

This chapter records a psalm that David sung in celebration of the fact that the LORD had given him the victory over those that wanted to oust him from the throne and had restored him again as king of Israel. This psalm, which is virtually identical to Psalm 18, appears to have been written earlier in David's life, but is recited again in thanksgiving to the LORD for taking care of him.

1 And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:

This song that David spake to the LORD (vs. 2-51) is almost identical to Psalm 18, also written by David. Many commentators believe that David wrote Psalm 18 earlier in his life to celebrate the fact that the LORD had kept him safe from Saul, but now was speaking/singing this psalm to the LORD again (with some variations) in worship, thanking the LORD for preserving his life and restoring him safely back to the throne. We sometimes do this today when we sing a song or read scripture to the LORD when we are alone for the sole purpose of worshiping God.

2 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; 3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

“And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer [to cause to escape]” – David describes the LORD as being his rock, his fortress and his deliverer, all three being means of protection one's from enemies. People would often hide from their enemies among the rocks (caves and holes in rock faces), and a fortress was a place of refuge where one would be protected from the enemy. A deliverer was someone who helped you escape from your enemy. David understood that it was the LORD who had protected him from Saul and his other enemies and had enabled him to escape from their grasp.

“The God of my rock; in him will I trust” – Psalm 18:2 phrases it as “the LORD is my rock...” God is pictured as being as strong, stable, and permanent as the rock that David trusts to provide shelter from the enemy.

“he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation [safety; deliverance]” – The LORD protected David like a shield and provided safety and deliverance to David with the power of a horn (a symbol of strength).

“my high tower, and my refuge” – These are places of safety from the enemy. The LORD is like a high tower, placing David above his enemy and out of the reach of their arrows and other weapons. The LORD is a place of safety in which to find refuge.

“my saviour [to save or deliver; to give victory]; thou savest me from violence [violence; injustice]” – Whatever the danger, the LORD protected David and gave him victory over his enemies. He prevented the enemy from doing violence and injustice to David.

4 I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. 5 When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; 6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

“I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies” – This verse is an overview of the upcoming verses. The LORD is worthy to be praised because He is faithful to those who call on His name for help. David states that he will call on this LORD and this will be how he will be saved from his enemies.

“When the waves of death compassed [surrounded] me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid” – David admits that he became afraid when he saw the sheer number of ungodly men surrounding him like a flood and waves of death ready to overwhelm and kill him.

“The sorrows [sorrows; cords] of hell [Sheol: abode of the dead] compassed me about; the snares of death prevented [to be in front] me” – David describes his fear like sorrows/ropes from hell tightening around him to drag him to his death. The prospect of death was like snares in front of him, preventing his escape. The situation was looking hopeless for David.

7 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.

“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God” – David saw that his only hope was to cry out to the LORD.

“and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears” – The earthly temple had not yet been built, so David is apparently referring to the heavenly temple where the LORD resided. Despite David being far away, the LORD still heard his cry for help. The LORD was not distracted nor was David's voice drowned out by other sounds. The LORD heard David.

Verses 8-17: The LORD is pictured as becoming angry at David's enemies and then coming to his aid in a powerful and fearsome manner. David uses the imagery of earthquakes, clouds, smoke and thunder to describe the way the LORD comes to his aid.

18 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.

The LORD responded to David's cry for help by rescuing him from the strong enemy and those that hated him and wanted to do him harm. The “strong enemy” may be referring to Saul, who definitely had the power to capture and kill David. “Them that hated me” could refer to Saul's men, although both “strong enemy” and “them that hated me” could generically refer to anyone that sought to harm David. He acknowledges that his deliverance had to have come from the LORD since these enemies were definitely too strong for David to overcome. He could not claim the credit for his escape.

Verses 19-30: David states that the reason that the LORD has helped him escape from the evil plans of his enemies was because he was a follower of the LORD. The LORD's hand was against David's enemies because of their wickedness but the LORD had come to David's rescue because he was a righteous man who had put his trust in the LORD.

