



## Psalm 18 - Royal Thanksgiving for Victory

To the leader. A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:

### Introduction

This is a royal Psalm, i.e. it celebrates the way that God has shown his love to his people by giving them the Davidic monarchy and by preserving David through many dangers, as shown in the title and v.50. The text of the Psalm is almost identical to 2 Samuel Chapter 22. The two songs differ, however, in their context: Second Samuel Chapter 22 is David's personal expression of gratitude to the Lord, while Psalm 18 is the adaptation of that song for the whole people to sing, because their well-being is now tied to the offspring of David as promised in 2 Samuel 7:4-17.

When God's people sang this they were to give thanks for the Davidic line and to pray that its heirs would be faithful to the Lord and would be valiant military leaders, so that Israel might carry out its God-given purpose of bringing light to the Gentiles. The ultimate heir of the Davidic line would be the Messiah Jesus.

### Psalm 18:1-3 - The Lord Is My Strength.

The opening verses summarise the theme of the Psalm, namely, that David has found the Lord to be a reliable defender against his enemies.

<sup>1</sup> I love you, O Lord, my strength.

### Psalm 18:1

I love you, O Lord, my strength. This was a triumphant declaration made in a season of great triumph. It is true that David decided to love the Lord; but even more true that he simply felt compelled to love the Lord who delivered him so wonderfully. Since he was taken from the sheepfold and anointed the future king of Israel, David had lived some 20 or so years as a fugitive, and as a man who had lost everything. He lost his safety, he lost his youth, he lost his family, he lost his

career, he lost his rights, he lost his connection with the covenant people of God, he lost his comforts, and at times he even lost his close relationship with God. Despite all this, he remained steadfast to the Lord and God, in his timing, delivered David and fulfilled the long-ago promise of his anointing.

<sup>2</sup> The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,  
my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,  
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

### Psalm 18:2

The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. David knew this to be true before, but he knew it by faith. Now David sang from a perspective that knew this by experience in a greater way than ever before. When David said the Lord is my rock he likely meant it in more than one sense. A rock was of help to the ancient Judæan in several ways.

- It could provide essential shade, always needed in the merciless sun and heat of the desert, as in: *<<Each will be like a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land>>* (Isaiah 32:2).
- It could provide shelter and protection in its cracks and crevasses, as in: *<<and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by>>* (Exodus 33:22), and: *<<the badgers are a people without power, yet they make their homes in the rocks>>* (Proverbs 30:26).
- It could provide a firm place to stand and fight, as opposed to sinking sand, as in: *<<He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure>>* (Psalm 40:2).

My God, my rock in whom I take refuge. David knew the triumph of God's strength over the long trial. Many people fall under the excruciating length of an extended season of trial, and David almost did (1 Samuel Chapter 27 and Chapters 29-30). That fact that David saw his God as his rock is a reminder of the promise later expressed through Paul: *<<Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power>>* (Ephesians 6:10).

My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. As David piles honouring name upon honouring name for God (there are nine in just these first few verses), the reader gets the feeling of a flood of praise and emotion from David. He cannot say enough about who God is and the great things he has done for David. It is revealing that David can speak so eloquently about his God and what God has done for him. This means that David both knew God, and that he had experienced God. These nine titles reveal just what God was for David:

- His rock, which indicates a place of shelter, safety, and a secure standing.

- His fortress, a place of strength and safety.
- His deliverer, the one who made a way of escape for him.
- His God, not only the object of my adoration, but he who puts strength in my soul.
- His strength, but this uses a different Hebrew word than in v.1.
- His shield, who defends both his head and his heart.
- His horn, meaning his strength and defence.
- His stronghold, his high tower of refuge where he could see an enemy from a great distance and be protected from the adversary.

<sup>3</sup> I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised;  
so I shall be saved from my enemies.

### Psalm 18:3

I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised. In previous Psalms David cried out to God from times of intense crisis; now he cries out to God with the same strength to praise him for his deliverance. It is sad to say that many are far more passionate in asking for help than they ever are in giving thanks or praise.

The thought so shall I be saved from my enemies did not always come easily for David. Not very long before this great season of victory, he said to himself: *<<I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than to escape to the land of the Philistines; then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand>>* (1 Samuel 27:1). This shows that there were times when David deeply doubted the final victory he now enjoyed; but it also shows that in the end his faith - and more importantly, God's strength - was greater than his weakness.

### Psalm 18:4-6 - In My Distress I Prayed.

These verses amplify v.3, as David describes a particular danger that threatened to kill him.

