

## PSALM 18

### I. BIBLICAL TEXT

#### THE LORD PRAISED FOR GIVING DELIVERANCE

**For the choir director.**

A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord  
who spoke to 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. And he said

#### **Praise for God's Help [vv1-3]**

**1** *"I love You, O Lord, my strength."* **2** *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.* **3** *I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.*

#### **God Rescues [vv4-19]**

The Distressing Situation [vv4-5]

**4** *The cords of death encompassed me, and the torrents of ungodliness terrified me.* **5** *The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me.*

Appeal to God [v6]

**6** *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.*

God Comes with Power and Might [vv7-15]

**7** *Then the earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry.* **8** *Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire from His mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it.* **9** *He bowed the heavens also and came down with thick darkness under His feet.* **10** *He rode upon a cherub and flew; and He sped upon the wings of the wind.* **11** *He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.* **12** *From the brightness before Him passed His thick clouds, hailstones and coals of fire.* **13** *The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire.* **14** *He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them.* **15** *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.*

God's Final Deliverance [vv16-19]

**16** *He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many 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 stay. 19 He brought me forth also into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.*

### **God's Way Is Perfect [vv20-30]**

#### **The Righteous King [vv20-24]**

*20 The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has 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 I did not put away His statutes from me. 23 I was also blameless with Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. 24 Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes.*

#### **The Perfection of God [vv25-30]**

*25 With the kind You show Yourself kind; with the blameless You show Yourself blameless; 26 with the pure You show Yourself pure, and with the crooked You show Yourself astute. 27 For You save an afflicted people, but haughty eyes You abase. 28 For You light my lamp; the Lord my God illumines my darkness. 29 For by You I can run upon a troop; And by my God I can leap over a wall. 30 As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the Lord is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.*

### **God Brings Total Victory [vv31-45]**

#### **Defeating the Enemy in Battle [vv31-42]**

*31 For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God, 32 The God who girds me with strength and makes my way blameless? 33 He makes my feet like hinds' feet and sets me upon my high places. 34 He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, and Your right hand upholds me; and Your gentleness makes me great. 36 You enlarge my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped. 37 I pursued my enemies and overtook them, and I did not turn back until they were consumed. 38 I shattered them, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. 39 For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. 40 You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, and I destroyed those who hated me. 41 They cried for help, but there was none to save, even to the Lord, but He did not answer them. 42 Then I beat them fine as the dust before the wind; I emptied them out as the mire of the streets.*

#### **Complete Dominion—Domestic and Foreign [vv43-45]**

*43 You have delivered me from the contentions of the people; You have placed me as head of the nations; a people whom I have not known serve me. 44 As soon as they hear, they obey me; foreigners submit to me. 45 Foreigners fade away, and come trembling out of their fortresses.*

### **Doxology [vv46-48]**

*46 The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of my salvation, 47 the God who executes vengeance for me, and subdues peoples under me. 48 He delivers me from my enemies; surely You lift me above those who rise up against me; You rescue me from the violent man.*

**Vow [49-50]**

*49 Therefore I will give thanks to You among the nations, O Lord, and I will sing praises to Your name. 50 He gives great deliverance to His king and shows lovingkindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever.*

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. TYPE OF PSALM**

1. FITS TWO CATEGORIES—IN HERMANN GUNKEL’S CATEGORIES
  - o Individual Thanksgiving
  - o Royal Psalm
2. SOME CLASSIFY IT A HYMN [PRAISE PSALM]
  - o Keil and Delitzsch—call it a ‘hymnic Psalm’—a Praise Hymn of Thanksgiving
  - o The longest ‘hymnic Psalm’—114 lines of Hebrew poetry

### **B. AUTHORSHIP**

1. DAVID—ATTRIBUTED IN HEADING
  - o “**David**, the **servant** of God [**Jehovah**]”—NASB
  - o “David, the servant of the Lord [Jehovah]—KJV
2. HEADING
  - a. Only one other Psalm has this phrase in its heading

**Psalm 36** = “David, the servant of the Lord”
  - b. The rest of the heading—describes the occasion
    1. David spoke these words—after God delivered him from his enemies—including Saul
    2. Quoted in **II Samuel 22:1**—which introduces the same Psalm—quoted in **II Sam 22**

### **C. OCCASION**

1. THIS PSALM APPEARS IN II SAMUEL 22—WITH MINOR DIFFERENCES
  - a. Probably **not** composed as a piece celebrating recent victories over rebellion
    - Absalom—**II Sam 15-18**

- Sheba—**II Sam 20**
- b. **Instead**—part of retrospective reflections near the end of David’s life
    - Followed by David’s ‘Last Song’—**II Sam 23:1-7**—and closing events of his life
  - c. Problems with this being composed near the end of David’s life
    1. After his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah—he was no longer as ‘righteous’ as **vv 20-23**
    2. His victory over Saul’s house—in the **heading [v1 in text]**—is in the distant past
    3. A significant part of the Psalm refers to plight and deliverance from Saul—**vv 5-20**
2. MOST LIKELY SETTING—**II SAMEUL 8 OR 10**—DAVID AT THE ZENITH OF POWER
    - a. **After** David had subdued the House of Saul—**II Sam 2-4**
    - b. **After** David took Jerusalem and re-united all Israel—**II Sam 5**
    - c. **After** David restored the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem—**II Sam 6**
    - d. **After** David defeated other immediate threats to Israel—**II Sam 8**
      - Philistines
      - Ammonites
      - Edomites
      - Moabites
      - Amalekites
      - Arameans [Syrians]
    - e. **After** David subdued Ammonite rebellion and again defeated Arameans—**II Sam 10**

#### D. THEMES

1. THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH—**v1**
2. THE LORD LIVES!
  - o **v46** = theological climax of Psalm
  - o Not just that He is ‘alive’—but He is active—not passive
  - o He manifests Himself—and engages in human events on behalf of His servant
3. THE LORD DELIVERS THOSE HE ANOINTS TO DO HIS WILL
  - o Who are threatened by God’s enemies
4. THE LORD VINDICATES HIS KINGDOM

- o Working through redemptive history—to bring about the reign of God

## E. STRUCTURE

### 1. STANZAS?

- a. Some scholars divide this Psalm into ‘strophes’

- Keil and Delitzsch = 16 strophes
- John Peter Lange = 18 strophes

- b. Others say it has no poetic divisions—but is a song of praise flowing from verse to verse

### 2. OUTLINE

#### **1-3—Praise for God’s Help**

#### **4-19—God Rescues in Times of Trouble**

4-5—The Distressing Situation

6—Appeal to God

7-15—God Comes with Power and Might

16-19—God’s Final Deliverance

#### **20-30—God’s Way Is Perfect**

20-24—The Righteous King

25-30—The Perfection of God

#### **31-45—God Brings Total Victory**

31-42—Over Enemies in Battle

43-45—Subduing Rebels—Both Domestic and Foreign

#### **46-48—Doxology—Praise for Victory**

#### **49-50—David’s Vow**

### 3. SOME SCHOLARS SAY IT WAS ORIGINALLY TWO PSALMS

- o Praise for God’s delivering the Psalmist from death and personal enemies—**vv1-30**
- o Praise for God helping Psalmist achieve victory over enemies in battle—**vv31-50**

## F. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

### 1. **II Samuel 22**—is just one of David’s Songs in II Samuel

- o Dirge for Saul and Jonathan—**II Sam 1:17-27**
- o Lament for death of Abner [former commander of Saul’s army]—**II Sam 3:33-34**

### 2. Similarities—to other Psalms

- o Sequel to **Psalm 2**—the Lord anoints David as His regent—with dominion over the nations
- o Similar **Psalms 21** and **22**—God supports the king
- 3. Similar to—other Songs of Praise
  - o **Exodus 15**—Moses’ Song—after God’s deliverance from Egypt
  - o **Deuteronomy 32**—Moses’ Song—near the end of his life
  - o **Judges 5**—Deborah and Barak’s Song—for victory over the Canaanites
- 4. **Romans 15:9**—quotes **v49**—as a Messianic text
  - o Paul said Christ came to confirm the God’s promise to the ‘circumcision’ [Jews]
  - o And so that the Gentiles would glorify God for His mercy

**Rom 15:9**—*and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, ‘Therefore I will give praise to you among the Gentiles, and I will sing to your name.*

- 5. The fourth longest Psalm—after:
  - o **Psalm 119** [‘mixed Psalm] = **176 verses**
  - o **Psalm 78** [corporate confession] = **72 verses**
  - o **Psalm 89** [community lament/covenant] = **52 verses**

### III. EXPOSITION

#### PRAISE FOR GOD’S HELP [vv1-3]

**1** *“I love You, O Lord, my strength.”* **2** *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.*  
**3** *I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies.*

**VERSE 1**—*I love You O Lord, my strength.*

#### love

1. Not the word normally used for man loving God—**ahab**  
 But rarer word = **deep**—compassionate love—impulsive and emotional—**racham**
2. Like a strong, uncontrollable outburst!
3. A slight variation [in vowel points] from—“I exalt you”
4. This phrase—is **missing** from song in **II Sam 22**

#### Lord = Jehovah

Covenant God—used 19 times in this Psalm

## my strength

1. The source of the Psalmists power—you are the one who strengthens me
2. Anticipates vv 31-42—where God manifests His strength in battle

God girds the Psalmist with strength for battle—vv 32 and 39

**VERSE 2—***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.*

## Seven metaphors

1. Describe *how* God is David's strength
2. Longest continuous series of descriptions of God in Psalms
3. Each preceded by personal pronoun—'my'

Our total reliance on God—in every respect

Personal relationship—God cares *intimately* for us!

