

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE PSALMS OF DAVID

Psalms 17 - 20

A VERSE BY VERSE STUDY

by

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WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States jurists saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord"

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?

Salvation is available for all members of the human race.

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God so man cannot work for salvation neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. First of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my own free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful:

My sins are taken away (John 1:29),

I possess eternal life now (1 John 5:11,12),

I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),

The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (1 Corinthians 6:19),

And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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THE PSALMS OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

The book we have before us was the hymn book of the early church and of Israel beforehand. These Psalms form the finest musical expression of spiritual life, with all its ups and downs, than appears in the literature of any other nation that has ever lived upon the earth. The Psalms were the comfort to my old father as he walked the decks of his warship in World War II, and continued to be his comfort through the even darker days of cardiac caused episodic dementia as his life ebbed away in the Old Folks Home where he finally died full of years at 90. Through the most incredible pressures I have faced over the last eleven years in my own life they have comforted my soul with the same power they did when I was a young university student. I love this book!

I love my brothers in the Lord who wrote these psalms, and there were many authors, and they all testify to the grace, mercy, love, and patience of God with us all. David wrote all the psalms of the first section (or "book") of the collection, and he is a "trophy of grace" if ever there was one. David gives me hope every day, for if he could be forgiven and lifted up to serve again after his great sin, then there is hope for each and every one of us. The "Sons of Korah" later in the book also testify to the grace and mercy of the Lord, for they ought not to even live, given the great sin and judgment that came upon their forefather, and yet the "remnant of grace" survived and they lived on to sing the glory of the Lord who judged their ancestor in justice and righteousness and saved their posterity in loving kindness. King Hezekiah also figures as an author, and he also testifies to the grace and mercy of the Lord under the greatest time of national suffering.

King David was the youngest son of Jesse and ruled Israel from approximately B.C. 1052 - 1012. David learned to play music on the hills around Bethlehem and his skill saved his life several times from the madness of Saul. He was a skilled musician even as a young man (1 Samuel 16:18-23), and as is seen in 1 Chronicles 16:7 and 2 Samuel 23:1, continued writing psalms through to the end of his life. The psalms were his heart felt expression of his walk with God and his honesty with the Lord is at times overwhelming and humbling. The first forty-one psalms are, with a handful of anonymous exceptions, all attributed to David with a number of others scattered throughout the remainder of the book. The entire collection is called after him as he is the greatest of the singers of Israel, and their great king from whom Messiah is to come. It was probably collected into its final form that we see today by Ezra after the return of the Exiles from Babylon, but it had existed in earlier forms right back to the days of David and Solomon and in its five sections formed the song book for the Temple worship services, just as it will again in the Millennial Temple.

In the entire book of Psalms David is specifically credited as author of 73 Psalms, Asaph with 12, the Sons of Korah with 10, Moses with 1, Solomon with 2, Ethan with 1, Heman with 1, and 50 are anonymous.

I thank Brian Huggett, who did the earlier series of volumes on these Genesis Psalms, and I honour him for these works. My Reflections and Application points are the result of my present walk through a deep "valley of the shadow of death" that the Lord has allowed me to walk through at this time in 2011-2015. It has been the severity of the trials I have experienced over recent months that has moved me to reflect deeply on these psalms and rewrite these new books for our ministry. I have been encouraged and pray you will be.

PSALMS SECTION ONE

THE GENESIS PSALMS – PSALMS 1 - 41

INTRODUCTION

The Psalms are arranged in five specific books. Book 1 covers Psalms 1 – 41, and is tied to the book of Genesis, book 2 covers Psalms 42-72 and is tied to the book of Exodus, book 3 covers Psalms 73-89, and is tied to the book of Leviticus, book 4 covers Psalms 90 – 106, and is tied to the book of Numbers, and book 5 covers Psalms 107-150, and is tied to the book of Deuteronomy. The book of the Psalms gets into its final form in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (around 440 BC) when books four and five of the Psalms appear to be added to the earlier collection. The longest Psalm, 119, dates from the time of the Exile to Babylon in the early sixth century, but there are others that may date from the times after the Exiles return in 535 BC, and even some from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century BC.

The dominant name for God used in this section is “Jehovah - JHWH”, the holy name of God given to Moses. It is used 277 times in this book of the Psalms, well ahead of the next three sections, with the last section alone getting close with 226 uses of this special name of God. This name of God was never pronounced so do not get into debate about whether it should be said as “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”, because it was simply breathed through by the readers, or the word “Adonai”, or Lord, used in its place. Other names for God used in this first book of the Psalms are, Elohim 48 times, El 15 times, Adonai 11 times, Alyon 3 times, Adon 2 times, and Eloah once. Refer to the doctrinal study on the names of God below to explore the significance of these names, as all carry important reference to the psalmist’s understanding of the triune God.

Just as Genesis was the book of beginnings, or “first principles” so this section of the Psalms covers doctrinal topics that are the “first principles of faith”. The section begins with the consequences of the Fall of Mankind in the Garden of Eden, where man confronts his daily choices as to what his eternal destiny is to be. This section includes many of the psalms of the Great Rebellion of Absalom where David must face the consequences of his own great sin with Bathsheba that let loose such evil in his own household. This section traces man’s choices and the terrible and gracious consequences of those as they work out in time. David must face the full reality of his life and works, both for good and for evil and bring them to the Lord for solution. 1 Peter 5:5-10. He does and we rejoice in the things we learn about ourselves through our brother David and the things we learn about our great redeemer through his honesty in confronting his sins, fears, doubts and errors.

The psalms of this volume reflect similar themes to the earlier ones, but also build significantly upon them.

- Psalm 17 - A petition to Heaven by David (much as earlier ones)
- Psalm 18 - A reflection of God’s Past Goodness – the basis for present hope and confidence
(A doctrinal summary of all the principles to date in the shorter psalms.)
- Psalm 19 - Witnesses to God’s Glory – the heart reflection for and behind all petitions
- Psalm 20 - A National Anthem for Judah.

DOCTRINE

CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

NOTES

Psalm 17

A Prayer of David

Psalm 17: 1

“Hear the right, O LORD attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* not out of feigned lips.”

REFLECTION

David works on the basis that he is righteous before the Lord, and there is no arrogance behind this statement of his, for we must be able to say the same thing before we can be sure we are heard by the Lord. How is this possible? Well it is not possible through our own work, but through the forgiveness of the Lord. Psalms 51, 103.

David can ask to be heard and be sure he is heard and so can we. 1 John 1:5 - 2:2. We can rest upon the certainty of being heard by the one who has wiped away our sins through the perfect sacrifice of Christ for us on the Cross. Romans 8:1-2. Having asked for forgiveness we know, in Christ Jesus, that we are forgiven, and so we can with absolute confidence seek God's help, for nothing separates us from his fellowship and his power to work on our behalf.

David cries before the Lord, and this reminds us again that passionate faith is what we are called to celebrate in Christ Jesus. We can cry out to the Lord and be assured of being heard and valued by the Lord. David also reminds himself and nails his colours to the mast regarding his intentions in his prayer. He is absolutely committing to the fact that there are no “ulterior motives” or devious purposes in his prayers to come in this psalm.

God checks the thoughts and intents of the heart by means of the Holy Spirit's work upon the believer's heart and mind through the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12. David is examining himself in this petition before he speaks to the Lord and he sets an example in this that is well taken. Psalm 4:4, 26:1ff, Proverbs 17:3, 2 Corinthians 13:5.

APPLICATION

1. Let us examine ourselves in our prayers and ensure that we are not being devious in any way in our prayers, but that each and every thing we ask for is transparent before God and seeking God's glory and will being done through our life and the lives of others.
2. Let us ensure that all sin in our life is dealt with before we speak any word of petition and request for self or others. Let us ensure that no unconfessed sin separates us from God or our brethren.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE

Psalm 17:2

“Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.”

REFLECTION

It may be that this psalm is a late one and follows David's sin in numbering the army before Solomon was due to take over the kingdom. 1Chronicles 21 (2 Samuel 24). David is given by God a choice of three alternative forms of divine discipline (for his sin in numbering the army – the sin of depending on the strong arm of men rather than God's power and will). His choice at that time was to leave that selection of the form of discipline in the hands of the LORD, for “*very great are his mercies*”.

It may be this situation, or a similar situation at an earlier date, but David is not referring here to any judgment the LORD might have against him, he is asking that his defence (against enemy accusations) might lie in the judgments that *come forth* from God. He wants to leave his case firmly in the Lord's hands and not seek any justice for and by himself.

David can say in whatever situation he faces, having confessed any sins, "I am innocent LORD, and if you look into the situation you will see that this is so (and you will vindicate me)". We must be able to say this as we bow before the Lord and seek his grace, mercy and peace as we face the need to receive strength in the face of the enemy.

Satan is the accuser, and we will always be accused by his team members. Do not be surprised by any accusations against yourself, for the enemy is a liar and so are his people, just be sure to be innocent of all trumped up charges. David knows that it may take time to prove innocence and for all to see that he has been "straight" and the accusers are crooked, but he rests in God's hands and timing.

I have been falsely accused of serious things twice in my spiritual and professional life. The first was by a crooked pastor who was himself guilty of what he accused me of, and accused me privately to others so that the heat would be off him and his evil actions. It took seven years before the truth came out and he was disgraced and I was vindicated, but I had to just relax in the Lord's hands until then.

The second time was a religious psychologist who tried to discredit me, and it took a year of very hard work to prove his accusations false and great expense, but it was done directly with the Ethics Committee of the professional body as it needed to be. In the first case I was passive, and in the second I had to be active in providing facts, but in both cases my trust was in the Lord for vindication, not the judicial process.

APPLICATION

1. Let us rest in the hands of the Lord for vindication and justification. The Lord will sort all the facts out in the end. Trust Him and quietly keep serving the Lord, trusting in his timing for vindication. I presently must rest under great and evil pressure from three men and a woman who run a "trust" that controls the sale of my property, and they have squeezed me in a vice for eleven years. Their evil has seen over ten other families driven from the land with no money at all. I must still rest in the Lord at this eleven year point. David's words encourage me; let them encourage you, for they are God's precious promises to us all.

DOCTRINE

MERCY

NOTES

Psalm 17:3-4

"Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited *me* in the night; thou hast tried me, *and* shalt find nothing; I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept *me* from the paths of the destroyer."

REFLECTION

The Lord will always "try" the heart and check out our motivation and emotions surrounding things we bring before Him. The Lord seeks our 100% obedience to the letter and spirit of the Word. John 4:23. David acknowledges that the Lord has sought out his thoughts and examined his emotions. It is good to let the Holy Spirit "audit" our emotions and thinking in these matters. Hebrews 4:12. As we face things that need to be taken to prayer, let us open ourselves quite consciously to the auditing of the Holy Spirit.

God will "take us to the wood shed" and seriously examine our motivations in some circumstances when we have not been perfect in our thoughts and feelings before Him. David has been "visited" in the night and received what felt like a severe beating of the Lord to really make him face the truth about his intentions and desires. There is a "punishment" that is sweet and this sort of process by the Lord is sweet, because it brings great rewards. Hebrews 12:1-15.

The Lord has taken David's desires and "tried them" in the fires of testing and purified his motivation so that David is transformed well by the experience. My present distress is also an example of this sort of "sifting" and "trial", for the suffering I have experienced has brought me to my knees and clarified in short order what I really desire to do with the rest of my life and what I do not care for at all. I kid myself that I didn't need, what feels like this severe a beating, but the Lord is gracious and if I have received it, then it was needed! Romans 8:26-39.

David is sure of his heart now and encourages the Lord to really "go for it" and examine every thought and intent, for he knows there is nothing ungodly to find. Not only has he cleared his heart of wrongful, or even not 100% desires, he has also committed to stopping any hasty and wrongful words so that he will give no offence to others in the processing of his prayer requests. Guard the tongue believer! James 1:26ff, 3:5-8, 1 Peter 3:10.

He has also praised God for the protective impact of Bible Doctrine, for it has kept him from evil paths, exactly as it says it will do. Proverbs 1:7-9, 2:1-5, 3:1-7. If we take in Bible doctrines we will receive information and advance warning of behaviours, thoughts and activities that are dangerous to our spiritual health and so we can keep ourselves away from dangers and disasters. I have just spent an hour in a counselling session with a person who did not take such advice seriously and entered into disaster by doing something that was not wise, and has lived to feel the bitterest of guilt and regret.

APPLICATION

1. Let our daily prayer be, "Prove our hearts Lord and purify our emotions this day, that we might not desire anything that is not in accordance with your will and desires for us".
2. Let us take in the Word of God and so keep ourselves from evil paths. Satan's well worn paths lead downhill into greater and greater destruction for all concerned. Let us keep ourselves safe.

DOCTRINES

WORKS – DIVINE GOOD AND HUMAN GOOD

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMER

Psalm 17:5

"Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not."

REFLECTION

"Sustain us Lord". David is clear in his thinking here, for the Lord alone sustains our path. There is only one safe path through this life and it is God's path for us. There is no safety outside this path. We depend on the Lord for identification of the path and we depend upon the Holy Spirit for power to walk the path. We have in Christ Jesus God's Path, God's Power, and God's Person for company. This is to be the life of the believer; there is no other place where power can flow through you to others.

We shake and fall from the path by losing focus. In all walks through mountains you stop to admire the view and you do so only in safe areas, for to lose focus for a moment when walking in mountains can lead to a fatal, or at least very annoying and time wasting fall. Let us guard our steps and that means, let us keep focused upon walking where the Lord walked and as he walked. He is our mentor and it is him we are to be like, not our pastor or human role model. The Word is to be our guide. Psalm 119:116-117, 133, Jeremiah 10:23-24.

