

PSALMS

Chapter 18

I love you, O LORD, my strength. ²The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. ⁴The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; ⁵the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. ⁶In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. ⁷Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. ⁸Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. ⁹He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. ¹⁰He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. ¹¹He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. ¹²Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. ¹³The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. ¹⁴And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them. ¹⁵Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. ¹⁶He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. ¹⁷He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. ¹⁸They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support. ¹⁹He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me. The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me. ²¹For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. ²²For all his rules^[c] were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me. ²³I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from my guilt. ²⁴So the LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. ²⁵With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; ²⁶with the purified you show yourself pure; and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. ²⁷For you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down. ²⁸For it is you who light my lamp; the LORD my God lightens my darkness. ²⁹For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. ³⁰This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?—³²the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. ³³He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. ³⁴He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. ³⁵You have given me the shield of your salvation, and your right hand supported me, and your gentleness made me great. ³⁶You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and my feet did not slip. ³⁷I pursued my enemies and overtook them, and did not turn back till they were consumed. ³⁸I thrust them through, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. ³⁹For you equipped me with strength for the battle; you made those who rise against me sink under me. ⁴⁰You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and those who hated me I destroyed. ⁴¹They cried for help, but there was none to save; they cried to the LORD, but he did not answer them. I beat them fine as dust before the wind; I cast them out like the mire of the streets. ⁴³You delivered me from strife with the people; you made me the head of the nations; people whom I had not known served me. ⁴⁴As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me;

foreigners came cringing to me. ⁴⁵ Foreigners lost heart and came trembling out of their fortresses. ⁴⁶ The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation—⁴⁷ the God who gave me vengeance and subdued peoples under me, ⁴⁸ who rescued me from my enemies; yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me; you delivered me from the man of violence. ⁴⁹ For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations, and sing to your name. ⁵⁰ Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.

Ps 18 This song of David occurs also (with minor variations) in 2Sa 22 (see notes there). In its structure, apart from the introduction (vv. 1–3) and the conclusion (vv. 46–50), the song is composed of three major divisions: (1) the Lord’s deliverance of David from his mortal enemies (vv. 4–19); (2) the moral grounds for the Lord’s saving help (vv. 20–29); (3) the Lord’s help recounted (vv. 30–45). (CSB)

Royal thanksgiving hymn. Twin themes of gratitude and praise permeate the psalm. *choirmaster*. See p 993. *his enemies ... Saul*. Along with a variant form of Ps 18, superscription also appears in 2Sm 22:1, which provides the historical setting. (TLSB)

Format: Vv 1–3, the deliverer; vv 4–5, cords of death; v 6, the Lord hears; vv 7–12, the Lord comes down; vv 13–15, the Lord attacks; vv 16–19, the Lord rescues; vv 20–24, rewarded for righteousness; vv 25–30, the Lord protects the humble; vv 31–42, equipped by the Lord; vv 43–45, forgiveness subdued; vv 46–48, God be blessed; vv 49–50, salvation for David’s offspring. (TLSB)

18 *servant of the LORD*. See 78:70; 89:3, 20, 39; 132:10; 144:10. The title designates David in his royal office as, in effect, an official in the Lord’s own kingly rule over his people (see 2Sa 7:5)—as were Moses (see Ex 14:31 and note), Joshua (see Jos 24:29) and the prophets (Elijah, 2Ki 9:36; Jonah, 2Ki 14:25; Isaiah, Isa 20:3; Daniel, Da 6:20). (CSB)

when the LORD delivered him. It is possible that David composed his song shortly after his victories over his foreign enemies (2Sa 8:1–14), but it may have been later in his life. (CSB)

18:1–3 A prelude of praise. (CSB)

18:1 *I love you*. From an unusual Hebrew expression that emphasizes the fervor of David’s love. (CSB)

