

PSALMS 18

This Psalm is very similar to 2 Samuel 22:1-23. If 2 Samuel is close to being chronological, then we can conclude that Psalms 18 was likely written near the end of David's life since 2 Samuel 23:1 tells us what follows are the final words of David. The introduction to Psalms 18 tells that it was written "in the day" David was delivered from Saul. If this psalm was actually penned near the end of David's life, then "in the day" would have to mean "with regard to the occasion of the day" when God delivered him from the hand of Saul. As we read through this psalm, we can also see descriptions that remind us of the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians and the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The second and the forty-ninth verses are both quoted in the New Testament (#Heb 2:13 & Rom 15:9) as the words of the Lord Jesus.

RESOLVE TO PRAISE GOD

{18:1} I love you, O LORD, my strength. {2} The LORD is my rock (Selah or Petra), my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock (cliff), in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

When we (the children of God) see the hand of God at work in our lives, then our hearts overflow with love for Him. Just as a little child sees his earthly father as the epitome of strength and the source of supply, we look to God the Father as our only Provision for every need of life and life everlasting.

{3} I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

As we recognize God's awesomeness and contemplate His power, our hearts overflow with praise and we then have confidence to call upon Him for help when trouble arises.

GOD'S DELIVERING MERCY

{4} The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. {5} The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.

The greatest enemy is seen as death and the grave. Fear of death paralyzes us and prevents us from accomplishing the work God has for us to do. In Christ, we find that we are freed from this ultimate fear since He has conquered death and we no longer need to fear it.

{6} In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.

David not only called to God in his distress, he also called to God in times of joy and peace. If we are not regularly calling upon God and talking with Him, then we are not availing ourselves of the ultimate Resource for living life to the fullest.

{7} The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. {8} Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it.

God controls all that happens. He is the sovereign God. Perhaps David had seen the phenomena he described in these verses. What a dramatic description of a volcano erupting.

{9} He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. {10} He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. {11} He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him-- the dark rain clouds of the sky. {12} Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. {13} The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. {14} He shot his arrows and scattered the enemies, great bolts of lightning and routed them.

The development of storms and the resultant display of the awesome power of nature causes us to realize that man's efforts are puny compared to what God controls in His creation. What is more amazing is that the storms on earth are minor compared to the great power and energy displayed in the smallest star.

{15} The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of breath from your nostrils.

It is sobering for us to realize that vast areas of the world that are now populated with

people were once underwater as part of the ocean. What an awesome God.

{16} He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.

God is our help in times of trouble. Noah, Moses, Jonah and other experienced this help in a literal sense. Other have experienced it allegorically.

{17} He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. {18} They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. {19} He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.

The scriptures record many instances of God's intervention in saving His people from those who were more powerful. The church is being confronted now with godless humanism and it seems that traditional allies of the church are joining the ranks of those who oppose God. We are foolish to engage them in a fight on their terms and using their weapons. If we realize the true nature of the battle, then we can avail ourselves of the armor of God and the sword of the Spirit and thereby throw down the strongholds of the enemy.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO THE FAITHFULNESS OF HIS PEOPLE

{20} The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. {21} For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not done evil by turning from my God. {22} All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. {23} I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. {24} The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

The fullest application of these verses can apply only to Christ Jesus Who is the Righteous One. However, in a limited sense, David's trouble with Saul was not of his doing -- he acted honorably and with right intentions. God does reward those who walk in integrity. The application of these thoughts as a promise to us is found in the realization that we have become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, in Christ, we enjoy the blessing is these promises.

{25} To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, {26} to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. {27} You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.

It is sobering to realize that we influence the way God deals with us by the way we deal with others. God does reward good behavior and He punishes bad behavior.

{28} You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

David experienced what John wrote concerning Jesus: In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The only true light we have is the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

GOD'S PROVISION - PRESENT AND FUTURE

{29} With your help I can advance against a troop ; with my God I can scale a wall.

Not only does the Holy Spirit enlighten us, He empowers us for the tasks to which we have been called.

{30} As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

The perfectness and flawless of the way and the word of God speaks to the integrity of the Lord. The word "integrity" implies completeness, nothing missing and no holes. Anything on which we rely for protection (a shield) should have such integrity.

{31} For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?

Not only is God the only adequate protection for us, he is also reliable and strong.

{32} It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.

God is strong (He is the Rock) and His way is perfect. Those who trust in Him have access to His strength and perfection.

{33} He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. {34} He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. {35} You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. {36} You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn.

If we stand on His word, we will have sure footing. His word is truly the high road. He enables us and strengthen us for the confrontations of life and intervenes on our behalf. The ultimate expression of God "stooping down to make us great" is in the Incarnation. Jesus took on

the humility of the flesh and became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

{37} I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. {38} I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet.

The idea of detente with the enemies of our soul is not found in the scriptures. We should make no provision for sin in our lives. The nation of Israel failed to root out all the Canaanite influence in the promised land and that failure was part of their downfall. We must be as ruthless with sin in our lives as David was with his enemies.

{39} You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. {40} You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes.

We cannot have victory over sin in our own strength. We must rely on the power God provides by His presence in our lives in the person of the Holy Spirit.

{41} They cried for help, but there was no one to save them-- to the LORD, but he did not answer.

There are organizations that have a form of godliness but are actually enemies of the way of God. These wrap themselves in religiosity and superficiality and know nothing of the true Christianity and the supernatural power of God. These may cry out Lord, Lord, but they receive no answer.

{42} I beat them as fine as dust borne on the wind; I poured them out like mud in the streets.

When dealing with sin in our lives, we must be thorough and leave no trace of its influence.

{43} You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations; people I did not know are subject to me. {44} As soon as they hear me, they obey me; foreigners cringe before me. {45} They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.

Righteousness exalts a nation and it also brings great respect to an individual. The power of integrity in the life a person cannot be measured. A reputation of being totally honest and a person of excellent moral character does produce fear in those who get their way by bribes and compromise.

PROPHETIC FORESIGHT

{46} The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!

As we consider all our blessings from God, then we (as David) will break out in spontaneous praise to God.

{47} He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me, {48} who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me.

God gives us victories in all areas of life. We tend to limit God and His influence to a few areas, but God is Lord of all.

{49} Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O LORD; I will sing praises to your name.

If we do not associate the blessings we enjoy with their source in God, then we will not have much reason to tell others about the greatness of God. Many give themselves the credit for any good thing that comes their way and consequently they spend all their time praising themselves.

{50} He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.

The blessings of God include victories in life and his blessings continue to following generations.