

Introduction

1. This is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving which focuses on deliverance and refuge
2. Written when the Lord delivered David from Saul which was before the sin with Bathsheba
3. Almost identical to Psalm 18 (word for word, verse by verse)
4. The word repetition falls into groups or categories which reveals some of the themes (synonyms):
 - a. David's describes his situation using words like darkness (2x), death/destruction (4x), distress (1x), calamity (1x), and mentions his enemies (4x)
 - b. David describes God as a place of safety using words like fortress (2x), refuge (2x), a rock (4x), a shield (3x), a horn (3)
 - c. He describes God as a deliver (3x), savior (5x), rescuer (49), and one who rewards (3x) righteousness
5. It divides into four parts:
 - a. God as a fortress and deliverer
 - b. God as the one who rewards obedience
 - c. God as a sustainer
 - d. David's final praise for victory and God's covenant loyalty

A. David praises the Lord for being his fortress and deliverer (22:2-19)

1. He begins by describing the Lord as One in whom he takes "**refuge**" (READ 2-4):
 - a. Refuge refers to a condition or place that provides safety, shelter and protection

Trying to escape the downpour at Disney under the overhang

- b. He refers to the Lord as "**my rock**", "**my fortress**", and "**my stronghold**", all of which represent stability, security and protection
 - 1) Notice the repetition of personal possessive pronoun "**my**" through all of these (and the next)
 - 2) This is no mere cognitive acknowledgement but something deeply personal to David
 - c. He refers to the Lord as "**my deliver**", "**my horn of salvation**" and "**my savior**" which represent deliverance
 - d. He refers to the Lord as the one upon whom he calls to save him from his enemies (4)
 2. David describes his desperation (5-7a):
 - a. Like waves of the sea, "**death encompassed**" (surrounded) him and "**destruction overwhelmed**" (more probably "**ungodliness terrified me**" as treated by the KJV here and the NASB in parallel verse from Psalm 18)
 - b. He refers to the "**cords of Sheol**" surrounding him and the "**snares of death**" confronting:
 - 1) The cords of Sheol is a horrifying word picture because it portrays hell as having ropes or bands used to bind its captive and prevent escape, and David is surrounded by them

- 2) The imagery of snares is similar in that death is trying to trap David like a hunter does a wild animal
- c. He describes himself as being in “**distress**” (extreme anxiety, sorrow and pain) and all he could do is cry out to “**my God**” (7a)
3. David describes the Lord’s response (7b-19):
 - a. It begins with the Lord hearing David’s cry (READ 7b)
 - b. He then uses two incredible images to describe the Lord’s response:
 - 1) In the first, David presents the Lord as an all-powerful God who bursts forth from heaven with terrifying and devastating power (READ 8-16):
 - a) He causes both the heavens and earth to quake (8)
 - b) He is angry with fire and smoke coming out of his mouth and nose (9)
 - c) He is engulfed by thick black clouds but intense light created by coals of fire bursts forth in front of Him (10-13)
 - d) His voice echoes like thunder (14)
 - e) Intense lightning streaks across the sky like scattered (lit. confused) arrows (15)
 - f) The waters of the ocean are literally blasted away by a burst of his breath from his nostrils to the point where the ocean floor is completely exposed and laid bare (16)
 - 2) In the second, David presents the Lord as a gentle and compassionate God who rescues him (READ 17-19):
 - a) He reveals God as looking down from heaven and seeing him engulfed by the waves of death he described earlier, and then God reaching down from heaven into those waters and lifting him out of his distress (17)
 - b) While David’s enemies are too strong for him, the Lord delivers him and supports him (18-19)
 - 3) There couldn’t be a better picture of both God’s power and ability to deliver us in times of trouble or distress, and his compassion and willingness to do so
4. Practical Application: where do you turn when in distress? Do you expect the Lord to reach down and lift you up out of your distress?

B. David praises the Lord for rewarding his faithfulness (READ 22:20-33a)

1. We have been conditioned as Christians to believe that we cannot earn God’s favor:
 - a. This is certainly true when it comes to salvation and eternal life:
 - 1) Romans 3:23: “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**”
 - 2) Romans 6:23: “**For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”
 - 3) Ephesians 2:8-9: “**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.**”
 - b. However, what about outside of eternal salvation? Can we earn God’s blessing or be rewarded for our behavior?
 - 1) God promised the Israelites blessings for obedience to the Law (Leviticus 26:3ff): “**If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall...**” give you rains, multiply your crops, grant you peace and give victories over your

enemies, give you abundance, make My dwelling among you and walk among you (paraphrase)

- 2) He promised to reward them for obeying His commandments (Psalm 19:11):
"Moreover, by them [God's commands] your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward."
 - 3) He promised His favor to the righteous (Proverbs 12:2): **"A good man [context: righteous man] will obtain favor from the LORD, but He will condemn a man who devices evil."**
2. David certainly believed this and felt God had rewarded Him for his obedience (READ 22:20-25):
- a. He begins by saying that God rescued him because **"He delighted in me"** (20):
 - 1) This means to take pleasure in, to be pleased by
 - 2) The queen of Sheba used the same word when speaking to Solomon early in his reign, prior to him forsaking the Lord (1 Kings 10:9): **"Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."**
 - 3) David actually used the same word in regard to the Lord and himself when he was fleeing from Absalom (2 Samuel 15:26): **"But if He should say thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."**
 - b. Three times David says the Lord **"rewarded"** or **"recompensed"** him (21a, 21b, 25):
 - 1) He attributes this to the Lord seeing his obedience:
 - a) **"according to My righteousness...cleanness of my hands"** (25)
 - b) **"I have kept the ways of the Lord...not acted wickedly against the Lord"** (26)
 - c) **"all His ordinances were before me...I did not depart from them"** (23)
 - d) **"I was blameless toward Him...kept myself from iniquity"** (24)
 - 2) The word recompense is an interesting one because it refers to returning something and David highlights this in the next few verses (READ 26-30):
 - a) The Lord shows (or returns) kindness, blamelessness, and pureness to those who are kind, blameless and pure
 - b) But, to those who are **"perverted"** (lit. twisted) and **"haughty"** He brings down
3. What do we make of this?
- a. Does it sound arrogant and self-righteous?
 - b. Did David truly believe that God rescued and delivered him from his enemies purely on his own merits?
 - c. Did he really believe that he was sinless and perfectly righteous?
 - d. Certainly not:
 - 1) David recognized he was a sinner, and that he wasn't perfect, but also recognized that the Lord didn't demand perfect but faithfulness and loyalty
 - 2) He was reflecting what he wrote in Psalm 1 (READ)
4. Practical Application: Would you have the confidence to speak to the Lord as he does?

C. David praises the Lord for sustaining him (READ 22:31-49)
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1. The Lord sustained him in battle (31-43):

- a. Once again David uses the images of a shield, refuge, a rock, a fortress
 - b. He says that it was the Lord's help that made him great (36) and able to defeat his enemies (38-39)
 - c. The Lord was not only David's strength in battle but made his enemies flee (40-41)
2. The Lord sustained him as king (44-49):
 - a. The Lord "**delivered him from the contentions of**" his own people (e.g. Saul, Absalom, etc.)
 - b. The Lord kept him as head of the nations he had conquered (44b-46)
 - c. The Lord was the one who "**executed judgment**" and defeated those who challenged David (47-49)
3. Practical Application: where does your strength come from? What sustains you?

D. Conclusion: David's final thanksgiving and praise (READ 50-51)

1. He thanks the Lord for victory (deliverance)
2. He thanks the Lord for His covenant loyalty