APPLICATION

1. God's Power alone, God's Path alone, and the company of the person of Jesus alone. Let this be our motto.
2. Our footsteps slip when we get our eyes off the Lord and onto our own plans and schemes. Let us keep our focus upon the Lord our God and seek his "well done" alone.

DOCTRINE

GOD – DIVINE GUIDANCE: THE WILL OF GOD

Psalm 17:6-7

“I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Show thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee* from those that rise up *against them*.”

REFLECTION

David recognises where the help is coming from when we need it, and it is from the Lord alone. David calls upon the Lord for he has the promises of the Word of God that he will be heard by the Lord. We have the Lord’s word on this ourselves. The Lord is clear and strong in his call to all believers to pour out their hearts to Him, for he hears their prayers and answers them all. Isaiah 12:4, Jeremiah 33:3, Zephaniah 3:9.

God will “incline his ear”, really ensuring he hears what we are saying and what we really mean. We even have the promise that he hears the unspoken cries of the heart that are too deep for language to find words. Romans 8:26. The Lord’s response to our prayers is then well beyond what we could even hope or plan for. The Lord does not just answer, he fully and completely provides for us so that we can receive everything from the Lord we need to accomplish our tasking here. We do not just receive “love”, but his “amazing wonderful loving kindness”. We are under the “much more care” of God. Matthew 6:26-30, Romans 5:9-20, 1 Peter 1:7.

The Lord saves us by the “right hand” of his power against the power of those who rise up against us. The Lord’s power is unleashed towards those who attack his people. The Lord does not forget his people and nor does he forget those who abuse them. There is no escape from the consequences of evil for those who work evil towards the Lord’s people.

APPLICATION

1. Let us give thanks that we are under the “much more” care of the Lord. We are recipients of his wonderful loving kindness, not just his ordinary love! Let us give thanks for his abundance towards us.
2. God hears and God judges those who abuse his people. Let us rest in his care and give thanks for his provisions for us. Let us commit our keeping to the one with the power to keep us forever!

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH

Psalm 17:8-9

“Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, *who compass me about*.”

REFLECTION

David uses two well known images of protection that have entered into most languages through this and other biblical references. The “apple of the eye” is a reference to the pupil of the eye and it reminds us that the Lord protects the most sensitive part of us and keeps us safe from danger. To hide under the shadow of the wings is a picture well known in very hot climates where birds will spread their own wings to stop the heat of the sun from reaching their tender young. It pictures in both cases the tender and effective care of the Father for the Children of faith. We are kept by Him for service and worship forever; we are secure in him.

There are enemies out there that will destroy our joy at very least, and take our life at worst. There are great evils abroad and the Lord is aware of them all and guards us against them. The malice of satanic forces is not to be underestimated, but the Lord is with us and guards our steps. We will be “oppressed at times” and feel surrounded at other times, and both may be true, but the Lord is with us. 1 John 4:4.

APPLICATION

1. Commit your way to the Lord and follow His pathway for your life and there is safety and excellent company on the road.

2. Oppression and violence are the norm for believers on the road of service, but we are kept as we walk with God and serve the Lord in focused Holy Spirit supported energy.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

NOTES

Psalm 17:10

“They are enclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.”

REFLECTION

This is a very funny and very blunt observation of the lost who have arrogance at the core of their being. Such people are often self centred and such people will normally be either fat or anorexic. They will either eat compulsively or train obsessively; both behaviours being their “drivenness” to meet self centred needs for control that they cannot have.

The saddest/most pathetic lap-band surgery case I had to work with was a self important woman who was fat through over-eating and refusal to exercise, had asthma as a result, back trouble as a result, and heart trouble as a result. She had steadily eaten and “slothed” her way to death. She had great wealth but none of that money could overcome what self control and exercise was required to achieve. I also recall a man who threw his Porsche keys on my table and said, “The car is yours, just help me sleep”. I didn't get the car because he would not do anything to save himself!

The ancient world looked upon the fat as the best part of the meat and the fatty portion was for the rich or honoured guest. The problem with this sort of meat is that if you keep eating it you will resemble the meat. Once people are really fat they are “enclosed” by their fat, and constrained as to what they can and cannot do. They are caught by their behaviour and the results of their lack of control literally controls them. Psalms 73:7-9, Isaiah 6:10.

The interesting thing about self centred people is that they do not see others, and care little about their impact upon others. Others are simply wallpaper in their narcissistic world. They simply don't factor in the opinions and feelings of others. They speak proudly because they believe they are the most important people around, and so all ought to hear and obey them. They have majesty in their voices but it is all fake and empty of significance. 2 Peter 2:17-22.

APPLICATION

1. Our choices place us on our path in life and the longer we stay on the path the more ingrained its habits become. Choices of evil multiply evils and finally their results in our life control our future options.
2. Do not envy the evil and slothful, for their self centeredness will unhinge them in the end. Be self controlled and focused upon what the Lord wants you to do, for that alone matters, and the self controlled/Holy Spirit controlled person will achieve all the Lord calls them to.

Psalm 17:11-12

“They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth; Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.”

REFLECTION

The enemy will be very cunning at times and circle around and round until they spot the believer's weakness. Only when they are sure of the “kill” will they pounce. The malice of Satan is severe and his people are as cunning at times as he is, although they have his weakness and it is their self centeredness that enables them to be escaped from. Self centred and lust driven people will always believe their prey thinks the same way, and it is in this that we defeat the enemy; by Holy Spirit filled, other-centred walking through this life. Selflessness is the one thing they cannot understand.

The thought to which evil people put themselves to catch the unwary believer amazes many, but do not be amazed, for they hate goodness and their passion is destroying it. Proverbs 1:8-19, 7:4-27. They see the weaknesses of others and then they smell out the best way to launch their attack. This is the reference to their eyes down to the earth and pacing round, for that is the sign that the lion has spotted its target and is picking up the scent of the wind to ensure its attack will have maximum chance of success.

The devil is compared to a lion, and the Asiatic Lion was a fierce and violent animal, more lithe and faster than its larger African cousin. They would lie in wait in the thickets and seek the unwary animal stumbling along carelessly. They would set up their attack and launch it with fierce and focused energy and it would end in the death of the unwary. Just so the evil will try to destroy the unwary believer. The Lord has given us His Word to keep us safe but we need to read it, believe it and keep it to be safe.

APPLICATION

1. Be wary of evil, for the devil hates you. John 15:18ff. He is a lion and will kill if you are foolish at all around him. Be safe and keep close to the Word, walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit. James 4:10ff.

DOCTRINE**PERSECUTION****Psalm 17:13**

“Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:”

REFLECTION

David's heart felt prayer is in accordance with his age and position as a king. When he says, “Stand up Lord and act to defend me”, he is referring to the act of the king when he was about to judge. In our day a judge will verbally call attention, or place a black cap over their head to condemn to death, but in David's day the king rose to his feet to state his formal judgment of an evil man or woman. David is asking for a judicial intervention by God to settle the case.

God is well able to answer all David's requests, and he remains able to answer all of our own today. To disappoint meant to act in such a way as to “cut off the plans” of the enemy by actions that eliminated the effectiveness of all their strategies and plots. God's Plan flows from eternity past and he has had all the facts about events since before time was made, and so there is no doubt in David's mind that God has the plan, the power and his person is pure in love and mercy towards David. Psalm 7:11-13, Isaiah 10:15, 37:26-29.

Habakkuk 1:12-13

“12 Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?”

David wants the Lord to “cast them down to their knees”, all those who have attacked him, and therefore attacked the plan of God operating through him. We must remember this principle as we pray, that those who stand against us do not just attack us, they attack the Lord who made us, and they attack the very fabric of the Plan of God in which we operate in the Holy Spirit's power. The challenge to us is to walk with the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit and keep focus upon the plan, power and person of God, for in these we are invincible. The enemy has no power against the Plan

of God. 1 John 4:4. Our constant order, indeed our “Daily Orders”, centre round one command, “Stand”. 1 Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 6:11-18, Philippians 1:27, 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 3:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

David then asks that after the enemy are cast down to their knees in defeat and submission, at that point, he desires the means and way of escape to be opened up. David wants to see the defeat of the enemy first, then his own deliverance, for he desires the glory of God ahead of the lifting of pressures off his back. The Lord’s sword is revealed against those who oppose and assault believers fulfilling the Plan of God in their life. The Lord judges all who stand against his Plan and his people obediently fulfilling the plan. We obey the Lord, and stand against all who oppose the Lord, just as the early apostles did in Acts 4.

Acts 4:28-31

*“24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:
 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?
 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.
 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,
 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.
 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,
 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.
 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.
 32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things, which he possessed, was his own; but they had all things common.
 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.”*

APPLICATION

1. The Lord will rise up in judgment at his will and in accordance with his plan. We are a part of that plan and will be kept within its provisions, for provision has been made for us from eternity past and we are secure in that grace. Let us rest our minds and serve the Lord as we are called to do in peace and security of soul and body.
2. The Lord will judge the evil ones who believe they have the right to abuse the people of God. We are the people of God and we are in God’s hands for protection and for the demonstration of his power.

Psalms 17:14

“From men *which* are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, *which* have their portion in *this* life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure*: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.”

REFLECTION

David now reflects upon the men who God has kept in the world and has kept from the evils of the world. We are those who are “in the Lord’s hand”. David reflects that the Lord’s people in the midst of the corruptions of this world are kept and blessed in the midst of the world and they are secure in their dwelling as they walk humbly before the Lord. The “hidden treasures of the Lord” are deep within the soul of the believers who walk humbly before their God in the light of the Word of God.

Psalms 138:1-8

*“1 I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.
 2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
 3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.
 4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.
 5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.
 6 Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.
 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.”*

The sign of blessing in David’s day was a prosperity that was reflected in children inheriting the goods of their father, for that indicated peace and well being in the land and freedom from war. David sees that the “hidden treasures” of God,

protect and guide and keep, for they are the doctrines and promises of the Word of God. Proverbs 21:21-22, 31, Matthew 6:19-21, 2 Corinthians 4:7.

Psalms 37:21-28

*21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.
22 For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.
23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.
24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.
25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.
26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.
27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.
28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."*

APPLICATION

1. Let us seek the treasure of God's Word and store it deeply within and so be encouraged and strengthened in our walk before the Lord.
2. The Lord has magnified his Word above his name, and that fact must encourage and challenge us, for we are challenged to honour the Word above all else.

DOCTRINES

WORLD

WORLDLINESS

Psalm 17:15

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

REFLECTION

David's first phrase here reminds us of the Lord's constant challenge regarding all principles of doctrine. Hebrews 3:17 – 4:12. Will we apply them and live them or falter in application? What will it be for us? "As for me", David says, "I am determined to behold thy face in righteousness". He seeks the Lord's presence and the close fellowship of his saviour and king. It is in the presence of the Lord that there is hope, peace, love and certainty for the future.

If in pressure, seek God's face in righteousness (having confessed any known sins). If in great tribulation from evil men, seek God's face in righteousness and find peace with Him. If in any situation seek God's face in righteousness. All the trials of this world will be cast away backwards by the presence of the Saviour and Lord. Psalm 16:11, 36:8-9, 65:2-4.

David knows that if he seeks the Lord's fellowship he will find all he needs; he will find answers to prayer and certainty with peace in his soul. He will have everything he needs in fellowship with the Lord his God. Just seeing the Lord in the midst of his situation will stabilise his mind and settle his thoughts, but much more; it will provide all the resources he needs to advance in from this place.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be satisfied in the midst of the worst situations we face with the presence of the Lord alongside us and the Holy Spirit within us. Let us draw close to our Saviour, for it is in grace, mercy and the truth of the Word that security and assurance is found every day. His mercies are renewed every morning.
2. In all things give thanks, for this is the Lord's will concerning you! Philippians 3:1, 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

DOCTRINES

OFFERINGS – LEVITICAL OFFERINGS REPRESENT CHRIST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

Remember to always refer these N.T. doctrines to the Levitical system of sacrifice of which Jesus Christ was the fulfilment. O.T. believers looked forward to that fulfilment, we today look back to that fulfilment in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Psalm 18

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, the servant of the LORD, who spoke unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul:

This Psalm is an almost exact rewrite of 2 Samuel 22, which position may place the time of writing late in David's life, for the next chapter (2 Samuel 23) begins with *'Now these be the last words of David the son of Jesse'*. Those *last words* would not necessarily have been the last words David spoke, but are the last of his recorded words.

Whether Psalm 18 has its historical setting in proximity to those *last words* is not so clear, but the fact that they were written in **the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies** would suggest it being a eulogy to the LORD'S providence, at the end of an eventful life. **And from the hand of Saul** does not conflict with this view, for his deliverance from the hand of Saul set him on the throne, an event so momentous as to be the springboard, the catalyst for his deliverance from **all his enemies**. It was an event that deserved special mention. The CEV and GW both use *"especially from the hand of Saul"*, and this is a legitimate interpretation of the passage.

The slight differences between this psalm and 2 Samuel 22 may be the differences of revision and adaptation, or even reflect a later re-write at the end of David's life in light of many subsequent events. Psalm 18 has been sent to the chief Musician, to be included in a collection of David's psalms (perhaps as national hymns for Israel) and it is possible that the changes, too many to be scribal errors, were to allow an easy adaptation to a later and different melody or form of expression. If the 2nd Samuel version was written just prior to his *last words* of 2 Samuel 23, it is improbable, though not impossible, for David to have made the 'revision'.

(I am indebted to Brian Huggett for this excellent introduction that I have modified only very slightly. Please refer to his book on these psalms for additional material that will help and strengthen your walk with the Lord.)

