

Psalm 18 the Resurrection

by William MacDonald

Psalm 18 describes the resurrection of the Lord Jesus as the greatest display of power in the world and the key to our salvation.

Duration: 34:34

Scripture: Psalm 18:49, Luke 7:11

Topics: "Resurrection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Psalm 18 and provides a detailed analysis of its verses. The sermon begins by discussing the death of Jesus and the intense suffering he endured. The speaker then moves on to describe the warfare that breaks out and the resurrection of Jesus. The sermon concludes by exploring the reasons for Jesus' resurrection and the significance of his second coming in power and glory. Throughout the sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the Old Testament in order to gain a deeper understanding of Jesus' sacrifice and the spiritual battles that took place during his crucifixion.

Transcript

Psalm 18, I will love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.

We get a hint that this psalm refers to the Lord Jesus. If first of all you turn over to verse 49, therefore I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the Gentiles and sing praises to your name. And then if you turn to Romans chapter 15 and verse 9, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy as it is written, for this reason I will confess to you among the Gentiles and sing to your name.

In other words, the verse from Psalm 18, 49, is quoted in Romans 15, and it's applied to the Lord Jesus, isn't it? It's a key, a helpful key. Watch out for keys as you study the word of God. What was the greatest demonstration of power, of God's power in the Old Testament? If you ask the average Hebrew in the Old Testament, what was the greatest display of the power of God? What would he say? He'd say the crossing of the Red Sea, the parting of the sea and the people walking over and driving.

If you were to ask what is the greatest display of divine power in the New Testament? Anybody? I didn't hear. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's true. But I ask myself, that's true.

I ask myself the question, why? What was so great about the resurrection that distinguishes it from all other displays of power? After all, didn't the Lord Jesus raise the son of the widow of Nain? Didn't he raise Jairus' daughter? Didn't he raise Lazarus from the dead? Why was the resurrection of Christ such a marvelous, eventful occasion? I think Psalm 18 answers the question. Psalm 18. Actually, the Bible treats those other raisings, the son of the widow of Nain, Lazarus, as more resuscitations.

The Lord Jesus was the first one ever to rise from the dead to die no more. He was the first one ever to rise from the dead in a glorified body. That distinguishes his resurrection from those other raisings that you have in the Word of God.

That's why it says, Christ the firstfruits, afterwards those that are Christ's that is coming. So with that in mind, that this psalm gives you a background concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus that you don't get in the New Testament. I think that's wonderful, because David never had a chance to work with the writers of the New Testament.

I tell you, it's a great proof of the inspiration of the Word of God that a man living hundreds of years before should be able to write by divine inspiration and give you information that you never would have otherwise known. I don't think it's found anywhere else in the Word of God. Let's just look at it now.

Psalm 18. In those first three verses, first of all, I'm tremendously impressed by how when a dear man like David opens his mouth and all these titles of the Lord just come gushing from his heart. Did you notice it when I read it? Lord, rock, fortress, deliverer, God, strength, shield, horn of my salvation, stronghold, I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised.

That's marvelous. It's marvelous to me that he lived in a time when he did not have the Holy Spirit as a permanent indwelling person in him, and yet when he opened his mouth, praise just gushed forth in an unparalleled way. I often think that the best I do is stutter compared to some of these men in the Old Testament scriptures.

I think it's marvelous when you think of that. I'd just like to mention something about that word rock, my rock. Rock in the Old Testament almost always refers to deity.

That's a good key now, another key. Rock almost always refers to deity. Even in a verse like in Isaiah, it says, their rock is not as our rock.

In other words, the heathen, they have their rock, their deities, but they're not like our rock, our God. This is very helpful to me because one day the Lord Jesus said to Peter, who do you say I am? And Peter said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And the Lord Jesus said, flesh and blood have not revealed unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say unto you, upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Now let me just tell you that Jewish disciples, they knew the Old Testament. They knew what rock meant, always referred to deity.

They had no thought in their mind that that word rock had anything to do with anything else than the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a thought never did. That was left for theologians of the 20th and 21st century to debate.

