

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990 USA
 © ASK, September 2015 • All rights reserved • Number 9/15

Telephone: 503 292 4352

• Internet: www.askelm.com •

E-Mail: askoffice@askelm.com

Israel and Judah: 12. David's Special Song

by David Sielaff, September 2015

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for September 2015](#)

Israel and Judah: 12

David's
Special
Song

THE SITUATION: In 2 Samuel chapter 22, a long psalm by King David is presented. It gives a retrospective look at David's life and particularly all the help God has provided for him throughout his life, his intrigues, his political career, and especially the many battles he fought to defend and expand the territory of God's people to the extent promised to Abraham. Several references are made about David being saved from impending death by God. Psalm 18 repeats most of the same words from this end-of-life reflection by David.

The text of 2 Samuel chapter 22 and Psalm 18 have only minor differences between them, but as E.W. Bullinger points out about Psalm 18: "**Like all Psalms of David, it finds its fulfillment in the true David,**"^a who is Jesus Christ. We will see if the differences reflect the prophetic transition from an historical David of 2 Samuel chapter 22 to a future Christ of Psalm 18, though David probably did not even realize it when he (or a later unknown editor) made changes to produce Psalm 18. King David's messianic psalms were prophetic about Christ, as Peter pointed out at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. Peter began speaking about King David and then spoke about Jesus Christ and His resurrection:

"[David] **being, then, inherently, a prophet, and having perceived that God swears to him with an oath, out of the fruit of his loins to seat One on his throne, perceiving this before, he speaks concerning the resurrection of the Christ [Messiah], that He was neither forsaken in the unseen [hades], nor was His flesh acquainted with decay. This Jesus God raises [resurrects], of Whom we [disciples] all are witnesses.**"

• Acts 2:30–32, CLV^b

In fact, Peter goes on to quote portions of Psalm 16, but that is a study for another time.

^a E.W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible*, "Title, Psalm 18," p. 734.

^b I use the Concordant Literal Translation (CLV) throughout, unless otherwise indicated. The first of the "Israel and Judah" series of articles began in August 2014 with "[Israel and Judah: 1. Saul and David.](#)"

The apostle Paul told his audience at Antioch in Acts chapter 13 that David was dead, but his latter son, Jesus Christ, who was crucified and entombed, was now alive. Paul told the people about their Savior, a son of David.

“[God] **rouses David for their king, to whom He said also, in testifying, ‘I found David, of Jesse, a man according to My heart, who will be doing all My will.’ From this one’s [David’s] seed, God, according to the promise, led to Israel a Saviour, Jesus. ...**

Now as they accomplish all that which is written concerning Him, taking Him [Jesus] down from the pole, they place Him in a tomb. Yet God rouses Him from among the dead.”

• Acts 13:22–23, 29–30

I will analyze 2 Samuel chapter 22 and Psalm 18 together, noting the differences. I begin with an outline because of the length of the text. I use Thomas Boys’ outline of Psalm 18 from his book, *A Key to the Psalms*.^c What is explained for Psalm 18 generally applies to 2 Samuel chapter 22. In Boys’ analysis there are six sections to the psalm. Refer to this outline as a foundation for understanding David’s message.

A YHWH spoken to in love, spoken of as Deliverer (Psalm 18:1–2)

- YHWH is my rock, and horn of my salvation
- YHWH is my deliverer from my enemies

B David’s deliverance from enemies (Psalm 18:3–19)^d

- I cried to God, He heard, my cry reached His ears
- He delivered me, YHWH was my support
- He brought me to a wide place
- He delivered me from my enemy, from those who hated me
- He sent out His arrows and scattered them, He flashed lightning and routed them

C Equity of YHWH’s dealings (with me) (Psalm 18:20–24)

- I kept the ways of YHWH, I have been blameless

C’ Equity of YHWH’s dealings (with others) (Psalm 18:25–27)

- This God, His way is blameless

B’ David’s victory over his enemies (Psalm 18:28–48)

- The enemies cried to YHWH; He did not answer
- He delivered me, His right hand supported me
- He gave me a wide place for my steps
- He turned back my enemies and destroyed those who hated me
- I pursued my enemies, overtook them, did not stop until consumed, struck them down, they could not rise, they fell under my feet

A’ YHWH spoken to in praise, spoken of as Deliverer (Psalm 18:49–50)

- YHWH is my rock and God of my salvation
- YHWH is my deliverer from my enemies

First, note the introduction before Psalm 18:1. It differs from the introduction of 2 Samuel 22:1.

^c Boys’ manuscript, *A Key to the Psalms: being a tabular arrangement by which the Psalms are exhibited to the eye according to a general rule of composition prevailing in the Holy Scriptures*, was edited and annotated by E.W. Bullinger (New York: E. Young and Co., 1899), 15–17. Bullinger is known for his notes and appendices in his annotated Companion Bible.

^d Information under **shaded sections B and B’** comes from David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 183.

TEXT: A. YHWH spoken to in love, spoken of as Deliverer

2 Samuel 22:1–3

¹ David *addressed* the words of this song to Yahweh on the day Yahweh rescued him from the palm of all his enemies and from the *palm* of Saul.

