

2 Samuel 22 - David's Psalm Celebrating the Providence of God

IV. Six appendices testifying to the greatness of the Davidic covenant (21:1—24:25)

(3) David praises God for his deliverance (22:1-51)

A Psalm Extolling the Lord

This composition, set between the account of David's Philistine wars (21:15-22) and his list of heroes (23:8-39), is a poem celebrating the providence of God in delivering him from all his enemies (Cf. v4). In these psalms, David articulated the deepest convictions of his heart about God. These convictions were the basis of David's greatness, and they account for God's blessing of him. They are found again in almost identical wording in Ps 18, a piece that is generally classified from a literary standpoint as a royal hymn of thanksgiving.

2 Samuel 22

(3) David praises God for his deliverance (22:1-51) (Cf. Ps 18:1-50)

1 Now David spoke the words of this song to the LORD on the day that the LORD had saved him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

1 And David spoke the words of this song to the LORD in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

1 David composed the words of this song to the LORD the very day the LORD delivered him from the domination of all of his enemies, including from Saul's hands.

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:

2 He said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;

2 He said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;

2 This is what he said: LORD, you are my stone stronghold and my fortified place; you are continuously delivering me.

2 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence.

3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence.

3 He is my God, my strong stone— in him I will find my refuge— my shield, the strength of my salvation, my high tower, my way of escape, and the one who is saving me. You will save me from violence.

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.

- In a manner characteristic of this literary form, the David first acknowledged the greatness and glory of the LORD in a series of designations—Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, Shield, Horn, Salvation, Stronghold, Refuge, and Savior.

— All God's exploits in the past and promises for the future are predicated on who He is

— These descriptions of the LORD are especially appropriate in light of the setting of the song, that of flight, conflict, and victory

4 "I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies.

4 "I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies.

4 As I am praising him, I will call out to the LORD, and I will be saved from my enemies.

4 I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

5 "For the waves of death encompassed me; The floods of destruction terrified me;

5 "For the waves of death encompassed me; The torrents of destruction overwhelmed me;

5 Because deadly breakers engulfed me, while torrents of abuse from the ungodly overwhelmed me.

5 When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;

6 The ropes of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me.

6 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me.

6 Binding ropes from Sheol entangled me while lethal snares hindered me.

6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

7 "In my distress I called upon the LORD, Yes, I called out to my God; And from His temple He heard my voice, And my cry for help *came* into His ears.

7 "In my distress I called upon the LORD, Yes, I cried to my God; And from His temple He heard my voice, And my cry for help *came* into His ears.

7 I cried out to the LORD in the middle of my troubles; I cried out to my God. He listened to my voice from his sanctuary, and my call for help was heard.

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.

- David was quite conscious of history and of God's providential arrangement of its particulars. He saw this in respect to his own peculiar circumstances which he described

hyperbolically as being akin to death.

— So desperate had been his peril that death was imminent. It was only the mercy of God in response to his prayer which brought David salvation from heaven ("his temple").

8 "Then the earth shook and quaked, The foundations of heaven were trembling And were shaken, because He was angry.

8 "Then the earth shook and quaked, The foundations of heaven were trembling And were shaken, because He was angry.

8 Just then the earth shook and trembled! The foundations of heaven reeled and quaked because the LORD was angry.

8 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wrath.

9 "Smoke went up out of His nostrils, And fire from His mouth was devouring; Coals were kindled by it.

9 "Smoke went up out of His nostrils, Fire from His mouth devoured; Coals were kindled by it.

9 Smoke poured out of his nostrils, and fire from his mouth kindling coals to flame by it.

9 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

- From David, as a center of God's saving purposes, the exploits of the Lord ranged almost concentrically to the arena of the whole earth (v8-9)

— With reference, perhaps, to prevailing pagan myths about Creation, David showed that it is the Lord who controls the earth. In His anger He shook the whole cosmos as an expression of His concern for David.

10 "He also bowed the heavens down low, and came down With thick darkness under His feet.

10 "He bowed the heavens also, and came down With thick darkness under His feet.

10 He deformed heaven itself as he descended. Thick darkness enveloped his feet.

10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet.