But I want to tell you, none of those Jewish disciples ever thought that that word rock meant anything else than the confession of the Lord Jesus as the Christ of God, the Son of the living God. Helpful to know that. Well, it's wonderful to hear this, dear men of worship.

It's absolutely unparalleled. It's a good thing if you feel your prayers are dry, just start thinking of some of the attributes of God and rehearse them in his presence, and that's real praise, and that's real worship. So in verses one through three, you have actually, you have the Lord Jesus speaking, and he's thanking God the Father for answered prayer in advance.

He hasn't even come to the prayer yet. He's thanking God in advance for answers to prayer. In verses four through six, I'll just give you a little outline.

In verses four through six, you have death closing in on the Son of God. Very solemn. And then in verses seven through 19, you have warfare breaking out.

Unmistakable. Unmistakable. And we'll go over it in detail.

It might not be clear right now. Warfare breaking out. Then in verses 16 through 19, you have the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then in verses 20 through 30, you have the why of the resurrection. Why did God raise him from the dead? Why did God have to raise him from the dead? The why of the resurrection. Now, the reason for the resurrection.

On to 42, you have the second advent of the Lord Jesus, his coming in power and great glory. Verses 31 to 42. 43 to 45, you have the millennium, when the Lord Jesus reigns in power and great glory.

And the animals are domesticated, and the desert blooms and blossoms like a rose. In verses 46 to 50, you have praise to God for vindicating the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, just with that in mind, let's look at verses four through six.

This is the death closing in of the holy, spotless, sinless son of God. The pangs of death encompassed me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me.

The snares of death confronted me. In my distress, I called upon the Lord and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from his temple, and my cry came before him, even to his ears.

Isn't it wonderful that in the Old Testament, you get details concerning the death of the Lord Jesus that you don't get in the Gospels? Doesn't that strike you as marvelous? It strikes me as marvelous. I see the hand of God in this book in a special way. Let me say a word about the word Sheol.

The Old Testament saints had very dim and indistinct ideas of what happened at the time of death. If you asked them, what does happen when you die? I think the average Hebrew would have shrugged his shoulders and said, Sheol. And it expressed more of ignorance than it expressed of knowledge.

I think generally the word Sheol just means the disembodied state. The disembodied state. I know it's used in place in Sheol.

He lifted up his eyes being in torment in the New Testament. But to the end, they had very poor ideas of life after death. In fact, if you look through the Old Testament, you won't find many verses shedding light

on it.

We have, In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand are pleasures forevermore. That's good.

I shall awaken thy likeness. That's good. In my flesh I shall see God.

That's good. But I'll soon run out. I'll soon run out of verses like that because there aren't a great deal of them.

And that's what's so precious about the fact that the Lord Jesus brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. He revealed what they didn't know in the Old Testament. And we know today that when a believer dies, his body goes into the grave, but his spirit and soul go to be with the Lord, where he's in the conscious enjoyment of the glories of heaven.

They didn't know that in the Old Testament. I believe Abraham, when he died, he went to heaven. But I think they didn't realize it very clearly in those days.

So Sheol, just think of it as the disembodied state. The Lord Jesus said, Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol. That is disembodied.

Neither will you suffer your Holy One, that's his body, to see corruption. Then also down in that word temple in verse 6. You know, when David wrote this, the temple hadn't been built, had it? So I think that just is a poetic expression for the dwelling of God. The dwelling place of God.

It doesn't refer to the temple in Jerusalem. The temple in Jerusalem didn't exist at that time, although David does speak of the before it ever did exist. That's another of the marvels of the Word of God.

The handprint of God is throughout this wonderful book. And so there he is, the Lord Jesus, suspended on a cross of wood and death closing in upon him. Now, you say, well, why does warfare break out in verses 7 through 19? Well, I think this comes to an explanation of why the resurrection is the greatest display of power in the world.

I believe, and I think this bears it out, that at the grave, at that grave, all the forces of Satan were massed there to prevent the Lord Jesus from rising. Throughout the life of the Lord Jesus, there were all kinds of satanic attempts to kill him, weren't there? I mean, you have the massacre there of the infants in Bethlehem. You have them trying to throw the Lord Jesus over the cliff at Nazareth.

