

Psalm 18

Title: God Save the King

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 18:50

Outline

- A. Opening doxology (verses 1-2).
- B. The need for deliverance (verses 3-6).
- C. The description of deliverance (verses 7-19).
- D. The basis of deliverance (verses 20-31).
- E. The examples of deliverance (verses 32-45).
- F. Closing doxology (verses 46-50).

Notes

Title: "For the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David the servant of Jehovah, who spake unto Jehovah the words of this song in the day that Jehovah delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: and he said," See 2 Samuel 22:1 for the same words. Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 are identical with some variation in wording.

Verses 1-50: This psalm discusses the Lord's deliverance of the psalmist from his enemies. A number of divine qualities are revealed in this psalm: the Lord hears (verses 3-6), rebukes (verses 7-15), delivers (verses 16-19), rewards (verses 20-27), strengthens (verses 28-39), subdues (verses 40-45), and exalts (verses 46-48).

Verses 1-2: Note the eight "my" statements in these two verses (see also verses 6, 21, 28, 29, and 46). The Lord is: "my strength," "my rock" (twice), "my fortress," "my deliverer," "my God," "my shield," "my salvation," and "my high tower". Six of these figures relate to military strength and provision (see verses 29, 34, and 39 for mention of military activity). "My stay" is also found in verse 18.

Verse 2: The key metaphor of God as a "rock" is found twice here and in verses 31 and 46. The "rock" stands for God's victorious might and superior strength. "The horn" is also a symbol of strength. It is a reference to the strong horn of a bull who is poised for attack (see Deut. 33:17; 1 Sam. 2:1, 10; Psa. 75:10; 89:17, 24).

Verse 3: The song, "I Will Call Upon the Lord" (Michael O'Shields, 1981), is based on this verse. The chorus of this song is taken from verse 46.

Verses 4-6: Compare the psalmist's words here with those of Jonah (Jonah 2:2).

Verse 6: The Lord heard the psalmist “out of his temple”, i.e., out of heaven (see Psa. 11:4; 20:6).

Verse 10: A “cherub” is a winged angel who ministers to God (see Ezekiel 9-10).

Verses 7-19: The psalmist uses the vivid language of a “theophany” (God appearing to man) to announce God’s dynamic appearance and awesome power to deliver him from his enemies (see verses 47 and 48). God’s actions from heaven to deliver the psalmist are here likened unto great forces of nature, like an earthquake and a storm. Compare the poetic and highly figurative language used here with the song of Deborah in Judges 5:1-5 and the prayer of Habakkuk in Habakkuk 3:1-19.

Verse 28: “Light my candle” and “enlighten my darkness” (KJV) are references to keeping the psalmist alive and delivered from his enemies.

Verse 49: This verse (or 2 Sam. 22:50) is quoted by Paul in Romans 15:9 in reference to Jesus’ saving work among Jews and the Gentiles.

Verse 50: “Loving-kindness” (Heb. *hesed*) is common in the psalms. It is God’s steadfast love for mankind (see the notes on Psa. 5:7). “Anointed” (Heb. *mashiach* or *messiah*) is a reference to David anointed as a king (see the notes on Psa. 2:2). Here is one of a few times in the psalms where the name of David is actually mentioned in the text and not just in the title (see also Psa. 72:20; 78:70; 89:3, 20, 35, 49; 122:5; 132:10-11, 17; 144:10). Jesus Christ is the “seed” of David (Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8).

Questions

1. What things does the psalmist say the Lord is to him – the “my” statements (verses 1-2)?
2. What does the psalmist do and why (verse 3)?
3. How does the psalmist describe the troubles he is having from his enemies (verses 4-5)?
4. What does the psalmist do in his distress and what happened (verse 6)?
5. What kind of language does the psalmist use to describe the Lord’s saving activity (verses 7-15)?

6. What does the Lord do for the psalmist (verses 16-18)?

7. How does the Lord reward the psalmist and why (verses 20-22)?

8. How does the psalmist live and how is he rewarded (verses 23-25)?

9. How does the Lord treat the merciful, the perfect, the pure, the perverse, the afflicted, and the haughty (verses 25-27)?

10. What does the Lord provide for the psalmist (verses 28-29, 32-36)?

11. How does the psalmist describe the Lord and his word (verses 30-31)?

12. What does the psalmist do to the enemies and what does the Lord do to them (verses 37-42)?

13. What does the Lord do to the psalmist in relation to the nations (verses 43-45, 47)?

14. What does the Lord do for the psalmist (verses 47-48 and 50)?

15. What does the psalmist do to the Lord for all that the Lord has done to him (verses 46 and 49)?

Applications for Today

1. We can say “I love you” to the Lord (verse 1) because the Lord shows his “loving-kindness” to us (verse 50). What did Jesus say was the greatest commandment (Mt. 22:37)?
2. Like the psalmist we can say, The Lord is “my strength, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my shield, my salvation, and my high tower” (verses 1-2 and 46). What is the Lord to the Christian (Heb. 13:6)?
3. In times of distress, we like the psalmist, can cry and call upon the Lord (verses 3-6). Who does the Lord hear (Psa. 34:15; 1 Pet. 3:12)? Who does the Lord not hear (Prov. 21:13; Ezek. 8:18)?
4. The Lord will always reward people “according to” their works (verses 20-27). What does Paul write about this (Rom. 2:6-11; 2 Tim. 4:14)? What does John write about this (Rev. 2:23; 20:12-13)?
5. We can rely upon the Lord because his way is “perfect” and his word is “tried” (verse 30). What does Psalm 12:6 and Proverbs 30:5 say about the Lord’s word?
6. We can beat our spiritual enemies in war with the Lord’s help (verses 32, 35, and 39). What promise are Christians given concerning the winning of our spiritual warfare (Eph. 2:10-18)?
7. We should bless the Lord and praise his name for all he has done for us (verses 46 and 49). What reason do we have to praise the Lord (Rom. 15:8-12)? What do we offer up to God and how do we do it (Heb. 13:15)?