

David's Song of Praise

Second Samuel 22:1-51 and Psalm 18:1-50

For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD.
He sang to YHVH the words of this song when ADONAI delivered him
from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Sha'ul.

DIG: In David's song of victory, what was he giving thanks for? How did David describe the LORD in his song of praise? How were David and the nation of Israel part of God's grand, sovereign plan to include the Gentiles in salvation? If you had to express the emotions of David's song in music, what types of music would you choose and why? What refrains would you dramatize? What solo parts stand out? Where would you signal the musical crescendo? What about this song reflects his triumph over foreign enemies? Nowhere in First or Second Samuel did the cosmic events described here actually happen to David. Why then does he use such figurative language to describe how God saved him? To what other redemptive experiences in Israel's collective history is he alluding? How could David make such claims about himself? What qualities of ADONAI do you see through the eyes of David? What effect does YHVH have on him? In referring to his qualities as a warrior and a king, what new insights do you gain into David?

REFLECT: Has God ever delivered you from anything bad? If so, from what? What does the image of YHVH as a rock mean to you? How can you face David's example when facing opposition? Ha'Shem used hard times to build David into a leader. When have you noticed the LORD using hard times to mold you? What new insights might these verses give you into the victorious rule of Messiah, the descendant of David? When do you feel like ADONAI would shake heaven and earth to save you? Or don't you think YHVH would even lift a finger? Why? Knowing you are worth that much effort to Him, and that He delights in you, what does that do for your motivation to praise God among the nations who do not know Him? How might God help you prevail over enemies "too strong for you?" Over what "walls" would you like God to help you scale? What verse of lyric from David's song would you claim to describe how you want to see the LORD work in your life? What are the key insights you take away from this psalm?⁴⁷⁰

The last four chapters of Second Samuel serve as an appendix to David's career. These events occurred earlier in the king's life but are presented here to show the other kinds of problems David had to face - famine and plague (Chapters 21 and 24) - the men David relied on to fight his battles (Chapter 23), and how the king learned to praise God through his trials (Chapter 22 and Psalm 22).

Second Samuel 22 is mirrored in **Psalm 18** with few variations. It's likely that **Second Samuel 22** was the original version, but when the **song** was adapted for corporate worship, **David** wrote a new opening. **David's song** of praise tells us about **God's** attributes and actions. Both elements are found throughout. **Psalm 18** is read every year in the synagogues around the world on the seventh day of Passover.

According to the superscription, **David** had experienced victories over **his** enemies, including **Sha'ul**. The **Psalm** of thanksgiving may have served as a victory hymn on various occasions of victory over **the enemies of Isra'el**.⁴⁷¹ After reviewing all that **ADONAI** was to **him**, **David** then recorded **his** deliverance by **the LORD** and rejoiced in the mercies shown to **him**. This **psalm** is a **song** of gratitude for victory by the warrior-king who was at peace.⁴⁷²

The original situation is not entirely clear. It's unlikely that this **song** was written just after the defeat of **Sha'ul** and the beginning of **David's** reign in Hebron. And the last verse of the **song** infers that it was written after **God** made **His** everlasting covenant with **His** anointed king (see **Ct - The LORD's Covenant with David**). Consequently, it seems to have been a reflective **psalm**, written at a time that **David's** power was at its height (**Second Samuel 8:14**). We can further infer from **Psalm 18:20-27** that **he** wrote the **psalm** before **his** great sin with **Bathsheba** had left its mark on **him** and its shadow on **his** kingdom.⁴⁷³

A. YHVH, the Rock of Isra'el: **David** sang to the **LORD** the words of this **song** when **YHVH** delivered **him** from the hand of all **his** enemies and from the hand of **Sha'ul**. His simple statement of intimate devotion - **I love you, LORD, my strength** - identifies **him** immediately as **a man after God's own heart**. **David** loved **God**. The assertion that **God** is **David's strength** is really the heart of the **psalm**. **He** knows the **LORD's** character because of the way **He** acts. Therefore, **he** says: **ADONAI** is **my rock** (Hebrew: *sela*, because **He** provided stability and security for **him**), **my fortress** (Hebrew: *mesuda* or *Masada*, the name of Herod's well-know **fortress** by the Dead Sea) and **my Deliverer; my God is my rock** (Hebrew: *tzur*), picturing a high place in whom **I** take refuge, **my shield and the horn of my salvation** in which one could flee for protection. All these staccato-like metaphors summarized **David's** life when **Sha'ul** hunted **him** down like a dog. Death avoided **him** daily. It seemed impossible that **he** should escape with his life, but **YHVH** had done it. **He is my stronghold, my refuge and my Savior - from violent people you save me (Second Samuel 22:1-3 and Psalm 18:1-2)**. Notice the repeated first person possessive pronoun **my**. **ADONAI** was personal to **David**. **He** knew **Him**. **He** could count on **Him**. Consequently, when **David** called on **His God**, something happened. **He** was saved from **his** enemies. Likewise, **Yeshua** promises that when we call on **His** name, something will happen: **Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. [But] ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete (Yochanan 16:24)**. We can also call upon the **LORD** and count on **His** answer because of **His** character revealed in what **He** says and does.⁴⁷⁴