And he said,

Psalm 18:1-2

"I will love thee, 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 buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

REFLECTION

Love is an act of will, not an emotional response. When love is cheapened and lowered to an emotional response it becomes as unstable as the wind, but when it is a choice of the soul and spirit it will bring the deepest and most precious emotions in its train, but they will be there with stability and power. Let us stand with David in committed love of the Lord and in doctrine, not emotion as our foundation.

The Lord is our strength and shield, and we love Him because of who He is towards us, and by so expressing this love we find renewed strength daily. Psalms 116:1-6, 144:1-2, 1 John 4:17-19. Truly it is said by the apostle John, "We love Him, because He first loved us". He is our strength because he is our Saviour. Psalm 28:6-8. As Paul was to note in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".

The Lord is our "Rock". We are built upon Him; upon his holy character, his holy Word and His holy Plan. There is absolute stability in the plan and purposes of God for our ministry, for the ministry we are called to is rightly "not ours", but HIS! He is the Rock – there is no other Rock of stability in the storms of life.

Psalm 91:1-6

"1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday."

Martin Luther would go on to write his famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God", as a result of reading and meditating upon these psalms. He could see that amidst the turmoil of the Reformation the Holy Spirit was working hard to call out a people according to his name. He could see that there was but one solution and that was for the Lord to be

the rock for each man and woman, and for the Word of Truth to guide them in the power of the Holy Spirit under the shepherding of God's called servants. This remains the truth today.

The Lord is our strength and our deliverer from all evil forces. We will make that solemn and whole hearted commitment to him and his power to keep and guide us through, and we will depend upon him alone. He is our "buckler", that is, he is our armoured protection. The Lord alone keeps us safe from the arrows of the enemy. Ephesians 6:16. Paul will draw the whole armour of God and encourage the believer to put it all on daily. The breastplate (buckler) Paul draws is that of God's provided righteousness that is given to all believers at the point of salvation. We are safe in the Lord's provided breastplate and down behind the shield of faith. There is safety no-where else in this world.

The Lord is the "horn of my salvation" and my "high tower of defence". God's "horn of plenty" is the gracious provision of his resources to fight the battles in the Angelic Conflict, and his provision is always sufficient and overflowing for the needs of the ministry. His presence is the "high tower" that gives protection from the enemy and all who would harm us. In prayer and worship it is as if we are sheltered behind the high walls of God's protection and we rejoice in his powerful presence. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe." Proverbs 18:10.

APPLICATION

1. Let us praise the Lord our Rock of salvation that cannot be moved. Let us cling to the rock as the storms of life pour their fury around about us and let us rejoice that we do not stand in our own strength but in that of Almighty God our Saviour.
2. Let us ensure that our armour is on, and that we stand before the enemy in the Holy Spirit's filling and the provisions of God the Father to fulfil His Plan in spiritual power. We are with the Lord and the Lord is with us, who can be against us? The enemy can and he will, but greater is he with us than he that is in the world. Hallelujah! 1 John 4:4.

DOCTRINES

CHRIST – ROCK: CHRIST AS THE ROCK

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SERVICE

Psalm 18:3

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

REFLECTION

Once again David makes his commitment to the Lord and before all men, that he will call upon the Lord alone for deliverance and trust in the Lord's hands alone for the solution. Worship is, as we have seen again and again in the early psalms, an act of will, not an emotional response. Emotional religion is not worthy of the name and is akin to that of the Baal prophets who stood against Elijah on Mt Carmel. 1 Kings 18:21-29.

We must take great care that we do not resemble the prophets of Baal, weeping, wailing, crying aloud and cutting ourselves in passionate frenzy. This is not godly, for the Lord's worship is most often quiet, calm, and settled in mind and spirit. Hebrews 12:11, James 3:17. The Lord's still quiet voice must be listened to in the silence of the soul. 1 Kings 19:10ff. Elijah had to learn to be still before the Lord and David mentors that by his example here to us all.

There is no boasting of any person save the Lord. One pastor teacher of mine in the past used to constantly say aloud a great biblical truth; "There is only one celebrity in this universe and it is Jesus". This truth is what is behind David's great praise hymn here. There is only one Saviour, and only one King of kings, and He is our Lord. We are in his hands and we are best to reflect this reality with worship that lifts the roof rather than bores people to sleep.

He is worthy to be praised, and as I write these words I have just heard that we continue to face an overwhelming stress regarding our house and have no human hope to sell our house and move forward with our life. We face the loss of everything, but we have prayed again this afternoon and are focused on the work of the Lord and worship, for other than the Lord's deliverance we face hopelessness. I stand with David this night, facing a letter that would crush hope from a pagan, and I choose to express my hope in the Lord and rest upon his deliverance this night in worship of his holy name. My "enemies" who control my property sale rights are powerful, and I have no power against them, but I rest in the Lord's power and with David pray that the Lord will save me from my enemies.

APPLICATION

1. I will call upon the name of the Lord for he alone is worthy to be praised. There is praise in no other.
2. We all face impossible odds in the battles of this present world, but the Lord will deliver us as we rest upon his promises as they rest upon his holy character.

DOCTRINES

DELIVERANCE

OFFERINGS – LEVITICAL OFFERINGS REPRESENT CHRIST

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Psalm 18:4-5

“The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.”

REFLECTION

It is interesting to face this verse after the news we received as a family today, for the “sorrows of death” literally compassed me about this afternoon as I faced at 60 the loss of all my property and all my savings in one act by those more powerful than I. (Written in 2011.) The great torrent of abuse by powerful men has “swept away” my hope, and yet I am resting in the Lord, through the deep fear that gripped my soul when I heard the news. I still rest in the Lord, but I certainly have experienced the great fears that David speaks of here and felt my heart melt within me. Given what we face this response is “normal”, just as David’s response was also “normal” given his great distress at the time. He came through and in faith I affirm aloud that the Lord will carry us through, although there is no way this can happen humanly speaking. (Revised in late 2015 – still under impossible pressures but still here standing in the Lord’s strength alone.)

When death starts to look good you know you are facing great pressures, and that is the feeling that I have experienced this afternoon as I think of death quite calmly and seek the end of the troubles in the arms of Jesus. David recognises this truth himself and he honestly expresses his pain and anguish and takes it all to the Lord for salvation, for the Lord alone can deliver. The noose of disaster has come up to meet David; the confrontation with Hades is “in his face” and he can do nothing. When we face this serious indicator of great depressive affect in our spirit we need to pour it out before the Lord and seek his path, or else we will succumb to despair and end our days in tears and suicide. David tells us here, with brutal honesty just how close he comes to all this, and yet the Lord delivered him to write this later.

APPLICATION

1. David is in great despair here and he faces it, acknowledges it and lays it before the Lord his God. Let us lay our despair before the Lord and seek his path through the torrents.
2. It is not wrong or sinful to be depressed when what we face is depressing. It is where we go with our depression that marks our spiritual status. We take it to the Lord and seek his solution alone. Let us lay our burden and distress before the Lord. In our hopelessness he is our only hope.

PRESSURE

PRINCIPLES

- a) Pressure can come from your closest colleagues, your family or countrymen, religious or political leaders (Matthew 10:35,36).
- b) Pressure can be applied by circumstances (Psalm 46:1-5).
- c) We are in Satan’s world. If we are effective we will be opposed (Ephesians 6:12).
- d) Religion is antagonistic to Christianity (Romans 3:27,28).
- e) You will be attacked if you downgrade people’s idols, be they physical or mental (Judges 6:30).
- f) The Lord can divinely protect believers (Psalm 124:1-5).
- g) The purpose of testing or pressure is to build up faith and to keep down pride (Romans 5:3,4).
- h) There is inner happiness for those who are persecuted for the Lord’s sake (Luke 6:22,23).
- i) All things work together for good to the believer (Romans 8:28).

Psalm 18:6

“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.”

REFLECTION

David is feeling the deepest distress imaginable and he cries out to the Lord, and then he affirms that the Lord has heard his distress and has risen up to answer his prayer in grace, mercy and love. David is overwhelmed at the answer of the Lord to his prayers. Even from the very temple of the Lord the answer has come, for the Lord has heard the prayers of his humble servant; a fugitive on the run in a cave with a band of men around him. God cares for David the fugitive, because he turns to him and prays. God hears us still and our deepest anguish comes to his ears.

APPLICATION

1. We are heard by the Lord and we seek his face in all we do, for only in his grace and mercy can we ever find help and focus forward in difficult and dangerous times.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

GRACE

Psalm 18:7

“Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.”

REFLECTION

David will refer to natural events over the next ten verses to underline the power and majesty of God. While in the wilderness years David may have experienced a wide variety of natural phenomenon that inspire awe and even fear at times. While few great earthquakes are recorded elsewhere in scripture the entire area of Israel and the Jordan Valley is a seismic zone where such things can be expected. David will draw on experiences and upon earlier records of events to point to the power of God to achieve all he desires in the world of men.

Having served in the Christchurch earthquake crisis for the last four years I have experienced a number of powerful earthquakes and been in buildings as they shook, and also been in cars as they were tossed around on the road. The strangest sensation is that of being without any human hope for the end of the shaking. In prayer alone can you relax, for there is no knowing when a quake starts just how long and powerful it will be. When the earth shakes it is God’s way of reminding us that this is a temporary planet and we live on a very shallow crust of earth.

David refers to the shaking of the hills as the “wrath of God” and we need to pause and reflect upon this phrase, which is an “anthropopathism”; whereby we speak of a natural event and we personify it as God. It is important that we recognise that we are drawing an analogy from our emotions to the manifest power of God. It does not mean in this case that God is “angry”, and it certainly does not mean that God has human emotions.

“The Bible uses anthropopathisms in regard to the Almighty God:

- a. Wroth (wrath) *expressed as deep justice based anger.* (Deuteronomy 1:34; Joshua 22:18; Psalm 78:21; John 3:36; Ephesians 5:6.)
- b. Anger. (Exodus 4:14; Numbers 11:1; Deuteronomy 7:4; 1Kings 14:15; Isaiah 1:4; Habakkuk 3:12)
- c. Jealousy. (Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 4:24; Ezekiel 35:25; Joel 2:18; Nahum 1:2; Zechariah 8:2; 1Corinthians 10:22)
- d. Vengeance. (Deuteronomy 32:41; Isaiah 47:3; Ezekiel 25:14; Micah 5:15; Nahum 1:2; 2Thessalonians 1:18)
- e. Fury. (Leviticus 26:28; Isaiah 34:2; Ezekiel 5:15; Ezekiel 25:14; Micah 5:15; Nahum 1:2)
- f. Hate. (Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 61:8; Amos 6:8; Malachi 1:2-3; Romans 9:13)
- g. Love: -
Love is a more difficult concept to label an anthropopathism, for it is said in 1John 4:8 and 1John 4:16 that *God is love*, love **is** an integral part of God’s being. But how can a Holy, Just and Righteous God ‘love’ those whose righteousness he designates as ‘filthy rags’ (Isaiah 64:6 c.f. Romans 3:10-20)? The answer of course is that he cannot; he cannot ‘love’ mankind **as men understand the word ‘love’**.

There are several words in the Bible that can be translated 'love', many of which are never used in relation to God (even as an anthropopathism) for they are of an amorous, a sensual nature. There are those in the O.T. that relate to friendship or affection which are ascribed to God and which are anthropopathisms, such as the Hebrew:

1. *ahab* to have affection for, love, like, friend (Deuteronomy 7:13; Deuteronomy 10:15; Psalm 78:68)
2. *chashaq* to love, be attached to, long for (Deuteronomy 7:7, Psalm 91:14, Isaiah 38:17)

Racham is translated 'love', only in Psalm 18:1 where it is David who will love the LORD. When used in relation to God, *racham* is translated *mercy, compassion and pity* and is similar in meaning to the Greek *agape*, used by John to describe the character of God (1John 4:8 and 4:16).

In regards to *agape*, the following is taken from a study by Richard C.H. Lenski, a famous German Scholar.

"The verb "agapan" (noun 'agape') is the love of intelligence, reason and comprehension, coupled with the corresponding purpose; in its content it vastly outranks "philein", which expresses the love of mere personal affection or liking, including even the passions... no intelligence or high purpose is involved. It could never be said of God that He "philei", that he had personal affection or liking for the sinful world..." (On the contrary, it is said of God that he will judge the world (Psalm 9:8; Psalm 96:13; Acts 17:31; Romans 3:6).) "Jesus never asked us to love our enemies in the sense of "philein"; he never himself loved his enemies in this way. But "apapan", yes, with this love did God love the world, and by which we can love our enemies..." Compare John 3:16 and every other passage in which either of the verbs is used in this Gospel. Only in a few cases, where either type of love would apply, either verb might be used; but even then the great distinction would remain - the two are never equal."

(This section is from Brian Huggett's Volume on these Psalms.)

Whenever we assign a human emotion to God we are to be cautious in defining God in these terms, for these things are simply man's halting and inadequate attempts at trying to understand an aspect of God's revealed character or a specific action/event in human terms. Jesus was very quick to point out that we had better be careful when we assign all who die in natural disasters to the "judgment" of God, or believe that God was angry at these people and not those alongside them. In two passages this subject is directly addressed and it is right to pause and receive the words of Jesus on this subject, lest we assign the dead to judgment, when we are facing things here that we can only grasp at to understand this side of eternity. Firstly let us look at **Luke 13:1-9**.

"1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Gallaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Secondly let us look at **John 9:1-7**

"1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

APPLICATION

1. Seeing the shaking of the earth as a sign of God's mighty power is helpful at times, for it reminds us that the Lord will judge this earth in a last great earthquake and the "cities of man will fall". Revelation 16:17-21. Let us not be attached to the things of this world for all will be swept away by the power that is to be unleashed in the end and the earth will be remade by the Lord for his reign. All will then be swept away and replaced eternally.

