

PSALM 18 – GREAT DELIVERANCE GIVETH HE TO HIS ANOINTED! (1)

INTRODUCTION – If there is a psalm that assures the child of God that his LORD hears, helps and delivers him when he is in dire need, it has to be Psalm 18! The superscription, which is part of inspired Holy Writ, reveals the author as well as the circumstances that precipitated the writing of this precious and very comforting psalm. The superscription says, “To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: ...”.

David called himself the servant of the LORD even though he was the king of Israel when this psalm was penned (verse 50). He realized that before his LORD, he was not a king. Instead, the LORD was his king! David was merely a servant who belonged to the LORD and would always seek to do the LORD’s bidding. This psalm was written after the LORD delivered David from the hand of all his enemies and from Saul. The fact that Saul is mentioned here seems to indicate that this psalm could very well have been written in the early stages of David’s 33 year reign as king of Israel. The other open enemy in David’s life was his own son Absalom who usurped David’s throne momentarily before David took back his kingdom. Absalom could not be classified as just one of “his enemies” if this psalm was written after Absalom’s defeat and death! Absalom was too great an enemy and what he did was devastating, perhaps even more devastating than what Saul did. Saul tried to stop David from becoming the next king of Israel. Absalom tried to stop David from reigning as the legitimate God-anointed king of Israel! If this psalm was written soon after David became king of the united Israel, then the identity of his enemies would be the Philistines and all those who took Saul's side against David the fugitive.

The theme of this psalm is heartfelt praise from one who walked very intimately with his God. His experiences with God flows copiously throughout this psalm from start to finish. There was no pretense but a total and complete honesty. He bared his soul like a little child revealing to his loving father how grateful and appreciative he was for all that his father had done for him. The protection, provision, care, love and intimacy that only a child can enjoy are all expressed in this tremendous psalm of praise and love! We can feel the joy and deep gratitude that David had for his LORD. May all of God’s children experience the same as we learn from this wonderful Psalm of David!

I. A Heartfelt Deliverance! – 18:1-2 – The first thing that David expressed was that he would love the LORD. How appropriate an exclamation from David the King of Israel. He testified of the mercies and goodness of God in his life as the LORD delivered him from his many enemies throughout his years as a fugitive! The LORD alone was his strength. David did not lean on his men for strength as they also wanted him dead when they lost their belongings

and families to the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 30. Also, the help rendered by many men came only if someone or something they loved more was not at risk. This is the sad case of leaning on man for help! However, the LORD will never fail His own. David experienced the strength of the LORD in the face of his many enemies who wanted him dead. The LORD kept him in the most holy faith! David did not stop trusting the LORD to see him through. This strength is not physical but spiritual. The believer's struggle is always one of trust and faith! The strength that the LORD gives to His own is always to strengthen the trust and faith so that the child of God will not deny his LORD.

Verse 2 – The pronoun “my” is used eight times to highlight and emphasize David's personal relationship with his LORD. The LORD is David's Rock which represents stability and steadfastness. The LORD can be leaned upon and He will not fail. He did not fail David at all! The LORD is David's Fortress which represents security and protection. No hurt or harm can befall David without the LORD's permission. The LORD will keep His children perfectly safe as far as their faith is concerned. The LORD is David's deliverer who keeps His charge safe from harm. This does not mean that God's children will not suffer physical hurt if it is God's will for the persecution to come their way. The Bible is replete with examples of such persecutions. However, the LORD can protect His children from physical harm if and when He so chooses as in Daniel 3. Daniel's three friends were thrown into the fiery furnace and were not burned. Also, in Daniel 6, Daniel was thrown into the lion's den and was not touched by the ravenous lions. The LORD is David's God. This is a blanket statement that covers the sovereign power of God over David's life. Whenever the name “elohiym” (“God”) is used, the power of God is emphasized as opposed to the use of “Jehovah” (the LORD”) whereby the covenantal relationship is emphasized. The LORD is also David's strength. The emphasis here is that the LORD is all powerful. No one is able to overcome Him. If there is hurt or harm in the lives of His children, it must never be construed that the LORD was caught off guard or that the enemy had suddenly become more powerful. The LORD will always be David's strength. No matter how great the adversity, David would continue to trust in the LORD Who knows best. David would not sin against God by indulging in self pity or murmuring. Hence, David concluded with “in whom I will trust.” How could David not trust in his LORD since He was everything to David!

