

**GOD WITH US**  
**Part 3: A King in place of THE KING.**  
**1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel**

**Message 17 – The Song of David’s Life**  
**Psalm 18 (also 2Samuel 22)**

**Introduction**

David was known as “*the sweet psalmist of Israel*” (2Samuel 23:1). Besides being a warrior and king, he was a musician and songwriter, responsible for composing half of the Hebrew songbook (75 of the 150 Psalms are attributed to David). Psalm 23, the “shepherd’s Psalm,” is certainly the most well known of David’s songs; but Psalm 18 may be the most important. It is found also in 2Samuel 22 as the *summary Psalm of David’s life* (the *only* Psalm actually included in the narrative portion of his story). Its placement at the end of David’s story makes it a fitting summary of David’s experiences with God. It also serves as David’s grand song of praise and thanksgiving, so that the nations might know his amazing God. He was putting God on display by writing about His awesome attributes and actions. “*I will give thanks to You among the nations, O Lord, and I will sing praises to Your name*” (Psalm 18:49).

*David shows us how to be very specific when we praise and thank God for who He is and what He has done in our lives. The words he chose were very personal to his own experiences with God. We might not have a literal “enemy” as David describes, but we do have very real things that we battle against. Like David, we can learn to invite God into the struggles of our lives, and to praise and thank Him for His intervention and protection.*

**God was David’s Rock: 18:1-6**

There were many times when David felt as if *the cords of death were wrapping themselves around his neck* (18:4). During the first 15 years after being anointed as a youth, Saul repeatedly tried to kill him. Then, during the first 20 years of his rule, he faced other nations that were fighting against him. He could not have survived without God’s ongoing protection. For this reason, David began his singing of his love for his “rock” of refuge and safety.

***“I love You, O Lord, my strength.” The Lord is my ROCK and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my ROCK, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies” (18:1-3).***

When David spoke of God as his “rock” he had two different ideas in mind. The first was that of a stable place to stand above the threats of an enemy. In Psalm 40 David says: *“He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm” (Ps. 40:2)*. The second idea is that of a rocky cave or a hiding place. This is the meaning in Psalm 18:1-3 where David praised God for being his rock, fortress, stronghold and place of refuge. He was recalling the many years fleeing from Saul in the wilderness when he was forced to hide in caves and strongholds (i.e. “rocks”). There, God saved David from the murderous hands of his enemy.

***“So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam” (1Samuel 22:1).***

***“David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand” (1Samuel 23:14).***

What personal “enemies are you now facing? Is it a personal weakness where you need God’s strength? Is it a potential loss where you need God’s provision? Is it a person that is attacking you and you need God’s protection? Are you finding your “hiding place” in God? In Psalm 62, David encouraged himself and others to trust ONLY in God as the ROCK of refuge in times of trouble. “My soul, wait in silence for God ONLY, for my hope is from Him. He ONLY is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us” (Psalm 62:6-8). What, or who do you trust in for your security in life? Can you declare with David that GOD is your rock of refuge?

### **God was David’s Warrior: 18:7-19**

David was known as a mighty warrior who subdued all of Israel’s surrounding enemies. Yet, he was quick to acknowledge that it was actually GOD who was *his* warrior, the One who came to his defense and gave him victory in the great battles of life.

***“He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me” (18:17).***

God is not limited in the means of His intervention in our lives. David here vividly pictures God rushing from heaven onto the battlefield of his life. He used imagery to describe how God showed up in his time of need: like a violent earthquake, a volcanic eruption, a terrifying thunderstorm, a devastating hailstorm, and an overwhelming flood. (There were some battles where God *literally* intervened on David’s behalf with the forces of nature.)

***“Then the earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry. Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire from His mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down with thick darkness under His feet . . . The Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire. He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them. Then the channels of water appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at Your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils” (18:7-15).***

Sometimes we need God to show up in power to deal with enemies that are too strong for us. Other times, we need Him to show up with gentle tenderness to comfort us in times of hurt or loss. Still other times, we need Him to come as a wise counselor, giving direction and counsel to us. Or, He may arrive as a loving Father to discipline us and shape our character. Our job is to call upon the Lord and invite His involvement in our lives. His job is to choose the means by which He will come to us.

*If you have been calling out to God for help, He has been at work in your life. Think back through predicaments and hardships you have been in. How has God shown up for you? Did a person just “happen” to stop and help. Did you suddenly remember something you had forgotten to do that would have been a disaster if it had not been brought back to your mind? Did a friend call you “out of the blue” when you were struggling? Did a solution just come out of nowhere? God is always at work in our lives. We often fail to take notice and give Him thanks. Consider how He has been coming to you. What metaphor would you use to describe the ways that God has been showing up in your life?*

## God was David's Vindicator: 18:20-27

The language in this section sounds as if it came from the earlier period in David's life, before his major failures. He makes a strong connection between his own righteousness and the Lord's favor in his life.