The verb used here is unusual; this is the only place this form and this meaning occur. It describes a deep feeling of compassion and tender affection (s.v. Ps. 51:1). It usually refers to the Lord’s tender compassion for his people, but here the psalmist used it to express his deep affectionate for the Lord. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

Strength – The expression “my strength” (s.v. Ps. 27:14) is in apposition to “the Lord,” further describing him as the one who gives strength to his servants (“strength” is then a metonymy – a figure of speech which an idea is evoked or named by means of a term designating some associated notion. The word sword is designation for military career. of cause). David saw the strength of God in the way he was enabled again and again to gain victory after victory – and referring to God as his strength surely brought to mind a lifetime of experiences. These experiences he now refers to with a series of figures. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:2 Verse 2 focuses on the character of God with a series of figures of speech (see similar listings in Pss. 31 and 71). The images are drawn from both military settings and geographical locations. Kinder says that in listing these descriptions David was reliving his escapes and victories. By these metaphors he was saying that God was his place of safety and security. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

The divine epithets are derived from David's familiarity with battle and with the geographical scenery of Canaan. These metaphors convey the intensity of David's love for his God as the all-sufficient One. God is the Great King, who is able to deliver those who call on him. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Psalms)

rock ... rock. The translation of two different Hebrew words. "Rock" is a common poetic figure for God (or the gods: Dt 32:31, 37; Isa 44:8), symbolizing his unflinching (see Isa 26:4) strength as a fortress refuge (see vv. 31, 46; 31:2–3; 42:9; 62:7; 71:3; 94:22; Isa 17:10) or as deliverer (see 19:14; 62:2; 78:35; 89:26; 95:1; Dt 32:15). It is a figure particularly appropriate for David's experience (see 1Sa 23:14, 25; 24:2, 22; 26:20), for the Lord was his true security. (CSB)

The first description, "my rock" is a geographical metaphor; it relates to a natural place of protection, a rocky crag that serves as a defense. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

Fortress – This word was applied to the huge rocky plateau in the desert called Masada, a formidable place of refuge. It provides a good illustration of a natural desert fortress. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

Deliverer – This simply declares that the Lord is "my deliver" (s.v. Ps. 37:20), "the one who delivers me." All the images in the verse serve to illustrate the many ways and times that the Lord delivered him from danger – because he took refuge in him (s.v. Ps. 7:1). (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

Shield – Because he is speaking about deliverance during war, David describes the Lord in military terms. (PBC)

Shield (see Ps. 3:3; Gen. 15:1), signifies God as the one who protects his people, especially in the midst of battle. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

horn. symbolizes strength ; Dt 33:17; Jer 48:25. (CSB)

The image of the "horn" is drawn from the animal world; it signifies power, and is therefore used for kings (cf. 132:17; Dan. 7:7, 8). By this image God is described as his saving power, the one who delivers him in battle. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

stronghold. In Israel, mountain strongholds (such as Masada) were high and inaccessible. (TLSB)

This is a parallel term for "fortress". It is a high tower meaning to be high, unassailable. Such a stronghold might be isolated high up in the rocks (see Is. 33:16) or built high. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:3 *who is worthy of praise* – All of the Lord's past acts of deliverance and protection prompt the inescapable conclusion: he is to be praised. Who better to call on in trouble than the one

worthy of praise, for that means he has a history of answering prayers? I AM SAVED – It is as though the Lord actually appeared to his servant and extricated him from his dangers. (Leupold)

I am saved – It is as though the Lord actually appeared to his servant and extricated him from his dangers. (Leupold)

18:3-6 Psalmist recalls perils that assailed him and his desperate cry to the Lord. (TLSB)

18:4-5 David depicts his experiences in poetic figures of mortal danger. (CSB)