2. When we recognise our frailty before the Lord we recognise our limitations and our creatureliness, and this is a good thing to do often, lest we grow in arrogance.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – LOVE****NOTES****Psalm 18:8**

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

REFLECTION

Very similar language is used in Isaiah 65:3-5 where idolatry and paganism generally were said to provoke the Lord to “breathe fire”. To speak of God as a dragon is to our ears totally inappropriate as such creatures are mythical and God is very real, but to the ancients the stories that brought true terror were used to underline the incomprehensibility of God to men and the great terror of his judgment.

Fire burned on the altar and the smoke rose to heaven from the sacrifices, and it is this concept also that is contained in this. God’s anger against sin is expressed in the sacrificial system of fire and smoke, and when men turn away disdainfully from the sacrifice for their sins they must expect similar judgment. Hebrews 10:26-34.

In Deuteronomy 29:19-20 the LORD’S anger “*smokes/burns*” against the one who rejects the commandments of the LORD and who lives his life according to “*what is right in his own eyes*”, rather than what the Lord decrees is righteous (Proverbs 16:2). In Psalm 74:1 and in Habakkuk 3:5 this image is used again and reminds us all of the great power and holiness of God in judging men for their disobedient lives. We get offended at the reference to judging fire, but that is only because we do not see the evil and awfulness of sin in light of the Cross.

APPLICATION

1. The fierce judgment of the Lord cannot be stood against by arrogant men. So often we hear pagans today, as in the past, say that they will “tell God a thing or two when they stand before him”, but they will not, they will fall at his feet as dead men, for they will see their sin then. Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:20. Let us see just how awful sin is and how terrible it is to side with evil against God’s goodness.

DOCTRINE**SIN – SIN UNTO DEATH****Psalm 18:9-10**

“He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.”

REFLECTION

For all who have seen great storm clouds these verses ring true indeed. The shapes and power of the great storms over the American Mid-West always inspire awe in me as I look at their majestic structure, but that awe is turned to fear quickly if you are in their path. It is all very well to speak of such sights as “awesome” but that is best done when looking at photos or camera footage of them, not when you are under them.

The heavens are almost “inverted” in these great storms, with deep blackness you can feel beneath the storm clouds and fire and lightning in the heart of the clouds and fierce and destructive winds all around them. We are reminded again of our smallness as creatures, and that this world is not our home.

APPLICATION

1. When you stand under a great storm, take a few seconds to experience the power of it and recognise that this is a glimpse of a fraction of a fraction of God’s power, but don’t stand there too long brother/sister, seek cover, for you are but a fragile human being. O Lord let us keep remembering that we are fragile and weak and do not know the smallest part about our earth and heavens.

Psalm 18:11-12

“He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.”

REFLECTION

Once again we have a great storm described in all its awesome power and majesty. I enjoy watching the thunder and lightning roll over the hills around my present house in Auckland. We are on ground that doesn’t attract fork lightning strikes on the ground here, so you can stand out in a storm without fear of being hit by a lightning bolt and I will often take advantage of the storm and go out walking in it. Feeling the hail hit your leather hat and the percussion of the thunder against your chest is a great way to worship, and a great reminder of the awesome power of the creation; all made and put together by the Lord. But my brethren, do not follow my example if you are living in places where the lightning does strike the ground, for your walk in the storm may be your last!

APPLICATION

1. Let us stand in awe before the Lord our God and worship his majesty. Let us praise him in all ways we can and serve him in all ways we can.

Psalm 18:13-14

“The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.”

REFLECTION

David saw the Philistines defeated by nature in battle, when the Lord released a storm of hail upon them, and many times in history the weather has played a decisive part in a victory. In my own family my great uncle saw the deliverance of the British Army in WW I at the Battle of Mons, where a great storm occurred, and the clouds formed the shape of an angel and the German advance was stopped for a crucial time to allow the other army to escape when victory should have been certain.

APPLICATION

1. Let us worship the Lord and trust the Lord in situations where we face the “threats” of nature. Paul was shipwrecked at least four times in great storms at sea, and yet he kept on sailing to his destinations! Acts 27:21ff, 2 Corinthians 11:23ff. Let us express the awesomeness of the Lord aloud and keep worshipping and keep serving Him in all ways.

Notes

Psalm 18:15-16

“Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.”

REFLECTION

The description here may be of two separate phenomena, the first of which we have seen in the Christchurch earthquakes often; it is called “liquefaction”. It involves the oozing of water-mud from deep under the earth onto the surface and can occur in geyser like eruptions that go up a considerable height. The other natural phenomenon here is the water spout that can rise up to the clouds and destroy ships in their path. Both these things are fear invoking phenomena that remind us again of the power in this created universe.

APPLICATION

1. Let us stand before the Lord in awe and holiness, seeking the Lord’s power to comfort our hearts.

Psalm 18:16

“He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.”

REFLECTION

We have no idea what this describes, but given David’s time in the wilderness of Judea it may refer to a quite specific deliverance of the Lord from what we now call a “flash flood”. In dry places rain may fall in torrents many miles away from a site and flow down a dry river bed in a giant wall of destructive water. There is no warning except the roar of the water seconds before it arrives. Many are killed every year in such things. They can be meters deep and are carrying rocks and trees in their torrent and so swimming against them is impossible. David was clearly supernaturally delivered from such an experience as is graphically described here. He felt “plucked out” of the torrent.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord is able to “pluck us out” of the overwhelming death dealing torrents that can swirl around us at times. When we are overwhelmed and fear death or destruction at any second we are to cry aloud to the Lord for deliverance.

DOCTRINE

DELIVERANCE

GOD – GOD CARES FOR YOU

Psalm 18:17

“He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.”

REFLECTION

David was always outnumbered in his early battles, and he had learned that the enemy is always “too strong” for him, but that the Lord was strong and able to deliver if he was where he was supposed to be. It is walking where God wants us that gives security and stability of mind. If we are where we are meant to be we are to relax and serve the Lord without fear, trusting Him to deliver us in his time and in his marvellous way. Let this be our prayer today if we are facing great and powerful enemies.

APPLICATION

1. O Lord you are our defender and the lifter of our head. There is no other that we seek to deliver us, and there is no hope except in you alone. We rest and wait for your deliverance.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – HUMILITY

GRACE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE

Psalm 18:18-19

“They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.”

REFLECTION

The enemy are always determined to obstruct the Lord’s Plan and oppose the Lord’s people and they achieve their goals at times, but in prayer and through the power of the Holy Spirit we may see mountains moved. Zechariah 4:6-10. We may have to walk through our own “day of calamity” as David had to many times, but the Lord is with us through the terror of the situation. As we as a family walk through dark times as I write these words it is this reality that I claim and it is the Love and Grace of the Lord I appeal to daily in prayer.

*“But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.
I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.” Psalm 3:3-5*

The Lord is the support structure underneath us, and as it is his plan in which we walk, so it is his glory that we seek. He is our “stay” in difficult times. When we are in “constrained places” it is the Lord who brings us out into open ground. The great Chinese general Sun Tzu spoke of “constrained ground” as being “dying ground” for an army; you can only die there if you stay there. His advice was to “flee for your life to “open ground” where you can manoeuvre and make yourself safe.

David understood this principle and sees that it is the Lord who has delivered him time and again from “dying ground”. I find myself on dying ground this very day and seek the Lord’s deliverance, and I do so in the same way as David, on the basis of God’s love for me.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord will bring us through, from constricted places to open ground where we can do the work he has called us to do. Let us place ourselves in the hands of the Lord for his work and rejoice in what he asks us to do and eagerly do it.

DOCTRINES

OFFERINGS – LEVITICAL OFFERINGS REPRESENT CHRIST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

CLEANSING

CHRISTIAN LIFE – STABILITY

Psalm 18:20-21

“The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.”

REFLECTION

David’s attitude here seems arrogant to some, but pause and reflect upon his words, for each of us must be able to say this as we approach the Lord in prayer. We must deal with any sins that have come between us and the Lord and we must stand before Him in righteousness and truth. We must be able to say with David that there is no shadow of evil or sin that has come between us and the Lord, for then we know we are heard and the Lord’s answers to our prayers are “Yes and Amen”.

David did some terrible things later in his life, but he repented thoroughly from them and was restored by the Lord. The Lord deals with us in grace and in holiness; his holiness means he will not hear us if we think iniquity in our heart. Isaiah 66:18. His grace means that we are heard on the basis of the character of God and forgiven by him and have our prayers answered on the basis of our forgiven status, not our previous unworthiness. David had not walked away in “wickedness”, for he hated the satanic, and valued only the Lord’s viewpoint and path for his life.

APPLICATION

1. Let us thank God that he deals with us on the basis of his grace, not our past and now forgiven sins. Let us walk away from all “wickedness” – “worldliness” and walk close to the Lord in glory to his name.
2. Let us see ourselves in Christ Jesus, not in terms of our past. Let us define ourselves as God does, and that is always by looking forwards to heaven, not backwards to our sins.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Psalm 18:22-24

“For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight. ”

REFLECTION

David is clear in his thinking and reminds himself and ourselves of the importance of keeping the Laws of the Lord ahead of us, so that all we see in this life is seen through the framework of God’s Holy Law. David did not want to break any of God’s Holy Law in his dealings with men and made sure he consulted the Mosaic Law on all matters. When he walked away from this he entered into his great time of sin, but that was an aberration in an otherwise powerfully focused life. Except for the terrible year he walked away he did not put away the Lord’s Word from before his eyes and so he achieved all he did. The Lord made him great because he honoured the Word and gave it the right place in his life.

David is not arrogant here when claiming that he has been dealt with according to his righteousness he is being accurate in his assessment of the facts. God deals with us in accordance with our spirituality, and blesses and opens up ministry on the basis of our spiritual power to minister. If we are carnal, through unconfessed sins, we cannot expect anything except judgment upon us and our plans, for they are “our plans” not God’s plans.

APPLICATION

1. Let us come before the Lord with clean hands and righteous hearts before Him. Let us not think that we will be blessed by the Lord unless we seek his righteousness and grace in our life. The Lord does not “rubber stamp” and approve our desires, for he seeks us to discover his desires for our life and for us to live them in the Holy Spirit’s power.
2. Righteousness is a gift of God and we receive it in grace through confession of any sin in our life. Let us keep short accounts with God, and so bring glory to his holy name.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – STABILITY****Psalm 18:25-27**

“With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.”

REFLECTION

Man will receive in this life exactly what he dishes out to others. Let no man be in any doubt about the justice of God, for he deals with people in accordance with their treatment of others. I have seen this again and again, where those who showed no mercy are shown none in their own lives, and where their own malice is repaid with malice from their own enemies. It is a dangerous thing to set loose in your life a chain of evil like malice, for it always returns with interest.

God deals with us exactly as we truly are. If we are upright we are dealt with that way. We can all be “upright” in Christ Jesus through confession of sin and that is David’s point here. God seeks for us to be “pure” of heart, brightly shining with the glory of the Lord for all to see. We are meant to “shine” for Jesus so that all see his glory and worship his holy name.

Let the “froward” be rebuked and chastened, for their mental attitude sins of arrogance will return to bite them hard. These people twist the truth and pervert justice and doctrines, but the Lord will nail them all in his time. Remember that Satan’s main attacks upon the Lord and his people centre round this strategy; to distort, distract, deceive and finally to destroy. God saves the poor who come to Him, but God resists the proud and will bring down to the earth the arrogant who look down on others. God hates a proud look that disparages a person for whom Christ died. Proverbs 6:16ff.

Psalm 41:1-4

“1 Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

4 I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.”

APPLICATION

1. Malice is a two edged sword and will always cut the one who points it at others. Wickedness brings its rewards and they are terrible indeed. Do not envy the wicked for they must face their maker and there is no mercy to those who have shown none.

2. God saves the humble who come to him for salvation. God hates the proud and arrogant who look down on their brethren. Never let such things enter your home or church. Let us see all as those for whom Christ died.

DOCTRINES**MERCY****CHRISTIAN LIFE – HUMILITY****ISRAEL****NOTES**

Psalm 18:28

“For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.”

REFLECTION

The Lord will light our life like a lamp for others to be drawn to Christ. We are called to be lights in the dark world, and it is not our light that must burn but that of Jesus within us. Matthew 5:14-16. David is overjoyed that it is the light of God that will lighten his life and make him shine to the glory of God. It is the light that God provides that will darken the worst path he must walk. Though the darkness is overwhelming he will shine in God's Truth and walk in God's secure road for him. The Lord's Word is our light and He is our salvation. Psalm 119:105, 114-116, 123 – 125, 139, 161-163, 121:1-8.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord is the light of our life and we will always see where we are to walk, as we focus the Word upon our path.
2. We are to be light in the dark world, and so let us shine the Word out to the world and speak of things of God often.

DOCTRINE

LIGHT

Psalm 18:29

“For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.”

REFLECTION

By the power and protection of the Lord over him David can think of two feats he accomplished and looked back with amazement. In one battle he literally ran through an entire company of enemy soldiers and none laid hands on him, but he may have killed some of them. At one point he simply jumped at a wall that was an obstacle in his way and cleared it and headed onwards. He looked back with amazement, for had he done it any other time he would not have jumped that high. We should all be able to look back at events that baffle us and demonstrate the powerful protection of God over us. Those who cannot look back like this have not been very active in this life!