B. Affliction: The image of the rock gives way to the image of a storm. I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and have been saved from my enemies. The waves of death swirled about me (see the commentary on [Jonah At - Jonah's Prayer](#)); the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of Sh'ol coiled around me; the snares of death, pictured as a hunter setting traps for his prey, confronted me. The threat of death was very real. In my distress I called to ADONAI; I called out to my God. From His Temple in heaven He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, to His ears (Second Samuel 22:4-7; Psalm 18:3-6). What do we do when death presses in upon us? Cower in fear? Escape to denial? David cried out to God, his Savior. He knew YHVH was his God. And he knew where He was to be found . . . in His heavenly Temple (Psalm 11:4). Our God is not like the deaf idols. He hears our cries for help. We are His children. As Psalm 10:17 says: You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them, and You listen to their cry.⁴⁷⁵

C. ADONAI's Coming to Help: Then David changed from his near historical past to the far eschatological future and the Second Coming. The earth trembled and quaked, the foundations of the heavens shook; they trembled because He was angry. Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it and dark clouds were under his feet (see the commentary on [Revelation Bv - The Sun Will Be Turned to Darkness and the Moon Blood Red](#)). He mounted the cherubim (see the commentary on [Revelation Ew - He is Dressed in a Robe Dipped in Blood, And His Name is the Word of God](#)) and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness His canopy around Him - the dark rain clouds of the sky. Out of the brightness of His presence (the Shechinah glory) clouds advanced with hailstones and bolts of lightning blazed forth. The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded (see the commentary on [Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah](#)). He shot His arrows and scattered the enemy, with great bolts of lightning He routed them (see the commentary on [Revelation Ex - The Eight Stage Campaign of Armageddon](#)). The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at the rebuke of YHVH (see the commentary on [Revelation Fr - Then I Saw a New Heaven and a New Earth](#)), at the blast of breath from His nostrils (Second Samuel 22:8-16; Psalm 18:7-15). When Jesus returns, it will be a time of rejoicing for all believers: Then John heard what sounded like the roar of a huge crowd, like the sound of rushing waters, like loud peals of thunder, saying: Hallelujah! ADONAI, God of heaven's angelic armies has begun His reign! Let us rejoice and be glad! Let us give Him the glory! For the time has come for the wedding of the Lamb, and His Bride has prepared herself - fine linen, bright and clean has been given her to wear (Revelation 19:6-8a).

D. ADONAI's Deliverance: Then David changed back from the **far eschatological future** to his **near historical past**. God reached down from on high and took hold of me. He drew me out of deep waters, or the waves of death, mentioned earlier. He rescued me from all of my powerful enemies, from my foes, who were too strong for me. Without God's deliverance David would have been lost (just like the righteous of the TaNaKh during the Great Tribulation). They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but ADONAI was my support (2 Sam 22:17-19; Psalm 18:16-18). Therefore, God's deliverance of David became a model for His future deliverance of Isra'el at the end of the Great Tribulation. And when we call upon the LORD today, He is ready to fill us with His Spirit. When we battle against the Adversary and his demons, when we deal with the powers of this world, we too have a power, the power of the Ruach HaKodesh. And in that power, the power of the evil one is broken.

E. God's Faithfulness to the Faithful: He brought me out into a spacious place; He rescued me because He delighted in me. The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has renewed me. Obviously, David wasn't always righteous. But when he did sin, he would repent, confess and offer a sacrifice (see Dg - [O God, A Broken and Contrite Heart You Will Not Despise](#)). For I have kept the ways of YHVH; I am not guilty of turning from my God. For all His rulings were before me, I did not depart from His regulations in the Torah. I was pure-hearted toward Him and kept myself from my sin. David is not claiming he never sinned, but he always loved God with all his heart. David's victory over his enemies point to Messiah. Within the covenant ultimately fulfilled by Christ, David received the reward of God's deliverance: Hence, ADONAI repaid me for my righteousness, according to my purity in His view. Having meditated upon God's deliverance, David then addressed YHVH directly, revealing the true source of his claim of righteousness. With the merciful, You are merciful; with the champion of purity, You are pure; with the honest, You are honest; but the crooked You are cunning. People are afflicted, You save; but when Your eyes are on the haughty, you humble them. The humble learn that all they have is the gift by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). For You, ADONAI, are my lamp; ADONAI lights up my darkness. All of David's wisdom and accomplishments came from divine revelation. Applying this thought to the battle before him, David acknowledged that it was YHVH who strengthened him. With You I can run through a whole troop of men, with my God I can leap a wall (2 Samuel 22:20-30 CJB; Psalm 18:19-29).⁴⁷⁶