The figures of “cords” and “snares” are implied comparisons, indicating the captivating power of death; it is as if ropes were wrapped around him pulling him down to death. There may also be an allusion here to the idea of chaos as a force, for in the pagan Canaanite world “death” was deified as a god named “mot” (“death”), and the rivers (current, Nahar) and the sea (Yam), symbols of chaos in antiquity, were also made deities. A violent death might seem to psalmist to be a part of the chaos of this life, a chaos that dominated life in their pagan mentality. It might even have seemed to him that the deified forces of paganism would triumph if he met such an overwhelming death, but the Lord delivered him supernaturally from such a chaotic death, a death that seemed to have power over life. God would not surrender his servant to such an untimely death, and certainly not to any evil powers of death and hell, real or imagined. I AM SAVED – It is as though the Lord actually appeared to his servant and extricated him from his dangers. (Leupold)

18:4 *cords*. 2Sa 22:5 has “waves.” (CSB)

Lit, “the labor pains of death surrounded me.” (TLSB)

18:5 *cords of the grave ... snares of death*. See 116:3. He had, as it were, been snared by death (personified) and bound as a prisoner of the grave (see Job 36:8). (CSB)

No less than death and the grave had taken hold of David. (TLSB)

David calls the many dangers he has faced “death traps.” Recall how often David barely escaped death when he was being hunted by Saul. Absalom’s rebellion nearly cost him his life. (PBC)

18:6 *temple*. God’s heavenly abode, where he sits enthroned (see 11:4; 113:5; Isa 6:1; 40:22). (CSB)

The tabernacle, God’s dwelling on earth (cf 2Sm 6), where David prayed. (TLSB)

God answered the prayer from his temple, which is view of all the heavenly images to follow, most likely refers to the heavenly sanctuary. I AM SAVED – It is as though the Lord actually appeared to his servant and extricated him from his dangers. (Leupold)

18:7-19 David rehearses God’s powerful response to his cries for mercy. (TLSB)

18:7-15 The Lord came to the aid of his servant—depicted as a fearful theophany (divine manifestation) of the heavenly Warrior descending in wrathful attack upon David’s enemies (see 5:4-5; 68:1-8; 77:16-19; Mic 1:3-4; Na 1:2-6; Hab 3:3-15). He sweeps down upon them like a fierce thunderstorm (see Jos 10:11; Jdg 5:20-22; 1Sa 2:10; 7:10; 2Sa 5:24; Isa 29:6). (CSB)

The language of this section reminds us of two events, God's awesome appearance at Mt Sinai and his return on Judgment Day. By using language borrowed from the last day David shows that God present judgments on his enemies are foreshadowings of the great judgment to come. (PBC)

In verses 7-15 we have the description of a supernatural intervention. The use of the first person verbs and suffixes disappear from this section, and rightly so because it is all about the Lord. It uses the language of epiphany in which all the forces and elements of nature are involved in the Lord's presence to deliver. The language drawn on the phenomena at Sinai when the Lord made his presence known among his people. As then, so in subsequent miraculous interventions, all the phenomena of nature envelops God in his appearance. And even though the phenomena veil the Lord from plain sight, they are so compounded and so dazzling that they cannot be mistaken for ordinary events – when God comes in power to rescue his people, all nature is moved at his coming. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:7-8 David reports the way God responded to his prayer, evoking images of divine glory that occurred when God gave the Law at Mount Sinai (Ex 19:16–20:21). Thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, and earthquakes accompanied God's action. (TLSB)

18:7 *earth reeled and rocked* – Earthquakes seem to be the common starting point for theophanies (Jdg. 5:4ff; Deut. 33:2f; Ps. 97:2ff; Is. 30:27ff). Because rebellious forces were on the earth, the earth quaked in anticipation of the Lord's wrath. The earth reeled and rocked at his quake, and the very foundations of the mountains trembled because he was angry. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:8 God's fierce majesty is portrayed in terms similar to those applied to the awesome leviathan (Job 41:19–21). (CSB)