11 "He rode on a cherub and flew; He appeared on the wings of the wind.

11 "And He rode on a cherub and flew; And He appeared on the wings of the wind.

11 He rode on a cherub and flew, soaring on the wings of the wind!

11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind.

12 "He made darkness canopies around Him, A mass of waters, thick clouds of the sky.

12 "And He made darkness canopies around Him, A mass of waters, thick clouds of the sky.

12 The darkness around him was his canopies— amassed water was his overhanging clouds!

12 And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.

13 "From the brightness before Him Coals of fire were kindled.

13 "From the brightness before Him Coals of fire were kindled.

13 From the shining light that was his presence coals of fire blazed into flame!

13 Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled.

14 "The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice.

14 "The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice.

14 The LORD roared from heaven! The Most High let his voice be heard!

14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice.

15 "And He shot arrows and scattered them, Lightning, and routed them.

15 "And He sent out arrows, and scattered them, Lightning, and routed them.

15 He launched his arrows and scattered them— his lightning routed them.

15 And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them.

16 "Then the channels of the sea appeared, The foundations of the world were exposed By the rebuke of the LORD, From the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

16 "Then the channels of the sea appeared, The foundations of the world were laid bare By the rebuke of the LORD, At the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

16 The currents of the sea were revealed and the foundations of the world were exposed at the rebuke of the LORD and at the blazing breath from his nostrils!

16 And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

- The sovereignty of God goes even further. He is Lord also of the heavens (v10-16).

— Though Baal, the Canaanite god, was known to his worshipers as "the rider of the clouds," it is *Yahweh* who is enthroned in the heavens and who reduces all Creation to His service

— With lightning and a voice like thunder He cried out against His (and David's) enemies, terrifying them. The God of Creation rearranged Creation, as it were, on David's behalf.

17 "He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters.

17 "He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters.

17 He sent for me from on high! He grabbed hold of me, drawing me out of deep water.

17 He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters;

- God had drawn David out of the waters of affliction as Pharaoh's daughter had drawn Moses out of literal dangerous waters

18 "He rescued me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

18 "He delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

18 He rescued me from my strong enemy— from those who hate me continually, since they were stronger than I.

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

19 "They confronted me on the day of my disaster, But the LORD was my support.

19 "They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the LORD was my support.

19 They confronted me when I was in trouble, but the LORD remained my support!

19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

20 "He also brought me out into an open place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.

20 "He also brought me forth into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.

20 He brought me to a wide open area, rescuing me because he was pleased with me!

20 He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

- That David refers to God's mighty works (v8-16) as an expression not of His role of Creator as such, but as One powerful to save, is clear from the conclusion of the passage (v17-20): God had delivered him from his enemies because he was the object of God's mercy and grace.

- God's deliverance is expressed in several verbs: (a) reached down, (b) took hold, (c) drew out, (d) rescued (v18,20), (e) brought out.

21 "The LORD has treated me in accordance with my righteousness; In accordance with the **cleanliness of my hands** He has repaid me.

21 "The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.

21 The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness, rewarding me according to the degree of my innocence,

21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

- David, who knew his own sinfulness (Ps 14:3; Rom 3:10), stood on the solid ground of God's justice, not his own imperfect obedience

- "...cleanliness of my hands" - a figure describing moral purity that derives from the practice of washing hands with a cleansing agent

- God's deliverance of David was followed by His blessings, commensurate with David's own righteousness

— David did not suggest that works are necessary for salvation, which is not the issue here. He was saying, however, that the benefits of God are often obtained in this life by faithful perseverance in godliness.

22 "For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not acted wickedly against my God.

22 "For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not acted wickedly against my God.

22 because I have kept the LORD's way— I haven't willfully abandoned my God—

22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 "For all His ordinances *were* before me, And *as for* His statutes, I did not deviate from them.

23 "For all His ordinances *were* before me, And *as for* His statutes, I did not depart from them.

23 and because all of his decrees remain in my thoughts, I have not turned aside from his statutes,

23 For all his judgments were before me: and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them.

- He kept God's ways (v22), law (v23), and decrees (v23), and refrained from iniquity (v24; Cf. v21,25)

24 "I was also blameless toward Him, And I have kept myself from my wrongdoing.

