

# Psalm 18

by Henry Law

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*The sermon on Psalm 18 emphasizes God's mighty deliverance, the importance of faith and prayer, and the ultimate victory found in Jesus Christ.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 18:1-28

**Topics:** "Divine Deliverance", "Messianic Redemption"

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## Description

Henry Law preaches about the mighty deliverance realized and the utter ruin of every foe, emphasizing the importance of praising God intelligently. The sermon delves into David's heartfelt expressions of love and gratitude towards God for being his strength and deliverer, with a Messianic undertone pointing to Jesus' redemptive work. It vividly portrays God's power in rescuing His people from enemies, the sorrows of death, and the depths of distress, ultimately leading to triumphant victory and exaltation.

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## Transcript

Mighty deliverance is realized, and utter ruin of every foe. May we intelligently swell the note of praise!

1, 2. "I love you, Lord; you are my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the strength of my salvation, and my stronghold."

These fervent words show David's glowing heart. When seated on the throne of victory he saw his foes all low in dust, and felt that God had done it. He exhausts all warlike terms to show that God was his stronghold, God his armor, and God his power. God kept him safe; God gave him conquest. What can he render in return? He gives his heart. He gratefully exclaims, "I love You, O Lord."

David soon disappears. Jesus Himself strides forth. David's typical career suggests this noble song; but in its fullness it is Messianic. Faith hears it flowing fresh from Jesus' heart. It reads here redemption's conflict, redemption's triumphs, and it is exceeding glad. How feelingly would Jesus' lips exclaim, O my Father, I love You. You have been my fortress!

3. "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies."

It is a precious gift to know that faithful prayer is sure deliverance, and that our God is worthy of all praise. He is more worthy than thought can think or words express.

4, 5, 6. "The sorrows of death surrounded me, and the floods of the ungodly made me afraid. The sorrows of hell surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears."

The Man of sorrows is before us. When bearing the penalty of our sins to the uttermost, His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. In prayer He sought relief; by prayer He gained support.

7 - 15. "Then the earth quaked and trembled; the foundations of the mountains shook; they quaked because of his anger. Smoke poured from his nostrils; fierce flames leaped from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. He opened the heavens and came down; dark storm clouds were beneath his feet. Mounted on a mighty angel, he flew, soaring on the wings of the wind. He shrouded himself in darkness, veiling his approach with dense rain clouds. The brilliance of his presence broke through the clouds, raining down hail and burning coals. The Lord thundered from heaven; the Most High gave a mighty shout. He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies; his lightning flashed, and they were greatly confused. Then at your command, O Lord, at the blast of your breath, the bottom of the sea could be seen, and the foundations of the earth were laid bare."

We may not pause to marvel at the dazzling splendor of this brilliant picture. It is a poetic fervor in full blaze. Image succeeds image, revealing almighty vengeance arrayed in terror, and flying in dreadful majesty to sustain His chosen. David, thus speaking, felt that miracles had helped his cause; that God Himself had fought in his behalf. If all the hidden wonders of his wondrous career were open to our view, if we had witnessed all the marvels which amazingly delivered him, we would not wonder that such fervent language burst from his lips.

But in the Antitype the picture's colors are not overlaid. During the garden agony, during the horrors of the Cross, we conclude that a dreadful conflict was enacted unseen by mortal eye. We read indeed of nature's throes. In spirit we see darkness unparalleled; we feel the trembling of the quaking earth; but we do not see the hidden battle; we do not see all hell in fury to secure the victory; we do not see Jehovah arising in His strength, and rousing His instruments of wrath to crush the desperate foe and to sustain His suffering Son. We follow the guidance of this picture, and we ponder a deep mystery.

16 - 18. "He reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters. He delivered me from my powerful enemies, from those who hated me and were too strong for me. They attacked me at a moment when I was weakest, but the Lord upheld me."

We learn how real, how agonizing, was the anguish of our Lord. To pay sin's penalty was to endure hell. But He prevailed, for God was with Him. His trials were thus foreseen, but He encountered them. He waded conqueror through the many waters, for God was by His side. Let us thank and bless Him who suffered, and by suffering saved us; let grateful love adore Him.

19. "He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me, because He delighted in me."

The conflict ended in most glorious life. Our Jesus was exalted to supremest glory, and received all power in heaven and earth, because God loved Him as His Son, who had fulfilled His total will.

20 - 24. "The Lord rewarded me for doing right; he compensated me because of my innocence. For I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not turned from my God to follow evil. For all his laws are constantly before me; I have never abandoned his principles. I am blameless before God; I have kept myself from

sin. The Lord rewarded me for doing right, because of the innocence of my hands in his sight."

One zeal burned steadily in Jesus' heart. He came to earth to do His Father's will. To this polestar His course was always pointed. He came to do redemption-work, to save lost sinners, to atone for sin, to bring in perfect righteousness, to satisfy the law's demand, to keep its beautiful code, to honor all God's attributes, to bring glory to His name. He ceased not until He cried, "It is finished," and received the welcome, "Sit on My right hand."

25, 26, 27. "With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with an upright man You will show Yourself upright; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. For You will save the afflicted people; but will bring down high looks."

God's dealings with His incarnate Son all flowed in the channel of truth and justice. Pure godliness had claims. These claims were duly satisfied. So, also, no grace in the believer's heart is overlooked. God meets and cheers with blessings all those who by the Spirit's help strive to walk closely with Him. Each grace sows seeds of favor. Especial pity marks the sufferers in oppression's furnace. Bruised Israelites are comforted. Haughty Pharaohs are cast down.

28, 29. "For You will light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. For by You I have run through a troop; and by my God I have leaped over a wall."