31 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him. 32 For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God? 33 God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.

“As for God, his way is perfect [complete; whole; entire]” – The way of God is perfect in the sense of being complete. No one can say that following the LORD works most of the time except for certain situations. Doing things the LORD’s way is always right and is always the best way. It is lacking in nothing.

“the word [utterance] **of the LORD is tried** [to refine; to test]” – The Hebrew word for “tried” refers to how a goldsmith would place gold or silver over a fire to melt it and allow the impurities to come to the surface to be scooped off. Thus the metal is refined to make it more pure or else proven to be pure due to the lack of impurities. The utterances of the LORD have been shown to be refined and without impurities.

“he is a buckler [shield] **to all them that trust in him**” – David has recognized that the way of the LORD is perfect and His word can be trusted, therefore he can entrust himself into the LORD’s care and the LORD will be his shield.

“For who is God, save the LORD?” – Other nations have their gods that they worship and look to for protection, but David declares that there is no God except the LORD. All other gods are false gods that are made of wood, stone, or gold.

“and who is a rock, save our God?” – Worshipers of other gods are wasting their breath when they pray to their gods for protection, but the LORD is a “rock” (a place of refuge and protection) for those who trust in Him (vs. 2-3).

“God is my strength [place or means of safety] **and power** [strength; wealth]: **and he maketh my way perfect** [complete; whole; entire]” – David returns to the idea of God being his refuge/deliverer (v. 2), adding that God gives him the strength to escape or defeat his enemies. Thus the LORD enables David to travel his path in complete safety.

Verses 34-46: David describes in colorful language how that the LORD has given him the strength and ability to defeat his enemies.

47 The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.

“The LORD liveth” – In contrast to the gods whose idols are made of inanimate materials, the LORD is a living God Who hears and responds to those who call upon Him.

“and blessed [to be worthy of praise and adoration] **be my rock**” – Since the LORD is the living God, David has chosen the LORD to be his rock (a place of refuge) and sees that the LORD is worthy of his praise and adoration.

“and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation” – The LORD has saved David from his enemies (“the rock of my salvation”) and so David wants to exalt the LORD in his praise and worship.

48 It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me, 49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

“It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people [a nation] **under me**” – In David’s day, military victories were sometimes viewed as a sign that your god had executed vengeance upon your enemies in your behalf. David may have seen his military victories as the LORD giving him vengeance against his enemies by subduing them under David.

“And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies” – David seems to be picturing himself being surrounded by his enemies and the LORD bringing him forth (rescuing him) from their midst.

“thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me” – David’s enemies had risen up to defeat him but the LORD lifted David up, out of the reach of these enemies, placing David in the superior position.

“thou hast delivered me from the violent man” – The LORD has rescued David from those who would wish to execute violence (injury or death) against him.

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.

Giving thanks to the LORD denotes worship and praise intended to glorify the LORD. The fact that David promises to do this in the presence of the heathen indicates a witnessing opportunity to declare the goodness of God to “the heathen” (unbelievers). The Apostle Paul quotes this verse to illustrate the need that the Gentiles see us thanking God and glorifying Him (**Rom. 15:9** “*And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name*”).

51 He is the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

Commentators vary in who they think David is referring to with terms such as “his king,” “his anointed,” and “his seed.” The most natural interpretation is that these terms refer to David himself, who is “his king” in the sense of being chosen by God to be king. The same is true of David being “his anointed” since that terminology is used of the man chosen by God to be king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:6; 1 Sam. 24:6). “His seed” could refer to David’s descendants who would become king after him. However, some commentators point out that these terms are singular and therefore likely refer to the Messiah, the true Anointed of the LORD. The Apostle Paul illustrates the significance of the singular and plural forms of this word when reviewing the promise God made to Abraham (**Gal. 3:16** “*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ*”). The promise of being a tower of protection and of mercy extends to David and the Anointed One: Jesus Christ.