## rock

1. Cleft—cliff—crag—mountain or huge boulder = **sela**  
Provides concealment and protection  
Strong—firm and immovable
2. Like the 'cliff'—**David's previous refuge**  
Where David hid from Saul in the Wilderness of Maon—I Sam 23:24-29  
David named this the '**Rock of Escape**'—I Sam 23:29
3. God is *always* faithful—permanently reliable—a solid and immovable rock

**Isaiah's**—Rock of Ages

**Is 26:4—***Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord we have an everlasting Rock.*

4. Most frequently used metaphor for God in the Psalms

## fortress

1. Defensive position

Inaccessible place

Could be high and lifted up—God lifting us above the circumstances

Or remote like the wilderness—retreating with God alone!

Impregnable—unassailable—unconquerable

Provide impermeable protection

Where one can easily defend oneself

2. Like **David's 'strongholds' in the wilderness**

He retreated to isolated places in the Wilderness of Ziph—to hide from Saul—I Sam 23:14

**deliverer**

1. The *living* Protector—not just an inanimate object or force
2. Sums up what God does above—as ‘rock’ and ‘fortress’

**refuge**

1. Rocky wall—stone cliff—**tsur**
2. Root word for ‘Tyre’—the Phoenician fortress city—deemed impregnable in that day
3. Ever-present—always reliable

**Moses' Song**

**Dt 32:4**—*The Rock! His work is perfect. For all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice . . .*

4. Strong—stronger than the enemy

**Moses' Song**

**Dt 32:30-31**—*How could one chase a thousand, and to put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had given them up? Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, even our enemies themselves judge this.*

**shield**

1. **KJV** = ‘buckler’
2. God called Himself Abram’s shield—**Gen 15:1**
3. Like **Ps 3:3**—*But You, O Lord, are a shield about me.*

This shield—the Lord—covers more than other shields

The war shield of a field soldier protected only his front

This shield enfolds the whole person !

**horn of salvation**

1. Used of God—only here—and parallel passage in **II Sam 22:3**
2. Place of protection

Between the horns of the brazen altar of sacrifice

Fugitives could take refuge by clinging to the horns of the altar

**Adonijah**—David’s son who rebelled against Solomon—fled Solomon—**I Kgs 1:50**

**Joab**—David’s former army commander—fled Solomon—**I Kgs 2:28**

Therefore—God is my sanctuary

He is the place where I am safe from my enemies—He keeps them away

3. Some commentators say—metaphor for strength and power

Like the horns of a bull

### **stronghold**

1. **KJV** = ‘high tower’
2. High—safe—exalted—**misgab**
3. A place so high—it is beyond reach of danger
4. **Ps 9:9**—*The Lord will be a stronghold for the oppressed*

**VERSE 3**—*I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.*

### **This verse summarizes the intent of the Psalm**

To show that God delivers—when we call upon Him for help

Describes *personal* crisis of psalmist—and *personal* relationship to Savior

Besieged by unnamed *personal* opponents—*my* enemies

In need of personal salvation—I call . . . I am saved

### **Appeal to the Lord**—who is **praiseworthy**

Historic basis for calling upon the Lord

For past action—He has demonstrated His faithfulness to Israel in the past

For past presence of Person—He has manifested His holiness to Israel in the past

Result—this gives cause to praise Him

Not just for past deliverance/presence—but also for His continuous being/doing

## Call → Saved

Causative effect

When one calls upon the Lord—He saves

Immediate result—God responds without delay

Imperfect verbs

Often translated as future tense—KJV—“*I will call . . . shall be saved*”

But here—the idea is constant and continuous action

**I am calling** and will **continue calling**—He **is saving** and will **continue saving**

Testimony—the Lord hears and saves—already affirmed in the Psalter

**Ps 6:9-10**—*The Lord has heard my supplication, the Lord receives my prayer. All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; they shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.*

## Praiseworthiness of God

His **protection**—In Him there is refuge

**Ps 48:1,3**—*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised . . . God, in her palaces [Zion], has made Himself known as a stronghold.*

His **supremacy** as Creator

**Ps 96:4-5**—*For great is the Lord and greatly to be praise; he is to be feared above all gods, for all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens*

His **sovereignty** and glory

**Ps 113:3-4**—*From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens.*

His **person** and His **name**

**Ps 145:1-3**—*I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.*

## THE DISTRESSING SITUATION [vv4-5]

**VERSES 4-5**—4 *The cords of death encompassed me, and the torrents of ungodliness terrified me.* 5 *The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me.* NASB

*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.* NIV

### Parallel passage

**Ps 116:3**—*The cords of death encompassed me, and the terrors of Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow*

Flashback—sets the stage—describes previous, dangerous situation

The psalmist considered himself as good as dead!

**Overwhelming dangers**—on a cosmic scale—[4 metaphors]

**Cords of death**—KJV = sorrows of death

Cords = bands like a net—ropes that bind—that coil around a person

Death as a hunter—with a net, trying to trap people—or tie them up

Like when David was hunted by Saul

**I Sam 26:20**—*Now then, do not let my blood fall to the ground away from the presence of the Lord; for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, just as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.*

**Torrents of ungodliness**—KJV = floods of ungodly men

Rushing wall of water—crashing down a wadi—in spring storm

Floods that bring destruction—ruination

Being attacked by evil men—actual assault—or false accusations

**Cords of Sheol**—KJV = sorrows of hell

**Snares** of death = KJV and NASB

Snare—could be the ‘trap’ itself—or the ‘bait’ that lures one to be entrapped

### Devastating effects

**Encompassed** = surrounded [by cords of death]

Be all around—in static position = **aphaph**

No way of escape—all exit routes are blocked

**Terrified** [by torrents of ungodliness]

**ba’ath** = startle—overwhelm

**Surrounded** [by cords of Sheol]

Different from ‘encompassed’

**cabab** = actively marching around—encircling

Image—preparing actively to close in for the kill

**Confronted** [by snares of death]

**qadam** = meet—to go ahead—come upon

KJV = ‘prevented’ me—went ahead of me—came upon me [by surprise]

Active sense—not just lying in wait—but aggressively seeking to trap

Intensifying danger

Moving from **potential** outlying threat—to **active** on-coming attack

Cords encompass—torrents terrify

Cords surround—snares confront

**Personal** sense of **hopelessness**

Emphatically personal—four times—‘me’—‘me’—‘me’—‘me’

One lone man—against all the powers of death

### **APPEAL TO GOD [v6]**

**VERSE 6**—*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.*

**Expands verse 3—calling upon the Lord**

Explains—*how* God hears Psalmist’s plea for help—before He takes action and saves

The Psalmist ‘called upon’ the Lord

**qarah** = to cry—call out

Same verb used in **v3**

He ‘cried to’ God

**shavah** = cry out—shout

Intensifies action—more forceful

**Distress**

**tsar** = tight place—narrow—strait

Summarizes all the dangers of vv 4-5

Describes Psalmist's absolutely impossible situation

Which culminates in the following outburst—one great cry for help

**I called upon the Lord**—I cried to my God—[for help]

This appeal is both personal/intimate and transcendental

Personal appeal—to covenant Lord—Jehovah

Reaches beyond the covenant—to Creator God—Elohim

Could be stated this way: I call upon the Lord—who is my God

In the New Testament

*Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved*

Peter's proclamation at Pentecost—**Acts 2:21**

Paul reiterates this—**Rom 10:13**

*He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears*

**Out of His temple**

Not the earthly Temple—which had not yet been built

But from His heavenly home

**Ps 11:4**—*the Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men*

The Lord does not dwell in buildings—but in heaven

**Is 66:1-2**—*Thus says the Lord, 'Heaven is my throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being,' declares the Lord.*

**God is not so far away that He cannot hear**

He *does* hear even in heaven

Just because we do not see Him—does not mean He does not see and hear us!