- <sup>4</sup> The cords of death encompassed me;  
the torrents of perdition assailed me;
- <sup>5</sup> the cords of Sheol entangled me;  
the snares of death confronted me.

### Psalm 18:4-5

The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of perdition assailed me. David described two threats. First the threat of death, and second the floods of ungodliness. The overwhelming presence of ungodliness was a significant trial to David. This reminds believers that, despite the fact that David was a true warrior,

he was also a sensitive soul who was troubled by the deeds and words of the ungodly, both Jew and Gentile alike.

The cords of Sheol entangled me. This was another way of saying that David was threatened with death. Sheol is another word for the grave or death.

6 In my distress I called upon the Lord;  
to my God I cried for help.  
From his temple he heard my voice,  
and my cry to him reached his ears.

### Psalm 18:6

In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. So often people feel the need to call upon God in times of anguish and fear, and God seems to encourage this. However, they should not forget to call upon him at all times, giving him the praise and honour that he deserves.

From his temple he heard my voice. This was long before the later building of the temple in the days of King Solomon. The city of Jerusalem was not even in Israeli control at the time David wrote this, i.e. not until 2 Samuel 5:6-10 by which time David was king. Yet David knew that God had a temple, a heavenly temple that was the model for the tabernacle and the later temple, refer to Exodus 25:9 and 25:40, and that God heard prayers in heaven.

### Psalm 18:7-19 - The Lord's Marvellous Rescue.

This vivid picture allows readers to imagine God in his heavenly fortress suddenly taking notice of David's need and hastening to bring aid. The images shift quickly: v.8 speaks of God responding to David's danger as if he were an angry dragon, while vv.10-15 picture his coming as if it were by way of a raging thunderstorm. David portrays his rescue (vv.16-19) as if his enemies were swirling waters about to drown him, from which God plucked him and set him on a broad place, ground that is high and dry (v.19).

7 Then the earth reeled and rocked;  
the foundations also of the mountains trembled  
and quaked, because he was angry.

8 Smoke went up from his nostrils,  
and devouring fire from his mouth;  
glowing coals flamed forth from him.

9 He bowed the heavens, and came down;

thick darkness was under his feet.

- 10 He rode on a cherub, and flew;  
he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind.

### Psalm 18:7-10

Then the earth reeled and rocked. David describes the dramatic deliverance God brought to him. It was marked by earthquakes, the indignation of God (he was angry), as seen in: <<*he who removes mountains, and they do not know it, when he overturns them in his anger*>> (Job 9:5), <<*But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation*>> (Jeremiah 10:10), smoke and fire, and the personal intervention of God, i.e. he rode on a cherub, and flew.

Smoke went up from his nostrils is a violent oriental method of expressing fierce wrath. Since the breath from the nostrils is heated by strong emotion, the figure portrays the Almighty Deliverer as pouring forth smoke in the heat of his wrath and the impetuosity of his zeal.

He rode on a cherub, and flew. David here emphasised the speed of God's deliverance. It can be debated whether it seemed speedy to David at the time. This terminology of David emphasises the judgement of God; but since the judgement is directed against David's enemies, it means deliverance for David. God won this victory against David's strong enemy, against those who hated David (vv.16-17). There is a larger principle here; understanding that deliverance for a righteous person or people often means judgement against those who oppress them.

- 11 He made darkness his covering around him,  
his canopy thick clouds dark with water.
- 12 Out of the brightness before him  
there broke through his clouds  
hailstones and coals of fire.
- 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens,  
and the Most High uttered his voice.
- 14 And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them;  
he flashed forth lightnings, and routed them.
- 15 Then the channels of the sea were seen,  
and the foundations of the world were laid bare

at your rebuke, O Lord,  
at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

### Psalm 18:11-15

The Lord also thundered in the heavens. David set phrase upon phrase in describing the great work of God on his behalf. According to David's description God moved heaven, sky, earth, and sea to deliver David. When David described help coming to him through earthquakes, thunder, storms, and lightning, he clearly used poetic images from the way God delivered Israel from Egypt, at Mount Sinai, and during the conquest of Canaan under Joshua. Yet it is also entirely possible - if not probable - that he also literally saw such phenomenon sent from God to protect and fight for him. Although such events are not recorded in 1 or 2 Samuel, it should be remembered that there were long periods of David's life, such as when he was hunted as a fugitive from Saul, when there are few descriptions of events, and he must have experienced God's deliverance again and again in a variety of ways. The way David describes it all leaves the reader with two impressions. Firstly, he really believed those things happened as recorded in the Bible. Secondly, he saw the same God do similar things for him in his own day. Significantly, it might be said that David could only really see this once his deliverance was accomplished. In the midst of his trial David had many reasons and occasions to wonder where the delivering hand of God was. God's deliverance is always seen most clearly looking back; looking forward it can only be seen by faith.

