

# Psalm 27:13-14

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-27/psalm-2713-14/>

*God is the very essence of good and David knows he is in God's good hands*

The prayer of David is concluded: *I would have despaired unless I had believed* (vs 13). As can happen after an intense conversation, the psalmist-king is caught up in the aftermath of the event. There is in verses 13-14 a moment that lingers, an afterglow, wherein echoes and reverberations from the encounter with God continue to impress upon mind and spirit. As he weighs the circumstances of his concerns and prayer in verse 13, David acknowledges that left on his own he would not have been able to find and embrace the hope needed to carry on.

Rather, he *would have despaired*, a phrase rendered in English that is contextually understood from the negatively inclined Hebrew conjunction (“lule”) meaning “unless” or “had it not been.” The complete loss of hope, a full surrender to being overwhelmed by negative and opposing forces would likely have been David’s fate EXCEPT that he *had believed* (Hebrew, “aman”).

That belief, a wholehearted and active engagement with the Lord, unlocks all the possibilities and remedies made available by God to the believing soul (Psalm 112:7; Isaiah 28:16; Isaiah 40:31; Mark 9:23; Romans 10:11; Hebrews 11:6). This might prophetically anticipate the struggle to overcome temptation endured by David’s descendant Jesus, when He wrestled in Gethsemane. Jesus’s expressed rationale for His disciples to pray was that they might not fall into temptation (Luke 22:46).

Jesus’s prayer was one of expressed belief. He endured the grueling strife, which was to the point of death (Matthew 26:38). In His prayer to His Father, He expressed a preference for His own desire to be met, but only if it was within His Father’s plan, saying:

“Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”  
(Luke 22:42)

In expressing this, Jesus is choosing to believe that His Father’s plan was superior to His own desires.

In this passage from Luke, Jesus uses two different Greek words translated “willing” and “will.” In the phrase “Father, if you are willing” Jesus uses “boulomai” which indicates an intent, a decision based on a plan. In the phrase “not My will” Jesus uses “thelema” which is a wish or desire. Jesus is saying that His desire is not to suffer, but as with King David, through His prayer expressing belief, Jesus is setting His mind to trust that His Heavenly Father’s ways are for the best, and therefore will have confidence. To say *I shall be confident* is to say “Your will be done.”

David observes, *I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living* (vs 13). The subject and nature of belief in the Lord are, of

course, critically important when it comes to the relational interactions between mortal human beings and the eternal God. What David believes about God, what he understands to be the character of God, are matters of utmost importance.

Foremost in his mind is *the goodness of the Lord*. While it may be argued that mortal life—poetically expressed *in the land of the living*—is inescapably a journey between shades of gray, that very little is absolute, the exception is the unfailing *goodness of God*.

What David believes about God is succinct, explicit, and complete. God is good. There is no hint of anything but good in God (Psalm 25:8; Nahum 1:7; Mark 10:18; James 1:17). God's character is something that is completely absolute; He never changes (Hebrews 13:8). It is precisely because God is good that the psalmist-king can choose confidence over conjecture. God is the very essence of good and David knows he is in God's good hands (Psalm 34:8; Luke 18:19; 1 John 1:5).

Verse 14 is the psalm's poetic and concluding "Amen!" where he writes, *Wait for the Lord*. Artfully repeated to initiate and conclude the verse, *wait* (Hebrew, "qavah") encourages both a patient trust and an eager anticipation regarding its subject.

There are two streams of meaning at work here. First, envisaged is a sense of trust and confidence running deep enough to result in the freedom to acknowledge that events may well be beyond one's control. Second, there is a call given for an attitude actively and always looking forward to the just resolution of one's cherished hopes. *For the Lord* resolves the question regarding the Whom that is most longingly to be hoped for, the Whom most faithfully to be awaited.

David remarks, *Be strong and let your heart take courage* (vs 14). From the earliest days of Israel's walking with God, the uplifting refrain heard in the midst of all their troubles included *Be strong, take courage* (Joshua 1:9).

During his ministry on earth, Jesus exhorted His disciples and followers in a similar vein to let go of fear and embrace trusting in God for strength and courage (John 14:27; 16:33). Those who in faith give themselves fully to God will not be disappointed, and since the crucifixion and resurrection we now do so in faith through Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:42, 16:27; Romans 5:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:8, 14; Colossians 2:18; Hebrews 10:35; Revelation 3:21, 22:12).

While we may not see the ultimate outcome of our hopes in our own lifetime, while we may endure hardships that take us or loved ones to and through death's doorway, even so we can rely on God's sovereign will and loving disposition toward us. In Christ, we will rise. We will live blessed and free with God forever (John 14:19; Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 4:14). With David we can joyfully conclude and say with strength and courage, *Yes. Wait for the Lord* (vs 14).

### **Biblical Text**

<sup>13</sup> **I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.**

**<sup>14</sup> Wait for the Lord;  
Be strong and let your heart take courage;  
Yes, wait for the Lord.**