

## **Summer in the Psalms: Psalm 18**

*"My Rock, My Fortress, My Deliverer"*

Psalm 18:1–3

### **Big Idea:**

When God delivers, He doesn't just remove the danger—He reveals Himself. We discover that He is our strength, our shelter, our salvation, and our song.

### **"The Day the Storm Stopped"**

Imagine a soldier returning home from several months at war. As he steps off the plane, his kids run into his arms, and his spouse embraces him in tears. Consider that moment and what it means. In that embrace, in that reunion, so much has ended. The war is over—not just the conflict, but the years of longing, loss, and uncertainty.

That's the kind of moment David is having in this psalm. Psalm 18 isn't a quick thank-you note—it's a full-blown song of gratitude written at the end of a long, hard battle.

We're stepping into David's story *after* the storm. He has survived betrayal, exile, injustice, and fear. And now, he looks back—not just at what he's been saved *from*, but Who saved him—and how that changed everything.

(Read Psalm 18:1-3)

Not only is the psalm long, so is the title: To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all of his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:

In the title David tells us who the psalm was written for: God Himself, who is the Chief Musician. David then provides more insight into himself, that we should consider him the servant of the LORD.

He tells us the occasion for the writing of the psalm – possibly not only the immediate aftermath of Saul’s death (described in 1 Samuel 31; 2 Samuel 1), but also of the period leading to David’s enthronement (2 Samuel 2-5).

He also tells us something about how David felt about King Saul, who out of great, undeserved kindness on David’s part, is not explicitly counted among the enemies of David (from the hand of all of his enemies and from the hand of Saul).

This psalm is virtually the same as the psalm sung by David at the very end of his life, as recorded in 2 Samuel 22. It is likely that David composed this song as a younger man; yet in his old age David could look back with great gratitude and sing this song again, looking at his whole life. And as David composes this psalm, and as he revisits it in his old age, what does he see?

### **A Personal Declaration of Love**

*“I will love You, O LORD, my strength.” (v. 1)*

This is not mere theology—it’s intimacy. David doesn’t just say “I believe You,” or “I serve You,” but “I love You.” This is testimony and experience speaking. He looks back at what God has done and been for him in a terrible season of chaos. And then David repeats this song at the end of his life, to acknowledge what God has been and how he loves God.

This was a triumphant declaration made in a season of great triumph. It is true that David *decided* to love the LORD, but even more true that he simply felt *compelled* to love the LORD who delivered him so wonderfully.

Since Jesse, David’s father, plucked him from watching the sheep all those years ago, and Samuel anointed the future king of Israel, David had lived some 20 or so years as a fugitive, as a man who had lost everything. He lost his safety, he lost his youth, he lost his family, he lost his career, he lost his rights, he lost his connection with the covenant people of God, and he lost his comforts. Despite everything, David remained faithful to the Lord, and God – in His timing – delivered David and fulfilled the long-ago promise of his anointing.

In saying, “**I will love You**,” David used a somewhat unusual word. This word for *love* is an uncommon one, impulsive and emotional. Found elsewhere only in its intensive forms, it usually expresses the compassionate love of the stronger for the weaker. But here, David realizes that he is weak, and God has been his strength. David is reflecting the love that God has shown him back to Yahweh.

This word expresses the kind of love David has. David is saying that he will love God dearly and completely, entirely. From the very heart-root of his soul.

This invocation in [Psalm 18:1-3](#) has been referred to as being close to the high-water mark of Old Testament devotion, and it stands out. Nowhere else in Scripture is the form of the word employed which is here used for ‘love.’ David uses it with depth and tenderness toward God.

David said, “**I will love You**” to the God who delivered him, not only for rescuing him *from* his trial, but for all God did in and through the trials to make him what he was. David wasn’t bitter against God, as if he said, “Well, it’s about time You delivered me.” Instead, he was grateful that the years of trouble had done something good and necessary in his life.

Do you see that in your own life? Do you see how struggle and hardship can produce not just good but necessary things in your life? James talks us through the benefit of struggle: endurance, completion, lacking nothing.

A child might love a parent because they give them gifts. But a mature love says, “I love you even when you say no, even when I don’t understand.” That’s the kind of love David expresses here. He recognizes God’s loving hand and God’s perfect plan.

### **A Flood of Praise for a God Who Is Everything**

*“The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my rock where I seek refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” (v. 2)*

David uses **nine different titles** for God in just one verse. Why? Because one wasn’t enough.

Each word carries a unique image: God is David's **Rock**. He was solid ground underfoot when David was uncertain about what was happening around him. God is David's **Fortress**, the safe and strong place David could run in the battle, protection against attack. God was David's **Deliverer**, the One who rescues David when you're surrounded, cornered.