*He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears*

**He heard my voice . . . my cry . . . came into His ears**

Double phrase—emphasizes the fact that the Lord certainly hears us

First phrase—is general—Psalmist’s *voice* gets God’s attention

Second phrase—is specific—Psalmist’s *message*—Help me!—is heard and understood

The cry for help

**cry = shav’ ah**

First used in the OT—to describe Israel’s cry in Egypt—and God’s response

**Ex 2:23-25**—*Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.*

### **GOD COMES WITH POWER AND MIGHT [vv7-15]**

*7 Then the earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry. 8 Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire from His mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it. 9 He bowed the heavens also and came down with thick darkness under His feet. 10 He rode upon a cherub and flew; and He sped upon the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies. 12 From the brightness before Him passed His thick clouds, hailstones and coals of fire. 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire. 14 He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them. 15 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.*

### **SUMMARY OF SECTION**

**God’s deliverance is pictured in a ‘theophany’—appearance of God on earth**

Imagery recalls the Exodus—God’s power in delivering Israel

Similar imagery used Moses’ Song—Ex 15

Like God’s appearance on Sinai after delivery

**Ex 19:18-19**—*Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.*

All nature is moved by God’s appearance

Brief pictures of dramatic theophanies are given in other passages—but it is most complete here

- o Exodus 19—delivery of Israel from Egypt
- o Psalms 68 and 77— delivery of Israel from Egypt
- o Judges 5—God helps Deborah and Barak deliver Israel from Canaanites
- o Amos 9—God’s judgment on [northern] Israel
- o Micah 1—God’s judgment on both Judah and Israel
- o Habakkuk 3—recalling how God delivered Israel in the past

These are pictures in Psalmist’s imagination—not literal events—but impressions

Passage begins and ends with personal manifestation of God

Smoke from nostrils and fire from mouth—**v8**

Blast from breath of nostrils—**v15**

Pictures of God using and controlling nature

- The **gathering storm**—**vv7-11**
  - o Earthquake
  - o Smoke from His nostrils
  - o Fire from His mouth
  - o Thick cloudy darkness
  - o Jehovah riding the winds on cherubim
- The **storm unleashed**—**vv 12-15**
  - o Storm: thunder—lightning—hail
  - o Channels of water—laid bare foundations of the earth
  - o Blast of God’s breath

Purposes

Depicts responds to the cry of the suffering Psalmist

God’s demonstrates His wrath against those who oppose His kingdom

Demonstrates God’s sovereign power—over all the earth and its elements

### **THE GATHERING STORM—vv7-11**

**7** *Then the earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry.* **8** *Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire from His mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it.* **9** *He bowed the heavens also and came down with thick darkness under His feet.* **10** *He rode upon a cherub and flew; and He sped upon the wings*

*of the wind. 11 He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.*

**VERSE 7**—*Then the earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry.*

### Then

Connective—connects previous call for help—with God’s response

Shows beginning of a two-fold process

vv7-15—God’s coming—[to rescue the Psalmist]

vv16-19—God’s delivery of the Psalmist

### shook . . . quaked . . . trembling . . . shaken

Four verbs—mean essentially the same thing—describe a devastating earthquake

They bracket—‘earth’ and ‘mountains’

Show how God’s coming will affect all the earth—shaking it down to the very foundation

Like when God appeared to Israel on Mount Sinai—before His giving of the Law

**Ex 19:16-18**—**16** *So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.*

### because He was angry

This anger is directed against the Psalmists enemies—who also oppose God

In the OT—when God’s wrath is kindled—it usually blazes into a fire—which follows in **v8**

**VERSE 8**—*Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire from His mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it.*

**Overall picture**—of a volcano erupting—with smoke, fire, and hot coals raining down

### Smoke

In **Is 6:4**—depicts the reaction of God’s holiness to sin—smoke filled the Temple

### Nostrils

In Hebrew, Roman, Greek cultures—the organ and seat of anger

**Devoured**—devouring fire

Depicts divine jealousy—intolerance

**Dt 4:24**—*For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*

**Coals**

**Ezek 10:2**—Coals rain down from God’s chariot throne onto Jerusalem—as God’s glory departs the Temple

Parallel passage

**Job 41:19-21**—*19 Out of his mouth go burning torches; sparks of fire leap forth. 20 Out of his nostrils smoke goes forth as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. 21 His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes forth from his mouth.*

**VERSE 9**—*He bowed the heavens also and came down with thick darkness under His feet.*

**The thunderstorm descends with His coming**

Dark clouds underneath God bend downward—almost touching the earth

**He bowed the heavens**

He bends the heavens—aimed toward the earth—like a hunter bending his bow

He stretches the heavens—to the point of tearing the sky apart

Like the imagery David uses—calling upon the Lord for rescue in **Psalm 144**

**Ps 144:5**—*Bow Your heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains, that they may smoke.*

**and came down**

God descends toward earth—through the opening in the firmament that He has torn open

**thick darkness under His feet**

This darkness—like thunderclouds under his feet—hides Him from sight

Just as God appeared when He delivered the Ten Commandments

**Dt 5:22**—*These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone and delivered them unto me.*

**VERSE 10**—*He rode upon a cherub and flew; and He sped upon the wings of the wind.*

**He rode**

This verb is related to the Hebrew noun ‘chariot’

Picture—God is riding in a chariot—[later we see—where He is enthroned—see below]

### cherub

Angelic being(s)—collective that implies plural [angels]

Angels—that are guardians of holiness

- o Guarding the tree of life—**Gen 3:24**
- o Guarding the Holy of Holies—cherubim woven into fabric of the veil—**Ex 26:31, 33**
- o Overlooking the Mercy Seat—**Ex 25:18-22**

Bearers of the **chariot-throne** that God rides to judgment—**Ezek 1:22ff; 10:1ff**

Picture here—God’s chariot is borne by angels

### *He sped upon the wings of the wind*

#### Sped

He comes swiftly—like an eagle ‘swoops’ down—**Dt 28:49; Jer 48:40**

He ‘soars’—or ‘glides’—at great speed

**Wings**—the chariot of God is borne on angel wings—which are airborne

**Wind**—the on-rushing and powerful storm winds—bearing the force of God’s judgment

Parallel passages

**Ps 104:3**—*You use the clouds as your chariot and ride on the wings of the wind.*

**Is 66:15-16**—*For behold, the Lord will come in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For the Lord will execute judgment by fire and by His sword on all flesh, and those slain by the Lord will be many.*

**VERSE 11**—*He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.*

#### darkness

Indicates the separateness of His separateness holiness

**Ps 97:2**—*Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.*

#### hiding place

KJV = secret place

Other versions—NIV, RSV, ESV = covering

The picture—He uses darkness as a ‘veil’ to hide Himself

### His canopy around Him

Fully enveloped—by a ‘tent’

This completely seals Him off—keeping anyone from seeing Him

But this is not a permanent structure

‘Booth’ (temporary)—KJV ‘pavilion’—not a permanent Temple/building

Like the ‘booths’ Israel occupied in the Wilderness—celebrated by Feast of Booths

Implying—it can (and will be) torn away—revealing God and His wrath

### darkness of waters, thick clouds of the sky

Purpose of clouds—not just to hide Jehovah

But also to store up wrath—clouds full of water ready to pour a torrent of judgment

Dark and thick clouds = storm clouds—ominous portent of the coming storm

### THE STORM UNLEASHED—vv12-15

*12 From the brightness before Him passed His thick clouds, hailstones and coals of fire. 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire. 14 He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them. 15 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.*

VERSE 12—*From the brightness before Him passed His thick clouds, hailstones and coals of fire.*

#### Literal wording

*From the brightness before Him his clouds passed through, hailstones and coals of fire*

#### Other translations

NIV—*Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning.*

ESV—*Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds.*

KJV—*At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.*

TEV/Good News—*Hailstones and flashes of fire came from the lightning before him and broke through the dark clouds.*

### From the brightness before Him

This brightness is not exactly the ‘shekinah’

‘Shekinah’—this noun is not in the Bible—but in the rabbinic literature

Shekinah—means ‘presence’ of God—related to another word for ‘tabernacle’

This **brightness**—means ‘shining’—reflecting the fiery glory of God

The glory of God is represented by fire and light

Two possible pictures

Like lightning flashing from storm clouds

Like the fiery pillar of cloud—leading Israel through the desert

### **passed His thick clouds**

The clouds pass before His glorious presence

They emanate from His glory and continue to enshroud His very Being

### **hailstones and coals of fire**

Now—the forces of wrath are unleashed

Just like the sixth plague against the Egyptians

**Ex 9:23**—*Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt.*

As Isaiah prophesied—just like God would rescue Israel from Assyria

**Is 30:30**—*And the Lord will cause His voice of authority to be heard, and the descending of His arm to be seen in fierce anger, and in the flame of a consuming fire in cloudburst, downpour and hailstones.*

These forces of wrath pass before His glory

Just as the clouds pass ahead—or—they pass *through* the clouds

The main point—they emanate from His very glory

So—God’s wrath—and its instruments—are produced by His righteousness/holiness

**VERSE 13**—*The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire.*

### **This reiterates the point of the previous verse**

The instruments of God’s wrath emanate from His very being

The source of judgment—His voice

**Identity of God**—the source of this wrath

**The Lord**—*Jehovah*—is **the Most High**—*Elyown*

**Elyown** = He who excels all others

Similar to **Elohim**—'god of gods'

Emphasizes Jehovah's supremacy over all other so-called gods

**thunder . . . voice**

**Thunder**—deafening sound associated with lightning flashes of the storm

The source—is God's very own **voice**

Draws attention to God's mighty and mysterious acts—see Elihu's testimony (below)

*Job 37:2-5—Listen closely to the thunder of His voice, and the rumbling that goes out from His mouth. Under the whole heaven He lets it loose and His lightning to the ends of the earth. After it, a voice roars; he thunders with His majestic voice, and He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard. God thunders with His voice wondrously, doing great things which we cannot comprehend.*

**VERSE 14**—*He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them.*

**arrows . . . lightning flashes**

**Parallelism**—describes God's action

His holy being—His fiery brightness—produces the lightning of the storm

These lightning flashes—are the arrows of God's judgment

Just as God 'bowed' the heavens **v9**—He shot [sent out] these arrows of judgment

David's used **arrows** to depict weapons used by God against His enemies

*Ps 7:13—He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts*

**lightning flashes in abundance**

Hebrew word 'lightning'—means 'glittering'—light the bright flash of a sword

Most versions translate this simply as 'lightning'—or 'lightning flashes'