- 16 He reached down from on high, he took me;  
he drew me out of mighty waters.
- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,  
and from those who hated me;  
for they were too mighty for me.
- 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity;  
but the Lord was my support.
- 19 He brought me out into a broad place;  
he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

### Psalm 18:16-19

He took me; he drew me out of mighty waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy. Like a man under a flood, David knew that his enemies were too strong for him, i.e. too mighty for me, but that God could deliver him.

He brought me out into a broad place. The strong hand of God not only plucked David from the flood, but it also set him in a place of safety.

He delivered me, because he delighted in me. It can be said that David meant this in two ways. Firstly, he delighted in David in the sense that he chose him, anointed him, and set <<*his steadfast love*>> (Psalm 17:7) upon David. Secondly, he delighted in David because he lived a righteous although not a sin free life, as explained in the following verses.

#### Psalm 18:20-30 - David's Claim of Faithfulness.

In these verses David claims that he has faithfully kept the ways of the Lord (v.21), and thus God has recompensed or rewarded him (v.20 and v.24). This could be taken as absurdly self-righteous if it were not for two obvious facts: firstly, this song comes from 2 Samuel, which is open about David's sins; and secondly, the ways, ordinances, and statutes of the Lord (v.22) include provisions for receiving forgiveness of sins. Thus the claim of v.21, <<*I ... have not wickedly departed from my God*>>, clarifies it all by saying that he has held fast to the life of faith.

- 20 The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness;  
according to the cleanness of my hands he recompensed me.
- 21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord,  
and have not wickedly departed from my God.
- 22 For all his ordinances were before me,  
and his statutes I did not put away from me.
- 23 I was blameless before him,  
and I kept myself from guilt.
- 24 Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my  
righteousness,  
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

#### Psalm 18:20-24

The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness. During his long season of affliction under Saul, David was challenged to respond in unrighteous ways. He had many opportunities to strike against Saul as a matter of self-defence. Yet David consistently conducted himself in righteousness, and knew that God rewarded him because of it: <<*All one's ways may be pure in one's own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit*>> (Proverbs 16:2).

For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God; I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from guilt. This was not a

claim of sinless perfection on David's part. In fact, the year or so before the death of King Saul was spent in some significant measure of spiritual and moral compromise (1 Samuel Chapter 27 and Chapters 29-30). Yet through it all David kept a core of integrity towards God, was correctable despite his failings, and most importantly did not fail in the greatest test: to gain the throne through killing or undermining Saul. It is believed that this Psalm -recorded twice in Scripture, with minor variations, both here and at 2 Samuel Chapter 22 - actually speaks from two contexts. Here, according to the title, it was sung first from David's victory over Saul and receiving of the throne of Israel. In 2 Samuel Chapter 22 David sung it as a grateful retrospect over his entire life. He can say I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God in both contexts, but with somewhat different meaning. It meant one thing to say it before his sin with Bathsheba and against Uriah; it was another thing to say it after that sin.

I kept myself from guilt. Some think this is arrogance or pride on David's part. Spurgeon quotes one commentator who protested, 'Kept himself! Who made man his own keeper?' Yet it is known there is certainly a sense in which humankind must keep themselves from sin, even as Paul spoke of a man cleansing himself for God's glory and for greater service: *<<All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work>>* (2 Timothy 2:21). A personal danger may be seen in the words 'my guilt'. It shows that there is iniquity in every person, and that one must be on special guard against one's own tendencies to sin. The prophet spoke the truth that: *<<All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way>>* (Isaiah 53:6a). A sinful nature may be in everyone from birth; it may be been educated into individuals by a bad family or by bad company. Personal iniquity may come through temptations, through adversity, or through prosperity - even through blessings. These words of David also speak of a special guard. David was determined to keep himself from his iniquity. One may object: 'Yet David did not keep himself from his iniquity, and some years after this he sinned with Bathsheba and he grievously sinned against Uriah.' That is true, and David was disciplined greatly for that sin. Nevertheless, it is not recorded that he sinned in a similar way after his repentance from that terrible transgression. There is a real sense in which after his repentance, David did keep himself from his iniquity all over again. As Benjamin Franklin wrote: "Many princes sin with David, but few repent with him."

Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness. David resisted the remarkably strong temptation to depose Saul and take the throne promised to him by either violence or intrigue. This was the consistent expression of righteousness that the Lord rewarded by giving David a throne that could not be taken from him. David here simply testified to his clean conscience, which is a good and wonderful thing.

According to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. David is not proclaiming personal righteousness through any personal attribute or moral stance. He recognises that he is righteous in the sight of God purely due to God's grace. For Christians this statement is achieved through the redemptive work of Christ on the Cross that makes all believers clean in the sight of God.

- 25 With the loyal you show yourself loyal;  
with the blameless you show yourself blameless;
- 26 with the pure you show yourself pure;  
and with the crooked you show yourself perverse.
- 27 For you deliver a humble people,  
but the haughty eyes you bring down.

### Psalm 18:25-27

With the loyal you show yourself loyal. David understood a basic principle of God's dealings with humans; that God often treats a person in the same way that people treats others. Jesus explained this principle in the Sermon on the Mount: <<*For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get*>> (Matthew 7:2). Human nature wants to use a small measure of mercy with others, but expect a large measure of mercy from God. Jesus teaches his followers to expect the same measure from God that they give to others.

With the pure you show yourself pure. The theme continues and was one that was picked up in the NT: <<*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God*>> (Matthew 5:8), <<*And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God*>> (Philippians 1:9-11), <<*Do not ordain anyone hastily, and do not participate in the sins of others; keep yourself pure*>> (1 Timothy 5:22), and: <<*To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure. Their very minds and consciences are corrupted*>> (Titus 1:15).

The attitude of God towards humankind is created by their attitude towards him. This principle works in a positive way; those who show great mercy are given great mercy. It also works in a negative way: with the crooked you show yourself perverse. Perhaps the greatest illustration of this was how God used the shrewd Laban to educate the devious Jacob (Genesis Chapters 27-28).

It is significant that this appears to be the Psalm that celebrates David's victory over Saul; this principle was mightily illustrated in both the lives of David and

Saul through their ongoing conflict. Translators have had trouble with the second half of v.26 because it communicates a difficult concept. It is easy say that if a man is pure towards God then God will be pure to him. However, it cannot be said that if a man is wicked towards God then God will be wicked towards him, because God cannot be evil or wicked.

For you deliver a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down. God loves to give grace to the humble, and likewise resists the proud: <<*But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble'*>> (James 4:6), and: <<*In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble'*>> (1 Peter 5:5).

- 28 It is you who light my lamp;  
the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.
- 29 By you I can crush a troop,  
and by my God I can leap over a wall.
- 30 This God – his way is perfect;  
the promise of the Lord proves true;  
he is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

### Psalm 18:28-30

It is you who light my lamp. David now moves from joyful thanks for the past to confidence for the future. The same God who brought him to the throne would give him the light he needed to rule, and lights up his darkness.

By you I can crush a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. This gives thanks for past victories, and thanks God for present strength. One might think that after the 20 or so years of living as a fugitive from Saul, David would simply be exhausted. This was not the case; with God empowering him, he felt strong enough to accomplish superhuman feats.

This God – his way is perfect. This indicates that following the Lord's blameless way, confirmed in v.21, is what enables a man to become blameless (v.23 and v.25).

The promise of the Lord proves true. Literally, this means 'tried in the fire', a common theme in Scripture: <<*And I will put this third into the fire, refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The Lord is our God'*>> (Zechariah 13:9), <<*the work of each builder*

*will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done>>* (1 Corinthians 3:13), and: <<*so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed>>* (1 Peter 1:7). It has stood all tests; and has never failed those who pleaded it before its author. David could say, the promise of the Lord proves true from his personal experience. The word given to David - that he would be the next king of Israel, plus hundreds of smaller promises - had been proven true. Many do not know this from their own experience because they will never allow themselves to be put in a situation where God must prove his Word to be true. David knew the truth of this from the extreme circumstances of his life.

### Psalm 18:31-45 - The Lord Has Given Me Victory.

David's rescue (vv.16-19) came by way of his military prowess, which was itself God's gift. In the books of Samuel those enemies included both Israelites and Gentiles, and both are in view here, i.e. Israel described as 'the peoples' (v.43), and by 'they cried to the Lord' (v.41); and the Gentile nations, 'people whom I had not known' (v.43), and confirmed in vv.44-45 as foreigners.