24 "I was also blameless toward Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity.

24 I have been innocent before him, and I've kept myself from incurring guilt.

24 I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.

25 "So the LORD has repaid me in accordance with my righteousness, In accordance with my cleanliness before His eyes.

25 "Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to my cleanness before His eyes.

25 The Lord has repaid me according to my righteousness, that is, according to my clean standing as he looks at me.

25 Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight.

- God therefore rewarded him (v25) and showed mercy to him as He does to all who are upright (faithful, blameless, pure, humble; v26-28)

26 "With *the one who is faithful* You show Yourself faithful, With the blameless one You prove Yourself blameless;

26 "With the kind You show Yourself kind, With the blameless You show Yourself blameless;

26 In the company of the gracious you demonstrate your gracious love. In the company of the blamelessly valiant you demonstrate your blamelessness.

26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.

- God responds to people according to their conduct...

27 With the *one who is pure* You show Yourself pure, But with the perverted You show Yourself astute.

27 With the pure You show Yourself pure, And with the perverted You show Yourself astute.

27 In the company of the pure you demonstrate your purity. In the company of the perverted you will appear to be perverse.

27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.

- He is shrewd to the perverted in the sense that He turns them into fools

28 "And You save an afflicted people; But Your eyes are on the haughty *whom* You humiliate.

28 "And You save an afflicted people; But Your eyes are on the haughty *whom* You abase.

28 You save the nation who is humble but your eyes watch the proud, to bring them down.

28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.

- The wicked, on the other hand, because of their pride cannot expect His favor

29 "For You are my lamp, LORD; And the LORD illuminates my darkness.
29 "For You are my lamp, O LORD; And the LORD illumines my darkness.
29 For you are my lamp, LORD, the LORD who illuminates my darkness.
29 For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness.

30 "For by You I can run at a troop of warriors; By my God I can leap over a wall.
30 "For by You I can run upon a troop; By my God I can leap over a wall.
30 By you I devastate armies, by my God I scale walls.
30 For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.
- With God, who gives light as a lamp (v29), a righteous person is invincible
— He can break through barricades ("a troop") or scale the highest walls
- In the final section of the psalm David turned once more to the attributes of the LORD,
but he connected them now to specific ways in which God had worked and would work on
his behalf
— God is described first as a Strengtheners (v31-35); One who is a Shield, a Rock, a
Strength (lit., "strong Refuge" or "Fortress"); One who gives speed and power to His own
servants.
31 "As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is refined; He is a shield to all
who take refuge in Him.
31 "As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is tested; He is a shield to all
who take refuge in Him.
31 This God! His way is perfect! What the LORD declares proves true. He shields everyone
who flees for protection to him!
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, except the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?
32 "For who is God, besides the LORD? And who is a rock, besides our God?
32 For who is God apart from the LORD? And who is a Rock, apart from our God?
32 For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?

33 "God is my strong fortress; And He sets the blameless on His way.
33 "God is my strong fortress; And He sets the blameless in His way.
33 This God is my strong place of valor! He has made my life blameless.
33 God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.

34 "He makes my feet like deer's *feet*, And sets me on my high places.
34 "He makes my feet like hinds' *feet*, And sets me on my high places.

34 He has made my feet like those of a deer, setting me secure on his high places!

34 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet: and setteth me upon my high places.

35 "He trains my hands for battle, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

35 "He trains my hands for battle, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

35 He has trained my hands for battle readiness— I can bend a bow made out of bronze.

35 He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

36 "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your help makes me great.

36 "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your help makes me great.

36 He has equipped me with the shield that is your salvation, Your gentleness has made me great.

36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great.

37 "You enlarge my steps under me, And my feet have not slipped.

37 "You enlarge my steps under me, And my feet have not slipped.

37 You've made room beneath me for my footsteps, and my feet didn't slip.

37 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip.

38 "I pursued my enemies and eliminated them, And I did not turn back until they were finished off.

38 "I pursued my enemies and destroyed them, And I did not turn back until they were consumed.

