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Lesson 11: Psalm 18

Psalm 18

Author: David

Background: Perhaps a song of praise and victory written and sung after the Lord made David king over all Israel and gave him victory over the nations that opposed his rule. – Wiersbe’s Bible Exposition Commentary

Theme: The love of God moves heaven and earth for the sake of his own.¹

In this psalm, David shares as a worshipper and a witness to what God can do when we trust and obey Him. Deliverance is a key thought in this psalm (v. 2, 17, 19, 43, & 48). This psalm may have been used at a national day of prayer and praise to give thanks to the Lord for showing mercy to Israel.

Outline (*The outline comes from Warren Wiersbe’s Bible Exposition Commentary with additional notes from other resources as noted.*)

I. God **Delivers When We Call on Him (v.1-18)**

Wiersbe shares how David expressed his love for God with a Hebrew word that means “to love deeply, to have compassion.”

¹ Gaebelein, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (173). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

The Lord provides a refuge in his “fortress” (31:2–4). The “refuge” was an isolated high place in a mountainous region, whose natural relief provided excellent strategic advantages.²

The word “horn” (*qeren*) has been variously understood as the protection provided by the horn of a bull (Briggs, 1:141), the asylum of the horns of the altar (A.A. Anderson, 1:155), or a hill shaped like a horn.³

After expressing his devotion, David described his “distress” (v.6 KJV) giving the image of a man who had been hemmed in on every side, caught in a trap, bound with cords, and thrown into the water to drown. But, when he called on the Lord, God showed up (v.9-17).

God is the Great King who is able to deliver those who call on him. He is the “rock” of Israel (Deut 32:4, 15, 18, 31, 37), who is faithful from generation to generation.⁴

God’s reaction in his heavenly glory is couched in the language of theophany—a *visible manifestation of a deity* (Exod 19:16–18; Deut 33:2–3; Ps 68:7–8; Isa 13:9–10; Joel 3:15–16; Nah 1:3–6).⁵

Though the enemy forces are strong (vv. 4–5), the Lord **prevails** over their great strength (v. 17).⁶

II. **God Rewards When We Obey (v.19-27)**

David’s situation shifted from being in a tight place to a large place (v.19) because God was pleased with him. He was not perfect by any means, but Samuel described him as a man after God’s own heart (I Sam. 13:14). He pleased God with his obedience (Ps. 17:3-5) and God rewarded him with deliverance. The Lord will do the same for us!

² Gaebelein, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (169). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

³ Gaebelein, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (169). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁴ Gaebelein, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (169). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁵ Gaebelein, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (171). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁶ Gaebelein, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (172). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

In this section, we find two separate parts: man's faithfulness to God (vv. 20–24) and God's faithfulness to man (vv. 25–29).⁷

The attitude to God may be described as “righteous” (vv. 20, 24) or “blameless” (v. 23). “Righteousness” is that response to God that, on the one hand, adheres to his decrees (v. 22b) and, on the other hand, keeps away from evil (v. 21). Righteousness and blamelessness are not to be equated with works-righteousness nor with perfection. It is the joyous expression of love to God for all his mercies. It is a response of gratitude. The psalmist is not saying to God, “Look what I have done for you,” but he says, “Lord, I love you so much that I make every effort to please you.”⁸

Here's a note on verse 26 from the Pulpit Commentary:

God cannot “show himself froward”—he can only show himself opposed, antagonistic, an adversary. What the psalmist means to say is that, if men oppose and thwart God, he in return will oppose and thwart them. But they will act in a perverse spirit, he in a spirit of justice and righteousness.⁹

III. **God Equips When We Submit to Him (v.28-45)**

The Lord's ways are “perfect” and his word is “flawless” (v. 30). Therefore he is filled with goodness to those he loves.¹⁰

The Israelites reckoned swiftness of foot, agility, and endurance among the highest of warlike qualities (comp. 2 Sam. 2:18; 1 Chron. 12:8; Hab. 3:19).¹¹

Although David was very skillful in warfare, he knew where his Help came from!

IV. **God is Glorified When We Worship (v.46-50)**

David climaxes his psalm exalting the Lord for His covenant to him and to his descendants (v.50). David used the word “forever” and it will be through the promised Messiah that the kingdom promises would be fulfilled (Rev. 11:15).

⁷ Gaebelin, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (173). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁸ Gaebelin, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (173). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁹ *The Pulpit Commentary: Psalms Vol. I.* 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (118). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

¹⁰ Gaebelin, F. E., VanGemern, W., Ross, A. P., Wright, J. S., & Kinlaw, D. F. (1991). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (175). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

¹¹ *The Pulpit Commentary: Psalms Vol. I.* 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (119). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.