- 31 For who is God except the Lord?  
And who is a rock besides our God? –
- 32 the God who girded me with strength,  
and made my way safe.
- 33 He made my feet like the feet of a deer,  
and set me secure on the heights.
- 34 He trains my hands for war,  
so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
- 35 You have given me the shield of your salvation,  
and your right hand has supported me;  
your help has made me great.
- 36 You gave me a wide place for my steps under me,  
and my feet did not slip.

### Psalm 18:31-36

For who is God except the Lord? David here celebrated the reality of the God of Israel against the illusions of the gods of the nations. The Philistines, the Moabites,

the Edomites, and all the rest had their gods; but only Yahweh, i.e. the Lord, is truly God.

**The God who girded me with strength; He made my feet like the feet of a deer.** David knew by experience the strength of God given to him, and also the skill to use such strength. This skill was like the skill that deer have, who can run effortlessly upon the high places; sure footed on steep slopes and narrow paths. David sang about the way God helped him to make war. God gave him strength, helped him to run swiftly and on a secure path, i.e. **makes my way safe**, with **feet like the feet of deer**: <<*God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights*>> (Habakkuk 3:19), he made him strong enough to **bend a bow of bronze**, and gave to him **the shield of your salvation**. As a warrior, David knew God as one who helped him to make war triumphantly. Just as God gave David what he needed, i.e. physical strength and skill, God will also give to those who trust in him what they need, although seldom what they want.

**Your right hand has supported me; your help has made me great.** David was held by the strength and skill of God's right hand, and made great by the gentleness of God. One does not often think of someone being made great by the gentleness of God. It is easy to underestimate the power of God's gentleness and people often want a more evidently spectacular work from God. Yet David - this great warrior - received from and responded to the gentleness of God.

In many ways God had shown his gentleness to David, and there were even more ways after his victory over Saul and taking of the throne:

- God's gentleness was great to David when he was the least member of his own family, neglected, ignored, tending the sheep in solitude.
- God's gentleness was great to David when Saul began to envy and hate him; consoling the soul of David who was rejected by the king.
- God's gentleness was great to David by giving him a friend like Jonathan.
- God's gentleness was great to David by allowing him to have the holy bread at the tabernacle when fleeing from Saul.
- God's gentleness was great to David through Abigail, who kept him from slaughtering a foolish man and his family.
- God's gentleness was great to David by granting him the self-control to spare Saul's life at least twice.
- God's gentleness was great to David even when he was foolish, such as when he acted like a madman in the court of a Philistine ruler.
- God's gentleness was great to David to gently prevent him fighting on behalf of the Philistines against Saul and Israel.
- God's gentleness was great to David when he lost all at Ziklag; where David encouraged himself in the Lord and recovered all.

It can be also seen what this gentleness of God did: it made David great. It can be said that the gentleness of God makes every believer great also, more than they often consider:

- Some people are great because of their royal birth; who has a greater claim to royal birth than the son or daughter of the King of kings?
- Some people are great because of their election; what greater election is there than to be the elect of God?
- Some people are great because of their wealth; who has greater riches than the children and heirs of the God who owns everything?
- Some people are great because of their victories; who has achieved greater victory than the one who is in unity with Jesus Christ, the greatest champion of all?
- Some people are great because of their influence; who has greater influence than the child of God who can move the hand of God with their faithful and righteous prayers?
- Some people are great because of their discoveries; who has discovered anything greater than the nature of the infinite and eternal God?
- Some people are great because of their history; who has a greater heritage than a member of the body of Christ as it spans through the ages and generations?
- Some people are great because of their destiny; who has a more glorious and amazing destiny than the heirs of his glory; those who are his own inheritance?

37 I pursued my enemies and overtook them;  
and did not turn back until they were consumed.

38 I struck them down, so that they were not able to rise;  
they fell under my feet.

39 For you girded me with strength for the battle;  
you made my assailants sink under me.

40 You made my enemies turn their backs to me,  
and those who hated me I destroyed.

41 They cried for help, but there was no one to save them;  
they cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them.

42 I beat them fine, like dust before the wind;  
I cast them out like the mire of the streets.

### Psalm 18:37-42

I pursued my enemies and overtook them. Here David had in mind those other than Saul, whom he did not describe in any specific sense as his enemy. David knew that as king of Israel he would have to face enemies from surrounding nations, and here he celebrated the past victories God had given him against his enemies: <<*You shall give chase to your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword*>> (Leviticus 26:7).