38 I pursued my enemies and conquered them; I didn't return until they were consumed.

38 I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them.

39 "And I have devoured them and smashed them, so that they would not rise; And they fell under my feet.

39 "And I have devoured them and shattered them, so that they did not rise; And they fell under my feet.

39 I devoured them, striking them down until they could not get up again. They fell beneath my feet.

39 And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet.

40 "For You have encircled me with strength for battle; You have forced those who rose up against me to bow down under me.

40 "For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.

40 You strengthened me with valor sufficient for the battle; you made those who rebelled against me fall beneath me.

40 For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.

41 "You have also made my enemies turn *their* backs to me, And I destroyed those who hated me.

41 "You have also made my enemies turn *their* backs to me, And I destroyed those who hated me.

41 You made my enemies turn and run— that is, those who hate me— and I destroyed them!

41 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.

- Again, He is a Subduer of enemies (v38-41)

— Through the LORD, David was able to pursue and destroy his enemies so that they could not rise again

42 "They looked, but there was no one to save *them*; *Even* to the LORD, but He did not answer them.

42 "They looked, but there was none to save; *Even* to the LORD, but He did not answer them.

42 They looked around, but there was no one to save them— they looked to the LORD, but he paid no attention!

42 They looked, but there was none to save; even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

- The Lord also is a support (v42-46)

— David's enemies called out to God but He would not answer them

43 "Then I pulverized them as the dust of the earth; I crushed *and* trampled them like the mud of the streets.

43 "Then I pulverized them as the dust of the earth; I crushed *and* stamped them as the mire of the streets.

43 I pulverized them to powder, like the dust of the earth; I crushed them, stomping on them like mud on a street.

43 Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad.

- Pictures David's enemies as objects of humiliation and contempt

44 "You have also saved me from the contentions of my people; You have kept me as head of the nations; A people I have not known serve me.

44 "You have also delivered me from the contentions of my people; You have kept me as head of the nations; A people whom I have not known serve me.

44 You delivered me from civil war among my own people. You preserved me as head of the nations. People whom I had never known served me!

44 Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen: a people which I knew not shall serve me.

45 "Foreigners pretend to obey me; As soon as they hear, they obey me.

45 "Foreigners pretend obedience to me; As soon as they hear, they obey me.

45 Foreigners came cringing to me; they obeyed as soon as they heard me.

45 Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.

46 "Foreigners lose heart, And come trembling out of their fortresses.

46 "Foreigners lose heart, And come trembling out of their fortresses.

46 Foreigners lost their courage, coming trembling from their strongholds.

46 Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places.

- Instead He let David crush them (v43), and rule over them as well as over his own people (v44-46)

47 "The LORD lives, and blessed be my Rock; And exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation,

47 "The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock; And exalted be God, the rock of my salvation,

47 The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock, and may my God be exalted, the Rock who is my salvation!

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

48 The God who executes vengeance for me, And brings down peoples under me,

48 The God who executes vengeance for me, And brings down peoples under me,

48 The God who keeps on avenging me, subjugating people beneath me,

48 It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me,

49 Who also brings me out from my enemies; You also raise me above those who rise up against me; You rescue me from the violent person.

49 Who also brings me out from my enemies; You even lift me above those who rise up against me; You rescue me from the violent man.

49 delivering me from my enemies. You exalted me above those who rebelled against me, delivering me from violent men.

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.

50 "Therefore I will give thanks to You, LORD, among the nations, And I will sing praises to Your name.

50 "Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the nations, And I will sing praises to Your name.

50 Because of all of this I will praise you among the nations, LORD, and I will sing praises to your name!

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

51 "*He is a tower of salvation to His king, And shows favor to His anointed, To David and his descendants forever.*"

51 "*He is a tower of deliverance to His king, And shows lovingkindness to His anointed, To David and his descendants forever.*"

51 Great is the salvation he brings to his king, showing gracious love to his anointed, to David and to his offspring forever.

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

- Finally, David said that the Lord was his Savior (v47-51)

— Though his enemies surrounded him and were about to destroy him, the Lord brought him through triumphantly

— As a result David praised Him (v50) and acknowledged that all God's benefits of the past were tokens of His promised blessings on both David and his descendants, blessings which will endure forever