² He said:

”O Yahweh! my Crag, My Fastness,
my Deliverance for me!

³ My *Elohim*, my Rock! I take refuge in Him,
My Shield and the Horn of my salvation!
My Impregnable Retreat
and my Haven! My Saviour, You Who are saving me from violence!”

Psalms 18:1–2

Concerning *the servant of Yahweh*, concerning David, who *spoke* to Yahweh the words of this song

on the day Yahweh rescued him from the palm of all his enemies and from the *hand* of Saul.

Thus he said:

¹ “*I feel deep passion* [love] *for You, O Yahweh, my Steadfastness,*

² O Yahweh, my Crag and my Fastness and my Deliverance!

My *E!*, my Rock! I take refuge in Him,
My Shield and the Horn of my salvation!
My Impregnable Retreat!”

[end text]

As you read the texts side-by-side, think in terms of Second Samuel as applying to King David and Psalm 18 applying to Christ, which is how Peter said we should consider some of David’s writing. In literary terms, “**This psalm is generally classified as a royal song of thanksgiving to God for victory,**” as well as an individual praise psalm contrasted with communal praise psalms. The psalm is personal, written by David himself and God’s actions of care, protection, and assistance are all done by YHWH for David.^e

Psalm 18:1. The author of the words is David (Christ, in symbol) who has a “**deep passion**” for YHWH. YHWH was the stability, the “**steadfastness,**” of David’s life and Christ’s life.

“The name, *servant of Jehovah*, which David gives to himself in his prayers, Ps. 19:11, 13; 144:10; 2 Sam. 7:20, and there in a general sense in which every pious Israelite might use it, is here in the title [of Psalm 18], as in Ps. 36, in the pregnant meaning of an official name and honorable title *as Moses bears it*, Deut. 34:5; Jos. 24:29; the prophets, Jer. 7:25 and elsewhere, on account of their historical position as the specially commissioned instruments of God; and *David likewise has received it being recognized as such by the mouth of Jehovah*, Ps. 89:3, 20.”^f

Lange makes another point regarding the source of Psalm 18:

“The use of this Psalm in Psalms 116 and 144 is in favor of its great antiquity, as well as the use of [Psalm 18:]30 in Proverbs 30:5, and [Psalm 18:]33 in Habakkuk 3:19.”^g

Verse 3/2.^h YHWH being “**my Rock**” of protection, refuge, and security is repeated in this song (2 Samuel 22:3, 47 and Psalm 18:2, 46), elsewhere in Psalms (19:14, 28:1, 62:2, 6–7, 73:26, 89:26, 92:15, 94:22, 144:1), in Isaiah 44:8, and in Habakkuk 1:12. Six metaphors are in this verse; all six are in other psalms:

^e Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reayburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 160.

^f John Peter Lange et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Psalms* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 139.

^g Lange et al., *A Commentary on ... Psalms*, 138.

^h By “**Verse 3/2**” I mean 2 Samuel 22:3 and Psalm 18:2.

<u>Metaphor</u>	<u>CLV</u>	<u>KJV</u>
1.	crag	rock
2.	fastness	fortress
3.	rock	strength
4.	shield	buckler
5.	horn of my salvation	horn of my salvation
6.	impregnable retreat	high tower

The **“Horn of my salvation”** may refer to the altar in a temple where people went for sanctuary and asylum from those seeking to kill them. We will see this done by Adonijah near the time of David’s death when he failed to usurp the throne (1 Kings 1:50–51) and by Joab who supported Adonijah (1 Kings 2:28). Both put their hands on the horns of the altar of the Tabernacle. In **Verse 3/2** David is appealing to God’s **“horn of salvation”** which is in heaven. David is appealing to that heavenly place to obtain asylum or protection from his enemies.ⁱ

A portion of **Verse 3/2** is quoted in Luke 1:69 by Zacharias, just after he wrote that his son would be named John (the Baptist), and immediately regained his voice.^j The first spoken words of Zecharias were those of 2 Samuel 22:3/Psalm 18:2, **“And rouses a horn of salvation for us in the house of David, His boy [servant]”** (Luke 1:69). While Zacharias only quotes a few words of David’s song, it was understood that the hearers of his words knew the passage he quoted in the way he intended, with all it implied. The word **“boy”** can also be translated **“servant.”** Both are correct.^k

This quote chosen by Zacharias shows he understood that his son John was to announce the coming of the Messiah, referred to as the **“horn of salvation”** out of the House of David. Even the person announcing the Messiah is important. His birth was worthy of a revelation by the supernatural messenger Gabriel.

2 Samuel 22:3. The sentence, **“My Saviour, you who are saving me from violence!”** is not in Psalm 18. King David died peacefully in bed, but Jesus died in a horribly violent manner — crucifixion. While Christ was likely the active agent who “saved” David, God the Father did not save Jesus from His violent death.

TEXT: B. David’s deliverance from enemies

2 Samuel 22:4–13

- ⁴ The One being praised! I call on Yahweh,
And *I am being saved from my enemies.*
- ⁵ *For* the cables of death have enveloped me,
And the torrents [floods] of decadence [*belial*],
they frighten me.
- ⁶ The cables of the unseen [*sheol*],
they surround me;
The traps of death have confronted me.
- ⁷ In my distress I called on Yahweh,
And to my Elohim I implored.