God was David's **Shield**, his defense in the fight and struggle. God was David's **Horn of salvation**. In Exodus 27, we see a horn at each corner of the altar in the tabernacle. In worship, the horns of the altar were dabbed with blood to purify them and make atonement for sin. The horns of the altar speak of the power of God's salvation. That part of the altar also became a place of refuge and sanctuary for a fugitive.

In the New Testament, Jesus is the horn of salvation ([Luke 1:68–69](#)). Thus, a title applied to Yahweh is also applied to Jesus; they are both called “the horn of salvation.” The very name *Jesus* means “The Lord Is Salvation.” The salvation Jesus offers is strong, triumphant, and powerful. Just like the horns on the altar offered refuge and atonement, Jesus offers clemency and cleansing through His death on the cross. However strong our spiritual foe, the horn of our salvation is stronger still. David has experienced that salvation in Yahweh.

God was David's **Stronghold**, a high tower with perspective and protection. Looking back, David can see those two decades worth of struggle from his anointing with a clearer perspective. He now realizes how God has been his protection, safety, and salvation through all of it.

When trouble comes, do you reach for God like David did? Or do you run to other “false strongholds”—comforts, addictions, escape, self-reliance? God is a *refuge*. Are you hiding in Him?

### **A Commitment to Call and Trust**

*“I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I was waved from my enemies. (v. 3)*

David had called on God many times from a cave or a battlefield. He cried out to God in times of intense crisis. Now he calls from a place of victory—not just for rescue, but for *worship*.

The same God who heard him in the darkness is worthy of praise in the light. His declaration: **"So shall I be saved."** Faith has been tested—and proven. David now cries out to God with the same strength to praise Him for His deliverance.

When you pray your most passionate prayers, are they asking for help, deliverance, and healing? It is sad to say that many are far more enthusiastic about asking for help than they ever are in giving thanks or praise.

The thought, **"So shall I be saved from my enemies"** did not always come easily for David. Not very long before this great season of victory, he said to himself: *One of these days I'll be swept away by Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape immediately to the land of the Philistines.* (1 Samuel 27:1). How is that admission hopeful for us?

It means that there were times when David deeply doubted the final victory he now enjoyed; but it also shows that in the end, his faith – and more importantly, God's strength – was greater than his weakness. David expected, in his weakest moments, to lose. To be overwhelmed by Saul.

Now, looking back, David sings a song of praise. In his writings about Psalm 18, Charles Spurgeon commented on the salvation that David was praising God about here: "To be saved singing is to be saved indeed. Many are saved mourning and doubting; but David had such faith that he could fight singing and win the battle with a song still on his lips."

Are you only urgent in prayer when you're in need? What if your praise was as enthusiastic as your cries for help? "To be saved singing is to be saved indeed."

### **"Saved Singing" – And the Song That Never Ends**

David's song in Psalm 18 is echoed again near the end of his life (2 Samuel 22). That tells us something: God's deliverance wasn't just *once*. It was *always*. It wasn't just about getting out of trouble—it was about meeting a Deliverer.

*Bridge to the Gospel:*

David points us to the Great Deliverer.

There is another rock—higher, stronger, and more secure than any other place we can look for help. There is a true Horn of salvation—not forged by human hands but raised on a cross. Jesus Christ didn't just save David's line—He is the Savior for all who trust in Him.

On the cross, Jesus became our fortress in judgment, our shield from wrath, our deliverer from sin, and our salvation through His resurrection.

*Invitation:*

Like David, we've all been pursued—by guilt, shame, sin, and fear.

Like David, we need a refuge and rescue.

Today, call upon the Lord. He is worthy to be praised.

Say with your heart: "I will love You, O LORD, my strength."

In the Swiss Alps, climbers are trained that when danger comes, they're to anchor to "the rock"—a steel stake driven deep into the mountain. No matter the wind or snow, that anchor won't move. Jesus is that anchor—our rock who never moves.

**Closing Prayer:**

"Lord, You are our strength when we are weak. You are our rock when the world shakes. You are our deliverer when sin surrounds. Teach us to love You—not only when we are saved, but while we are still in the struggle. Let us call upon You, praise You, and trust You with everything. In Jesus' name, Amen."

The battle for your life is over. Jesus won the victory. Join David and sing praise to Christ – sing endless hallelujahs to His holy name. You've been offered rescue. You can experience strength, protection, and security in His salvation.

Cry out to Jesus and live. Surrender today – bow before the King of kings.