You have the storm in the Sea of Galilee. And if you go down all these attempts, and they all failed. And now here's Satan's master attempt, Satan's master attempt, that body must not come out of that grave alive.

And so all the hosts of hell, all the demons that ever existed at that time, they're all camped there. And he's not going to rise, according to them. But you know, in verse 6, that cry goes up, lonely and solitary.

And you know, warfare breaks out. I'm telling you, the Lord Jesus, I mean, God the Father just comes forth, and he just empties his armory, as it were, against these forces. A lot of this is poetic language.

A lot of it is very poetic language and very beautiful. Listen, then the earth shook and trembled. Earthquake.

The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken because he was angry. God had decreed that he would rise from the dead. Smoke went up from his nostrils and devouring fire from his mouth.

Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down with darkness under his feet. A wonderful picture of God coming down in what? In judgment.

In judgment on what? Judgment of all the demons of Satan. And he rode upon a cherub. Perhaps it was a cloud, as it were.

And he comes down riding upon a cloud shaped like a cherub. We don't know what a cherub is shaped like. He rode upon a cherub and flew.

He flew upon the wings of the wind. What marvelous language. He made darkness his secret place.

His canopy around him was dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. From the brightness before him, his thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire. He can't find weapons enough to hurl at the enemy there, at that sepulcher outside the walls of Jerusalem.

The Lord also thundered in the heavens. All creation is reacting to the significance of what is happening. Not earthquakes enough, but thunder.

The Most High uttered his voice, lightnings and thunders and hailstones and coals of fire. He sent out his arrows and scattered the foe. This is marvelous.

Now, you'd never know this in the New Testament, would you? You'd never know the battle that went on. Everything seems to be quiet and serene there in the garden. It wasn't quiet and serene.

In the spiritual world, there was this tremendous conflict going on. And the channels of the waters were seen and the foundations of the world were uncovered at your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of your nostril. A vivid description of the judgment of God.

And what happened? Verses 16 through 19, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He sent from above.

He took me. He drew me out of many waters. Out of many waters.

It's poetic language. He said, all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Deep, calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.

Those are the words. I have a baptism to be baptized of, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished? There. Baptism.

He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamities, but the Lord was my support.

Listen. He also brought me out into a broad place. He delivered me because he delighted in me.

A wonderful picture of the father and the son. Joe was speaking about another father and a son. You have the father, God the father, and the son of his love, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, then you have the why of his resurrection in verses 20 through 30. And what is it saying? I want to say this reverently, but I believe it's just true. God had to raise him from the dead.

Say what? The glory of God demanded it. If you turn to Romans chapter 6 and verse 4, it said he was raised from the dead by the glory of the father. By the glory of the father.

Raised from the dead by the glory of the father. What does that mean? Well, the glory of the father speaks of all his excellencies, all his perfections. And I believe it's saying that all the excellencies and perfections of God the father demanded that he raise the Lord Jesus from the dead.

Why? Because the Lord Jesus had come to fulfill the father's will. He always delighted to do those things. He could do nothing of himself.

Only what the father gave him to do could he do. He was without spot or stain of sin. God had to raise him from the dead.

Now let's read it and see if it doesn't say that. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness. Now, if you looked at the heading of this psalm, you notice it says the Psalm of David.

But David often said things that didn't apply to David. I mean, this is another marvel of divine inspiration that God would put words in the mouth or in the pen of these men of God. And they must have pondered, what if David pondered, why am I writing this? It isn't true in my life.

But it was true of the Lord Jesus, wasn't it? The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands. He has recompensed me. Listen, for I have kept the ways of the Lord and not wickedly departed from my God.

Once there was a life lived upon this earth, a life without spot, without stain, without any imperfection. He knew no sin. He did no sin.

There was no sin in him. Never a hidden motive, never a mixed motive, never a day when he wished he had done something that he hadn't done, or had done something he wished he hadn't done. Never anything like that.

Spotless, sinless, stainless in all his ways. Verse 22, for all his judgments were before me, that is his judgments, his doctrines, his teachings, his word, his judgments in that sense, were before me and I did not put away his statutes from me. This is like Psalm 119, isn't it, where you have those many different synonyms for the word.