Psalm 18:3–12

- ³ The One being praised! I call on Yahweh,
And *from my enemies I am being saved.*
- ⁴ The cables of death have enveloped me,
And the torrents [floods] of decadence [*belial*],
they frighten me.
- ⁵ The cables of the unseen [*sheol*],
they *have* surrounded me;
The traps of death have confronted me.
- ⁶ In my distress I called on Yahweh,
And to my Elohim I implored.

ⁱ Bratcher and Reyburn, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 163.

^j His voice was silenced by the angel Gabriel. Zacharias’ role in the announcement of his son’s birth is in Luke 1:5–25, 57–80.

^k In Luke 1:69 the phrase **“the house of David”** refers to the descendants of David. In a minority of instances the phrase **“house of David”** refers to the Tomb of David. That is not so in Luke 1:69. See [“The House of David”](#) and [“The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb.”](#) Psalm 132:17: **“There shall I make the horn of David sprout; I will arrange a lamp for My anointed one.”**

From His temple He heard my voice,
And my imploring before Him,
it came to His ears.

- ⁸ Then the earth reeled and quaked,
And the foundations of the mountains,
they were disturbed,
And they reeled, for His anger grew hot.
- ⁹ Smoke ascended from His nostrils,
And fire that devours, from His mouth;
Flashing embers blazed forth from Him.
- ¹⁰ He stretched out the heavens and descended,
And murkiness was beneath His feet.
- ¹¹ He rode on a cherub and flew;
So He swooped down on the wings of the wind
[Hebrew, *ruach*, “spirit”].
- ¹² He set darkness round about Him;

His booth was the darkness of waters,
the thick clouds of the skies.
- ¹³ Out of the brightness in front of Him

Flashing embers of fire *blazed forth*.

From His temple He heard my voice,
And my imploring before Him,
it came to His ears.

- ⁷ Then the earth reeled and quaked,
And the foundations of the mountains,
they were disturbed,
And they reeled, for His anger grew hot.
- ⁸ Smoke ascended from His nostrils,
And fire that devours from His mouth;
Flashing embers, *they* blazed forth from Him.
- ⁹ He stretched out the heavens and descended,
And murkiness was beneath His feet.
- ¹⁰ He rode on a cherub and flew;
So He swooped down on the wings of the wind
[Hebrew, *ruach*, “spirit”].
- ¹¹ He set darkness *as His concealment* round about
Him;
His booth was the darkness of waters,
the thick clouds of the skies.
- ¹² Out of the brightness in front of Him *His thick
clouds passed
With hail and* **flashing embers of fire**.

[end text]

Verse 4/3. Here begins a long section of the psalm that looks back to the past telling of several instances of God’s interventions to rescue David. YHWH saves both David and Christ, rescuing them from physical death before their time. This is the purpose of this psalm for both David and for his prophetic message. YHWH saved Jesus from death several times, for example when the people in Nazareth sought to kill Him and He miraculously slipped through their grasp (Luke 4:29–30). At other times (Matthew 12:14; Mark 3:6; John 5:18–19, 7:1, 19, 25) people sought to kill Jesus but God prevented them from doing so.

Verses 5/4. The word translated “**decadence**” (“ungodly men” in the King James Version) in Hebrew is the word *belial*, indicating extreme wickedness or decadence. The KJV frequently leaves *belial* untranslated (Deuteronomy 13:13; Judges 19:22, 20:13; 1 Samuel 1:16, 2:12, 10:27, 25:17, 25, 30:22; 2 Samuel 16:7, 20:1, 23:6; 1 Kings 21:10, 13, and 2 Chronicles 13:7). In some instances it may be a title for Satan. One such instance may be when the apostle Paul uses the term in 2 Corinthians 6:15: “**Now what agreement has Christ with Belial? Or what part a believer with an unbeliever?**”

In **Verses 5/4** and **6/5**, David thought (probably several times) that he was facing certain death. And, for anyone but God’s anointed king, death would have occurred.¹ God was working out several purposes in David’s life: establishing the kingdom of Israel (the ideal type for the future of Israel), establishing a kingly line, having David be an example of God’s salvation, and especially being an example for the archetype “anointed of God,” David’s greater son Jesus the Messiah. Some see an allusion to **Verse 5/4** when Peter at Pentecost talked about “**loosing**” and “**death**” as referring to Christ’s resurrection:

¹ The same sense of impending death is expressed later by Jonah. He *knew* there was no way out, no survival, that *sheol* would inevitably come. Yet God saved Jonah after three days and three nights. Read Jonah 2:2–9.

“Whom God raises, loosing the pangs of death, forasmuch as it was not possible for Him to be held by it.”

• *Acts 2:24*

Peter may have combined verses 5/4 and 6/5, with the thought that the “**cables**” (in the Concordant Literal Version) which held Jesus in death meant “**sorrows**” (as in the KJV where a marginal note has “**cables**” like the CLV). Other translations have “**cord**” for verses 5/4 and 6/5. Only God can rescue us out from death, whether imminent death like David, or for Christ and all of us, only God can resurrect us after death.

