.” — Andrew Murray, *Waiting on God* (New York: Revell, n.d.), 46-47, as cited by Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms Volume 1*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 494.
  
- v. 14 “Wait for the LORD”
  - Cf. Psalm 25.
  - “If some wealthy person promised to give you an expensive gift, wouldn’t you wait for it expectantly? If you were in trouble and a king were coming to your aid, wouldn’t you be alert for his appearance? God is just such a generous benefactor and powerful king. He is well worth waiting for. It is a privilege to wait for him.  
“Yet how little true waiting most of us really do.”  
— James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1994), 1:243-44

#### 4.0 Singing Psalm 27

***My Light and My Salvation***  
(Tune: “The Church’s One Foundation”)

My light and my salvation, O Lord, whom shall I fear?  
You are my life’s great stronghold when evil men come near.  
Though enemies attack me, my heart will never fear.  
Though war break out against me, I’m confident you’re near.

One thing I ask and seek, Lord: to dwell with you always,  
To gaze upon your beauty and seek you all my days.  
For in the day of trouble, you’ll hide me, keep me safe.  
My head will be exalted; I’ll sing and shout your praise.

Hear now my voice and answer; be merciful I pray.  
Your face, Lord, I seek daily; do not turn me away.



For you have been my helper; do not reject me, God.  
Though family may forsake me, I know that you will not.

Teach me your way, my Savior; in straight paths may I walk.  
Don't let my foes oppress me with false and vicious talk.  
Of this I still am certain: I'll see God's goodness yet.  
Wait for the Lord Jehovah; be strong, take heart, and wait.

— Author: Susan H. Peterson (2000); Music: Samuel S. Wesley (1864)

Various hymns based upon Psalm 27:

- v. 3 "The Patriot's Prayer" (Fanny Crosby)
- v. 5 "He Hideth My Soul" (Fanny Crosby)
- "Anywhere With Jesus" (Jessie B. Pounds)

### *The Lord Is My Light*

- 1 The Lord is my light and my salvation,  
Whom then shall I fear? Whom then shall I fear?  
The Lord is the strength of my life,  
The Lord is the strength of my life;  
Of whom then shall I be afraid?
- 3 The Lord keeps me safe in time of trouble,  
My soul shall He hide, My soul shall He hide.  
I dwell in the house of the Lord,  
I dwell in the house of the Lord;  
A Rock shall be my hiding place.
- 4 O wait on the Lord; be of good courage;  
God's grace shall abound, God's grace shall abound.  
His pow'r is exceedingly strong,  
His pow'r is exceedingly strong;  
He saves all those who trust in Him.

— Author: Frank Garlock; Music: Frances Allitsen

## **5.0 Praying Psalm 27**

- Lord, conquer my fears and give me courage to serve You. [v. 1]
- Father, bring me into Your presence every day of my life. [v. 4]
- I will sing praises to You, O Lord. [v. 6]
- Thank You for being the God of my salvation. [v. 9]
- Lord, teach me Your way and lead me in Your path. [v. 11]



## **6.0 Applying Psalm 27**

- As a believer my relationship to God is permanent and dependable.
- Human relationships too often fail—even the closest ones.
- We must learn to wait upon the Lord.