***“The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His ordinances were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also blameless with Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity. Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes” (18:20-24).***

Keeping in mind the context of the entire Psalm (David's struggles against his many enemies), it is likely that David was referring to the “reward” of God's *vindication* from the attacks of his enemies. David was *not* saying: God has rewarded me because I am a perfect man. He *was* saying: God has vindicated me (given me victory over my opponents) because I have tried to live with integrity in my heart.

Some of David's other Psalms are prayers for vindication against enemies. In these other passages, David connected God's vindication of him to his personal integrity of heart:

***“Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Examine me, O Lord, and try me; test my mind and my heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth” (Ps. 26:1-3).***

***“Hear a just cause, O Lord, give heed to my cry; give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips. Let my vindication come forth from Your presence; let Your eyes look with equity. You have tried my heart; You have visited me by night; You have tested me and You find nothing” (Psalm 17:1-3).***

Thus, in Psalm 18 David was praising God for seeing every situation *as it truly was*, not as wicked opponents made things out to be. God was the One Person who knew David inside out, and came to His defense against unjust and ungodly accusers.

We cannot expect God to be our vindicator if we are not walking with integrity in our hearts. On the other hand, if we have been living from a genuine heart, we can expect the reward of God's vindication. Is there some situation in your life where you are being unjustly accused, attacked or maligned? Call upon God to be your vindicator. He knows the real truth behind every situation, and the real motives beneath every action. Trust God to bring your vindication forth from His presence (Psalm 17:2).

### **God was David's Strength: 18:28-40**

***“He makes my feet like hinds’ feet, and sets me upon my high places. He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, and Your right hand upholds me; and Your gentleness makes me great. You enlarge my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped” (18:33-36).***

David uses several different metaphors to picture the strength that God gave to him in different situations. The most unusual is the metaphor of a female deer (hind) walking securely on high places. The deer David refers to is extremely sure-footed, able to run among rocks and cliffs with elegance and efficiency. The fluctuating terrain does not throw her off, nor is she at all terrified by the heights of the mountain cliffs. She moves on high places with the same kind of sure-footedness and security that she traverses the level paths of the lowlands.

David knew that life is not some smooth, easy road; rather, it is full of unevenness, uncertainty and danger. Yet, he experienced the strengthening hand of God that made him able to navigate the treacherous terrain of life with skill and security.

This metaphor of the hind on high places was later picked up by the prophet Habakkuk in his description of how God enabled him to handle the great difficulties of his life:

***“The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds’ feet, and makes me walk on my high places” (Hab. 3:19).***

Are you currently walking through some treacherous terrain in high places? Do you have difficult decisions to make? If you ask Him to, God will guide your steps so that you will not stumble and fall. Do not try to navigate this dangerous terrain on your own. HE is the One who can make your feet like hinds’ feet. HE can take you safely through the unsafe passages of life.

## God was David's Savior: 18:41-50

In the concluding lines, David used the Hebrew word “salvation” three different times. He was using the word not in reference to *spiritual salvation*; rather in terms of *deliverance* from the trials and troubles of life. First, speaking of his enemies:

***“They cried for help, but there was none to SAVE, even to the Lord, but He did not answer them” (18:41).***

Where there is no *relationship with God*, there can be no expectation that He will suddenly ‘show up.’ Second, David refers to his own experiences of God’s saving works in his life:

***The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of MY SALVATION” (18:46).***

Finally, he summarizes the entire picture of his life with God as a life of “salvations” (plural – repeated deliverances from peril):

***Therefore I will give thanks to You among the nations, O Lord, and I will sing praises to Your name. He gives great SALVATIONS to His king, and shows lovingkindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever.***

As you reflect upon your own life with God, what “salvations” has He brought about for you? When has He rescued you? Come through for you? Provided a way forward for you? Vindicated you? Fought for you? Given you a way of escape? Is it time for you to write your own “song of deliverances” in praise to your God for all He has done in your life?

### Takeaways from the Song of David's Life:

**1. Life is full of trials.** Even the “man after God’s own heart” lived amidst daily turmoil. *“Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all” (Ps. 34:19).*

**2. Invite God into your trials.** He wants to do the journey of life with you. *“In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears” (Psalm 18:6).*

**3. Celebrate God's character.** When God shows up for you, give Him praise and proclaim His mighty deeds to your world. *“I will give thanks to You among the nations, O Lord, and I will sing praises to Your name” (Psalm 18:49).*