Some versions bring out idea of power behind the flash

NASB—‘lightning flashes in abundance’

NIV—‘great bolts of lightning’

### **scattered them . . . routed them**

**Another parallelism**—describes the result of God’s judgment

**scattered**—**imperfect verb** = was continuing to disperse

**routed**—**imperfect verb** = was continuing to ‘discomfit’—‘confuse’—‘crush’

**VERSE 15**—*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.*

**The source of action is at the end of the verse**

### **The blast of the breath of Your nostrils**

The storm wind—is produced by the very breath of God Himself

#### **Parallelism**

The blast of God’s **breath**—is the expression of His **rebuke**

God’s breath does two things

Unleashes channels of water

Lays the foundations bare

### **channels of water appeared**

Two possible pictures

Unleashing of the Flood—that destroyed the earth in **Genesis 7**

Drowning of Egyptians in the Red Sea—**Exodus 14**

### **the foundations of the world were laid bare**

Three possible pictures

Delivery

God parting the Red Sea—**Exodus 14**

God drying the bed of the Jordan River—**Joshua 3**

Judgment

God exposing His enemies to the depths of Sheol and death

Those same enemies who have threatened David with death/Sheol—**v5**

## GOD'S FINAL DELIVERANCE [vv16-19]

**16** *He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many 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 stay.* **19** *He brought me forth also into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.*

VERSE 16—*He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters.*

Contrast previous passage [vv7-15]—with this one—[vv16-19]

vv7-15—the cosmic nature of God's appearing—grand and enormously powerful

vv16-19—the close and personal nature of God's appearing

Three evidences of this personal contact

- ❖ v16—'sent' is better rendered 'reached'—'stretched'—**shalach**

of

Like Ps 144:7—*Stretch forth Your hand from on high; rescue me and deliver me out of great waters*

- ❖ The singular and private—'He-me' relationship—mentioned twice here
- ❖ Personal delivery from Psalmists' specific distressful situation—that he pled to God

v4—David was terrified by the 'torrents' of ungodliness

v16—now—God delivers him from the 'many waters'

**Many waters**—**mayim**

'Chaos'—as in Gen 1:2

When the earth was without form and void

God's Spirit moved upon the face of the 'waters'—**mayim**

Calamities—that threaten destruction

Ps 124:4-5—*Then the waters would have engulfed us, the stream would have swept over our soul; then the raging waters would have swept over our soul.*

**Analogies**—for delivery from many waters

1. David rescued—like Moses

Verb 'drew out'—used only other places

Ex 2:10—when Moses was drawn out of the Nile

Moses' name comes from 'draw out'—**mashah**

**II Sam 22:17**—David's Psalm of deliverance—parallel passage to this one

2. Israel crossing the Red Sea—**Ex 14**
3. Israel crossing the Jordan—into Canaan—**Josh 3**

**Parallel**—with **Ex 2:5, 10**

Same sequence—**sent**—**took/brought**—**drew**

Pharaoh's daughter sent her maid—**shalach**—'reached' her out—**Ex2:5**

Same verb as here

Jochabed brought—**bow**—Moses to Pharaoh's daughter —**Ex 2:10**

*Different* verb than here—**took**—**laqach**

Pharaoh's daughter said—I drew—**mashah**—him out of the water—**Ex2:10**

Same verb as here

**VERSE 17**—*He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me.*

**Contrast vv16 and 17**

Figurative language in v16 to show deliverance

Here—shifts to literal language explaining deliverance

**The enemy—those who hated**

Singular strong enemy—is associated with the plural—those who hated me

Singular enemy—probably Saul

Plural enemies—Saul's followers

**Day of delivery**

When Saul and his army were defeated—II Sam 31—at Mt Gilboa—by the Philistines

**Reason**

Why God has intervened

Enemies are too strong for His David

God is aware of David's plight—and takes mercy on Him—to deliver Him

Reminder—even David was not strong enough by himself

**VERSE 18**—*They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the Lord was my stay.*

**‘confronted’** me

‘prevented’—in KJV

Reiterates danger—like ‘snares of death’ that David said reached out and confronted him—**v3**

**‘calamity’**—found only *here* in the Psalms

Means ‘disaster’—or [abstract] ‘peril’

Found also in Dt 32:35—means ‘doom’

Moses speaks of God’s vengeance on His enemies—and those of Israel

**Dt 32:35**—*Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; for the day of their doom is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them.*

**‘ my stay’**

Support—that one can lean on

Used only here [and parallel in II Sam 22]—and **Isaiah 3:1**

Isaiah prophesied—God’s judgment would remove all ‘support’ from Israel

i.e. all the supply of bread and water—that which sustains—on which they lean

**VERSE 19**—*He brought me forth also into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.*

Again—God’s **personal** delivery from Psalmists **specific** situation

**v6**—In my **‘distress’** I called upon the Lord—‘distress’ = ‘straights’—**narrow place**

Like **Ps 41**—*Answer me when I call, O God . . . ! You have relieved me in my distress*

**v19**—He brought me into a **‘broad’** place

Like **Ps 118:5**—*From y distress I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a large place.*

**Broad place**

Open ground—where there are no snares or nets; no hidden places for enemies to ambush

**Reason**—that God delivers the Psalmist

Because God delighted in him

‘**delight**’ = take pleasure in—be pleased—to bend down to show favor

God delights in those who follow Him

**Ps 37:23**—*The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way*

Explained below—**verses 20-24**

## OUTLINE OF PSALM 18

**Praise for God’s Help [vv1-3]**

**God Rescues [vv4-19]**

The Distressing Situation [vv4-5]

Appeal to God [v6]

God Comes with Power and Might [vv7-15]

God’s Final Deliverance [vv16-19]

**God’s Way Is Perfect [vv20-30]**

The Righteous King [vv20-24]

The Perfection of God [vv25-30]

**God Brings Total Victory [vv31-45]**

Defeating the Enemy in Battle [vv31-42]

Complete Dominion—Domestic and Foreign [vv43-45]

**Doxology [vv46-48]**

**Vow [49-50]**

### **GOD’S WAY IS PERFECT [vv20-30]**

#### **THE RIGHTEOUS KING [vv20-24]**

**20** *The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has 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 I did not put away His statutes from me. 23 I was also blameless with Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity. 24 Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes.*

#### SUMMARY OF SECTION

1. After reporting God’s salvation—the psalmist praises the Lord  
He discloses the perfection of God (**vv20-30**)—which is the basis for His deliverance  
But he begins in a strange way—by reciting his own righteousness (**vv20-24**)  
The reason for his deliverance is found in the last part of the previous verse  
**v19**—*He rescued me because He delighted in me*

2. So vv20-24 explain *why* God delighted in the psalmist

Because the psalmist is righteous—God has delivered him

The psalmist's righteous nature brackets this section

He is rewarded (v20) and recompensed (v24)—*according to my righteousness*

This is not a claim of self-righteousness—but a confession

He has been faithful to the righteousness God expected of him when selecting him as king

He does not create this righteousness—it comes from God

The source is God's perfection—explained in vv25-30

**VERSE 20**—*The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.*

### **Exposition**

#### **The Lord has rewarded me**

The Lord 'has been good' to me—RSV 'dealt bountifully'

**According to my righteousness**—the way I have followed God's law given to Moses

The psalmist's claim is—He has kept the law—and obeyed God

#### **According to the cleanness of my hands**

Clean hands = metaphor for innocence—TEV 'because I am innocent'

#### **He has recompensed me**

Recompense = 'turn'—'cause to turn' = repay

Repay can be negative or positive—here it is positive

### **David's 'righteousness'**

David had asked God to vindicate his righteousness—7:8

David said this has been proven by God's trying his heart—previously stated in 17:3

This does not mean David was perfect

David did sin and confessed so to God in his penitential Psalms

This claim to 'righteousness' is not an inconsistent claim

It shows David's other side—his faithfulness—and God's resulting favor

The 'righteous' and 'penitential' Psalms stand by themselves

David was a sinner—who sincerely desired to serve God uprightly and faithfully

David's honesty of purpose—was like Job's

**Job 27:6**—*I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. My heart does not reproach any of my days.*

This was demonstrated in *specific* acts of righteousness—that God honored with deliverance

**I Sam 26:23-24**—when David spared Saul's life a second time—*The Lord will repay each man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the Lord delivered you unto my hand today, but I refused to stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed. Now behold, as your life was highly valued in my sight this day, so may my life be highly valued in the sight of the Lord, and my He deliver me from all distress.*

David's habitual faithfulness became the pattern by which all later kings were judged

**I Kgs 11:4**—Solomon's heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord as David's heart had been

**I Kgs 14:8**—Jeroboam did not keep God's commandments like David did—whole-heartedly

**I Kgs 15:4-5, 9-11**

Abijam followed the sins of his father Rehoboam—was not wholly devoted to God

But God spared Judah for David's sake until the reign of Abijam's son Asa

Then Asa did right in God's sight—like David his 'father'

**VERSE 21**—*For I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from my God.*

## Exposition

### I have kept the ways of the Lord

Carefully to follow on God's road

**Josh 1:7**—to do all according to the law of Moses, not departing to the right of the left

Have not wickedly departed from God

To do wrong by turning away from my God

NIV—I have not done evil by turning from my God

“I have not committed the sin of turning away from God.”