D. ADONAI's Perfections: God was both David's strength in battle and his protection in battle. As for God, His way is perfect: The LORD's Word is flawless; He shields all who take refuge in Him. For who is God besides YHVH? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure. God removed every obstacle that blocked the path of his life. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; He causes me to stand on the heights (Habakkuk 3:19). He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze (Job 20:24). ADONAI then supported His king. You make Your saving help my shield, and Your right hand sustains me. The right hand is the hand of power and authority (Psalm 20:6). Paradoxically it is God's humility that made David great and kept him from falling. Where the living God is at work there can be seen an uncanny combination of authority and humility. Your help has made me great. You provide a broad path for my feet, so that my ankles do not give way (Second Samuel 22:31-37; Psalm 18:30-36). We can see this fully expressed in Jesus' ministry. ADONAI, out His abundant grace, equipped David for battle and assured him of victory. Not only that, He offers the same to us today! Through His Word He illuminates our darkness and shows us where the real battle is to be fought against Satan and his demons. Then He gives us the strength of His Spirit for the battle, to leap over walls and to tear down strongholds (Second Corinthians 10:4). In this battle, the LORD arms us with spiritual weapons and teaches us how to use them (Ephesians 6:13-18). He grants us His authority and humility keeps us secure in Him. Ha'Shem's Kingdom is at war with the devil and we, like David, are soldiers in His army.⁴⁷⁷

C. ADONAI's Victory Over His Enemies: Armed for battle, David graphically described the fight. I pursued my enemies and crushed them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them completely, and they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet (see Af - [The Problem of War in the TaNaKh](#)). You armed me with strength for battle; You humbled my adversaries before me. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroy my foes. They cried for help, even to ADONAI, but there was no one to save them, He did not answer (Second Samuel 22:38-42; Psalm 18:37-41). When they fought against David, they fought against the LORD's anointed. His triumph was by grace alone. This same is true for us. We conquer only in Christ. He is the One who is seated at God's right hand interceding for us. Although in this world [we] experience trouble (John 16:33), yet we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). We are not, however, to be victims. We are called into a spiritual battle to fight against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph 6:12-13), and in this, we can expect a spiritual victory like David's. Come what may, nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:39).⁴⁷⁸

B. The Glorious Deliverance: David's victory in battle assures us that his kingdom, which represents the Kingdom of God, is established. **I beat them as fine as the windblown dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets. You have delivered me from the attacks of the people (see Ce - War Between the Houses of David and Sha'ul).** David was delivered from the attacks of his own people and the threat of the Gentile nations. Now they are submitted to him. **You have made me the head of nations; people I did not know (the Gentile nations) now serve me, foreigners cower before me.** No one wanted to mess with David. **As soon as they hear of me, they obey me and acknowledge my authority. The nations all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds, with their hands in the air (Second Samuel 22:43-45; Psalm 18:42-45).** This description of David's reign is, once again, prophetic, foreshadowing the coming of the New Jerusalem (see my commentary on **Revelation Fs - The Eternal New Jerusalem**). Yeshua now rules His Church made up of Jewish and Gentile believers (**Ephesians 2:14**), and one day He will rule the Gentile nations after the Adversary's power is destroyed (**Revelation 20:1-3**). The Gentile nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it (**Revelation 21:24**). The redeemed will consist of peoples from every nations, tribe, people and tongue (**Revelation 7:9**) who will not lose their national identity. This is echoed by the prophets (**Isaiah 60:1-5, 11, 16, 19-20**). In this interim before the Lord's return, we battle, but we battle in His strength and victory. We also know the outcome of our war.⁴⁷⁹

A. YHVH, the Rock of Isra'el: With the confidence of victory and reign before him, David turned to worship. He made his confession: **ADONAI lives! While the idols of my enemies are lifeless. Praise be to my Rock! ADONAI was his refuge and security. Exalted be my God, my Savior! He is the God who avenges me, who subdues the nations under me, who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me.** Remembering what YHVH had done, David gave Him praise: **Therefore I will praise You, LORD, among the nations. No only did David give thanks, he also sang: I will sing the praises of Your name.** The goal of our salvation is that we worship with the mighty heavenly chorus in praise to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, "Praise and honor and glory and power be to ADONAI the Father and Seh Ha'Elohim, God's Lamb, the Lamb for ever and ever" (see my commentary on **Revelation Cf - You Are Worthy To Take the Scroll**). The psalm ends on a confessional note: **He gives His king, King David, great victories. He shows unfailing kindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever (Second Samuel 22:47-51; Psalm 18:46-50).** From this we see in the psalms conclusion the Gospel story. **Another David has come. He had defeated the enemies of Ha'Shem and established His reign.**⁴⁸⁰

Psalm 18 reveals the **God** who controls nature and history, who establishes **His King** and **His Kingdom**. **He** is not absent but present, not distant but near, not aloof but involved, not powerless but powerful. In **His Son**, the **Kingdom** has come and is coming. Finished, but not yet. Light pierces the darkness and the **Adversary** and his demons tremble. Yet we wait for the full dawn. In this hope we live and pray: **Your Kingdom come** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Dp - When You Pray, Go Into Your Room and Close the Door**).