Peter goes beyond David’s meaning of “rescue from impending death” changing it to “rescue after death,” i.e., being resurrected from the dead. Where did Peter get that idea? He got it from Christ, who taught all the apostles about such things after His resurrection:

“And, beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interprets to them, in all the scriptures, that which concerns Himself.”

• *Luke 24:27*

“Now He [Jesus] said to them,

‘These are My words, which I speak to you, still being with you, for all must be fulfilled that is written in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms concerning Me.’

Then He opens up their mind to understand the scriptures, and said to them that

‘Thus it is written, and thus must the Christ be suffering and rise from among the dead the third day, and there is to be heralded in His name repentance for the pardon of sins, to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Now you shall be witnesses of these things.’”

• *Luke 24:44–48*

The apostle Paul understood that the Scriptures (our Old Testament) testified and prophesied Christ’s death and resurrection:

“Now, as was Paul’s custom, he entered to them, and on three sabbaths he argues with them from the scriptures, opening up and placing before them [what?] that the Christ must suffer and rise from among the dead, and that ‘This One is the Christ [Messiah] — the Jesus Whom I am announcing to you.’”

• *Acts 17:2–3*

They had an expectation regarding the Kingdom of God, which Christ preached often:

“... until the day on which He was taken up; through holy spirit directing the apostles whom He chooses, to whom also He presents Himself alive after His suffering, with many tokens, during forty days, being visualized to them and telling them that which concerns the kingdom of God.”

• *Acts 1:2–3*

His apostles had a specific understanding of the Kingdom of God. They understood it to be something similar to the kingdom David established, a sovereign kingdom that ruled a large area. They asked Christ:

“Those, indeed, then, who are coming together, asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, are You at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?’”

• *Acts 1:6*

The kingdom they expected was to be like the kingdom David established. Why? Probably because many prophecies about Christ were found in David’s writings. They expected David’s victories to have similar occurrences when Christ began “**restoring the kingdom to Israel.**” Indeed, the visible events David writes about in 2 Samuel chapter 22 and Psalm 18 will occur when Christ returns. Such signs in the skies will occur before and during Christ’s return (Matthew 24:24, 29; Mark 13:22–26; Luke 21:11). Peter anticipated the signs he talked about in Acts 2:19–20, signs he thought would continue, but they did not continue.

Verse 7/6. “From His Temple” refers to God’s presence in the time of David. That was in the Temple in heaven. (There was no physical Temple on earth while David was alive.) In His heavenly Temple, God hears David and moves swiftly to bring physical salvation to David.

Verse 8/7. “The earth reeled and quaked.” Why? It was because **“His anger grew hot.”** If you have ever experienced an earthquake, you know that David’s description is accurate. We cannot know for sure when this earthquake occurred, but it likely happened when the nations were gathered in Syria against David and the army of Israel. See my article [“Israel and Judah: 6. David’s Foreign Wars.”](#) Psalms 20 and 60 also tell of earthquakes saving David and Israel’s army, besides 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18. These texts give a great amount of detail.

Verses 8/7 to Verses 13/12, YHWH’s arrival is described:

- Smoke, fire, and **“flashing embers”** came forth from God’s presence as He descended.
- Some kind of atmospheric disturbance occurs with **“the heavens”** described as being stretched and the heavens themselves **“descended.”**
- **“Murkiness”** was in the heavens. [What this means is unclear.]
- A Cherub, singular, was seen flying with YHWH riding him.
- YHWH Himself was concealed in darkness of what looked like waters.
- Thick clouds (Psalm 18:12) form in **“brightness in front of Him.”**
- Hail fell with more **“flashing embers”** coming forth.

This entire spectacle was awesome and reminds the reader of God’s appearance before Israel at Mt. Sinai. Some elements of this are described in another Davidic song, Psalm 104:1–4. The similarities are striking. Now let us examine how God saved David.

TEXT: B. (continued) David’s deliverance from enemies

2 Samuel 22:14–20

- ¹⁴ Then Yahweh thundered from the heavens,
And the Supreme, He gave forth His voice.
- ¹⁵ He sent off His arrows, with which He scattered them,
And He multiplied bolts of lightning with which He discomfited them.
- ¹⁶ So the channels of water were made to appear,
And the foundations of the habitation were revealed,
By Your rebuke, O Yahweh,
By the breath of the wind of Your nostrils.
- ¹⁷ He sent from the height; He took me;
He removed me from many waters;
- ¹⁸ He rescued me from my strong enemy
And from those hating me;
For **they were tougher than I.**
- ¹⁹ They confronted me in the day of my **calamity**,
Yet Yahweh became my Stay.

Psalm 18:13–19

- ¹³ Then Yahweh thundered from the heavens,
And the Supreme, He gave forth His voice
With hail and flashing embers of fire.
- ¹⁴ He sent off His arrows, with which He scattered them,
And He multiplied bolts of lightning, with which He discomfited them.
- ¹⁵ So the channels of water were made to appear,
And the foundations of the habitation were revealed,
By Your rebuke, O Yahweh,
By the breath of the wind of Your nostrils.
- ¹⁶ He sent from the height; He took me;
He removed me from many waters;
- ¹⁷ He rescued me from my strong enemy
And from those hating me;
For **they were tougher than I.**
- ¹⁸ They confronted me in the day of my **calamity**,
Yet Yahweh became my Stay.