APPLICATION

1. Let us give thanks more often for the amazing protection of the Lord as we drive, walk, work and fight our way through this life.
2. Let us not be limited in our eyesight regarding ordinary “limits” we may have, for in the power of God we can exceed all previous limitations and serve with power.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE

Psalm 18:30

“As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.”

REFLECTION

Man's way is often not “straight”, for we can be “crooked” in our motivation and intentions, but God is always direct, transparent, and holy in all his works. God's way is perfect, and if we are walking with God we can depend upon his directions to be 100% effective for the tasking we have been given. All that is needed will be provided and all that

happens will work together for good as we love, serve and worship the Lord. Romans 8:28. The strength we have comes from our faith/trust in the Lord, not seeing or enjoying his provisions at the time. It is our anticipation of deliverance, and assurance of the reality of it before it comes that stabilizes the mature believer. Hebrews 11:1.

The Word of God is refined in the furnace of time and truth and is "tried and true". God's Word is dependable and sure and we can rest upon the sure foundation of God's truth. The truth of God's Word is like a strong breastplate of tough scale armour; if we have it well strapped on it will keep us safe against the enemy's attacks. Ephesians 6:10-18. As we trust in the Lord we receive strength to stand against the enemy, for we rest upon the Lord not ourselves.

APPLICATION

1. God's Word is filled with doctrines to help us in times of pressure, and the principles within them are "straight", and all who trust in the Lord, and obey the commands and rest upon the doctrines of His Word are kept safe by them.
2. God's Word is "battle tested" and is well proven pure and true. Hear it, believe it, and apply it into your life and be safe within its provisions.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS – SATAN'S STRATEGY

ANGELS – DEMONS

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SOLDIER: CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IN EPHESIANS CHAPTER 6

Psalm 18:31

"For who is God save the LORD, or who is a rock save our God?"

REFLECTION

For who is God? This was an important question in the pagan demonic saturated culture of David's day. Many demons masqueraded as "gods" in his day and claimed the allegiance of men. They still do, but most intelligent pagans today reject idolatry in its most obvious forms, and yet they fall for the subtlety of Satan in worship of things. Modern pagans mock those who worship a magical idol in a Hindu temple, but they will worship at the shrine of success, power, cars, houses, wealth, and status. We however rest upon the Rock of the Creator of space and time, who is our Saviour, and is the true King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

Who is the refuge for man other than the true rock who is Christ. It is the Lord alone who provides the safe place in times of trouble. There is no rock save the Lord, for he alone is the one to whom we can flee to find safety and security. The Lord is like the great rocks of the wilderness, where people may shelter and be safe, and where the sun or waters do not reach them to sweep them away or rob them of life in any way. God is the life giver, and the Saviour; he is not the life taker and destroyer. The Lord protects his own; it is the enemy who destroys and abuses.

APPLICATION

1. Let us worship the Lord our rock; for in him we are safe and secure in all situations.
2. There is one God and Lord over all and it is God the Lord. Let us worship the one true Lord above all. Let the demons be exposed for the fake "gods" they are.

DOCTRINE

CHRIST – ROCK: CHRIST AS THE ROCK

Psalm 18:32-34

“It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.”

REFLECTION

It is the Lord alone who gives us the provisions he has had prepared for us since eternity past, and he will provide what is needed to achieve his purposes in our life as we walk in Holy Spirit filled and directed service. Satan cannot interfere with God's "Supply Chain", unless we give him permission by lack of faith or lack of prayerfulness. Remember, "whatever is not of faith is sin". Romans 14:23.

The Lord "girds" our armour on in the Holy Spirit daily as we advance into worshipful service and claim his provision for us to fulfil our part in the battlefield of the Angelic Conflict today. Psalms 91:1-2, 93:1-2

Isaiah 45:5-9.

*“5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:
6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.
7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.
8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.
9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?”*

We need armour on, not because we are being abandoned by the Lord, but because he has called us to be his soldiers, and he has a battle to fight today in his power and with his provided protection, and with the resources of his supply chain. No soldier has to pay and provide uniform for himself; it is provided by the army he serves. Our job is to take the provided equipment and utilise it to win the victory that we are called to win.

2 Timothy 2:1-13

*“1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.
3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.
5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.
6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.
7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.
8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:
9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.
10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:
12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:
13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”*

The Lord our God is our Commanding Officer, and having provided our equipment and daily rations, he also provides our daily orders for the direction of march this day. As we quietly obey the orders for the march and battles of the day, so we find peace of mind in the conflict and under whatever pressures come with this battlefield. The path the Lord guides us upon is the one he has chosen for us from eternity past as a part of his plan for our life and so it is "perfect". The meaning of perfect covers a range of things, but given the image of the hind upon the high hills and difficult ledges the primary meaning is probably a "sound and secure" path.

Like the hind on the ledges of the mountains we are able to leap and bound from difficult place to difficult place in the Spirit's power and under the light of the Word, for the Plan of God for us calls us to achieve great things, not be mediocre in our service and battle against the enemy. The simplest service can be done with the gracefulness, speed, and apparent effortlessness of the deer on the hills. When we lack orders, it is because we are to stand where we are, so we must at times "Stand" and serve while we await the next direction.

Habakkuk 3:16-19

*“16 When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.
17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:*

18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places."

APPLICATION

1. God's Path is over a battlefield and so we need our armour on daily, and we need the Lord's provision daily of spiritual food and sustenance. Let us affirm and put on the Lord's provisions daily and advance into the tasking of the Lord for us today in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

2. Let us leap over the walls, and dance on the ledges in the battle, and let us ensure that the "Joy of the Lord is our strength". Let us serve the Lord in joy and restful faith that dynamically drives us forward to seek the service of the Lord.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE

PROMISES OF GOD

Psalm 18:34

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

REFLECTION

The war we fight is the Angelic Conflict and it is constant in this life, for the Devil's hatred of us is severe and life long, but "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world", 1 John 4:4, and so we are secure in the fight if we take the Lord's orders and obey them. The enemy will fire his darts (arrows) at us, but his strong bow will be broken in our hands when we walk with the Lord's power, under the Lord's direction to seize the Lord's objectives.

We learn warfare, we do not go on short courses for it. There are all manner of "Spiritual Warfare" courses around today and sadly most are nonsense, for the training here spoken of is directly by the Lord as we fight under his orders. We all have a "Personal Trainer" the indwelling Holy Spirit, and it is this training that David is referring to. Our training is by prayer and by the daily intake of the Word of God as it takes root and grows in reality within our lives. It is daily walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit that makes us good soldiers of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Ephesians 6:10-18.

The Lord will directly teach us the spiritual lessons we need, through the filling of the Holy Spirit, and there are no "tricks" and quick prayers to "bind the spirits", for Satan isn't bound in this age, he is active and fierce in his hatred, and so are his demons. James 4:6-10, 1 Peter 5:5-10. We learn to fight by walking with God and seeing the Holy Spirit act decisively in our life and other's lives. We learn to fight with our provided armour as we learn to pray more powerfully and trust more completely in the Lord as we advance into the tasks we are assigned as our part of the battlefield.

APPLICATION

1. Let us stand fully armoured and Holy Spirit filled, ready for orders each day and night, ready to fight the Lord's appointed battle for us. Let us maintain a battle mental attitude and see all things as opportunities for faith-rest combat.

2. Let us be confident in the Lord's provision for his soldiers, not fearful of him allowing us to be "hammered", for we serve Him and it is his own glory for us to win. We are not here to lose or be beaten, but to win and bring glory to the Lord.

DOCTRINES

WAR

SALT

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Psalm 18:35

“Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.”

REFLECTION

The Lord’s protection is over us, for we are eternally secure in his power and position. God is over us as a strong shield that the toughest arrows cannot pierce. We are safe in the battlefield, as long as we have our armour on and get down behind the “shield of salvation/faith”. Ephesians 6:10-18.

Let us combine David and Paul’s image of the shield of the believer, as the combination is doctrinally correct and helpful to see. God provides salvation for us in both senses of this term. We are saved eternally, and we are delivered daily. Paul’s meaning of the shield then becomes applicable, as we crouch down behind the promises of God’s Word and shelter in faith behind the holy Character of God that backs every word in the Word!

I have been hit by many arrows of the enemy over recent months of combat in my assigned corner of the Angelic Conflict. I have faced my greatest battle since being gassed and medically “written off” back in the late 1980s. I have been hit daily by waves of arrows of fear, anguish, doubt and self deprecation. Under the terrible pressures faced through these recent months and the eleven years that is both psychologically “normal”, but it is also unnecessary! I have just seen in light of this passage, that **I have not been holding the shield of faith-salvation high enough!**

It is the Lord who will “hold us up” under the pressures we face, and it is the Lord who in gentleness towards us comforts us in the midst of the battlefield and keeps us safe as we learn all there is to learn before joining our Lord in heaven. The only greatness that we have is in the successes we have in the Spirit in the Angelic Conflict, for there the “greatness” of our deeds is Holy Spirit empowered and eternal in its rewards. We are blessed eternally as we understand and apply these principles.

APPLICATION

1. Let us put on the armour of the Holy Spirit every day and praise the Lord for his provisions and utilise them all by means of faith-rest prayer and 100% obedience to the task before us.
2. The shield of faith and salvation is our protection from the arrows of the enemy, and his righteousness our breastplate. We are secure, and so holding our shield aloft to protect from arrows of doubt and fear, let us advance towards the objectives the Lord has given us. Let us get the shield of Salvation and faith high above our heads and brandish it in the direction of the arrows of the enemy and so quench them!

Psalm 18:36-37

“Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.”

REFLECTION

The image is still that of the deer on the hills and narrow ledges, and the way these animals leap, bound and act as if they have great space to manoeuvre and yet they only have inches of ground beneath them. The Lord will make our narrow path appear like a highway, and make the most dangerous places appear to be safe and secure, for with the Lord they are.

The Lord will “enlarge” our footsteps in narrow places so that we can walk securely and safely. Our feet will not slip in dangerous paths as we trust in Him and walk as he has called us to walk. We will stumble in unbelief only. Proverbs 4:12, Jeremiah 50:32, 1 Peter 2:8.

We are to “go after” the goals the Lord sets us in this life and not rest until we have seized the objective he has set us. Let us advance with vigour and seize all that the Lord has called us to seize. We do not turn back until all the enemy are defeated and destroyed and the battlefield is ours. We are not here to achieve a “draw” but the total defeat of the enemy.

APPLICATION

1. God's job is to protect our foot steps, our job is to keep our eyes on Him and go after the enemy positions and knock them down. We are called to stand and to advance, not retreat from battles.

2. God will protect our footsteps, but we are to act as soldiers and lift up our shield and sword and use them for what they are designed to do. Let us "play the man" and be strong in the Lord. 2 Samuel 10:12, 1 Corinthians 16:13.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH

Psalm 18:38-39

"I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me."

REFLECTION

David has seriously won his battles and nothing he has done has been done half heartedly. He has ensured that every battle fought has been the total defeat of the enemy so that they do not rise again to threaten the good. So often evil is not crushed and so it rises again and defeats the good and hurts the innocent. It is the Lord's strength that achieves these things and it is in the Lord's strength that this will always be achieved.

God is not the Lord of half measures. All who rise up against us will be crushed and by the Lord's power as we walk in that power. Let us do nothing in our own strength. Ezekiel 30:24-26.

APPLICATION

1. Our enemies declare war on God when they attack us. When they show no mercy, none will be shown them by the Lord. We are to fight and show no mercy at all to them, for in the Lord's strength we are to cast down strongholds and defeat the most evil by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

DOCTRINE

WAR

Psalm 18:40-42

"Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me. They cried, but *there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.*"

REFLECTION

Keep in mind that those who hate believers hate the Lord they serve, and so when David speaks of his enemies being defeated he speaks of the enemies of God being defeated. When the enemy assaults and insults you believer they directly assault and declare war on God Almighty. Deuteronomy 32:10, Zechariah 2:8, John 15:18ff.

As a young believer I used to be slightly embarrassed of David's emotional power here, but as I have matured and been beaten up by the enemy a number of times, I now find myself with David's thinking pattern, and I am now in the right place. Do not feel that David is wrong seeking the total defeat of all who hate the truth, for he is right and stands for God's viewpoint. Pastors, we are to tear down the devil's strongholds through prayer and systematic Bible teaching.

These enemies of David were sadly all too often those who called themselves believers in the one true God, and so when they were hit by the sword of David they cried to the Lord, but he never heard them! How can this be? Pause and reflect on all the principles we have seen in these early Psalms and the answer is clear.

David was standing for the Lord's truth and path, and he had confessed any sins, and so was operating from a Holy Spirit filled and directed path with nothing separating him from fellowship with the Lord. His "religious" enemies used God's name, but had no relationship with Him; for at worst their religion was fake and hypocrisy.

Remember the chilling words of the Lord in this matter. "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you". Those who say, "Lord, Lord..." are not necessarily his servants in spirit and in truth. Matthew 7:23. At very least these people are not heard because of their unconfessed sins. Isaiah 59:1-2, 64:4-8.

I have had deep anguish over this last three weeks as I faced three new people who attended the Bible Teaching session I run in the church each Saturday morning. We have a church breakfast, that I prepare for the people, and then the study runs from 0730 – 0845 to allow people to then head off to Saturday work commitments. Nearly 90 people attend regularly and it is a powerful time of "sword work" as the Word goes out, and fellowship with wonderful fellow soldiers in the Lord.

These three new people came in Pentecostal fervour and joined me around 6am and prayed with me to prepare the way for the teaching. I was however not built up or strengthened by their prayers, but rather felt undermined and drawn down, even though their words were pleasant when they stopped their tongues speaking prayers. I was reminded of Paul, who identified that he would not use the gift of tongues if others were present, as he wanted every word he uttered to be understood. 1 Corinthians 14:14ff.