“I have not shown my back to God.”

“I have not left God's road”

Calvin said—‘entire alienation from God’

Summary—willful and persistent wickedness

### My God

The God whom I worship—the God whom I obey

## Observation

Even David's penitential psalms—never admit to this sin—wickedly departing from God  
David never stooped to false humility so low—that he admitted to sin he did not commit!  
The truly 'righteous' person—in relationship with God  
May stray and sin—but never completely departs from Him

**VERSE 22**—*For all His ordinances were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me.*

### Exposition

This verse parallels **verse 21**

'Ordinances' and 'statutes'—synonyms for—'ways of the Lord'—**v21**

'Were before me' and 'did not put away'—parallel 'kept' and 'not departed'—**v21**

**Ordinances**—same word for 'judgment'—in **7:6**

Legal prescription—regulation

Similar to the 'decree of the Lord'—in **2:7**

Ordinances **were before me**—I **did not put away** His statutes

The wicked—'cast God's commandments *behind* their back'

See **I Kgs 14:9—Neh 9:26—Ps 50:17—Ezek 23:35**

**VERSE 23**—*I was also blameless with Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity.*

### Exposition

**Blameless** = complete—whole—entire

In Psalm 15:1-2 = integrity

*O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? Who walks with integrity, and works righteousness.*

KJV = 'upright'

Not perfect—but he tries to behave in line with his honest and faithful intentions

Used 4 times in this Psalm—vv23, 25, 30, 32

Blameless **with Him**

Blameless 'before' Him

In His presence—in His sight

**Iniquity** = perversity/depravity—and **guilt** that accompanies it

His conscience is clear—he feels no guilt—because he has not behaved iniquitously

On one occasion—David's conscience *did* bother him—**I Sam 24:1-7**

After he cut off the hem of Saul's robe-his conscience bothered him

This led him to prevent his men from killing Saul

**VERSE 24**—*Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes.*

## Summary

This verse virtually repeats v20

Reinforces the main point—God has delivered David because He is pleased with him

### THE PERFECTION OF GOD [vv25-30]

*25 With the kind You show Yourself kind; with the blameless You show Yourself blameless; 26 with the pure You show Yourself pure, and with the crooked You show Yourself astute. 27 For You save an afflicted people, but haughty eyes You abase. 28 For You light my lamp; the Lord my God illumines my darkness. 29 For by You I can run upon a troop; and by my God I can leap over a wall. 30 As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the Lord is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.*

#### SUMMARY OF SECTION

1. The source of the psalmist's righteousness and faithfulness is the perfect God Himself
2. General description of God's perfection—**vv25-27**

God's perfection is shown in His reciprocal dealings with humans—His kindness, blamelessness, purity, opposition to crookedness—and His salvation

3. Personal application to the psalmist—**vv28-29**

David has experienced God's perfection personally: God is the source of David's own light and David's own strength

4. David summarizes—**v30**

God is perfect—His word is reliable—He protects those who rely on Him

5. Here the psalmist directly praises God

- o Up to this point—all references to God were in the third person
- o **vv25-29**—the psalmist speaks directly to God—in the second person—[except **v28b**]

6. Principles

The blameless God is the source of the psalmist's blamelessness

Our righteousness does not come from our human ideas we generate about God; it originates in the very character of God Himself that prompts our trust and obedience

Because the psalmist can trust God, he obeys God; likewise, the psalmist's obedience shows that he trusts God—both his trust and obedience are rooted in God's perfection and faithfulness

### General Description of God's Perfection

**VERSE 25**—*With the kind You show Yourself kind; with the blameless You show Yourself blameless*

**With the kind** [adjective] = merciful [persons]

Also translated as ‘godly’—‘holy’—‘saints’

**Ps 4:3**—*Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for Himself*

**You show yourself to be kind** [verb] = to show mercy—to be gracious/kind

The human quality [adjective] is generated by the godly character [verb]

**Note:** other translations of ‘kind’—**chaciyd**—and ‘show kindness’—**chacad**

NIV = to the ‘faithful’—‘show faithfulness’

RSV = to the ‘loyal’—‘show loyalty’

NET = to the ‘innocent’—‘prove to be trustworthy’

**With the blameless** [adjective] = upright—perfect—complete

**You show Yourself blameless** [verb] = to deal with uprightly

The psalmist claimed to be ‘blameless’—in **v23**

Here—we see the source is God—Who not only is blameless—but generates that quality

**Principles:**

1. God deals with people according to their character
2. But good human qualities originate in God’s character—which God ‘shows’ to them

NT parallel—**Mt 5:7**—*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy*

**VERSE 26**—*with the pure You show Yourself pure, and with the crooked You show Yourself astute.*

**With the pure**—**barar** [participle]—**You show yourself to be pure**—**barar** [verb]

barar = clean—pure

The same relationship between the two clauses—as in **v25**

The participle serves as an adjective—‘the purified one’ [‘the one who is purifying himself’]

So the quality in humans—originates in the God’s action/character

The mode of the verb [hithpael] can also mean—‘to show kindness’

With the pure, You show yourself to be kind

## With the crooked You show Yourself astute

Previous pairs of qualities in **vv 25-26** were built on the same roots

But not here—one word is used for human crookedness—another for God’s astuteness

**Crooked** [adjective] —**iqqesh** = twisted—perverse

**Be astute** [verb]—**pathal** = to be wise/cunning—also to wrestle/oppose

God meets human perversity by turning it back upon itself

**Rom 1:28**—*Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do.*

**Example: in wrestling—using the momentum of the opponent to throw him**

Different translations

**KJV**—with the forward Thou wilt show Thyself to be forward

**NIV/HCSB**—to the crooked You show Yourself to be shrewd

**RSV**—with the crooked thou dost show Thyself perverse

**ESV**—with the crooked You make Yourself seem tortuous

**NET**—You prove to be deceptive to the one who is perverse

**VERSE 27**—*For You save an afflicted people, but haughty eyes You abase.*

**Afflicted people** = humble—poor/needy—down-trodden—oppressed

Identified with **pious** and **God-fearing** persons—**Ps 10:12-14** and **11:2**

**Save**—**yasha** = **deliver**—**help**—same root for Jesus’ name—[savior]

Evidence—God hears and delivers the ‘afflicted’

**Ps 9:12**—*For He who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted*

**Ps 10:17**—*You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.*

**but haughty eyes You abase**

Pride goes before the fall

**Pr 16:18**—*Pride goes before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

This principle was acknowledged by pagans

**Herodotus—See how God with his lightning smites always the bigger animals, and will not let them grow insolent, while those of a lesser bulk don't offend him? How likewise his bolts ever fall on the highest houses and the tallest trees? So plainly does he love to bring down everything that exalts itself. Thus, often a mighty host is defeated by a few men, when God in his jealousy send panic or storm from heaven, and they perish in a way unworthy of them. For God allows no one to have high thoughts but himself.**

Seven things God detests—**Pr 6:17-19**

- o **Haughty eyes**
- o Lying tongue
- o Hands that shed innocent blood
- o Heart that devises wicked schemes
- o Feet that are quick to rush into evil
- o False witness who pours out lies
- o Man who stirs up dissension among brothers

**NT parallels**

**Jas 4:6 and I Pe 5:5—*God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble***

**Contrast**

**God raises the humble, but humbles the high and mighty**

The great reversal in God's kingdom

**Is 2:17—*The pride of man will be humbled and the loftiness of men will be abased and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day***

NT parallels

**Mk 10:31—*Many who are first will be last and the last first***

***Personal Application of God's Perfection***

**VERSE 28—*For You light my lamp; the Lord my God illumines my darkness.***

**Two word pictures**

**Personal lamp**

**The lamp** in those days was a small clay bowl, filled with olive oil, with a wick floating in it, one end protruding through a spout on the side of the bowl.

**Seven-branched menorah** (candelabrum) in tabernacle—oil renewed daily

**Exod. 25:37; 37:22, 23; 40:25**

**Light** my lamp—**owr** = give light—to **cause to shine**—[from sun, moon—or a combustible source]

**Illumine** my darkness—**nagahh** = **enlighten**

**Both verbs** = Hebrew **imperfect** (continuous) + (Hiphil) **causative** action

Focus on **God as causer** of the action

Continuous action—**now and into the future**

You continue to cause my lamp to be lit  
You continue to cause illumination of my darkness

Implication

Not only now—but I can rely on this for the future

KJV = *For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.*

**Shift**—from second to third person

Psalmist acknowledges his reliance *to* the Lord directly

Then declares this to his hearers/reader

**Parallel passage**—is more **direct**—the lamp = metaphor of God Himself

**II Sam 22:29**—*For You are my lamp, O Lord; and the Lord will lighten my darkness.*

Applications

**Light** = symbol of life and prosperity

Job 18:5, 6; 21:17; 29:3; Prov. 31:18

**Extinguishing light**—symbolizes destruction—abandonment of tabernacle and desolation

Job 18:6; 21:17; Jer. 25:10; Prov. 13:9; 20:20; 24:20

**Light** = symbol of continuation of house of David

1 Kings 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; Ps. 132:17

**Light** = symbol of direction and guidance

You show me the way

**Ps 119:105**—*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

**Light** = symbol of wisdom—guided by God

**Menorah**—**Exod. 25:37; 37:22, 23; 40:25**

Jewish Talmudic tradition—symbolized enlightenment/wisdom

Branches of human knowledge inclined toward center—the light of God

Also symbolized creation in six days—with seventh day Sabbath in center.

