

## **Psalm 18**

This Psalm is virtually the same as the Psalm sung by David at the very end of his life, as recorded in 2 Samuel 22. In 2 Samuel 22 David sung it as a grateful retrospect over his entire life.

Its relationship to Genesis 24 and the story of Rebekah is shown by the last verse of the haftarah reading from **Isaiah 13**

**Isaiah 13:4** - "The LORD who commands armies is mustering forces for battle."

And the previous blessing over Rebekah: "be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." (**Genesis 24:60**)

Historically, David is rejoicing in his deliverance from Saul, when he believed he faced almost certain death, and his victory over his enemies.

But it projects and prophetically reflects Christ's resurrection, and his ultimate victory over death. David's kingdom is a prototype for Christ's kingdom.

**Psalm 18:4-6** - A picture of Christ on the cross, and descending to the depths of hell:

The pangs of death surrounded me,  
And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.  
The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;  
The snares of death confronted me.  
In my distress I called upon the LORD,  
And cried out to my God;  
He heard my voice *from His temple*,  
And my cry came before Him, even to His ears.

There was not yet a temple in Jerusalem. Yet David knew that God had a temple, a heavenly temple that was the model for the tabernacle and the later temple (Exodus 25:9, 40), and that God heard prayer from heaven.

### **David praises God with nine titles:**

- His strength; the one that empowered him to survive against and defeat his enemies.
- 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; "my strong God, not only the object of my adoration, but he who puts strength in my soul." (Clarke)

- His strength; but this uses a different Hebrew word than in Psalm 18:1. According to Clarke, the idea behind this word is fountain, source, origin.
- His shield, who defends both his head and his heart.
- His horn, meaning his strength and defense.
- His stronghold, his high tower of refuge where he could see an enemy from a great distance and be protected from the adversary.

### **How could David say “ I kept myself from my iniquity”?**

**Psalm 18:20** - “The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands has he recompensed me.”

This could be understood as the righteousness of David's cause, and of his innocence with respect to the things he was charged with by his enemies, and his refusal to harm Saul (which he could have done twice).

“But it is best of all to apply it to Christ, and understand it of his righteousness” - Gill's Exposition

David was a man after God's own heart. He not only sinned, but repented with his whole heart. That repentance means God sees only his Son, not us, and His righteousness is reckoned as ours..

**Numbers 23:21** - “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.” (This was Balaam's God-directed blessing over Israel, although they had certainly been rebellious).

**Psalm 18:25-27** - “with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.”  
Perhaps the greatest illustration of this was how God used the shrewd Laban to educate the devious Jacob (**Genesis 27-28**).

**Psalm 18:30** - “As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.”

The Hebrew word *tsaraph* (in this verse translated “tried”) means “to test, to purify and to refine,” as a silversmith would refine his metal. When confronted with Torah, our lives are conformed to His Word, we ourselves are refined as human beings, and the word of the Lord is tested and proved to be genuine and reliable.

### **Only one God**

**Psalm 18:31** - "For who is God, except the LORD?"

Jews recite daily the "shema" from Deuteronomy 6:4 - "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One."

"Vain were the idols of the ancient world, Baal and Jupiter; as vain are those of modern times - pleasure, honor, and profit. They cannot bestow content, or make their votaries happy below; much less can they deliver from death, or open the everlasting doors above." (Horne commentary)

**Psalm 18:33-34** - "He makes my feet like the feet of deer, And sets me (*`amad* - to make a stand) on my high places (*bamah*). He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze."

(Repeated in **Habakkuk 3:19** - "He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.")

A double metaphor is depicted - the high places can represent dangerous precipices where sure footing is needed. It also refers to the hilltop worship of idols. This is hinted at in Psalm 18:31 - "For who is God, except the LORD?"

When we "take a stand" against our own idolatry, confronting our own personal "high places", standing on our own "high places," Paul tells us to "revenge the disobedience." (2 Corinthians 10:6)

**Psalm 18:38** - "I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet."

i.e. my enemies are cast down to the ground, so that I may tread upon their necks, after the manner of conquerors. David's lineage would bring forth the Messiah, the Deliverer of Genesis 3:15 who would crush the head of the serpent - "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

"Satan and his principalities and powers, whose head is broke, whose works are destroyed; yea, he himself, which had the power of death, so as not to be able to rise more against Christ, who has led captivity captive: he has also finished and made an end of sin, and overcome the world; nor did he turn back from this work he engaged in until he had made a complete conquest; and moreover he has likewise made his people more than conquerors, through him, over these same enemies; so that the words are also applicable to them." - Gill's Exposition

**Psalm 18:50** - "Great deliverance gives he to his king; and shows mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for ever more."

“By his seed is meant the Messiah, who was of his seed according to the flesh; or of the Messiah, whose name signifies Anointed; and who is often called David, (Ezekiel 34:23, Hosea 3:5); and so some of the Jewish doctors (Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2.) from this verse prove that the name of the Messiah is David: and by his seed are meant his spiritual seed; all the elect of God, who are given him as his children, to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father: and as mercy is kept with him for evermore, Psalm 89:28; so it is shown to them in regeneration, in the forgiveness of their sins, and in their everlasting salvation.” - Gill’s Exposition

### **Summary: The Messiah in the Psalm**

- **Psalm 18:1-6** suggests His death (the pangs of death encompassed me ... the sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me).

- **Psalm 18:7-18** suggests His resurrection (the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken ... He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy).

- **Psalm 18:19-27** suggests His exaltation (I have kept the ways of the LORD ... I was also blameless before Him ... Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness).

- **Psalm 18:28-42** suggests His victory (For by You I can run against a troop ... I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them). Jesus was strong enough to run against a troop and be victorious; the enemies against us 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 us from Him. He didn't destroy the wall; instead with His holy life He jumped over it and fulfilled the law on our behalf.

- **Psalm 18:43-50** suggests His kingdom (You have made me the head of the nations ... The foreigners submit to me ... You also lift me up above those who rise against me ... Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles).

(See David Guzik :: Study Guide for Psalm 18 - <http://buff.ly/2IBXTpF> )