²⁰ He brought me forth into a wide place [platform];
He liberated me, for He has delighted in me.

¹⁹ He brought me forth into a wide place [platform];
He liberated me, for He has delighted in me.
[end text]

Verse 14/13. The noise and thunder “**from the heavens**” sounds like a voice. David says it is YHWH’s voice.

In **Psalm 18:13**, “**flashing embers of fire**” are repeated from **Verses 13/12**. The phrase does not occur in 2 Samuel 22:14.

Verses 16/15 and **17/16**. After YHWH’s arrival, the effects on the ground begin. While the lightening continues, floods of water fill the wadis, separating the enemy from David.

Verse 17/16. Caught up into the waters, God “**removed me from many waters.**”

Verse 18/17. In this way, YHWH rescued David from his enemy, though they “**were tougher than I.**”

Why did God do all this for David? Surprisingly, it was because of his righteousness and obedience. This limited “**righteousness**” was according to the Law of Moses.

TEXT: C. Equity of YHWH’s dealings (with me)

2 Samuel 22:21–25

²¹ Yahweh requited me according to my
righteousness;
According to the purity of my hands
He recompensed me.

²² For I have kept the ways of Yahweh,
And I have not been wicked by turning from
my Elohim.

²³ For all His *judgments* have been in front of me,
And I have not put away His statutes from me.

²⁴ I have become flawless [blameless] before Him;
Let me keep myself from my depravity.

²⁵ Yahweh recompensed [paid] me according to my
righteousness,
According to my purity in front of
His eyes.

Psalm 18:20–24

²⁰ Yahweh requited me according to my
righteousness;
According to the purity of my hands
He recompensed me.

²¹ For I have kept the ways of Yahweh,
And I have not been wicked by turning from
my Elohim.

²² For all His *ordinances* have been in front of me,
And I have not put away His statutes from me.

²³ I have become flawless [blameless] before Him;
Let me keep myself from my depravity.

²⁴ Yahweh recompensed [paid] me according to my
righteousness,
According to the purity of my hands in front of
His eyes. [end text]

Verses 21/20, and following. David puts forward his innocence and righteousness. It is doubtful David wrote this after the incident of his adultery with Bathsheba and the “murder” of Uriah the Hittite, even though present-tense verbs are used.^m David’s actions of “**righteousness**,” “**purity of my hands**,” “**not been wicked**,” his being “**flawless**” before YHWH, all these attributes definitely would apply to Jesus before His crucifixion.

Verse 23/22. “**Judgments**”/“**ordinances**” and “**statutes**” are synonymous for “**the ways of YHWH.**”ⁿ

Verse 24/23. David asks YHWH to help keep him from depravity. This tinge of pride and arrogance may have caused David to fail with Bathsheba and descend into depravity with the murder and cover-up of Uriah. Nevertheless, when David wrote these words, he was blameless according to the Law of Moses.

^m Bratcher and Reyburn, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 173.

ⁿ Bratcher and Reyburn, *A Translator’s Handbook*, 174.

Verse 25/24. David says YHWH “owed” him for his righteousness. He was “flawless” and “righteous” in the same way that Zacharias and Elizabeth, John the Baptist’s parents were: **“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless”** (Luke 1:6, King James Version).

TEXT: C'. Equity of YHWH's dealings (with others)

2 Samuel 22:26–28

- ²⁶ With the **benign one** You show Yourself benign,
And with a flawless [blameless] **master** You
show Yourself flawless [blameless].
- ²⁷ With the purified one You show Yourself pure,
But with the perverse one You show Yourself
cunning.
- ²⁸ For You Yourself shall save the humbled people,
But You shall abase those whose eyes are
exalted.

Psalms 18:25–27

- ²⁵ With the **benign one** You show Yourself benign,
And with a flawless [blameless] **master** You
show Yourself flawless [blameless];
- ²⁶ With the purified one You show Yourself pure,
But with the perverse one You show Yourself
cunning.
- ²⁷ For You Yourself shall save the humbled people,
But You shall abase those whose eyes are
exalted. **[end text]**

In these verses the texts are identical. Notice that David refers to YHWH in the second person, **“You.”** These three verses correspond in parallel with the five verses above.

Verse 26/25. “Benign one” is usually rendered “merciful one” (for example, the KJV). The word “hero” is better understood by us today than **“master.”** YHWH protects His **“flawless”** hero.

Verse 27/26. In fact, David says that God gives him blessings because of his purity, and YHWH is pure in his response: **“You show Yourself pure.”**

Verse 28/27. David is humble, so God exalts him. God humbles those who exalt themselves.

While other writings in the wisdom literature tell us plainly that such things are not always so straightforward, for King David this is the case. Why? It is because David is playing the part which will be lived to God’s complete standards by David’s greater son, Jesus: His righteousness, His purity, His keeping YHWH’s ways, His goodness (not wickedness), His blameless acts, His keeping God’s judgments, ordinances, statutes, and His humility. Jesus did all those things fully. David did them for a period of time, but then he faltered and sinned horribly, publicly, and everyone knows his sins to our present day.