And here you have two of them here, judgments and statute. I was blameless before him. Well, once again, you'd hardly think David would say that.

I wouldn't say it. I don't think you'd say it either. David certainly wouldn't want to say it, but he wrote it by divine inspiration.

It's the Lord Jesus speaking here. I was also blameless before him and I kept myself from iniquity. Therefore, the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

Thoughts of his sojourn in this veil of tears, the tale of love unfolded in those years of sinless suffering and patient grace we love again and yet again detract. It really was a marvelous life. I like what Denny said of him.

He said, the only perfect life ever lived on earth. He left nothing but his clothes. That's enough to make a worshiper out of me, I'll tell you.

Somebody said, I think I heard on a tape this last week, that the source of worship is wonder. I like that. The source of worship is wonder.

When I think of the life of the Lord Jesus, I tell you, I'm just lost in wonder, love, and praise. You can hardly think about it without just overflowing in worship to him. Therefore, the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

Then he goes on just to rehearse the mode of God's dealings with men. Of course, he's found in the first part of it, with the merciful, you will show yourself merciful. With a blameless man, you will show yourself blameless.

With the pure, you will show yourself pure. Then the other side of the picture, and with the devious, you will show yourself shrewd. For you will save the humble people, but will bring down haughty looks.

And what, of course, he's saying is here that he fitted into the first category of those people, not into the second at all. For you will light my lamp, the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God, I can leap over a wall.

It's wonderful how he here speaks of himself as the one who was submissive to the will of God, and drew his strength from the Lord. This is brought up beautifully in John chapter 5, where the Lord Jesus is shown to be equal with the Father in so many ways, and one of them is, of course, his submissiveness to God his Father. We all love Psalm verse 30, as for God his way is perfect.

What a wonderful lesson to learn, that in all the changing circumstances of life, we don't turn and blame God for what happens. We say, as for God, his way is perfect. It is the Lord, let him do unto me as it pleases him.

This is a submission of a well-saved soul. The word of the Lord is proven. He's a shield to all who trust in him.

Then in verses 31 to 42, you have his second advent. Isn't that marvelous? Second advent. How did David have this marvelous outline of history and prophecy back then? He had it because God gave it to him.

He never would have had it by human ingenuity, whatever. Second advent, for who is God except the Lord? Who is a rock except our God? It's God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer and sets me on high places.

He teaches my hands to make war so that my arms can bend the bow of bronze. You say the second advent? What's this got to do with the second advent? Well, it's got a lot to do with it because the first thing connected with the second advent of Christ is judgment, isn't it? He comes, first of all, to put down his foes and to rid from the kingdom anything that would defile. You get that pictured in 2 Thessalonians 1. I think this would be a companion passage to what we're reading in Psalm 18.

I'll begin in verse 6. Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. This is not the rapture. This is his coming to reign.

This is his coming to set up his kingdom on the earth. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, here it is, taking vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, these shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power when he comes in that day to be glorified in his saints and to be admired among all those who believe because our testimony among you was relieved. So, Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, agrees perfectly with David.

First of all, the Lord Jesus is going to come and he's going to put down his foes. They're not going to enter the kingdom. And this has to be done before he can set up his kingdom.

You have given me the shield of your salvation. Your right hand has held me up. Your gentleness has made me great.

You enlarged my path unto me so that my feet did not slip. I have pursued my enemies still, still putting down his foes, overtaken them. Neither did I turn back again until they were destroyed.

I have wounded them so that they were not able to rise. They have fallen under my feet. For you have armed me with strength for the battle.

You have subdued under me those that rose up against you. You've given me the neck of my enemies so that I destroyed those who hated me. They cried out, but there was none to save them, even to the Lord.

But he did not answer them. Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the wind. I cast them out like dirt in the street.

And so here again, I think you have some description of the judgment of God when he comes at the time, at the end of the tribulation period. He's going to come in flaming fires, we read, taking vengeance on those that know not God, believe not the gospel. Then in verses 43 through 45, you have the millennium.

The kingdom has come. You have delivered me from the strivings of the people. You have made me the head of the nations.