One of the group of three claimed "prophetic gifting", but gabbled away so loudly in tongues in the prayer time that I could not even think straight to pray. This is a "fruit" in her life, and it was a sign of her spirit, which was so self centred that she could not even think of others. This sort of behaviour is not a fruit of the Holy Spirit. She also phoned my home and spoke with my wife and was rude and demanding; also not indications of fruit of the Holy Spirit. In the teaching session she could not sit still; she had no peace and her agitation disturbed others who saw it. She also was offended when I pointed out that the prophets were subject to the prophets (that is to the Word of God) and were always under pastoral discipline. She was not prepared to accept that, for she had received, she believed special messages that went beyond the scriptures, for the Lord was doing a "new thing" in our day.....!

These were all clues, and indeed solid evidence that all was not well with these people, even though I have no doubt they believed in Jesus as their Lord and used his name often. This woman then asked a question in the teaching session that finally gave her position fully away, as did the two men later. They believe the church is "corrupt" and all genuine believers will "come out of the corrupt organisation" and heed their prophetic words. I cut this woman down quickly and graciously with the Word in the teaching session, and then spoke with the leading man later and ended the prayer meeting with them. They have not returned.

As a result of my actions, like David's, appearing harsh and sudden to some, deep Peace returned to me before the last teaching session. I had felt the weight that deceived people bring upon us to slow us down, and by taking the Sword of the Spirit to the issue I removed the burden they brought. It was sad because the leading man was an old friend of many years, but two cannot walk together unless they be agreed, even if they are both believers. A deceived person is an enemy of truth, even if you still love him and keep praying for him, you cannot work with him, for he will undermine the work, because he believes he has "special" information.

The local church in your place of abode may be corrupt (six of the seven churches in Revelation 1-3 were challenged to deal with "corrupt" practise and belief) but we are called to bring truth and light, not leave and never return. We are called to heed and support the pastors, and we are called to magnify the Word as the sole standard of truth for the Church Age. God is doing a "new thing" through the Church, and there is no replacement of it until he comes for the Church to end this age. We will be a mixed multitude in each place before his return.

We are also called to be fruit inspectors, Matthew 7:13-23, and when the fruit of peace, grace, calm, and other-centred behaviour (love) is not present we must act to eliminate the influence of such self deceived people.

APPLICATION

1. Do not fear, nor be baffled by those who claim to be believers, and yet oppose the work of God, for they are either false brethren, or carnal brethren, and either way their prayers will bounce off the ceiling, as do their loud and self centred "tongue speaking". Remain prayerful and focused yourself on the task the Lord has for you and simply do it with all your strength and let the Holy Spirit's power flow through you in all things.
2. Do the Lord's work and cut down any who oppose truth by the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Do not be ashamed or embarrassed about grinding false prophets to powder by the use of the Word of God against them.

DOCTRINES

MILITARY

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

NOTES

Psalm 18:43

“Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; *and* thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.”

REFLECTION

The Lord has helped us in ways we cannot even know at this point. How many situations have you been in where you could have been killed and yet you lived? How many times have you heard of attacks upon your ministry well after they occurred and they were all brought to nothing? David reminds us that it is the Lord who delivers us in all things.

There are always disputes and controversies amongst people, and the more limited people are in their understanding the more obnoxious they are in the arguing at times. Many people are great in their own eyes and their arrogance betrays the fruit of the Old Sin Nature, for the Holy Spirit will always produce humility and peacefulness. The contentious and the arrogant are always sent by the enemy, even when they are believers, they have in effect joined the enemy when they let their Old Sin Nature rule them. They are traitors to their Lord who gave himself for them.

It is the Lord who “makes us” leaders, mentors, and victors, for it is the Lord alone who has the power to lift us up. All men can do is blow their own trumpet, but the Lord can sound the charge and win the victory to the glory of the name of Jesus. It is this we seek when we stand with David in this psalm. It is this level of victory that is the only thing worth seeking in this life. 1 Peter 5:5-10.

APPLICATION

1. David celebrated the fact that the Lord brought people he never knew of to serve him as his vassals. He could not even know the scope of the Lord’s blessing when he wrote this psalm, for people of every race and culture sing his songs and worship God with his words. God’s blessings over us are way above all we could ever ask or even think of. Ephesians 3:20. Let us praise Him as we ought today for his protection over us.
2. Let us challenge contentiousness and fight against all negativity in the local church and through the Holy Spirit filled teaching of the Word of God bring all to mutual submission to the path of God. Ephesians 5:21.

DOCTRINE

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – FREE WILL

Psalm 18:44-45

“As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.”

REFLECTION

The forces of the enemy will be afraid of the king who stands with God. David pictures peoples who were “holed up” in their strongholds around Israel and would seek all opportunities to sweep in and raid the Israelites in the past. He sees that as he stands with the Lord and the Lord’s power is seen through his work that they “melt away” from confrontations. The enemy sees where the power is and retreats before him, or bows their knee to him as their sovereign. It is this spiritual “power projection” that we should see occurring in the churches around about

In today’s world the paganism of the enemy is growing more bold and the politicians will grant rights to every religious minority but not to Christians, and yet we are challenged to stand like David and blow the trumpet of the Lord and announce his Word aloud to all who will hear. Let us stand for truth and let the enemy of truth be ashamed and slink away.

APPLICATION

1. Let God’s people stand up for truth and hold nothing back from their proclamation of the truth in Holy Spirit power.
2. When people are a little fearful of believers we are probably in the right spiritual place, for those who hate God ought to hate us and those who fear God ought to fear the Word that comes from us.

Psalm 18:46

“The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.”

REFLECTION

What a hymn of joy this is! I have just returned from a church service where we sang these words with real heart felt joy and I still feel the power of the words in my heart. Truly the Lord lives and he lives to bless us! Jeremiah 10:10-13, John 14:16-21. He ever lives and supports, encourages, strengthens and empowers us.

Let us rejoice in the rock of our salvation, for in what the Lord Jesus did for us we have salvation, eternal life, and all the many resources required to live, worship and serve, both now and forever. Let us bless the Lord our Rock aloud and rejoice in his great gifts associated with our salvation. Let the God of our salvation be exulted in the eyes of all mankind.

APPLICATION

1. Let us sing of the Lord our Rock with Joy and thankfulness.
2. Let us praise the God of our salvation and hold the shield of salvation and faith high for all to see and hear the truth about our wonderful Saviour and Lord.

DOCTRINES**IDOLATRY****GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Psalm 18:47-48

“It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me. He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.”

REFLECTION

We do not have to defend ourselves when we are attacked, but we can pass all vengeance over to the Lord, who will always defend and recompense all evil against us. We can rest in the Lord’s defence of us, for He always will deal with evil so much better than we would ever do. Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:28-29.

If there is a need to “subdue” any group, in the power of the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the Word of God, they will be subdued, not to us, but to God and his will. We do not seek the rulership over men, but the service of men. As pastors we do not seek the subduing of people to ourselves, but their humble obedience to the Lord and his Word. Matthew 20:25-28.

God will deliver from those that plan violence against us as we rest in God’s protection and seek his blessing for the needy men and women around us. We are in the Lord’s hands and under his protection. Many will try to “rise above us” and knock us over, but in the Lord we are more than conquerors, and we are to rest upon him and his plan, not worry about our vindication. Do not care about others opinion of you, just rest with the Lord’s verdict, for it alone will be worthy of reception.

APPLICATION

1. Do not fear violent men believer, just rest in the Lord’s power to protect and guide you.
2. God will “subdue” the enemy before you, and the Holy Spirit will subdue all to obedience to the Word. Just preach it powerfully pastor and leave the outcome to the Lord.

Psalm 18:49

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

REFLECTION

I will give thanks to you O God! Once again we are challenged to exercise our free will and worship the Lord and give thanks aloud for the gracious gifts of the Lord our Saviour and King. We are to give thanks amongst the heathen, for then we exercise our power in the Lord. The enemy must have the truth proclaimed in their presence. They are the losers in this world and they must bow their knee voluntarily before it is too late. We boldly proclaim the victory of the Lord in the very presence of the enemy.

APPLICATION

1. Let us praise the Lord and honour his name and celebrate his victory here and now, so that all know Our God Rules.

DOCTRINES

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

OFFERINGS – LEVITICAL OFFERINGS REPRESENT CHRIST

GOSPEL OF SALVATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – EVANGELISM

Psalm 18:50

“Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and showeth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed forevermore.”

REFLECTION

God does not just deliver us, he gives “greater grace”; he gives “great deliverance”. We are under the greater grace of the Lord as his children, for he died for us while we were yet sinners, so now as his children will we receive even less than he did for us as his enemies? Let us walk in the confidence that is all those who understand the logic of grace. We are under the grace, mercy and love of God our saviour. He seeks ways to bless, and so when we face great pressures we need to remember who we are, and it is not people under pressure, it is people under God! He will lift us up.

God shows us mercy; mercy that is way beyond all we could ever ask or seek from the Lord. We never get what we deserve from the Lord; we always receive what he is free to do for us in grace and love. Let us give thanks for the greatness of his grace towards us, and see in the person and work of the Lord Jesus the ground for our confident thankfulness. Philippians 4:1ff.

Ephesians 3:20

“16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

David rejoiced in seeing the promise of God regarding his own posterity. He had asked to build God a house (that is build the temple) but God has said “NO”, however David discovered that God’s “no” is a blessing indeed. David would not build God a house, but God would build David a house forever! 2 Samuel 7:8ff. When we hear God say “No” to a prayer answer, we need to keep listening, for his next “Yes” will be amazing.

APPLICATION

1. When God says “No” to some prayer request, do not be disappointed, for the Lord’s blessing is just about to flow through that answer. The Lord seeks to bless us to the glory of the name of Jesus and so let us always look to the Lord’s blessing in power, for it will come in power.

2. The Lord shows us mercy indeed and the Lord will give us blessings beyond our wildest dreams in Christ Jesus. We are left here to glorify the Lord and so let us boldly advance in service and worship and seek opportunity to do this for the Lord will abundantly bless above what we ask or even think is possible.

DOCTRINES

COVENANTS

COVENANTS – DAVIDIC COVENANT

KINGDOM – MILLENIAL KINGDOM

KINGDOM

NOTES

PSALM 19

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

Chief Musician: *natsach* - naw-tsakh', to *glitter* from afar, to be *eminent* (as a superintendent, especially of the Temple services and its music). A Psalm, *mizmor* - *miz-more'*, instrumental *music*, a *poem* set to music, from the pen of David - *daw-veed'*, *loving, David*, the youngest son of Jesse.

Psalm 19:1

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.”

REFLECTION

When we face our “creatureliness” we face the great enigma of the creation. We can think but only so far, and in our humility we meet the Lord our God, the maker of space and time. Man in arrogance tries to out-think God and work out all there is to know and many of the modern atheist cosmologists have written great books that trumpet their confidence and explore new theories. They will do anything other than bow their knee to the Lord as God, but we serve the living God and we bow and worship the creator of this universe, and the one who will wind it up one day. 2 Peter 3:10-18.

The heavens declare the glory of the creator in deed, and now as we look up and see things through the Hubble Space telescope we are standing amazed at the glory of the universe. We must keep remembering that what we see is the light and radiation reflected back to us through the light years of space. Light that has travelled for 100 million light years to get here, which means the star may have died 99 million years ago, and yet we won't know for another million years. Just pause and reflect upon this fact and then look at Revelation 6:12-13, 8:12ff.

In the last days of the Tribulation Period one third of the stars will “go out”. Now that means that they have been pre-programmed to fail simultaneously for millions of years now, so that at the exact point required one third are seen to fail in one night as a dramatic sign. That is how careful the plan of God is and how precisely it is going to work out. The stars are amazing, but even the various levels of the atmosphere (Firmament) shows off God's handiwork, for each level of air does something to assist life on earth. At the time of writing David had no idea of the many layers of gas of different sorts and consistency that circle the globe and keep us safe from too much radiation.

APPLICATION

1. God's handiwork is amazing and we are to look up more often and recognise that we are in the hands of the one who made all this and has pre-programmed it for destruction and replacement. Let us keep our present distress in the right framework.
2. Let us praise the Lord more for his awesome power and for the beauty of his handiwork. Look up the Hubble Space telescope pictures and praise God aloud for the glory of his work, and remember that much of it is already gone, and one day all will be, but only to be replaced by something better. Over this universe write – the best is yet to come!

DOCTRINE

SCIENCE AND CREATION

Psalm 19:2-3

“Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*”

REFLECTION

David is still speaking of the glory of the universe here and sings of the glory of God's creative work and the instruction that it gives to mankind. Man is truly without excuse for ignoring the teaching of the created universe, for in all things it shows us God's power and majesty.

Every day and every night the teaching of the created universe and the beauty and amazement of the world around us teaches us of the greatness of our God. It is amazing that men ignore such things, and yet they do. There is no place however where man may not look up, or look around, or even look inwards to the created wonder of the human body itself.

APPLICATION

1. Let us make it a point to look up daily and give thanks for all we have received.
2. Let us make it a point to spend some reflective time at each church service when we remember the creation, and the promise of the new creation, for we are blessed beyond all words and the plan is even bigger than we think.

Psalm 19:4

“Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.”

REFLECTION

Let us pause and reflect upon the way things hang together in the creation. Let us do what David does here, well before quantum physics was understood he could see that there were invisible “strings” that held everything together. We refer to forces, but in a funny twist a modern theory of cosmology is called “string theory”. Don’t let the atheistic cosmologists upset or distract you from where David is here, for he sees the wonder of things, and we want to hold onto that, for that keeps us grounded in the truth of a creation, rather than the speculations of men who don’t want God at any price.