TEXT: B'. David's victory over his enemies

2 Samuel 22:29–40

- ²⁹ Indeed You Yourself shall light up **my lamp**,
O Yahweh;
My Elohim, He shall brighten my darkness,
- ³⁰ So that by You I may run over a **stone-dike**
[troop],
And by my Elohim I may leap a barricade.
- ³¹ The One, El, His way is flawless;
The word of Yahweh is refined;
He is a Shield to all who are taking refuge in Him.
- ³² For **is there any Eloah apart from Yahweh?**
And is there any **Rock** apart from our Elohim?

Psalms 18:28–39

- ²⁸ Indeed You Yourself shall light up **my lamp**,
O Yahweh;
My Elohim, He shall brighten my darkness,
- ²⁹ So that by You I may run over a **stone-dike**
[troop],
And by my Elohim I may leap a barricade.
- ³⁰ The One, El, His way is flawless;
The word of Yahweh is refined;
He is a Shield to all who are taking refuge in Him.
- ³¹ For **is there any Eloah apart from Yahweh?**
And is there any **Rock** except our Elohim?

33 He is the One, El, the One belting me with valor,
And He spreads flawlessness on my way,
34 The One poising my feet like hinds' [deers'],
And on my high-places He causes me to stand.
35 He is the One teaching my hands for the battle,
So that my arms may manage a **bow of bronze**.
36 You gave to me **the shield of Your salvation**;

And Your help made me great.
37 You widened my steps beneath me,
So that my limbs have not tottered.
38 I pursued my enemies and *exterminated* them,
And I did not return until they were finished.
39 *I finished them and* I transfixed [stabbed] them,
And they were not able to rise.
They fell beneath my feet.
40 You belted me with valor for the battle;
You bowed beneath me those rising against me.

32 He is the One, El, the One belting me with valor,
And He spreads flawlessness on my way,
33 The One poising my feet like hinds' [deers'],
And on my high-places He causes me to stand.
34 He is the One teaching my hands for the battle,
So that my arms may manage a **bow of bronze**.
35 You gave to me **the shield of Your salvation**;
Your right hand, it braced me,
And Your help, it made me great.
36 You widened my steps beneath me,
So that my limbs have not tottered.
37 I pursued my enemies and *overtook* them,
And I did not return until they were finished.
38 I transfixed [stabbed] them,
and they were not able to rise.
They fell beneath my feet.
39 You belted me with valor for the battle;
You bowed beneath me those rising against me. [end text]

Verse 29/28. YHWH Himself is said to be **“my lamp,”** which relates to God’s assurance of descendants for David, as indicated in 1 Kings 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; and Psalm 132:17.

Verse 30/29. The Hebrew word translated **“stone dike”** is used for a stone wall 12 other times. All translations I read say “troop,” indicating a military formation. Perhaps a defensive fortification is meant. Also, a wall of shields would have many qualities of a **“stone dike.”** With God’s support, David runs up to, crashes through, or goes over military formations of troops or barriers like stationary stone walls. Such were the actions of a “hero” or “mighty man” in ancient times. So dangerous were such actions that David’s men implored him to stop leading his troops in battle. They begged him to “lead from behind.”

Verse 32/31. “Rock” is used as a name for God in Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 37; Isaiah 44:8, etc.

Verse 35/34. No one knows what a **“bow of bronze”** was, but if bronze was somehow made pliable, it indicates David’s powerful strength to be able to wield such a weapon.

Verse 36/35. For David the shield is effective because it is God’s **“shield of salvation.”** (Goliath’s shield served him not at all against God’s anointed.) With God’s help, David’s reputation became great. YHWH said He would give David **“a great name”** (2 Samuel 7:9). See **Verse 3/2** above for **“the shield of salvation.”**

Verses 38/37 to 40/39. David caused,

“... the subjugation and destruction of his enemies. ... fighting in God’s strength, with God’s weapons and under God’s assistance he beat, subjected, annihilated all his enemies in domestic and foreign wars.”^o

In every war and every battle, David faced powerful opposition, but with God’s help, he could not lose! David said honestly in **verse 18/17** that his enemies were **“tougher”** than he was. He knew that without God’s he should have lost occasionally, if not most of the time, except for the grace of God. Remarkable.

^o Lange, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Psalms*, 144.

TEXT: B' (continued) David's victory over his enemies

2 Samuel 22:41–49

- ⁴¹ As for my enemies, You gave to me the scruff of their necks,
And those hating me, I effaced them.
- ⁴² **They implored**, yet there was no salvation;
They called to Yahweh, yet He would not answer them.
- ⁴³ I reduced them to powder like the *soil of the earth*;
Like **the mud of the streets** I pulverized them;
I stamped on them.
- ⁴⁴ You delivered me from the disputes of *my* people;
You placed me at **the head of the nations**.
A people I had not known, they serve me;
- ⁴⁵ *The sons of the foreigner, they cower before me;*
As soon as the ear is hearing they hearken to me.
- ⁴⁶ The sons of the foreigner, they disintegrate,
And they come cringing from their enclosures.
- ⁴⁷ Alive is Yahweh, and being blessed is *my* Rock;
Let the Elohim of **the rock of my salvation** be exalted.
- ⁴⁸ He is the One, El, Who is rendering vengeance for me,
And *the One bringing down* the peoples under me,
- ⁴⁹ The One *bringing me forth* from my enemies.
From those rising against me have You exalted me;
From **the man of violence** have You rescued me.