Smoke went up from his nostrils – These are symbols of divine wrath being breathed out. The language of a volcanic eruption is reminiscent of the end of Sodom. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:9 *parted the heavens and came down*. Imagery of the Lord stretching open a hole in the atmosphere so that He can descend to earth. (TLSB)

thick darkness. Additional aspects of the Lord's manifestation on Sinai (cf v 11; Dt 4:11). (TLSB)

The dark clouds hovered over the area, and above them was his presence, veiled by the darkness. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:10 *cherubim*. Symbols of royalty. In Eze. 1; 10, cherubim appear as the bearers of the throne-chariot of God. (CSB)

Angelic creature that appears with manifestations of the divine glory. (TLSB)

His chariots were the angels (Ps. 68:33), here identified as the powerful and terrifying composite angelic creature called a "cherub." The dense clouds seemed to bear him up, but it was in reality the angelic chariotry (Ezek. 1). His swift flight across the heavens was like riding the wings of the wind (see Ps. 104:3-4). Here there may be another allusion to pagan religions, for in Canaan Baal was known as "the rider of the cloud" – it was part of his description as lord of heaven and earth. That description was simply part of a mythological text; this description in the Bible is of the very

presence of the Lord's armies. The victory over such forces that were deified in Canaan was what made it clear that the biblical account was true. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

wings of the wind. The Lord is portrayed as riding cherubim and flying like the wind. (TLSB)

18:11-14 *coals of fire.* Amid the darkness already described, there are also flashes of fire and lightning, poetically described in v 14 as the Lord's arrows. The Lord's voice thundered from Mount Sinai. (TLSB)

18:11-12 The darkness in the dense clouds became his canopy. Apparently the phenomenon of a dark thunderstorm appeared to be a covering for his glorious presence, but ahead of the clouds was a dazzling brilliance that preceded him as he went (see Deut. 33:2; Hab. 3:4). From this dark cloud cover came hailstones and coals of fire, the imagery of the thunderstorm and volcanic eruption being joined together as evidence of his swift judgment. All of this precedes the terrifying thunder, which signifies the mighty voice of the Most High God (see Ps. 29 and Rev. 19:6). (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:13 *voice.* For thunder as the voice of God see Ps 29; Job 37:2–5. (CSB)

Baal also was said to thunder when he was about to bring the rains; but this passage is different in that it does far more than accompany rain that would then be explained as coming from a deity – it accompanies the Lord's actual intervention in battle to give his people victory over the pagan enemies. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:14 *arrows.* For shafts of lightning as the arrows of God see 77:17; 144:6; Hab 3:11. (CSB)

Out of this storm God sends down bolts of lightning like arrows (see also Pss. 77:17; 144:6; Hab. 3:9-11) to scatter the enemy. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:15 Perhaps recalls the great deed of the heavenly Warrior when he defeated Israel's enemy at the Red Sea (see Ex 15:1–12). (CSB)

Channels of the sea...foundations of the world – Cf God's deliverance at the Red Sea (Ex 14:21–31). (TLSB)

Finally the language turns to a description of the foundations of the land without the presence of the chaotic waters. What is terrifying and chaotic in nature and deified by pagans is all under the power of God to be used for the destruction of evil forces. In this is a similarity to creation in which the Lord controls the waters by his powerful commands so that the dry land appears. Here we read that as a result of the blast of his rebuke though this fierce storm the channels of the sea are seen, and the foundations of the world are laid bare. This brings to an end of the descriptions of the theophany, the manifestation of the divine presence in the phenomena of nature. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:16–19 The deliverance. (CSB)

18:16 *sent from high* – The Lord hears his prayer and intervenes from heaven. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

deep waters – He rescues him from his enemies, which is like being rescued from many waters (a reference to the torrents of verse 4, an implied comparison). The word “rescue” is “draw out” ; it was used in Exodus 2:10) for Moses being drawn out of the water. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:17-18 Reminder that David’s perils resulted from enemies amassed against him, not from forces of nature. (TLSB)