Job 38:4-5. *“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest, or who hath stretched the line upon it?”*

God reminds Job that he has not got any answers at all, but that his friends had fewer answers. Job 42:1-9. God has to rebuke them all, for they thought their theologies were true but they were all in error in their understanding. We know so very little and humility is called for as we contemplate things around about us. Let us be careful and thoughtful as we lift up our eyes to see how things work, for we are guessing.

APPLICATION

1. Humility is what is called for as we look up at the universe and even around at the things in our world. We are creatures and our minds are limited, even the best of them. Let us learn from Job and be humble.

DOCTRINE

LIGHT

Psalm 19:5-6

“Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

REFLECTION

God set the sun and moon as the measurers of the day and night and seasons, and they have their courses, as have all the stars, so that men may even use them for navigation. The sun rises in a predictable manner and a measureable manner, but just because we can measure and discuss these phenomena let us not think we understand it all.

The sun rises in fierce glory and races across the heavens, and David uses a lovely image of this, comparing the sun to a bridegroom coming out of his bedroom from his bride, with joy and energy from the joy of being with her. David sees the poetry and glory of the way the universe works; he sees that there is energy and joy in all that God has made, and his hand is telling us to rejoice in his work as we rejoice in each other in marriage.

The radiant heat of the sun reaches all over and the path of the sun has a predictability that allows for crops to be sown and harvest brought in, and time measured for all man's work. There is an order because it was placed into the creation from the beginning, and God's order will operate until the end, for this creation will end.

This present space-time universe will end, wrapped up like a tired old blanket to be replaced by eternity. 2 Peter 3:10-18, Revelation 20:10-15. The good news is that nothing will "fall apart" until the Lord allows it to, and finally he wraps it all up into the Lake of Fire and brings in a new creation that is eternal and infinite, amazing beyond present words. Revelation 21-22.

APPLICATION

1. Let us see what the Lord has done and rejoice in it. Let us see the order and reflect upon its meaning for our challenges, and let us rejoice in all God has done and will do with us.
2. As we can tell time by the sun and moon, so let us "tell eternity". Let us realise the truth, and worship over the truth that all that we see is temporary and will be swept away, and all will be replaced, but we are destined for beyond the stars ourselves in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 19:7

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."

REFLECTION

God's Law is perfect, over man and over the universe. There is no detail left out of the Lord's plan and the Law (mind) behind it. Every detail of the Lord's plan for mankind is perfect, complete and will work out in time and space until the day that time and space end. Revelation 20-22.

This statement of David's is bigger than just referring to the Mosaic Law as "God's Law". It covers all the principles, mostly still unknown to man, that hold this universe together and act as the frame of reference for all man is and does upon this earth. God has a complete and perfect system and we must be 100% obedient to it. Psalm 78:1-7.

The effect of total obedience to the Lord's plan is that we have our lives "turned back" (converted) from disaster again and again, and we are "turned back" (restored from disaster) from all falsehood as we pay close attention to the Lord's will and plan for our life. Our human life here has meaning and purpose only in the plan and purposes of God for us. Proverbs 1:7, 2:1-5, 3:1-8.

The Lord's "testimony" on any and every thing in this world is dependable and trustworthy and able to be followed, making the wise man wiser and the foolish man safe as he heeds the truths God reveals.

APPLICATION

1. Let us keep the upward look – seeking his purposes, rather than seeing the evil of men around about us.
2. His path alone makes sense; there is hope and power and meaning in no other place.

WISDOM:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" Psalm 111:10

1. Wisdom is identified as understanding (Proverbs 8:1, 5).
2. Wisdom will speak of things that are right, i.e. *just* and *unbiased* (Proverbs 8:6).
3. Wisdom will speak truth and will abstain from wicked or malicious words (Proverbs 8:7).
4. Wisdom results in righteous (*just, honest*) words and will refrain from perverse or *slandorous* speech (Proverbs 8:8).
5. Words of wisdom will be heard and understood by those who have understanding and knowledge (Proverbs 8:9).
6. Wisdom will seek after instruction rather than wealth (Proverbs 8:10).
7. Wisdom is better than material gain (Proverbs 8:11).
8. Wisdom is identified with prudence (*discretion*), it is discerning regarding 'witty inventions' (*evil plots*) (Proverbs 8:12).
9. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10); therefore, to hate evil, pride and arrogance is a sign of wisdom (Proverbs 8:13).

10. There is strength (*mastery*) in wisdom (Proverbs 8:14).
11. Wisdom is necessary to leadership (Proverbs 8:15-16).
12. Wisdom will come to those who seek her early in life (Proverbs 8:17).
13. Those things that God considers true riches, i.e. a good name, humility and fear of the LORD are the rewards of wisdom (Proverbs 8:18-19 cf. Proverbs 22:1, 4).
14. Wisdom is eternal (Proverbs 8:22-23).
15. Wisdom was before the creation; was instrumental in creation and for creations benefit (Proverbs 8:24-35).
16. He that falls short of wisdom does wrong (does violence) to his eternal soul (Proverbs 8:36).

Psalm 19:8

“The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

REFLECTION

This verse is a good example of Hebrew parallelism in relation to the previous verse, using slightly different words to underline the principles stated. The Lord's statutes to mankind are righteous and to be heeded in all matters. God's direction to us is clear and crucial to be heeded.

The Lord's commands to us are pure and clean and they open our eyes and make us right before Him. There is true joy in the heart of the believer in no other place than in the word and work that God directs us to. It is the joy of fellowship with the Lord through the Word that stabilizes us in the midst of the uncertainties of space and time.

APPLICATION

1. God seeks our righteousness and purity before Him. He wants our hearts to rejoice within us and they will as we walk with Him in absolute obedience to His statutes.
2. The Lord wants our eyes open and with his light directing us forward. It is the light of the Word upon our path that we need each and every day. Let us seek that light and turn it on before every step we make.

Psalm 19:9

“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”

REFLECTION

The holy fear (reverence for) of the Lord is a thought-emotion that purifies the heart, mind and hands as we walk through this life. The great pressure situation I have faced has made me aware of every sinful thought and emotional side track and drawn me to slash it away with the sword of the Spirit in my soul. We need to declare war on all things that slow us down and side track us in any way from the path the Lord has called us to. Holy fear cleans up our life! Ephesians 5:26

The result of “applied fear” is a cleaned up life and holy witness, and such a life wins eternal rewards and has eternal benefits to others. We are made for eternity and the Lord calls upon us to serve with a focused power and energy that is not sullied by sin or evil, nor distracted by any carnal desire. We have eternal life in Christ Jesus and we are called to make a difference in this brief walk upon this earth, and assist others in their eternal destiny by telling truth powerfully and often.

All that the Lord does is good and righteous. Job discovered not only his friends were wrong, but he was also. We must at times face terrible and unfathomable things, and rest in the righteousness of God over each and every one of them. All the Lord's judgments/actions in time are righteous and we will see that in eternity when we have all the facts. Until then let us be obedient to his holy demands and focus ourselves forward in the battlefield we are called to stand upon.

APPLICATION

1. We are called to eternal life, and to have the values and attitude of people who know they are destined to bring glory to their Lord forever. Let us live with eternity in our sight each and every day. Let us see the battles of today in the eternal life perspective. Let us fear the Lord, and so fear no man or demonic force.

2. All the Lord does is gracious, righteous, full of mercy and will be seen to be all these things and more from the heavenly perspective. At times we are called to face the unfathomable and do so with the shield of faith held firmly above us to deflect the many arrows of doubt and fear that the devil may throw in our direction. Let us hold our shield up strongly above us and quench the arrows of the devil.

DOCTRINE

GOD – FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Psalm 19:10-11

“More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

REFLECTION

What do we desire in this brief walk through time and space? The Lord spoke of this central question in the Sermon on the Mount. He challenged people to assess their values and make their decisions for eternal life on the basis of what they truly valued. From that strong values foundation each person can then deal with their goals and their fears.

Matthew 6:19-21, 25-34.

“19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

The challenge to us all is to stand with the Lord and for his values alone, and then serve and worship in accordance with the foundational values of eternity, rather than the temporary values of time. God’s values acted upon in time produce a sweetness in the life as of the sweetness of honeycomb, and the work of the Lord satisfies and is of eternal value like finely wrought gold. 1 Corinthians 3:12-20.

By the values of God we are warned of foolishness and protected from disasters that will otherwise come upon us. By keeping the Lord’s Word and following closely to his precepts in all things, we are protected and guided to the places of service, and so we are lifted up to produce works in this life in the power of the Holy Spirit that win eternal rewards.

APPLICATION

1. With God there is victory in the end, and great eternal rewards, but in time there will be pressures. John 16:33. We have the Lord’s words on this fact, but also his assurance that he is with us, and he is the overcomer of this world system.

2. Set your values upon the Lord’s work alone, for there is eternal value in no other things other than the works he has called us to do. Joy is where the Lord calls and nowhere else.

DOCTRINE

HAPPINESS

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING

Psalm 19:12

“Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.”

REFLECTION

Hebrews 4:7-12

“7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

How do we understand our errors? It is only by opening our lives to the conviction of the Holy Spirit through the clarity of the Word, whereby we see our arrogance and presumption and understand that we did things that were beyond the leading of the Lord. I have been seriously convicted in these matters myself, and as the Word has brought clarity over past wrongfully made decisions, there is real strength for present decisions, so that the fleshly thinking pattern does not guide or lead ever again. The Lord’s grace alone has kept me, I have not deserved the grace received to date, but praise God we are all in this place and all face the same challenge. We are to walk by faith, not sight!

Let our daily prayer be, that God will cleanse us from secret *errors*. We are saved through faith (in Christ) yet we continue to break ‘fellowship’ with God by sinning. It is as we study the Word of God that the knowledge of sin becomes clearer as the Holy Spirit convicts us within, and then we humbly confess our sins to him (1John 1:9). Sin is all pervasive for *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* (Jeremiah 17:9).

Praise God that his grace is greater than our sinfulness and evil stupidity of thinking at times. Hallelujah that we still live and are able to serve, for we truly stand in grace and mercy.

Paraphrase:

“What man is there that can discern error? (I cannot, but within me you can, and so O My God) cleanse me from hidden sins, that nothing may hinder your work through me.”

APPLICATION

1. Let our daily prayer be, “O Lord our God, cleanse us through the Blood of Christ from all secret sins, and Lord bring them to light through your Word that we may deal with them thoroughly and completely through confession of sin.”

2. Let us learn, identify and forsake every error of thinking that has led us astray in our past and bring all these things to the foot of the Cross and seek the Lord’s pardon.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Psalm 19:13

“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”

REFLECTION

This prayer of David’s is mine this very day as I look back and see some foolish things in my earlier life. I can still hear myself saying at one point, “The Lord gave us a mind to use and this path makes the most sense, so let’s do it as unto the Lord”. Some of you will say, “Well that’s fine”, but actually it is “presumption” and foolishness, for if the Lord does not direct, to advance is foolishness. Saul found this to his peril! Let us be warned and be obedient to the Word, not arrogant in the fleshly mind. I have paid dearly in divine discipline for my presumption and have repented in tears of it, and remember this lesson. Learn from the Word my brother and sister; experience is a lot harder and hurtful!

1 Samuel 15:22-26.

*“22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.
23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.
24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.
25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.
26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.”*

Thank God that he does not “reject us” from being the kings he has made us to be in Christ Jesus. 1 Peter 2:9-10. The Lord does however punish us sorely for the errors we make of presumption, but he will recover us as we repent and confess our sins before Him and seek his path to bring glory to the Lord again. Let us learn from his divine discipline and re-arm ourselves in the Holy Spirit and face forward again into the battlefield he has called us to fight upon.

Hebrews 12:4-13

*“4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.
5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:
6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.
7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?
8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.
9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?
10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.
11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.
12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;
13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”*

The Lord will garrison our soul with His Word and the truths of the Word will keep us safe from great sins. When we sin we can come before Him and find forgiveness for our sins and restoration of his will for our life. We are not cast away, but discover his grace every morning, for truly “there is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus”. Romans 12:1-2. If we are still alive and able to pray we can be restored as we confess and refocus ourselves forward. There will be some losses, but we are not lost, we are found by him and blessed again.

APPLICATION

1. Let us serve with humility the One who loved us and keeps on loving us in Christ Jesus. We are loved and can approach the throne of grace and mercy and find forgiveness. Let us beware of pride in any form.
2. Divine discipline is not pleasant, but if it is taken as educational, rather than punishment, we can move forward with blessing into further service to the Lord. Let us lift up our tired arms and strengthen our feeble knees and advance into the battle of today and hold no fear that the Lord will strike us from behind, for he never does that.

DOCTRINE

NEBUCHADNEZZAR – PRIDE

Psalm 19:14

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”

REFLECTION

This is my prayer, and it needs to be our prayer every morning. This is the heart of service and the centre of power in our walk with God. Let us focus upon ensuring that the thoughts we think are brought into captivity to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Let the words that pass our mouths be holy and helpful. The old Rabbis used to say that the Lord has placed the tongue within the mouth and behind a palisade of teeth to try to stop it doing anything foolish! There is no stopping a foolish word spoken in haste and many words “cannot be taken back” and their devastating results will flow onwards for years.

Let us ensure that the very melody of our heart is in tune with the Lord’s Word and will for us. Let us bring all thoughts and emotional patterns into captivity to Bible doctrine. It is the Lord’s value system alone that keeps us safe; there is no other.