Psalm 18:40–48

- ⁴⁰ As for my enemies, You gave to me the scruff of their necks,
And those hating me, I effaced them.
- ⁴¹ **They implored**, yet there was no salvation;
They called to Yahweh, yet He would not answer them.
- ⁴² I reduced them to powder like the *dust before the face of the wind*;
Like **the mud of the streets** I pulverized them.
- ⁴³ You delivered me from the disputes of *the* people;
You placed me at **the head of the nations**.
A people I had not known, they serve me;
- ⁴⁴ *As soon as the ear is hearing they hearken to me.*
The sons of the foreigner, they cower before me;
- ⁴⁵ The sons of the foreigner, they disintegrate,
And they come cringing from their enclosures.
- ⁴⁶ Alive is Yahweh, and being blessed is *my* Rock;
Let the Elohim of my salvation be exalted.
- ⁴⁷ He is the One, El, Who is rendering vengeance for me,
And *He subdues* the peoples under me,
- ⁴⁸ The One *delivering me* from my enemies. *Indeed*
from those rising against me have You exalted me;
From **the man of violence** have You rescued me. [end text]

Verse 42/41. As far as the enemy was concerned, “**they implored**,” probably to their false gods, then “**they called to Yahweh**,” Israel’s God, for mercy, but that did Israel’s enemies no good at all.

Verse 43/42. The dead enemies were “**the mud of the streets**” referring in a graphic manner to human and animal waste commonly thrown into the streets of towns and cities. Such was to be the state of the enemy after David and Israel’s army destroyed them.

Verse 44/43. “**The head of the nations**” indicates David ruled over a great empire (2 Samuel 8:1–14).

Verse 47/46. “**Alive is YHWH**.” He is real, alive, and David’s “**rock of my salvation**” (see **Verses 3/2** and **32/31**). He is also David’s “**horn of my salvation**” (**Verse 3/2**) and “**shield of Your salvation**” (**Verse 36/35**).

Verse 49/48. Many commentators presume “**the man of violence**” was King Saul, or the singular may be a collective term for several people who were smarter, better, faster, or stronger than David was. Nevertheless he prevailed because God was working a work through David just as God worked a work through the apostle Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:41) and through Timothy (1 Corinthians 16:10).

TEXT: A'. YHWH spoken to in praise, spoken of as Deliverer

2 Samuel 22:50–51

⁵⁰ **Therefore, I shall acclaim** [confess] **You among the nations**, O Yahweh,
And to Your Name shall I make melody.

⁵¹ He is the One magnifying the salvations [victories] of His king.
 And showing benignity [mercy] **to His anointed**,
 To David, and to his seed for the eon.

Psalms 18:49–50

⁴⁹ **Therefore, I shall acclaim** [confess] **You among the nations**, O Yahweh,
And to Your Name shall I indeed make melody.

⁵⁰ He is the One magnifying the salvations [victories] of His king,
 And showing benignity [mercy] **to His anointed one**,
 To David, and to his seed for the eon.

Permanent

[end text]

Verse 50/49 and 51/50. These verses of David end the narrative. David makes a vow that he will **“acclaim”** YHWH to the world, and make music. You have read that very acclamation and song. The apostle Paul recalls David’s statement and proclaims God’s mercy even further, when he quoted and used **Verse 50/49** to indicate that **“the nations”** [*goyim*] will someday recognize God’s mercy and glorify him.

“Yet the nations are to glorify God for His mercy, according as it is written,

‘Therefore I shall be acclaiming [confessing] **You among the nations,’**
‘And to Your name shall I be playing music.’”

• **Romans 15:9** (quoting Verses 50/49)

David’s acclamation and song have not yet been recognized by the nations even though the words of David and Paul have spread around the world. God has not yet opened the minds and hearts of the people of Israel or the nations to receive God’s mercy. That will come in the future when God brings forth more information about King David and his relationship to Messiah. Two verses in Hosea give us information about our present and near future, **“in the latter days,”** before Christ returns. It describes the situation of Israel precisely at this moment and then it tells us what will happen soon, God willing:

“For many days shall the sons of Israel dwell

**without king and without chief official, And
 without sacrifice and without altar, And
 without ephod or Urim and Thummim.**

Afterward the sons of Israel shall return [to their land], **And**

**they will seek Yahweh their Elohim, and David their king;
 they will come in awe to Yahweh and to His goodness** [when?] **in the latter days.”**

• **Hosea 3:4–5**

“In the latter days.” Those days are still ahead of us. May God speed that day. But I must emphasize that although Israel will **“seek YHWH,”** Israel will come to be **“in awe to YHWH,”** and Israel will recognize **“His goodness”** — none of those things will happen quickly. How long did it take you to be called by God and accept the knowledge of His grace through Christ that you know now? Yes, it will happen quicker for Israel in the future than it happened for you, but it will still take time — all to occur before Christ returns.