18:19 *into a broad place* – The poor, afflicted soul was brought out of all his troubles and set in an open and secure place where there was ample room. Being confined almost always means pressure and trouble. (Leupold)

18:20 *according to my righteousness*. David does not claim sinlessness here and in the following verses, but rather asserts that he is the innocent victim of human jealousy and unprovoked intrigue. (TLSB)

18:21-24 *the ways of the LORD*. The Lord promised reward to those who followed His teaching. David refers to human righteousness in this passage, which remains imperfect. Only the righteousness given through faith in Christ is judged perfect before God (Rm 3:22–28). (TLSB)

way(s). Hbr *derek*, “trodden path,” used for a “pattern of behavior or custom.” “The way of the Lord” is twofold: He punishes sinfulness, but He also shows mercy to the repentant. (TLSB p. 844)

18:23 *was blameless...kept myself from my guilt* – It cannot be denied that what he has just outlined can be described as living with a holy purpose in mind, and no man can deny that such living may achieve some measure of being blameless. All the while David was not ignorant of certain sins that beset him, and so he guarded himself against these as carefully as possible. (Leupold)

This is not pride, because the Lord has delivered him, and the Lord delivers the humble. This is simply claiming that God accepts him. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:25-50 God is repeatedly thanked and praised for His goodness. (TLSB)

18:25-26 While God is good and gracious to all, He does not treat iniquity and righteousness alike. God is merciful to those reflecting divine attributes. (TLSB)

18:25 *with the blameless* – In the first expression we have the word “the faithful” (s.v. Ps. 23:6), often translated “the merciful” here. This is a common description of the faithful people of God in the Psalter (see Pss. 16:10; 30:4 etc.); it describes those who are loyal to the covenant that God has made with them (see Ps. 50:51). So to those who are loyal to the covenant, God will show himself loyal as well meaning, he will demonstrate his faithful love to his own (Ps. 17:7). (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

Show yourself blameless – God shows himself blameless, meaning that God’s dealing with people who maintain their integrity will be in faithfulness and righteousness – no one could find fault with it. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:26 *with the purified* – The description of the people as “purified,” the purified one” or “the one who purifies himself,” refers to a moral purification. Describing believers as the “purified” would

include the cleansing of sin through divine forgiveness, but in this context which stresses faithfulness, it would refer to remaining pure by the living a righteous life. To pure God deals in purity, openness, and perfection as he administers kindness and justice. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

Crooked – They are here described as “twisted, perverse” (see Prov. 2:15; 28:6). With them, God shows himself perverse, devious. This idea may at first seem troubling, but it simply says that God deals with the perverse in kind – he can match them in their capacities, twisting their wickedness around to come back upon them. God gives them up to follow their own perverse ways until they bring destruction on themselves (see Lev. 26:43; Rom. 1:28). (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:27 God saves the humble, but brings down the proud. The word “humble” (s.v. Ps. 9:12) can mean the afflicted, poor, or humble. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

Haughty eyes- The arrogant think they have no need of God, and as a result they disregard the value or the needs of others. This arrogant attitude, expressed by their eyes, is one of the things the Lord hates (Prov. 6:16). Their gaze may be high, but God brings them low. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:28 *light my lamp* – The lamp is a figure (an implied comparison) meaning prosperity, continuation of life and divine guidance. Lighting the lamp would indicate God gives life (whereas quenching a light would mean extinguishing a life (see 2 Sam. 21:17). Even in the darkness God is the source of life. The darkness here is also a figure for times and circumstances that are life-threatening. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

God is the source of physical light (Gn 1:3) and spiritual light (Ps 27:1). (TLSB)

18:29 *by You I can run against a troop ... leap over a wall*. Picturing an indefensible assault (cf Php 4:13). (TLSB)

“Troop” can refer to all kinds of conflicts in warfare. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

“Leaping over a wall” is perhaps escaping (see 1 Sam. 23:2). (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:30 *is perfect*. Does not fail—and so, because of his blessing, David’s way has not failed (see v. 32) (CSB)