**Continues *personal* application of God’s righteousness—to David himself**

*For You light my lamp*

God made David a lamp for His people

David was described as a lamp for Israel

In **battle** with the **Philistines**

*II Sam 21:17—Then Ishbi-benob, a descendant of Rapha, whose bronze spear weighed three hundred shekels and who was bearing a new sword, resolved to kill David. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to his aid, struck the Philistine and killed him. Then David’s men swore to him, “You must never again go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel may not be extinguished.”*

**VERSE 29—***For by You I can run upon a troop; and by my God I can leap over a wall.*

**Continues *personal* application—to David the warrior**

**Two *military* metaphors**

Attack the enemy

Overrun their position

**For by You**

The source of David’s strength = God

“With your help”—“You enable”

**Run** = rush with violence—attack!—as in an offensive assault

Upon a **troop**

A marauding band of light-armed troops sent out to plunder an enemy’s country

David did this—defeated such an Amalekite troop—who plundered Ziklag—I Sam 30:17

Could mean a ‘barrier’ of soldiers—standing in the way

Leap over a **wall**

1. Could be a physical wall—scaling the defensive ramparts of fortified city

**Wall**—rare usage—found in Hebrew only here and **Gen 49:22**

**Gen 49**—Jacob is a faithful bough by a well—whose branches run over the wall

But **Chaldean** cognate is used in **Ezra 4: 12-13, 16**—referring to wall of **Jerusalem**

Here David was probably referring to wall of Jerusalem—that he scaled

When David took the city from the Jebusites—**II Sam 5:6-7**

2. Could be over a ‘wall’ of troops in formation

To overrun and break up the solidarity of enemy troop formation

### *Summary Statement of God’s Perfection*

**VERSE 30**—*As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the Lord is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.*

SHIFT—TO UNIVERSAL APPLICATION

David—shifts from **personal** application—back to **general** proclamation

God’s uprightness and faithfulness—are available to anyone who seeks refuge in Him

‘AS FOR GOD’

**El**—not ‘Jehovah’ or ‘Elohim’—but—**the mighty One**

Literally—[awkward construction]

“The God, His way is blameless”—or “God, His way is blameless”

Emphasizes His uniqueness

This Mighty One—His way alone—is the blameless one

Again—links ‘**Jehovah**’—with being this one and only—**El**—‘Mighty One’

Reinforces that idea in **verse 2**

**2** *The Lord [Jehovah] is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God I [El], my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

SUMMARY STATEMENT = GOD IS **BLAMELESS**

*As for God, His way is blameless*

Two possible meanings

God’s way of acting—is blameless

The way God has set before us—is blameless

Serves to summarize David’s previous points

Reiterates—the source of **David’s blamelessness**—v23

Reinforces—**God’s relationship** with blameless humans—v25

Emphasizes—the **source of all** blamelessness/uprightness—is **God**—and only God

The theme/basis for Moses’ great song—ending Deuteronomy

**Dt 32:4**—*The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice.*

PARALLEL PASSAGE—FOR v30b, c

**Pr 30:5**—*Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him*

SUMMARY STATEMENT = GOD IS **RELIABLE**

*the word of the Lord is tried*

We can count on Him because He has proved himself faithful—repeatedly

What He says—every word—He actually *does*

Because His word has been **tried**—and shown to be true

Just like **metals**—are **tried by fire**—and proven genuine

**Ps 12:6**—*The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.*

SUMMARY STATEMENT = GOD IS OUR **REFUGE**

*He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him*

Reiterates the point in **verse 2**

**2** *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.*

**Shield—buckler**

A **surrounding** shield of protection

**Ps 3:3**—*But You, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the One who lifts my head.*

**Take refuge** = **chacah** = trust

**Word picture**—this verb often used with **taking shelter in the Lord’s wings**

- o Ps 36:7
- o Ps 57:1
- o Ps 61:4
- o Ps 91:4

## OUTLINE OF PSALM 18

**Praise for God’s Help [vv1-3]**

**God Rescues [vv4-19]**

The Distressing Situation [vv4-5]

Appeal to God [v6]

God Comes with Power and Might [vv7-15]

God’s Final Deliverance [vv16-19]

**God’s Way Is Perfect [vv20-30]**

The Righteous King [vv20-24]

The Perfection of God [vv25-30]

**God Brings Total Victory [vv31-45]**

Defeating the Enemy in Battle [vv31-42]

Subduing Rebellion—Domestic and Foreign [vv43-45]

**Doxology [vv46-48]**

**Vow [49-50]**

### GOD BRINGS TOTAL VICTORY [vv31-45]

1. God—whose way is perfect—**v30**
  - o Has made the messiah king’s way perfect
2. God whose conduct corresponds to His character
  - o Empowers the king able to act in a way that corresponds to his vocation
3. The king must win the battle and subdue all rebels
  - o This victory vindicates God and His power over pagan kingdoms
  - o Implied: defeat would not only destroy the king’s reign—but also dishonor God

### DEFEATING THE ENEMY IN BATTLE [vv31-42]

**31 For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God, 32 The God who girds me with strength and makes my way blameless? 33 He makes my feet like hinds’ feet and sets me upon my high places. 34 He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.**

*35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, and Your right hand upholds me; and Your gentleness makes me great. 36 You enlarge my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped. 37 I pursued my enemies and overtook them, and I did not turn back until they were consumed. 38 I shattered them, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. 39 For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. 40 You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, and I destroyed those who hated me. 41 They cried for help, but there was none to save, even to the Lord, but He did not answer them. 42 Then I beat them fine as the dust before the wind; I emptied them out as the mire of the streets.*

## 1. SUMMARY

- o This fourth part of the psalm (vv31-45)—is a song of victory
- o Begins with exclamation—the Lord is the incomparable Savior God—31
- o Shows how the Lord empowers the king—32-36
- o How this support enables the king to defeat his enemies—37-42
- o How rebellious people submit to the king’s rule—43-45

## 2. GOD’S POWER DEMONSTRATED THROUGH THE PROWESS OF THE KING

- a. This focus on the king as the actor instead of God is unusual in the Old Testament
  - The king pursues and defeats his enemies—who are helpless and surrender to the king
  - No army is mentioned—the focus is on the God-empowered king
  - The picture of the king is militaristic and exaggerated
  - It uses a common middle-eastern motif—the invincible power of the monarch
- b. This serves several purposes
  - It shows that God’s messianic king is more powerful than the kings of pagan gods
  - It demonstrates the power of God’s kingdom over the kingdoms of the world
  - It preserves the messianic king’s image—keeps it from being obliterated by God’s action
  - It shows that Israel’s historic, human kingship arose amid attack by other nations

## 3. MILITARY PICTURE: GOD PREPARES THE KING AND DELIVERS TOTAL VICTORY

**31**—God is his high fortress—the ‘rock’—where God prepares the king for battle

**32**—God strengthens him for battle—and prepares the way ahead

**33**—God keeps him sure-footed and safe in his mountainous camp

**34**—God trains him for battle—strengthens his arms to wield heavy weapons

**35**—God protects and saves him—enfolds him as a shield

**35**—God raises and sustains the king with His mighty hand

**35**—God makes him into a great but humble warrior—whom allies follow and enemies fear

**36**—God clears the path ahead and secures his footing as he races into battle

- 37—**The king** pursues and overtakes his enemy
- 38—**The king** destroys and subdues his enemy
- 39—**Victory is God's**: He has empowered the king and subdued the enemy
- 40—**Victory is God's**: He made the enemy flee while the king destroyed them
- 41—**Victory is God's**: He showed no mercy to his enemies
- 42—**Victory is total**: the king obliterates and empties his enemy of all power

**VERSES 31-32—31 *For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God, 32 the God who girds me with strength and makes my way blameless?***

1. WHO IS THIS GOD—WHO RESCUES—AND WHO IS PERFECT?

a. His identity is revealed in three questions and answers

1. Question one—Who is?—‘The **one** God’—**elowah**

- Answer—He is ‘*the Lord*’
- **Jahweh**—covenant God and creator

2. Question two—Who is?—a **rock**

- Answer—‘*our God*’
- **Elohim**—God of all gods and creator

3. Question three—Who is?—the one who **strengthens** and makes me **blameless**

- Answer—‘*the God*’
- **EI**—the Mighty One

b. Summarizes His fourfold identity

1. **The One God [Elowah]—is Jehovah—is Elohim—is EI**

**31-32—*For who is God [Elowah], but the Lord [Jehovah]? And who is a rock, except our God [Elohim], the God [EI] who girds me with strength and makes my way blameless?***

2. ‘Elowah’ [One God]—ties together God’s identity—in previous verses

a. **Jehovah** [covenant God] —who is **EI** [Mighty One]

**2—*The Lord [Jehovah] is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God I [EI], my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.***

30—*As for God [El], His way is blameless; the word of the Lord [Jehovah] is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.*

- b. **Jehovah** [covenant God]—who is **Elohim** [God over all gods]

6—*In my distress I called upon the Lord [Jehovah] and cried to my God [Elohim] for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears.*

21 *For I have kept the ways of the Lord [Jehovah] and have not wickedly departed from my God [Elohim].*

28 *For You light my lamp; the Lord [Jehovah] my God [Elohim] illumines my darkness.*