APPLICATION

1. Let our daily prayer be David’s prayer here. Lord let our thoughts and words be in accordance with your holy Word O Lord our God and King.
2. Let us check out our thinking and emotional patterns with the Word of God and ensure that we are living as we ought and serving as powerfully as we can. All errant thoughts and foolish emotions distract us from God’s purposes and direction and eliminate our usefulness. The slightest distractions when you are doing dangerous things on a battlefield will lead to your death or injury. Let us be constantly auditing our behaviours and thoughts/feelings so that we remain safe under fire in the Angelic Conflict.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – REDEMPTION

NOTES

PSALM 20

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

Introduction:

This psalm is said to be a Psalm of David and though in places it seems to be spoken by others it is almost certain to have been written by the *"anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel"* (2 Samuel 23:1). In his capacity as King and leader of a theocracy, it is also reasonable that David should use his gift in composing 'hymns' for the liturgy of national worship.

There is a general consensus that the psalm was composed on an occasion when the nation was about to embark on some military excursion and designed to be used by the people, the King and his army in their prayers for victory and their thanksgiving in expectation of that victory.

"This psalm is thought, by some, to be written by David, on account of himself, and as a form to be used by the people for him, when he was about to go to war; particularly with the Ammonites and Syrians (2 Samuel 10:60; mention being made of chariots in it, (Psalm 20:7); of which there was a great number in that war." Gill

"It is one of the Dialogue Psalms, and appears to be divided thus: - Prior to undertaking the war, David comes to the tabernacle to offer sacrifice. This being done, the people, in the king's behalf, offer up their prayers; these are included in the three first verses: the fourth was probably spoken by the high priest; the fifth, by David and his attendants; the last clause, by the high priest; the sixth, by the high priest, after the victim (sacrifice) was consumed; the seventh and eighth, by David and his men; and the ninth, as a chorus by all the congregation." Clarke

"This is, therefore, a patriotic and loyal psalm, full of confidence in the king as he starts on his expedition, full of desire for his success, and full of confidence in God; expressing union of heart between the sovereign and the people, and the union of all their hearts in the great God." Barnes

(I am indebted to Brian Huggett for this excellent introduction to this Psalm)

Psalm 20:1

"The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;"

REFLECTION

In the day of trouble it is more than "good" to know that you are heard by God, it is absolutely essential for our peace of mind. What grace we have in that our heavenly Father hears us when we ask for help. I praise God today that I am heard, and that I am heard by a father who cares.

Days of trouble will come to us, and we need to claim the promises of the Lord that they will not overwhelm us. John 16:33, 1 Corinthians 10:13. The Lord is the overcomer and we are overcomers through Him. We call on the Lord and his power is available to us and his presence is with us.

It is the "God of Jacob" who is our strength, and I rejoice in this, for Jacob was a crooked character and if Jacob is loved then there is hope for us all. It is a lovely reminder that we do not come to the Lord as perfect people, but as saved sinners, accepted in the beloved! Ephesians 1:6, 2 Thessalonians 2:13. We are beloved in Him!

When we stand before the Lord we stand before the one whose plan meant the Lord died for us while we were yet enemies, sinners before him. Ephesians 2:1-9, 1 John 5:1ff. We stand before the Lord who gave himself for us and knows how to give us every good thing we need to serve Him in the path he has called us to walk through this world. It is the Lord's business to supply his army and we are members of that army.

Matthew 7:7-11.

"7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

APPLICATION

1. We are defended by the Lord when we cast ourselves at his feet, and when we seek his help it is always there. Let us practice the faith of a child who knows their Father will not give them any bad thing.
2. Let us come before the throne of grace and ask the "God of Jacob" for help, for if he blessed Jacob he will certainly bless us in Christ Jesus. Let us expect prayer to be answered, and expect victory in the battles of each day.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – ETERNAL SECURITY

Psalm 20:2-3

"Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion; Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah. "

REFLECTION

The source of help is the very throne room of God (the sanctuary) and David looks to the place where Israel met the Lord in the tabernacle and sought the "near help" of the Lord. The tabernacle was a picture to assist worship and prayer, and it reminded the people that the Lord was "near" never "far off" from his people, and he was ready to answer, never reluctant.

Isaiah 55:6-11

*6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:
 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.
 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

The sacrificial system was the Israelite way of remembering that it was by blood sacrifice that they were accepted, not on their own merit. The Lord always sees the blood of Christ and it is on the basis of his work that we are always heard, for the Lord who shed his blood is sitting at the "right hand of the Father making intercession on our behalf". Romans 8:28-34, Hebrews 7:25. We cannot be more secure in our expectation of answers to prayer than we are in the situation we find ourselves in.

APPLICATION

1. We are heard and we are answered by the one who died for us. If he loved us enough to die for us, how much more does he care for us now that we are his children and love him. Even the "Jacobs" of us are loved, as old Jacob was.
2. The Lord always remembers his sacrifice on our behalf and as we are covered by his previous blood we can expect his love and power to be always exercised on our behalf. We are his through the blood of Christ and so our problems do not technically belong to us, they are his. When evil men declare war on us, as has just happened to me in my property sale process this week, then we pass it over to the Lord, for they have declared war on God! He is our Lord and those who attack us have attacked the Lord.

DOCTRINES

ZION

OFFERINGS – LEVITICAL OFFERINGS REPRESENT CHRIST

Psalm 20:4

“Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.”

REFLECTION

I always want to be heard in accordance with the character of God, not the deserts of man. It is the loving heart of the Lord that I want to receive bounty from, not from my deserving or on the basis of what I have asked for. Often our prayers are way off the mark as to what we actually need, and so I am always ready to receive the “heart of the Lord” rather than the words of John McEwan.

The Lord will always fulfil all his counsel and achieve all he desires to achieve. All we need to do to be in the place of blessing is to be positioned in the place of obedience to the revealed will of the Lord concerning us. It is only God’s path I seek and only his power I want to walk in, for there is no other path that works for me and delivers eternal rewards and eternal life with the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. Let our prayers be always focused upon the heart of Jesus for us and let us reach out to find what He wants for us and receive what he has to give. It is the Lord’s responsibility to provide what we need to fulfil his commission to us.
2. All the Lord’s counsel will be fulfilled in our life as we open ourselves to his word and will. Let us daily do this in the filling and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

DOCTRINES

MOTIVATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY – SIGNS OF MATURITY (Romans 15:1-15)

Psalm 20:5

“We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners: the LORD fulfill all thy petitions.”

REFLECTION

David’s prayer is for the Lord to fulfil all the prayers of those leading the worship service. It is a challenge to the High Priest to really think about what is being said and done and to get the petitions right before he opens his mouth. David reminds all the people present that we are rejoicing in our great salvation, and the celebration of what the Lord has given is a major part of proper worship.

There is to be one celebrity, and that is the Lord. If there is any name on the banners of men let it be the name of Jesus not the name of men. I am amazed at the advertising banners of many individuals and groups that magnify themselves in a cult of personality and where the Lord is incidental. Let us challenge ourselves to ensure that the Lord is central and the only celebrity in our work and worship.

APPLICATION

1. Let us make the Lord our banner, for his banner over us is love! It is all to be about “Him” in our life, and He is the one who will deliver us.
2. Let us rejoice in our great salvation and sing aloud of the joy of the Lord.

Psalm 20:6

“Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.”

REFLECTION

Now know I: David expresses absolute confidence in his prayer-song here, and we are not given a clear reason for this in the psalm, it is simply boldly stated aloud by David. At times we can have this “inner assurance”, and at other times there can be a “sign” that comes to assure us. The challenge for each and every believer is to let the assurance of doctrine bring solid faith into our heart, so that we with confidence advance into the next challenge knowing that the Lord has heard our prayer. It may simply be on the basis of a promise of the Word of God, but that is enough.

The LORD saveth his anointed: David’s assurance is stated again, and that even before he has been physically delivered from the issue they have prayed over, he has a “faith-promise” mental attitude and acts as if the problem is already resolved. (Hebrews 7:25). This “faith-promise” way of thinking may be perverted into a false doctrine but it is not here, for David is simply stepping out in faith here, stating that the problem is resolved, and all they have to do is act as the Lord has directed and they will see the results working out in time.

David has grasped what many do not grasp. We are in time and space when we pray, but the answers are coming from eternity (beyond space and time) and so to God the results are already seen and passed. We can’t afford to sit with this too long, but it is helpful to reflect upon eternity touching time, which is the mechanics of prayer. Is anything too hard for our God? “NO!!!” Genesis 18:14.

The LORD **will hear** and not just hear, but always act, for the plan has been there since eternity past and all the provisions needed for us to fulfil our task are already provided and so can be confidently asked for. Deliverance is always assured in glory, for all that is required is always provided. The Lord’s character is at stake here, and he will always act on the basis of his perfect character.

APPLICATION

1. God will always act to provide, it is only timing and direction that we lack information over. Our challenge is to target our prayers and act on the basis of the answer being already on the way, for it will be. This is “stepping out in faith”, for that simply means we act as if the Lord’s provision is in the pipeline and move forward with confidence, for the work is His, not ours.

2. When God acts he acts from his “right hand”; which in the ancient world meant his strength and power. There is no power shortage with the Lord, nor is there any reluctance.

DOCTRINES

CHRIST – LORD CHRIST JESUS – EMMANUEL

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

Psalm 20:7-8

“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.”

REFLECTION

There is no safety in planning and the heavy artillery and armoured forces when the Lord is against you. The German Army of WW II was the greatest ever seen on the earth but they were beaten simply because they were on the wrong side of history. They were beaten because their leader was demonic and he attacked God and his people and so no matter how great their armoured and other forces, they were doomed.

It is not to the swiftest or best that the victory comes, but to the forces that are working along the path of the plan of God. Often the swiftest and the best are demonic, or narcissistic, or both. It is not as man sees that power is expressed with finality and effect, it is as God determines in accordance with his eternal plan.

Psalm 33:16-22

*“16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
17 An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.”*

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;
 19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.
 20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield.
 21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.
 22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.”

It is the name of the Lord that is to be honoured, for it is the Lord's will that will be done on this earth, not the will of men. Proverbs 21:31. It is in returning to the Lord and waiting for the Lord that we can build confidence and re-assure ourselves of his safety and power.

Isaiah 30:15-18

“15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.
 16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.
 17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.
 18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.”

APPLICATION

1. It is with the Lord that you will find safety, not in the best laid plans and best financial arrangements. God's plan for your life is the only one that has security, not any plans of men.
2. Do not look at the outside of the forces, look at the heart of the great armies, for the heart of people is their strength, not their technology and expertise. The heart of the mature believer rests upon the Lord, and those who do this are truly secure, for they rest in God's Character, not their own intelligence and the apparent power of men who fail.

Psalms 20:9

“Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call.”

REFLECTION

This verse is best understood in its relationship to vs.1, and by doing this David brings us back to the starting point to have us reflect upon his message again.

Save, LORD is a parallel request to “**the God of Jacob defend thee**” and is in keeping with those first verses. It is but a concluding reminder to the LORD that though they are confident in having fulfilled all he required of them, the victory was in his hands and not theirs. It is the grace reminder that stabilizes, for we rest in his character not in our goodness.

The king of this verse is the LORD to whom the psalm is addressed and “**let the King hear us**” is parallel to “**the LORD hear thee**”.

APPLICATION

1. Praise God that he hears us on the basis of his character not our deserving nature.
2. The Lord is our King, and he will hear us when we call. Hallelujah.

Bibliography:

All Hebrew and Greek etymology is taken from either Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries or **Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Definitions** unless otherwise stated.

English pronunciations of the Hebrew words are according to Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary.

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A BATTLEFIELD LETTER FROM THE WRITER

Below I list the principles the Lord has made clear to us through a great personal testing time, as I have written this book. We have as a family, to date, been ten years under impossible financial pressures, but in the last three years this has become totally impossible and those with power over our physical property have effectively "declared war" on our ability to sell it and move forward or even stay much longer within it. We stand in an impossible position now, with no human hope, nor financial means to cope. It is in the context of this overwhelming pressure that I have undertaken to revise these study notes for our work in EBCWA, building on the work of my dear friend and colleague Brian Huggett.

Like David in these Psalms we have seen that it is the Lord alone who must guide our steps and direct our paths. We seek his will for our life and his role alone. There is nothing else that matters in this short life of ours. Working on these psalms has clarified my thoughts in ways I could never have envisaged as I began this work, and I can see why the Lord led me to prepare these additional studies on the Psalms for our CD.

The Lord's Revealed Principles

1. We come daily to the Throne of Grace and Mercy and we will receive his love in accordance with his holy and perfect plan for our lives.
2. Having confessed any sins we can claim Psalm 103 and Romans 8:28, and know that nothing we face is "punishment", but is simply testing circumstance, on the battlefield of the Angelic Conflict, and is to be dealt with in fellowship with the One who loved us and gave himself for us. 1 John 4:4.
3. We are to "quit ourselves like soldiers and be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13), and set an example under pressure to our physical and spiritual children, and all around us.
4. We are daily to put our spiritual armour on and stand fully equipped ready to march anywhere the Lord calls us to march. Ephesians 6:10-18.
5. We are to claim the promises of God that we have received powerfully through the years of this great test. We have been kept for eight long and hard years to date, and we will be kept until the Lord's end point. Psalm 18:32-35, 28:7-8, 71:18, Isaiah 26:3-4, 43:1-3, 46:4, Zechariah 4:6-10.
6. We seek the Lord to "move the mountain" ahead of us, for there is no human hope or direction and the Lord alone can bring us through in his way to his glory. Zechariah Chapter 4.
7. We claim battlefield provisions (work-money to pay bills) in the Lord's service. We are his soldiers and he is our paymaster and commanding officer. Since eternity past he has his provisions for us and we claim them now.

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