Everything that God does is blameless, perfect. Is always vindicated. The theme of vindication appears throughout the Psalms (e.g., 26:1; 35:24; 43:1; 54:1). (TLSB)

No one who has cast himself on the mercy of God can arrive at any other conclusion that that there is never a flaw in God’s dealings with his own. (Leupold)

Is always vindicated. The theme of vindication appears throughout the Psalms (e.g., 26:1; 35:24; 43:1; 54:1). (TLSB)

word of the LORD. While the reference is general, it applies especially to God’s promise to David (see 2Sa 7:8–11). (CSB)

The psalmist known that God's word is true and therefore trustworthy. Is always vindicated. The theme of vindication appears throughout the Psalms (e.g., 26:1; 35:24; 43:1; 54:1). (TLSB)

Shield – The shield is a metaphor for protection to those who acknowledge their need and take refuge in him. Is always vindicated. The theme of vindication appears throughout the Psalms (e.g., 26:1; 35:24; 43:1; 54:1). (TLSB)

18:31 This verse uses rhetorical questions to make the point: “Who is God but Yahweh?” meaning there is no god besides Yahweh. “Who is a rock except our God? meaning our God alone is the source of all strength and security (the metaphor of the rock is treated more fully in Deut. 32:4, 15, and 18). The point is that no other deity can be trusted, and no other deity should receive praise that is due to the Lord. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:32-36 In verses 32-36 the psalmist explains in detail what this means to him. The variety of verbal forms used suggests that these should be taken as general descriptions of what the Lord does, which would obviously include what the Lord has done. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:32 Here David acknowledges that both physical strength and moral uprightness are God's gracious gifts. (TLSB)

Equipped me with strength – “The God who equips me with strength,” uses the participle of “gird, surround.” Girding with strength means making strong (the figure referring to equipping for war). The verse similar to Isaiah 45:5 which has the same sequence of ideas: the only true God, Yahweh, is the one who strengthens Cyrus for his task. Here the psalm adds that if God gives him strength he also makes his way perfect, probably meaning safe and without difficulties. He does this because his way is perfect (v. 30). (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:33 *like the feet of a deer*. Sure in the most difficult circumstances. (TLSB)

Perhaps the ibex, that are sure-footed on the rocky ledges and cliffs. God makes his sure-footed- he enables him to stand on the heights. The point is the agility he needed to scale the cliffs and seize mountain strongholds. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:34 *trains my hands for war* – David declares that God is the one who equips him for war. God equipped David to overcome such evil enemies as Goliath and Absalom in war. David's wars against such enemies were just. (PBC)

Strength training from the ultimate warrior. (TLSB)

It may refer to a wooden bow strengthened with bronze, or perhaps a strong bow used to shoot arrows made with bronze tips. The point is that he able to use such heavy-duty weapons because God gives him the ability and the strength to do so. (A Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:35 *gentleness made me great* – Whenever he stumbled, it was the hand of the Lord that sustained him. In fact, throughout all of his experiences God condescended to serve him, and this is what made the writer great. (Leupold)

Lit, “your humility made me great.” It is exceedingly rare in the Scriptures that humility is attributed to God. Cf Php 2:5–11, where Christ's humility and obedience unto death is praised. (TLSB)

18:36 *gave me a wide place* – The psalmist asserts that God broadens his path so that his ankles do not twist. The figures used say that God makes his way flat and broad, so it is an easy walk; it refers to all his activities, but primarily his military activities. (Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:37–45 This section provides a report of what God enabled the psalmist to do on the battlefield. The verbs for most part imperfects but require a past tense translation. In several places the parallel poem in 2 Samuel includes *waw* confirming the past tense translation. The section reads as if David was bragging about his military exploits; but the psalm has made it very clear that God enable him to do this. (Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