And did not turn back until they were consumed; you made my enemies turn their backs to me. David fought as a true warrior, and sought to utterly defeat the enemies of Israel on the field of battle. He properly believed that God gave him the victory over these enemies.

43 You delivered me from strife with the peoples;  
you made me head of the nations;  
people whom I had not known served me.

44 As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me;  
foreigners came cringing to me.

45 Foreigners lost heart,  
and came trembling out of their strongholds.

### Psalm 18:43-45

You delivered me from strife with the peoples. David knew that taking the throne of Israel was more than just a matter of removing Saul. There were also the strivings of the people, of those who did not immediately support David as king over a united Israel (2 Samuel Chapters 2-5).

You made me head of the nations. David also knew that God would raise him up not only as the king of Israel, but as a regional power with authority over neighbouring nations who brought him tribute. This promise has an even greater fulfilment in the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ, when David will be the king over the millennial Israel, which will be exalted above the other nations of the earth: <<*Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you*>> (Isaiah 55:3-5).

As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me. It could be said that v.44 speaks of obedience to Jesus. This not only reveals of the obligation of the believer, but also

that one can immediately come to Jesus Christ, be converted, and live obediently to God. No probation period is necessary.

### Psalm 18:46-50 - God Is Faithful to His Anointed King.

This section stresses that David's place of prominence has come from the Lord and is therefore not the product of his own greed and lust for power. Indeed, the expectation that he will 'extol' the 'Lord among the nations' (v.49) returns readers to the call of Abram, in whom the nations were to find blessing, refer to Genesis 12:1-3.

46 The Lord lives! Blessed be my rock,  
and exalted be the God of my salvation,  
47 the God who gave me vengeance  
and subdued peoples under me;  
48 who delivered me from my enemies;  
indeed, you exalted me above my adversaries;  
you delivered me from the violent.

### Psalm 18:46-48

The Lord lives! Blessed be my rock. All of this made David love and honour the Lord more than ever. He gave praise to God for the great things he had done. He had truly delivered David from the violent man, most notably the murderous Saul who hunted him. Christians can give similar praise for what Jesus has done for them: <<*For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God*>> (2 Corinthians 13:4).

49 For this I will extol you, O Lord, among the nations,  
and sing praises to your name.

### Psalm 18:49

For this I will extol you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing praises to your name. On one level, this was David praising God for his deliverance and safety among his neighbouring kingdoms. Paul employs this verse in Romans 15:9 as a part of his proof that it was always God's plan that the Gentiles should receive the light, especially through the Davidic line, of which Jesus is the ultimate heir. While its use in Romans 15:9 shows that the Holy Spirit spoke of Jesus and his work here, it also has a unique application to David himself.

50 Great triumphs he gives to his king,  
and shows steadfast love to his anointed,  
to David and his descendants for ever.

### Psalm 18:50

Great triumphs he gives to his king. The Psalm puts the victories and escapes into perspective, as part of God's commitment to his people and the whole world.

Steadfast love to David and his descendants for ever echoes 2 Samuel 7:12-16. Here David understood something by either intuition or by faith; something that would not be specifically promised to him until later. The promise was that David and not Saul would begin a hereditary monarchy in Israel, and that his descendants would also sit on the throne of Israel. This was the promise to build a house for David that God explicitly made in 2 Samuel 7:1-17.

If the whole Psalm is reviewed with Messianic intent then the reader can reflect on the following:

- **Verses 1-6 suggest his death:** <<*The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of perdition assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me*>>.
- **Verses 7-18 suggest his resurrection:** <<*Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked*>> and: <<*He reached down from on high, he took me; he drew me out of mighty waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me*>>.
- **Verses 19-27 suggest his exaltation:** <<*I have kept the ways of the Lord*>>, <<*I was blameless before him*>>, and: <<*Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness*>>.
- **Verses 28-42 suggest his victory:** <<*By you I can crush a troop*>>, and: <<*I pursued my enemies and overtook them*>>. Jesus was strong enough to run against a troop and be victorious; the enemies against would-be believers were strong and disciplined; yet Jesus confronted them and defeated them. Jesus was great enough to jump over a wall; the wall of God's holy law that separated people from him. He did not destroy the wall; instead with his holy life he jumped over it and fulfilled the law on behalf of humankind.
- **Verses 43-50 suggest his Kingdom:** <<*you made me head of the nations*>>, <<*as soon as they heard of me they obeyed me*>>, <<*indeed, you exalted me above my adversaries*>>, and: <<*for this I will extol you, O Lord, among the nations*>>.