The LORD is David's buckler. A buckler is a shield. The shield represents protection from hurt or harm to soul and body as mentioned above. Phrases like “horn of my salvation” and “high tower” refer to the same truth. The truth is that David's safety and security was in his LORD and no one else. These are substantives used by David to describe the completeness and the absolute nature of his personal safety no matter what his many enemies might plan and do. They were utterly and totally helpless against David because the LORD was on his side.

II. A Cry before Deliverance – 18:3-6 – Since the LORD is all that David has described so intimately, David would surely cry to the LORD when in trouble. Hence, the next verse describes David continually calling upon the LORD to intervene and help. The future tense, rather than past tense, emphasizes David’s constant cry to the LORD for help. The LORD is indeed worthy to be praised! The rest of the psalm reveals the rationale behind David’s statement that it is the LORD alone who is worthy of David’s praise. David deliberately used the future passive tense in the last part of verse 3 to highlight the constancy of his cry to the LORD. Based upon past experiences he will continue to cry to the LORD in the future when he finds himself in dire straits again. David knew that the LORD would always save him no matter what he would face in the future! There will never be an enemy more powerful than his LORD. His LORD will never sleep. He will not allow David to be tempted beyond what he is able to bear and will with every temptation make a way of escape so that David will be able to stand up under the load of the adversity!

Verses 4-5 – How dire were David’s trials? The trials were so severe that he said in verse 4, “the sorrows of death compassed me” and “the sorrows of hell compassed me about” in verse 5. The reality of the fear in David’s life is clear. To be afraid of one’s enemies is not to be denied. Only fools are not afraid of impending death. It is what one does when one is afraid that makes a world of difference. In David’s case, he turned to his LORD for comfort and deliverance! He received them. David thought that he would die by the hands of his mortal enemies who hunted him like an animal. There was no one in all of Israel who could help him and who could stand up against his many enemies, especially king Saul. David’s enemies came like a flood. David used the plural “floods” revealing that this happened many times. There were at least three recorded times when king Saul came to arrest and kill David with his many soldiers. David sorrowed for fear that he would die! He also sorrowed of hell, i.e. to go to the grave, which is similar to “death” in verse 4. David did not doubt his own salvation here. He was surrounded by many who wanted him dead. “The snares of death prevented me” means that David’s enemies set traps to catch him and they anticipated his every move so that he felt so trapped and helpless. He was boxed in by all the snares of his enemies. They seemed to be everywhere no matter where David went. There was absolutely no place of safety left for David in all of Israel!

Verse 6 – While David was in distress, i.e. literally in a tight place (felt boxed in), he called upon the LORD. The “called upon” here is the same as in verse 3. It refers to a general crying out with sound. The use of the name, “the LORD” is obviously an appeal to the covenantal relationship. Then David said that he cried, literally he shouted out loud in distress, but this time the name was changed from “the LORD” to “my God”! The word “cry” here is a stronger word than the

previous one. The different usage of the word highlights the intensity of David's situation. Please also note the addition of the word "my" which makes it even more personal! David was confident that the LORD heard him out of His Temple. The "temple" here is the heavenly Temple that David mentioned in Psalm 11, rather than the Temple of Solomon which was not built yet. This means that the LORD heard David from His throne. David's cry, i.e. literally a cry of distress (the same as the second word), came before God, even unto His ears! David was a child of God and he knew that his prayers for deliverance were heard by the LORD. The LORD will deliver in His time.

(To be continued)