Well, he is the king of kings and lord of lords, king of kings and lord of lords, the head of the nation. A people I have not known shall serve me. Well, that could be understood in two ways.

There was a sense in which he had not known Israel during the present dispensation. But of course, it would also refer to the Gentile peoples who had not known him. The people I have not known shall serve me.

As soon as they hear of me, they obey me. The foreigners submit to me. And of course, that's the picture of the Gentile nations sending representatives up to Jerusalem during his reign, paying tribute to him, worshipping him, representatives of the Gentile nations of the world.

As soon as they hear of me, they obey me. The foreigners submit to me. The foreigners fade away and become frightened from their hideouts.

The golden era of peace and prosperity and how we long to see that day when the Lord Jesus will be glorified in a scene where once he was cast out, despised, and rejected of men. Then in verses 46 to 50, there is praise to God for vindicating the Lord Jesus. How beautifully he opens in praise and he closes in praise.

Good example for us in our prayer life, isn't it? Instead of just rushing into the Lord with petitions, just start out and think of the wonderful names of God. Rehearse them in his presence, the wonderful attributes of God and worship him. The Lord lives.

Blessed be my rock. There's the rock again. In fact, it comes all through this psalm.

I was noticing it as I was studying it. It's in verse 31 also. Who is a rock except our God? Here, blessed be my rock.

Let the God of my salvation be exalted. It's God who avenges me, subdues the people under me. He delivers me from my enemies.

You also lift me up above those who rise against me. You have delivered me from the violent man. Therefore, I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the Gentiles and sing praises to your name.

Great deliverance he gives to his king. Shows mercy to his anointed, to David and his descendants forevermore. Of course, this is David, the greatest son, isn't he? The Lord Jesus, the lineal descendant of David.

Let's just outline it again at the close. Verses 1 through 3, you have praise to God in anticipation really of answered prayer. In verses 4 through 6, you have death, the death of the Lord Jesus.

I was reading in a book this last week, a secular book by Lewis Thomas. He was speaking of the marvel of the human cell, a human cell that can grow to become a human brain. This man, not a believer as far as I know, Lewis Thomas, he said, you know, if we really took that in, if we really understood that, maybe I have it here, if I could just quote it to you.

He said, the mere existence of that cell should be one of the greatest astonishments of the earth. People ought to be walking around all day, all through their waking hours, calling to others in endless wonderment, talking of nothing except that cell. You say, what's that got to do with it? Listen, if that, and it's true, if that is true, how much more should it be true of us in wonderment of the death of our creator? I think it's very good for us just by faith to stand before the cross of Calvary and look up and see the one who's hanging there and realize it's the one who gave us our existence.

It's the one who hurled the farthest planets and galaxies into space, dying there for you and for me. I tell you, that doesn't make a worshipper out of you. Nothing will.

Isn't it true? So there you have the death of the Lord Jesus in verses four through six. Then the warfare, verses seven through nineteen. The warfare that took place there, outside Jerusalem, at the tomb, at the sepulchre, Joseph of Arimathea.

You say there was nothing visible. I know, spiritual realm. We don't see what's happening in the spiritual realm, but it was there just the same.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It seems to me that's very clear. Verses 16 through 19.

He took me, he drew me out of many waters. Verse 19, he brought me out into a broad field. The resurrection of the Lord, undeniable.

Then the fact, verses 20 through 30, why God raised him from the dead? He had to. The Lord Jesus had accomplished his will without imperfection. He finished the work that God gave him to do.

God was honor bound to raise him from the dead. Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Second advent of the Lord Jesus in verses 31 to 42.

The millennial kingdom, the thousand year reign of the Lord Jesus, verses 43 to 45. And then his final song of praise to the Lord for vindicating him in this marvelous way. Raised him from the dead.

And because he rose from the dead, those who believe in him will be raised too if they don't go home prior to that by way of the rapture. What a wonderful book the Bible is. I wish that something like this might just motivate, especially our young people, go to the word of God and see the treasures that are hidden there.

Kings conceal a matter, but the honor of princes is to search them out. There are a lot of wonderful things here in the Bible. It's the honor of princes to search them out.

May the Lord help us to be diligent students of the word of God. There's nothing like it. Nothing like the Bible.

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