- c. God [Elohim]—is a **rock**

1. The savior-protector

- a. Identified in verse 2—fortress, deliverer, strength, shield, salvation, high tower
- b. The Only One—**Elowah**—who can be this kind of saving rock
- c. There is none other—who can provide this kind of salvation-protection

**Ps 62:1**—*He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.*

2. Rock—as a metaphor for God—[again]

- a. A picture of His very identity
- b. Used as a **name** for God—'The Rock'
  - Already mentioned—in **Moses' Song**—**Dt 32**—[verses 4, 15, 18, 30]
- c. **Elowah**—the **Only One**—who is such 'a rock'
  - Contrasted with empty idols
  - Though made out of stone/rock—they are lifeless and powerless

**Dt 32:31**—*Indeed their rock is not like our Rock*

3. Who girds me with strength

- a. Repeated in **verse 39**
- b. Meaning—**azar** = to clothe—encompass—equip—gird

- c. Bestow a power—symbolized by a gift such as clothing
    - **Investiture—to convey the symbols or clothing of authority**
    - **Belt of a knight—robe of a judge—crown of a king—pallium of a bishop**
  - d. This clothing is strength itself
  - e. Result—to make strong—[to carry out one’s office/responsibility]
4. Blameless way
- a. **God**—whose way is blameless (**v30**)—**makes** the king’s way blameless (**v31**)
  - b. Blameless—NASB—ESV—NEB
    - [Again]—meaning = complete—whole—integrity—innocent
    - Being ‘perfect’—in KJV
  - c. Some interpret this as ‘straight’
    1. The ‘straight’ way is—safe and direct
    2. In context of security of the ‘rock’—some versions translate this as ‘safe’
      - NIV = ‘secure’
      - RSV and TEV = ‘safe’

**VERSE 33—***He makes my feet like hinds’ feet and sets me upon my high places.*

1. HE MAKES—**shavah** = [Piel] = to level—smooth
  - He levels—stabilizes—steadies—my feet

**Hab 3:19**—[last verse of book]—*The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like the hinds’ feet, and makes me walk on my high places.*

2. THE HIND

a. **ayalah** = female red deer

1. Female of ‘hart’—red deer buck—**ayal**
2. With two qualities
  - Blazing swiftness
  - Graceful sure-footedness
3. Jacob’s final blessing—attributes these qualities to **Naphtali**

**Gen 49:21**—*Naphtali is a hind let loose, He gives beautiful words.*

- **Naphtali** = Jacob's sixth son—second son of Bilhah (Rachel's handmaid)
- Medieval Jewish **targum** describes Naphtali as a **swift runner**
- Tribe—known for military prowess against Canaanites and Midianites

b. Similar in agility to **Himalayan sheep**

- **Bharal** = Hindi for 'Blue Sheep'
- Just above the Mt. Everest base camp
- Scampering over boulders and up cliffsides

c. Parallel—soldiers swift in battle—like **David's own warriors**

**I Chr 12:8**—*From the Gadites there came over to David in the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor men trained for war, who could handle shield and spear, and whose faces were like the faces of lions, and the were as swift as the gazelles on the mountains.*

### 3. HIGH PLACES

a. High and dangerous places

1. Inaccessible to his enemy
2. Fortified positions—from which he can see and defend his territory
3. Where the Lord keeps him safe—and gives him sure-footedness

b. Places of high authority

1. Possessed and commanded by the king and his army
2. From which he exercises authority over the nation
3. Example of Palestinian heights
  - **Mount Zion**—capital—Jerusalem—**2474 feet**
  - **Mount Gerizim**—**2890 feet**—**Mount Ebal**—**3120 feet**
  - **Mount Hermon**—**9232 feet**—Syria—*overlooks* Golan Heights
  - **Israeli peak on southern slope of Hermon**—**7336 feet**—highest place in Israel
4. Military 'high ground'—gives offensive advantage over the enemy

**VERSE 34**—*He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.*

#### 1. HE TRAINS MY HANDS FOR BATTLE

a. David ascribes all his military prowess to God—from his training forward

- b. Train—**lamad** = teach—learn—also **to discipline**
  - Not just mental understanding—but exercising that learning
  - Converting head knowledge to skill—by repetitive drilling
- c. God imparts knowledge—and disciplines—the king
- d. Results: increased **skill**—but also **strength**—to draw the bow

## 2. BRONZE BOW

### a. Weapon of power

- But difficult to string and shoot
- Required great force to string—using the ground as leverage
- Indicates David’s strength and accuracy

**Job 20:24**—[the wicked man]—*He may flee from the iron weapon, but the bronze bow will pierce him*

### b. Example—in the *Odyssey*

- **Ulysses** left behind at Ithaca a bow which no one but he could bend
- He won contest for Penelope’s heart—only suitor who could bend, string, and shoot it

**VERSE 35**—*You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, and Your right hand upholds me; and Your gentleness makes me great.*

## 1. THE SHIELD OF YOUR SALVATION

- The same wrap-around protective, saving shield in—**vv 2, 30**—and **Ps 7:10**

## 2. YOUR RIGHT HAND UPHOLDS ME

### a. The same ‘saving right hand’

- In which David has already **put his trust**—**17:7**
- At which—near His right hand—David has **positioned himself**—**16:8**

### b. ‘Right hand’—symbolic of three things

#### 1. Source of **salvation**

**Ps 60:5**—*That Your beloved may be delivered, save with Your right hand, and answer us!*

#### 2. Source of **power and strength**—stronger than the left hand

**Ps 44:3**—*For by their own sword they did not possess the land, and their own arm did not save them, but Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your presence, for You favored them.*

3. Source of **righteousness**—and the king’s blamelessness

**Ps 48:10**—*As is Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.*

- c. ‘Upholds me’

- ca’ad = support—sustain—strengthen
- God **strengthens** David’s—soul (salvation)—body (power)—spirit (righteousness)

### 3. YOUR GENTLENESS MAKES ME GREAT

- a. Definitions

1. Gentleness—**anvah** = meekness

- a. Only place in the OT—where this word is used to describe God
- b. Used elsewhere to describe the Messianic King

**Ps 45:4**—*And in Your majesty ride on victoriously, for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; let Your right hand teach You awesome things.*

NOTE: this verse combines two key concepts of **Psalm 18**

- 1. The Messianic King—is trained/taught and prepared for battle
- 2. The Messianic King—fights for three things
  - ▲ Truth—meekness—righteousness
  - ▲ Brings together meekness (v35) and blamelessness (vv 23, 25, 30, 32)

2. Make great—**rabah** = [Hiphil] multiply—enlarge—make numerous

- b. Gentleness—**meekness**—two possible interpretations

1. Humility

- a. God imparts His humility to the king
- b. Irony—the king is made ‘great’ in this humility
- c. Precursor to Jesus’ model—the **great** become **servants**—the **first** become **last**

2. Condescension

- a. Word also means to ‘bow’ or ‘stoop’

- b. God ‘stoops’—to reach down and uplift the king
- c. This is an act of divine kindness—making the king ‘great’
- d. It is also an act of patience—God not pushing—but gently encouraging
- c. Greatness
  - 1. The king is *made* ‘great’—enlarged—by God’s kindness—grace
  - 2. God has modeled true leadership—greatness in gentleness
  - 3. Implication—the king is truly great when he is kind and gracious—like God

**VERSE 36—*You enlarge my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped.***

1. YOU ENLARGE MY STEPS

- a. Remember—**vv4-5**—the Psalmist was surrounded by deathly impediments
  - v4**—*the cords of death encompassed me*
  - v5**—*the cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me*
- b. Here—God clears away all those dangerous obstacles
- c. Literally—**You give a wide place**—to my steps
  - 1. Possibly—room to maneuver in battle
    - Not hemmed in—but free to move and wield his weapon
  - 2. Possibly—freedom from capture
    - See how this phrase is used in **Ps 31**

**Ps 31:8—*And You have not given me over into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a large place.***

2. MY FEET HAVE NOT SLIPPED

- a. ‘Feet’—literally = ‘joint’—specifically ‘ankle’
- b. God has strengthened his ankles
  - 1. So—he is stable on his feet
  - 2. So—he does twist his ankle and limp—but advances firmly
  - 3. So—he can plant his feet as a stable platform—to bend the bronze bow—**v34**

**NOTE—transition here:**

**vv32-36—the Lord empowers the king—[present tense—God continues to do this]**

**VERSE 37—*I pursued my enemies and overtook them, and I did not turn back until they were consumed.***

1. PURSUED AND OVERTOOK—MY ENEMIES

- a. The threat of the enemy is reversed
  1. Pharaoh’s army threatened to **pursue** and **overtake** Israel and divide the spoil—**Ex 15:9**
  2. David’s enemies threatened to **pursue** and **overtake** his soul—**Ps 7:5**
- b. Previously on the defensive—the king took the offensive
- c. Battles are rarely won by static defense—not staying in a safe place—but by entering the field of battle and engaging the enemy
- d. Good defense may win games—but only if the offense scores!

2. THEY WERE CONSUMED

- a. **consumed** = cease—to be finished—wiped out
- b. Military principle
  - Exploit the victory—to the very end!
  - Do not give the enemy a chance to revive—and renew the threat!