Shocking as it may sound to modern ears, the OT frequently depicts God as commanding and then helping to carry out the annihilation of Israel’s enemies. He destroyed the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex 14) and leveled Jericho (Jsh 6). This clarifies David’s boasts (vv 37–38, 42). (TLSB)

18:37 *pursued my enemies* – He chased his enemies and overtook them adding that he was relentless in his pursuit until they were finished. (Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:38 *were not able to rise* – He adds that he trust them so that they were not able to rise. (Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:39 *sank under me* – They were killed, not doing homage. (Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:40 *turn their backs* – This could mean that they fled before him, or more likely to this context that says he destroyed them that he placed his foot on their backs as they groveled before him (see Josh. 10:24). (Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:41 *as dust...like the mire* – There was no deliverance. On the contrary, the psalmist reports that God enabled him to beat them down like dust and cast them out like the mire. The comparison of his defeated enemies with dust and mire depicts them as worthless rubbish. (Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:43–45 The next three verses speak of his conquest of the nations. He begins by saying that God delivered him from conflicts with the people. “Conflicts” is from a word that often refers to a legal complaint, but here it may refer to the battles with people. God not only delivered him, but made him head of nations – people whom he had not known now were his servants. On this point he dwells for two more verses, noting how these foreigners came cowering to him when they heard of him, and explaining that had lost heart (withered) and so came trembling out of their fortresses. God subdued the nations around him so powerfully that they lost the will to fight and gladly submitted to the king. (Commentary on the Psalms – Ross)

18:43 *attacks of the people*. All the threats he had endured from his own people in the days of Saul, and perhaps also in the time of Absalom’s rebellion. (CSB)

people I did not know. Those with whom he had had no previous relations. (CSB)

Nations surrounding Israel. (TLSB)

18:44 *foreigners*. Including the Philistines, whose defeat at David’s hand is related in 2Sm 21:15–22. (TLSB)

18:46–50 Concluding doxology. (CSB)

18:46 *The LORD lives!* God’s interventions and blessings in David’s behalf have shown him to be the living God (see Dt 5:26). (CSB)

Canaanites similarly asserted that “Baal lives,” yet only the Lord could make good on the claim. His repeated acts of salvation prove this. (TLSB)

Psalm 115:3-5 – *Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. ⁴ Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. ⁵ They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see.*

18:47 *avenges me.* Redresses the wrongs committed against me (see Dt 32:41). (CSB)

18:48 *exalted me* – Typically includes ideas of spitefulness and hard-heartedness. When the Lord gives vengeance, however, He restores, turns injustice into peace, and so moves us to rejoice. (TLSB)

man of violence. Probably Saul. (TLSB)

18:49 David vows to praise the Lord among the nations. (CSB)

Psalmist declares God’s deliverance before all people. The Gospel is always universal in scope. This song is also our song, to be prayed by all believers. (TLSB)

18:50 *his king ... his anointed.* David views himself as the Lord’s chosen and anointed king (see 1Sa 16:13). (CSB)

According to the covenant given by the Lord to David in 2Sm 7, one of his descendants would sit on the throne forever. David’s greater Son, Jesus Christ, fulfills this promise. “Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end” (Is 9:7). (TLSB)

shows unfailing kindness. David’s final words recall the Lord’s covenant with him (see 2Sa 7:8–16). The whole song is to be understood in the context of David’s official capacity and the Lord’s covenant with him. What David claims in this grand conclusion—as, indeed, in the whole psalm—has been and is being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, David’s great descendant. (CSB)

Ps 18 David exults, “The LORD ... is worthy to be praised” (v 3). This truth makes our failures to render Him thanks and praise a grievous affront. In this psalm, David recounts a time when the very cords of death were dragging him down into the abyss. The deliverance God provided him reminds us of our own victory over the grave, achieved for us by the risen Lord Jesus. • Grant me Your grace, Lord Jesus, that I fervently sing the praises of what You have done and make Your name known to all people. Amen. (TLSB)