

"Blessed Be My Rock"

Psalm 18:4-50

Verse two of Psalm 50 begins with, "The LORD is my rock" – verse 46 (and verse 31) finds the psalmist, David, blessing God for being that Rock after giving details of his deliverance from all his enemies (see the title of the psalm as well as 2 Samuel 22:1). There are several things we find in this psalm that demonstrate the Rock that David was anchored to and trusted in, and the Rock that we can and should be anchored to and trust in.

The majority of this psalm deals with deliverance from enemies, and deliverance during battles. The historical context would have been the many battles that David faced as king of Israel. We may not fight physical battles like he did, but we will fight spiritual battles that we can find help for in this psalm.

Bear in mind that the Psalms are structured in Hebrew poetry and as such are often written to demonstrate emotion with fairly extreme terms. It's meant to draw attention to the concern in order to point equal attention and equal emotion to the Deliverer. That's seen in a very clear way in this psalm.

I. THE DISTRESS OF THE BATTLE - VS. 4-5

A. These verses combine to make the parallel, rather than each verse having a parallel.

1. "The sorrows of death compassed me" parallels to "The sorrows of hell compassed me about."
2. "The floods of ungodly men made me afraid" parallels to "the snares of death prevented me."

("Prevented" here doesn't mean it hindered him but that death "crossed his path," endangered his safety.)

- B. It shows the utter despair David felt during the stress of the battles he faced against the many enemies he fought.**
- C. At times, we will face the same kind of distress and despair in the battles we face.**

II. THE PRAYER IN THE BATTLE - VS. 6

- A. It's during these times of distress that we need to remember to turn to the One who is ready to help.**
- B. "He heard my voice out of his temple" - God is always there in His place, so to speak, listening for us to call.**

III. THE ANSWER FOR THE BATTLE - VS. 7-15

These verses describe the immense power of God when He appears to aid in the battle. Whether there was a literal occasion in David's life where God moved in nature to demonstrate His presence is unknown - nothing is recorded in Scripture. What is known is that God is in control of all of creation and can wield it as He sees fit. What is described here is a Theophany - God appearing in form; in this case, flying upon the wind (vs. 10).

A Theophany is described as: "a manifestation of God in the Bible that is tangible to the human senses. In its most restrictive sense, it is a visible appearance of God in the Old Testament period, often, but not always, in human form."

IV. THE DELIVERANCE OUT OF THE BATTLE - VS. 16-19

A. From the sheer volume of battles we face at times - vs. 16 - "many waters"

Jonah 2:5-6 [in Jonah's prayer from the fish's belly]

⁵ The waters compassed me about, even to the soul:
the depth closed me round about, the weeds were
wrapped about my head.

⁶ I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the
earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou
brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

B. From those that are too strong to handle on our own - vs. 17

C. To a place of safety - vs. 18-19a

Psalm 40:1-2

¹ I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto
me, and heard my cry.

² He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of
the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and
established my goings.

Psalm 118:5

⁵ I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD
answered me, and set me in a large place.

D. Because we are His children, and He delights in us as such - vs. 19b

V. THE FAITHFULNESS TO GOD'S WORD BEFORE THE BATTLE - VS. 20-27

A. David was rewarded with deliverance in the battles he faced because of his righteousness and the cleanness of his hands (stated twice - verse

twenty and twenty-four). This is also seen in verse twenty-three.

1. This does not speak to soul salvation – he isn't saying He was eternally delivered because he was good – that would contradict other portions of Scripture.
2. This is a contrast between the wickedness of his enemies and David's faithfulness to God's Word historically in his life, starting as a child.
3. He was not perfect by any means – and neither are we – but he was God's servant and had proven himself so and that is why his is praising God here.
4. In many ways, our deliverance is contingent on our righteous living. If we aren't living right, we really need to be careful in thinking that God will come to our rescue every time we get into trouble, especially if that trouble is self-inflicted because of sin. All we can rely on then is His abundant mercy.

B. His faithfulness to God's Word is seen in vs. 21-22 in the descriptive words used for Scripture: "ways of the LORD" (the "ways" spoken of are because He followed God's Word), "his judgments," and "his statutes."

C. Verses 25-26a define David's righteousness and cleanness of hands found in verses twenty and twenty-four: he was merciful, upright, and pure (not sinless but holy in his life).

D. Verses 26b-27 speaks of those that don't live right

and pure. If someone defies God and perverts His ways and His Word as the enemies of David did, God will not show them mercy but will show them judgment and justice in His vengeance: He will show Himself "forward" - the corresponding passage in 2 Samuel 22:27 the text is translated, "Thou wilt show thyself unsavory," meaning that "God would deal with the man referred to according to that person's real character" (Barnes).

VI. THE PRESENCE OF GOD AFTER THE BATTLE - vs. 28-45

- A. He's our light after we've walked in the darkness of battle and our way out of the valley - vs. 28-29.**
- B. He's all we need to get us back to where we need to be to fight the next battle - vs. 30-36**
- C. Verses 37-45 speak in a specific way of David and the victory that God gave to him. The application for us is that the same God that showed David deliverance and showed him His presence in that deliverance is the same God we serve today.**

VII. THE PRAISE BECAUSE OF DELIVERANCE FROM THE BATTLE - vs. 46-50

Conclusion: How do we handle the battles we face? This entire psalm is given so we can know that God is there to help when we call on Him, and His help is far greater than any enemy that comes against us. He may not deliver from the storm, but He will always deliver us through the storm, one way or another, He is always there and He will deliver!

During the Second World War the US Army was forced

to retreat from the Philippines. Some of their soldiers were left behind, and became prisoners of the Japanese. The men called themselves "ghosts", souls unseen by their nation, and on the infamous Bataan Death March were forced to walk over 70 miles, knowing that those who were slow or weak would be bayoneted by their captors or die from dysentery and lack of water. Those who made it through the march spent the next three years in a hellish prisoner-of-war camp. By early 1945, 513 men were still alive at the Cabanatuan prison camp, but they were giving up hope. The US Army was on its way back, but the POW's had heard the frightening news that prisoners were being executed as the Japanese retreated from the advancing U.S. Army.

Their wavering hope was however met by one of the most magnificent rescues of wartime history. In an astonishing feat, 120 US Army soldiers and 200 Filipino guerrillas outflanked 8,000 Japanese soldiers to rescue the POW's.

Alvie Robbins was one of the rescuers. He describes how he found a prisoner muttering in a darkened corner of his barracks, tears coursing down his face.

"I thought we'd been forgotten," the prisoner said.

"No, you're not forgotten," Robbins said softly. "You're heroes. We've come for you."

Often in life we can start to give up hope, to feel that God has forgotten us, abandoned us to dark and hurtful experiences, but the cross of Christ reminds us, "No, you're

not forgotten" and the resurrection gives us the assurance that some day we too will see our rescuer face to face and be liberated from the distresses of this life. When he returns we too will hear him say, "I've come for you."