In darkest moments of desertion Jesus well knew that a bright dawn was near. The sun eclipsed is not the sun extinguished. The shadow will soon pass, and the returning rays will be more joyous. Thick troops may seem to choke the way, strong batteries may impede. But when God helps, no obstacles can check. A way is opened through opposing ranks. Strength is supplied to overleap all hindrances.

30, 31. "As for God, His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord is tried; He is a shield to all those who trust in Him. For who is God except the Lord? or who is a rock except our God?"

Knowledge of God is comfort in all times. It was so to our Head on earth. It has been so to every saint. It will be so until Jesus shall return. His dealings with His Church are perfection. No flaw therein was ever found. There is one testimony, "He has done all things well." His truth is often tested; but each trial proves that it is firm and pure. Who ever stood behind His armor and received a wound? He is well shielded whose shield is the Lord. Vain is all other help. Besides Jehovah there is no God. All other confidences mock and deceive. He only stands as an immovable rock. All earthly props and supports are shifting sand; when the storm comes they shake and fall.

32 - 36. "God arms me with strength; he has made my way safe. He makes me as surefooted as a deer, leading me safely along the mountain heights. He prepares me for battle; he strengthens me to draw a bow of bronze. You have given me the shield of your salvation. Your right hand supports me; your gentleness has made me great. You have made a wide path for my feet to keep them from slipping."

Christ waged a ceaseless warfare. Cruel assaults gave Him no rest. But He could sing that no help was withheld, and that God's arm wrought glorious triumphs for Him.

We now advance to a terrific fight. But let no fears unnerve. Our foes are doubtless many, strong, untiring, raging, infuriate; but armor and ability are prepared. The armor is spiritual and wrought by God, because the enemy is bitter and satanic. Let us gird ourselves with every weapon. It will be found sufficient.

Let us look upwards to our great Captain. He will infuse courage and might; He will gird up our weak loins; He will teach us to use well our weapons. All His dealings will be tenderness and love. Sweet whispers will encourage; gentle smiles will animate. Happy experience will at last clap the hand, and sing, "Your gentleness has made me great." Harshness is not in Him whom our souls love and our feet follow.

37 - 40. "I chased my enemies and caught them; I did not stop until they were conquered. I struck them down so they could not get up; they fell beneath my feet. You have armed me with strength for the battle; you have subdued my enemies under my feet. You made them turn and run; I have destroyed all who hated me."

David's experience here speaks. When calm in peace, high in supreme dominion, undisturbed by wars and hostile menace, he looked back on his eventful course. Many indeed had been his fights; perils frequently had been extreme; but conquest followed conquest, until he rested on a peaceful throne. But he knew well that conquering strength was not his own; he saw the source of his supremacy; he trampled on the necks of foes because God laid them low before him.

Here is a picture of the aged pilgrim pondering his bygone trials. He has passed through outward troubles leaning on his God. The deep waters did not overwhelm him because the heavenly hand sustained him. The lusts, the passions, the corruptions of the inner man failed to destroy the inner life, because grace was infused to fan the threatened embers. Faith testifies, I live because Christ lived within me. Mine is the joy; the victory is the Lord's.

But here the prominent figure is the blessed Jesus. The day fast comes when He shall reign supreme. Satan and hell's legion must lick the dust. The wretched multitude who have joined his ranks and fought against the Gospel-truth must gnash the teeth, all crushed beneath His chariot-wheels. A kingdom shall be set up in which pure righteousness shall reign. No foe shall interrupt the universal peace. No jarring note shall mar the melody of Hallelujah.

41 - 45. "They called for help, but no one came to rescue them. They cried to the Lord, but he refused to answer them. I ground them as fine as dust carried by the wind. I swept them into the gutter like dirt. You gave me victory over my accusers. You appointed me as the ruler over nations; people I don't even know now serve me. As soon as they hear of me, they submit; foreigners cringe before me. They all lose their courage and come trembling from their strongholds."

It seems the Spirit's joy to lengthen out the note of triumph. We see the enemies of Christ at last convinced of their lost state. They call, they seek, they bow the knee. But all submission is in vain. The Word is fulfilled, "I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear comes." How terrible is that word, "Too late!" Here, also, the Gospel's triumphs in the heathen world are shadowed forth. The heathen are His inheritance. The chosen seed will hear the good Shepherd's voice, and gladly hurry to salvation's fold.

46, 47, 48. "The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. It is God who avenges me, and subdues the nations under me. He delivers me from my enemies; yes, You lift me up above those that rise up against me; You have delivered me from the violent man."

Praise should never cease. It is a joyful exercise; it is the due acknowledgment of countless mercies. Throughout eternity remembrance will record God's marvelous aid in days of trouble, and at each remembrance harps will again be struck. The song will swell again, "Blessed be our rock; let the God of our salvation be exalted."

49. "Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises to Your name."

Again we are told of the triumphant song. Let it be no new song to us; let its sweet notes be now familiar to our lips; let us pray for grace to realize the wonderful mercies which surround us; let our thoughts seldom wander from the Cross. Oh! what a sight of wonder! How precious is that expiating blood! Let us ponder its worth, and the marvels it has wrought, until our hearts become one blaze of love, our lips one note of praise.

50. "He gives Great deliverance to His King, and shows mercy to His anointed, to David, and to his descendants forevermore."

Faith gladly answers, Yes, how true! how true! Jesus was greatly delivered from all the hate of hell, from all the bands of death, from every opposing foe. The typical David lived a long life of constant deliverances. It shall be so to all the promised descendants. Great deliverances are their portion; constant mercy is their attendant. May the thought deepen in each believing heart that they are on the conquering side--that no weapon formed against them shall succeed--that soon the warfare will be all accomplished, and that they shall magnify the conquering Lamb with conquering song! May we sing with them!

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