

Psalm 18

Psalms 18:1-3 [NIV] *“I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.”*

This Psalm of exuberant thanksgiving is found also in **2 Samuel 22** slightly revised to make it suitable for general use as a psalm of thanksgiving.

This Psalm may have been written towards the end of David’s life when there was peace. God is praised for His glorious works and blessings through the years.

The opening words and the use of the Hebrew word “*râcham*” for the love David had for the Creator God shows the intimate and passionate relationship they had. This Hebrew word is **not** found anywhere else in scripture.

God’s protection for His people is limitless and can take many forms. David characterised the Creator God’s care with five military symbols.

Remember both David and the Creator God, Jesus Christ are depicted as military leaders, [**Revelation 19:11-21**].

“A *rock*” – that cannot be moved by any who would harm us.

“A *fortress*” – a place of safety where the enemy cannot follow.

“A *shield*” – that comes between us and harm.

“A *horn of salvation*” – a symbol of might, power and safety from death.

“A *stronghold*” – a place high above our enemies.

These all tell us, if we need protection, look to the Creator God.

Psalms 18:4-19 [NIV] *“The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. 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. The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, the dark rain clouds of the sky. Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot his arrows and scattered [the enemies], great bolts of lightning and routed them. 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. He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.”*

The titanic scale of this scene is in strange contrast to the small human figure of the singer of this Psalm who is being rescued.

Such is the worth of the individual in the Creator God’s eyes is implied by this Psalm, and such is the individual’s debt to the Creator God.

David is blessed in this powerful way because God is “delighted” [verse 19] in him.

Acts 13:22 [NIV] “After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’”

A quote from **Psalms 89:20** and **1 Samuel 13:13-14** where the key to this relationship of David and the Creator God was David’s obedience to his creator.

Psalms 18:20-27 [NIV] “The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not done evil by turning from my God. All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.”

Here we see the grounds of God’s intervention. It is an expansion of the thought that God “delights”, [verse 19] in David.

Listed are two aspects of David’s life that the Creator God found pleasing.

David’s character [verses 20-23] – the law and statutes that the Creator God had given to Israel were foremost in the way that David conducted his day-to-day life.

The way God rewards His people [verses 24-27] – the principle underlying these verses is that the Creator God reinforces the character which people chose to acquire, behaving towards them as they behave towards Him.

Romans 1:28-32 [NIV] “Furthermore, since they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practise them.”

This godless society in which we live is the result of the lack of knowledge and fear of the Creator God and His Word, the Christian Bible.

1 Samuel 2:30 [NIV] “Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and your father’s house would minister before me for ever.’ But now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me! Those who honour me I will honour, but those who despise me will be disdained.’”

If our lives bring honour to our Creator God then in the end we will be honoured by Him.

Psalms 18:28-29 [NIV] “You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.”

This is referring to the work of the Holy Spirit in his life, [Psalms 51:11] Who gives us courage [2 Timothy 1:7], and guides us [John 16:13], and was given to David because of his obedience, [Acts 5:32].

Psalms 18:30-31 [NIV] “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. For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?”

God is worthy of all honour and adoration, not merely because of the blessings He bestows on human beings but because of His essential qualities.

Absolutely true in all He says, [**Titus 1:2**].

Perfect in all He does, [**Matthew 5:48**].

Holy, [**1 Peter 1:15-16**].

Therefore the Creator God **cannot** protect those who are antagonistic to Him, but He is utterly trustworthy to those who trust Him.

Psalms 18:32-36 [King James] *“It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds’ feet, and setteth me upon my high places. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.”*

David had been carefully trained by the Creator God. This preparation has been physical, health, strength and agility have been provided, [**1 Samuel 17:32-37**].

Also David as a shepherd had learnt gentleness towards others as he did towards the lambs in his flock.

The Hebrew word translated “gentleness” is “*ānāvâh*” meaning condescension, humility or meekness.

David showed this understanding patience and meekness, during all the long years of his life since the Creator God raised David a shepherd lad to a throne of power, [**Psalms 23:5-6**].

Psalms 18:37-38 [NIV] *“I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet.”*

David eagerly accepted the purpose for this training by the Creator God. In fullest confidence that God had prepared him for the task, David undertakes the subjugation of his foes.

Psalms 18:39-40 [NIV] *“You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes.”*

It was the Creator God who worked in David and for him. The conquest of his foes was really the work of the Creator God.

Psalms 18:41-42 [NIV] *“They cried for help, but there was no-one to save them, to the LORD, but he did not answer. I beat them as fine as dust borne on the wind; I poured them out like mud in the streets.”*

When we read this we need also to read of David’s mercy towards those who hated him. What David was doing was simply asking the Creator God to give the wicked the corrective punishment they deserved and needed.

David spared the life of Saul, [**1 Samuel 24:1-8**].

David spared the life of Nabal, [**1 Samuel 25:21-35**].

David spared the life of Shimei, [**2 Samuel 16:5-12**].

David showed great kindness to Mephibosheth, [**2 Samuel 9:1-13**].

This same corrective punishment will be given to all rebellious human beings by Jesus Christ at His Second Coming with the hope that they will repent and be subject to His rule and receive all the blessing He wants to give them, including eternal life, [2 Peter 3:9].

Psalms 18:43-45 [NIV] *“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. As soon as they hear me, they obey me; foreigners cringe before me. They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.”*

The climax of David’s supremacy is now described. Not only had all civil insurrection been put down, [2 Samuel 3:1], but the Creator God made David the head of many nations, [2 Samuel 8:1-15].

Even those peoples with whom there had been **no** previous contact would acknowledge David’s sovereignty as soon as they heard of him.

There is some historical support for this in **2 Samuel 10:18-19**, but there is also a prophetic aspect, [Isaiah 52:15; Psalms 2:8].

Again we see this fulfilled by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to rule this earth and its people, from all nations and every generation through a physical resurrection.

Revelation 20:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged accord”*

God’s Word, the Christian Bible, is the “books were opened” and God’s Laws that are expounded in its pages.

Psalms 18:46-50 [NIV] *“The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Saviour! He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me, who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me. Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O LORD; I will sing praises to your name. He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants for ever.”*

From these final reflections in this Psalm is the living reality of God in David’s life that causes him to be inexpressibly grateful.

Again David attributes all the victory to his God **not** himself and that the Creator God is vindicated in all that He does as righteous.

The Psalm concludes with a promise by David that he will utilise his dominion over many people to spread abroad the praise of his Creator God, [verse 49].

This concept Paul adjusts to the reign of David’s Lord, Jesus Christ, in whom salvation and loving kindness are fully exhibited, [Romans 15:8-9].

Finally, David names himself in connection with the permanent alliance with God which was ultimately fulfilled in the eternal Kingdom of the Son of David, Jesus Christ.

2 Samuel 7:12-29 [NIV] *“‘When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.’ Nathan reported to David all the words of*

this entire revelation. Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said: 'Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD? What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no-one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? You have established your people Israel as your very own for ever, and you, O LORD, have become their God. And now, LORD God, keep for ever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great for ever. Then men will say, "The LORD Almighty is God over Israel!" And the house of your servant David will be established before you. O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, "I will build a house for you." So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue for ever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed for ever.'"

The promise given to David by the Creator God through the prophet Nathan.

Luke 1:26-33 [NIV] *"In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end.'"*

This is the fulfilment of this promise that the Creator God gave to David.