3. EXAMPLES

- a. David ‘pursued/overtook’ the Amalekites—killed all the mature warriors—**I Sam 30**
- b. The list of David’s military victories is given in **II Sam 8**
  - Once David defeated them—they rarely arose and rebelled against him
- c. His victory over the Arameans and Ammonites was so complete—the Arameans no longer plotted to support the Ammonites against Israel—**II Sam 10**

**VERSE 38—*I shattered them, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet.***

1. I SHATTERED THEM

- I ‘thrust through’—means—‘to break in pieces’ = totally defeated

2. FELL UNDER MY FEET

- Not a statement of humble submission—but of total inability to arise again

**VERSE 39**—*For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.*

1. REMINDER OF THE CAUSE OF VICTORY

- a. This shows how the enemy fell under David's feet
- b. The psalmist returns to the source of his strength—God
- c. Though the implied instrument of victory is David
- d. It is God who has subdued the enemy—through David

2. GIRDED ME WITH STRENGTH—FOR BATTLE

- a. Repeats—and reinforces—the same assertion of **v32**—‘clothed with power’
- b. In **v32**—it prepares David's character—strength clothes him to walk God's blameless way
- c. Here—it prepares David physically—strength to wage war

3. SUBDUED UNDER ME

- a. To sink down—bend or bow down—in defeat
- b. Implication—combined with **v38**—*fell under my feet*
  - They are subdued under his feet—perhaps with his foot on their necks
- c. Similar to when Joshua subdued the five Canaanite kings after the Battle of Gibeon

**Josh 10:24**—*When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua call for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.’ So they came near and put their feet on their necks.*

4. THOSE WHO ROSE UP AGAINST ME

- a. Literally = ‘insurgents’
- b. Used elsewhere
  - Ps 3:2**—*O Lord, how my adversaries have increased*
  - Ps 44:5**—*Through You we will push back our adversaries*

**VERSE 40**—*You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, and I destroyed those who hated me.*

1. *enemies turn their backs to me*

- o Literally—‘backs of the necks’

- o Enemies retreated—they were completely routed

**Ex 23:27**—God promised Moses—He would cause Canaanites to flee in this same way

**Josh 7:8**—Joshua lamented that Israel did this—fled in defeat—at the Battle of Ai

2. I destroyed those who hated me

Not an expression of personal retribution from David

Rather—this indicates the animosity surrounding nations held for the Jews

David is intent on defending Israel—God’s people—from those who would exterminate them

**VERSE 41**—*They cried for help, but there was none to save, even to the Lord, but He did not answer them.*

1. Contrast with David’s earlier cry

**v6**—*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.*

2. But when his enemies cried

- a. **First**—when they cried—there was none to save

Obvious meaning—they cried to gods who were non-existent—unable to save

- b. Then—when they resorted to calling upon Jehovah—in desperation

Like Jonah’s pagan sailors called upon Jehovah to save them in the storm—**Jon 1:14**

Pagan people knew—and sometimes invoked—Jehovah’s name

Sennacherib—said he was obeying Jehovah when he invaded Judah—**II Kgs 18:25**

But when David’s enemies called upon the Lord—it was too late

**VERSE 42**—*Then I beat them fine as the dust before the wind; I emptied them out as the mire of the streets.*

1. Picture of complete defeat
2. Trampled—crushed—pulverized—ground into dust—that is scattered by the wind

The enemy has fled—dispersed—completely vanished

Like David’s plea against his enemies in **Psalm 35**

**Ps 35:5**—*Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the Lord driving them on.*

Like the wicked in Psalm 1

**Ps 1:4**—*the wicked are not so, but they are like the chaff which the wind drives away.*

3. Emptied—poured out—into the streets

Emptied of all power—totally abased

Nothing more than mire—mud and muck under the feet

### COMPLETE DOMINION—DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN [vv43-45]

**43** *You have delivered me from the contentions of the people; You have placed me as head of the nations; a people whom I have not known serve me.* **44** *As soon as they hear, they obey me; foreigners submit to me.* **45** *Foreigners fade away, and come trembling out of their fortresses.*

1. THIS POINTS TO JEHOVAH’S SOVEREIGNTY

- o A king’s victory established him as head over those nations he defeated
- o In the Middle East—this meant his sovereignty extended to the limits of the god he served
- o So David’s victory symbolized Jehovah’s sovereignty over the nations

2. JEHOVAH’S UNIVERSAL SOVEREIGNTY

- o David’s ‘*my Rock*’(v2)—now becomes the Rock of all nations

**Isa. 44:8**—*Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.*

**Is 45:21**—*And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me.*

**VERSE 43**—*You have delivered me from the contentions of the people; You have placed me as head of the nations; a people whom I have not known serve me.*

1. Delivered from—‘the contentions of the people’

- a. David also had to deal with internal ‘strife’—among his own ‘people’—**yam**

**II Sam 22:44**—*You have also delivered me from the contentions of my people*

- b. Probably refers to the civil war with Saul’s people and then Absalom’s rebellion

2. God made him ‘head of the nations’

- a. **gowy** = ‘nations’ = Gentiles—KJV ‘heathen’

- Possibly related to later term for non-Gentiles—‘goyim’

- b. The list of David’s conquests—**II Sam 8**

- Philistines
- Syrians
- Moabites
- Ammonites
- Amalekites

3. A people I have not known will serve me

- a. Possibly—David will conquer still more nations
- b. Possibly—he is speaking of his legacy—ruled over by Solomon
  - **I Kgs 4:21**—Solomon ruled everything from the Euphrates to the Philistines to Egypt
- c. Possibly—a messianic prophecy—of Christ ruling over those David did not know

**Ps 2:8**—*Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.*

**VERSES 44-45**—*As soon as they hear, they obey me; foreigners submit to me. Foreigners fade away, and come trembling out of their fortresses.*

1. The king's victories are well-known *beyond* those he defeated
  - o His reputation and the fear of his army precede him
  - o Even at the rumors of his victories—foreigners submit to him
2. Foreigners = **ben nekar** = sons of aliens—sons of alien gods—KJV 'strangers'
  - a. Submit—to pay court to—to do servile homage—cringing/cowering
  - b. Fade away
    - Their courage completely disappears
    - As though struck by a fiery wind—they wither

**Is 40:7**—*The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it*

- c. 'Came trembling' out of their fortresses
  - Verb occurs only here in the OT
  - Even their safe havens—the rocky places—cannot protect them
  - They emerge—quaking—'limping'
- d. Pictured by the prophets Isaiah and Micah

**Is 60:14**—*The sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you, and all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet; and they will call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*

**Mic 7:17**—*[Nations] will lick the dust like a serpent, like reptiles of the earth. They will come trembling out of their fortresses; to the Lord our god they will come in dread and they will be afraid before You.*

### DOXOLOGY [vv46-48]

**46** *The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of my salvation, 47 the God who executes vengeance for me, and subdues peoples under me. 48 He delivers me from my enemies; surely You lift me above those who rise up against me; You rescue me from the violent man.*

1. The Psalmist praises and blesses God—as his Savior
2. The reason: what God has *already* done—He *continues* to do
3. He continues to bring salvation

### VERSE 46

1. Three praises
  - o The Lord is living
  - o The Lord is blessed
  - o The Lord is exalted
2. The Lord lives
  - o This is the **living** Jehovah—not a lifeless idol
3. Blessed be my rock
  - o The same Lord—who is the ‘rock’ of [verse 2](#)
  - o This ‘rock’ is living—unlike the pagan gods—who are made of cold dead stone!
4. Blessed be . . . exalted be
  - o The psalmist blesses and exalts—and *exhorts the people* to bless God—and to exalt God
5. The God of my salvation = the God who saves me
  - o A favorite phrase of David— [Ps 25:5—27:9—38:22—51:14—88:1](#)

- But used rarely by other authors

## VERSES 47-48

1. God brings salvation—by the following actions
  - a. Avenging
    - Punishing those who have done violence against Israel
    - Vindicating His honor—against those who have committed evil
  - b. Subduing
    - Putting the enemy to flight—overtaking—and putting them down
  - c. Delivering
    - Reiterates idea of **verse 43**—[same verb] **delivered** from contentions of his own people
    - Now—He delivers the Psalmist from external enemies
  - d. Lifting up—above his adversaries/enemies
    - Adversaries—are those who **rise** up against David
    - So God **raises** David further—above them—in triumph
  - e. Rescuing from violent men
    - Reiterates idea of **verse 17**—[same verb] **delivered** from strong men
    - Here they are violent “men who kill others”
    - Some commentators say—this refers to Saul—the ‘man of violence’

## VOW [49-50]

**49** *Therefore I will give thanks to You among the nations, O Lord, and I will sing praises to Your name. 50 He gives great deliverance to His king and shows lovingkindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever.*

## VERSE 49

1. David gives thanks ‘among the nations’—gives testimony to the ‘heathen’—Gentiles
2. Paul—**Rom 15:9**—quotes **verse 49**
  - As proof—that Christ brings salvation to the Gentiles too
  - Paul combines this with similar testimony from **Dt 32:43** and **Ps 117:1**

## VERSE 50

1. The deliverance is ‘great’—in its extent and continuation
2. Extent—to the ‘nations’—in **verse 49**
3. In continuation
  - o To David’s descendants forever
  - o Alludes to everlasting Messianic covenant God made with David

**II Sam 7:12, 16**—*When your days are complete, and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will establish his kingdom . . . Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.*