We will be able to recognize the fulfillment of Hosea’s prophecy (and David’s and Paul’s prophecies as well) because not only will YHWH be honored by Israel, but the nations (the Gentiles) shall also **“seek YHWH”** as **“their Elohim”** and they all will seek David, because of what his words will teach them. (Again, both Israel and the Gentile nations will learn these things). This information will be known to everyone.

Verse 51/50. This verse concludes by giving us the reason for the song. The purpose of this song is to show God’s deeds by His constantly saving David, to make known that His salvation extends beyond David to another **“anointed one”** of God. YHWH’s salvations and victories refer to David in the immediate sense, but they refer to Christ Jesus in the ultimate sense.

It is likely there is even more information in this song of 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18 than we can know at this time. We simply do not have enough details about some of the events described in the salvations of God for **“David and to his seed for the eon.”** For me as well as you, it is exceedingly frustrating. I want to know more. And being impatient, I want to know more now. I don’t want to wait. Why isn’t Scripture clearer to us now? We must wait on God as it says in the first and last verses of Psalm 27:

**“Yahweh is my Light and my Salvation; Whom should I fear?
Yahweh is the stronghold of my life; Of whom should I be afraid? ...**

[1] **Be expectant toward Yahweh;** [2] **Be steadfast, and** [3] **let your heart be resolute. Yea,**
[1] **be expectant toward Yahweh.”**

• *Psalm 27:1, 14, CLV*

The King James Version expresses verse 14 in a way that may be more understandable:

**“[1] Wait on YHWH: [2] be of good courage, and [3] he shall strengthen your heart:
[1] wait, I say, on YHWH.”**

• *Psalm 27:1, 14 KJV*

These sentiments are very similar to those expressed in 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18.

The first seven verses of chapter 23 of 2 Samuel **“are the last words of David.”** Why are David’s last words placed here, when earlier events in David’s life are presented later in Second Samuel? You would expect **“last words”** to be given just before the death narrative, yet they are presented immediately after David’s song. This seems strange, until you see the outline after I present the text.

TEXT: The Last Words of David

2 Samuel 23:1–7

¹ Now these **are the last words of David:**

The averring [declaration] of David son of Jesse,
The averring of the master [hero] whom El raised up,
The anointed of the Elohim of Jacob,
And the pleasant one of the psalms of Israel.

² **“The spirit of Yahweh has spoken by me,
And His declarations have been on my tongue.**

³ **The Elohim of Israel has said,
To me **the Rock of Israel has spoken:**
When the one ruling over humanity is righteous
And is ruling in the fear of Elohim,**

⁴ **Then it is like the light of the morning,
When the sun rises,
A morning without thick clouds,
Like the brightness after rain
Bringing verdure [greenery] from the earth.**

⁵ **Indeed, is not my house thus with El?
For **He has made an eonian covenant** with me,**

Arranged forth in every respect and safeguarded.
Indeed, shall He not cause all my salvation
And my every desire to sprout?

⁶ Yet the worthless, they are like thorns,
All of them isolated away,
For they should not be taken by hand.

⁷ When a man touches them, he must be fully armed
With iron and the shaft of a spear.
And with fire shall they be burned, yea burned in their shame.” [end text]

These last words of David have significance, but they are obscure. Yet they are in 2 Samuel chapter 23 for a reason. These words of David relate to David’s song of praise in 2 Samuel chapter 22 and Psalm 18. Understand where we are in the story of King David’s life within the plot arc of 2 Samuel/Kings side-by-side with Chronicles. Look at this revealing outline by David Dorsey^p:

End of David’s Reign

(2 Samuel 21–1 Kings 2)

- a **famine caused by Saul’s war against Gibeonites** (2 Samuel 21:1–14)
 - Ends: when YHWH answered prayer in behalf of the land (21:14)
- | b **David’s heroes** (21:15–22)
 - How they defeated great Philistine warriors
- | c **David’s song of praise** (22:1–51 and Psalm 18)
- | c’ **David’s last words** (23:1–7)
- | b’ **David’s heroes** (23:8–39)
 - Including how they defeated Philistines in battle
- a’ **plague caused by David’s census** (preparing for wrongful war?) (24:1–25)
 - Ends: when YHWH answered prayer in behalf of the land (24:25)
- d **conclusion:** David’s death and Solomon’s succession (1 Kings 1:1–2:46)
 - Ends: the kingdom firmly established in Solomon’s hands (1 Kings 2:46)

In this outline the texts in this article are shaded under **c** and **c’**. The symmetry is remarkable and obvious when set out plainly. This is true considering the authors and editors of this document did not use a written outline. What they desired to communicate was in their minds, and they transmitted those thoughts from their minds to ours. The original audience listened to the text being read to them. Although the words were written, the oral nature of the text helped the audience to “keep their place” as the story progressed from one event to another, allowing them to appreciate the various story arcs.

When the audience heard the biblical text read to them again, they anticipated developments, learning more each time they heard these sophisticated and interwoven writings. I think this process is wonderful, but truly, should we be surprised considering God Himself inspired such writings? God’s basic information comes through clearly to the reader (or listener), in any language and in any translation as he or she hears or reads the histories of King David and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. God’s Word itself is truly a miracle.

David Sielaff, September 2015

^p David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 134.