

## A Testimony of Salvation

INTRODUCTION: There are several sets of “*twin psalms*” included in the Psalter …

1. For example: Psalms 1 and 2 are the first set of *twin psalms*
  - a) A *Torah* (Law) Psalm: Psalm 1
  - b) A *Messianic* (Christ) Psalm: Psalm 2
  - c) The *two main themes* of the Psalter: God’s Law (Word) and God’s Messiah (Christ)
  - d) On these two *pillars* Judeo-Christian faith and Gospel religion rest.
  - e) As a PrayerBook we ground our prayers ...
    - (1) in God’s word (we pray Biblically)
    - (2) in Jesus’ Name (we pray in Christ’s merit)
2. We’ve already noted that Pss 9 and 10 were at one time probably one Psalm (*Brian Peterson*)
  - a) Psalm 9 is an *Acrostic Psalm* (first 11 letters of the Hebrew Alphabet)
  - b) Psalm 10:1 opens with the 12<sup>th</sup> letter of the Hebrew alphabet
  - c) Psalm 10:12-18 picks up the *Acrostic* using the final 4 letters of the Hebrew alphabet
  - d) It is a *broken acrostic* because Ps. 10:2-11 do not utilize the next 6 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
  - e) The *Septuagint* (Greek OT) carry Pss 9-10 as one Psalm
  - f) **O. Palmer Robertson:** *The Flow of the Psalms*; p. 79, footnote 18.

*Psalms 9 and 10 are treated as a single psalm in the LXX, which most likely would be dated sometime in the third or second century B.C. The Masoretic text separates the two psalms. The absence of a title for Psalm 10 supports the original unity of the two chapters, as attested to by the LXX. Worth noting also is the fact that Psalm 10 opens with the next letter of the alphabetic acrostic after the first eleven letters had been covered in Psalm 9. Generally, Psalms 9 and 10 are regarded as a “broken” acrostic, since six letters of the Hebrew alphabet are missing in Psalm 10. Yet the connection in substance between the nonalphabetic section (Ps. 10:2-11) and the alphabetic conclusion (Ps. 10:12-18) suggests that nothing has “gone missing” from the psalm.*
3. The same could be said of Pss 42 and 43: They were originally one psalm tied together by a structure and repeated *refrain*.

*Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
 and why are you in turmoil within me?  
 Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
 my salvation and my God. (Ps. 43:5)*

4. Pss 127 and 128 are *twin psalms*, probably both written by Solomon, about the joys, pleasures and importance of domestic home-life.
5. Some scholars see Psalms 18 and 19 as twin Psalms. The structural role of these two psalms is significant in *Book I* of the Psalms.
  - a) The First Collection of David's Psalms (Pss. 1-41)
  - b) **A parallel structure** to Psalms 1 and 2
  - c) Psalms 1 (*Torah*) and Psalm 2 (*Messianic*)
  - d) Psalm 18 (*Messianic*) and Psalm 119 (*Torah*)
6. **O. Palmer Robertson:** *The Flow of the Psalms*; pp. 66-67
  - a) *Within Book I, Psalms 18 and 19 play a key role in structuring this first collection of Davidic psalms. These two psalms present the coupling of a messianic psalm with a Torah psalm. In this regard, they mirror the two opening psalms of the Psalter, Psalms 1 and 2: a Torah psalm and a messianic psalm.*
  - b) *The placement of this poem in Book I of the Psalter, conjoined with Psalm 19 as the second Torah psalm, suggests an intentional arrangement of materials in Book I that has a direct relationship to the message of these two pivotal psalms.*
  - c) Dr. Robertson, Principal of the Uganda Bible College, in Kampala, Uganda; and a PCA Minister, makes these key observations.
    - (1) Psalm 2 speaks of Christ the Messiah as *King, the Anointed, God's Son (Son of God)*. In Pss 3-17 these Messianic terms do not occur. But Psalm 18 picks up these terms, and leads to several such titles throughout Book I.
 

*Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever. (Ps. 18:50)*
    - (2) In Pss 3-17 there are no *Kingship Psalms*, after Psalm 2. But after Psalms 18/19 there are 5 Kingship Psalms, in a group, (Pss 20-24)
    - (3) In Psalm 1 are several terms for God's Law (*Torah*). In Pss 3-17 only Ps. 10:5 makes reference to God's laws. But after Psalm 19 those terms are frequent.
    - (4) References to the *teaching* of God's Word, as in Psalm 1, do not occur in Pss. 3-17. But dozens of references to God's instruction, revelation, guidance, etc. occur in Pss 19-41.
    - (5) Surprisingly there are no explicit references to the *confession of sin* in Ps 3-17. But in response to Ps. 19, Pss 25, 32 and 38 make frequent confessions of sin.
    - (6) Finally, the repeated reference in the Psalter to God as "*my Rock*" does not occur in the Psalter until Psalm 18:2 and following.
7. Here is the point: Psalms 3-17 reflect the time in David's life when he was pursued by Saul and living as a fugitive. From Psalms 18/19 onward David is pictured as Israel's *established King*.
8. **O. Palmer Robertson:** *The Flow of the Psalms*; pp. 78-79.

*These several indicators support the concept that the coupling of messianic Psalm 18 with Torah Psalm 19 has been intentionally arranged to serve as a structural marker indicating development within Book I. Contendings to establish and maintain the messianic throne of David will continue. According to the narrative of 2 Samuel, the establishment of David as king over all Israel after the death of Saul only served to provoke the nation's ancient enemy to even greater efforts to overthrow the Messiah and his kingdom. David almost lost his life in a battle with the Philistines that occurred much later in his career as king. This incident led his men to take an oath: "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished" (2 Sam. 21:17). But the two sections of Book I envision a definite change of circumstance for Israel's king, with messianic Psalm 18 coupled with Torah Psalm 19 serving as the pivotal point of transition.*

9. As we turn to Psalm 18 we need to make seven preliminary observations.

- a) First: Psalm 18 has a *historical superscription* and thus Psalm 18 is a *historical Psalm*.

*To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord rescued him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:*

- b) Second: Psalm 18 is virtually identical to the Psalm in *Second Samuel 22* (a summary of David's career) ...

*And David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, (2 Sam 22:1-2)*

- c) Third: Psalm 18 was *most likely* written during the events of 2 Samuel 5:1-5

(1) *Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the Lord said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.'" So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. (2 Samuel 5:1-5)*

(2) Saul was dead, having fallen in battle

(3) David assumes the Kingship at 30 years of age

(4) David moves his capital, the ark of the covenant and the Tabernacle (tent of meeting) to *Jerusalem*: The City of God.

(5) Shortly after God makes his covenant with David

*Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you." But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have*

*not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Sam. 7:1-13)*

- (6) In this season of respite and peace David pens Psalm 18
  - d) Fourth: Psalm 18 is the first *long Psalm* in the Psalter ...
    - (1) 50 verses
    - (2) the typical Psalm is about 12 verses
    - (3) The previous 17 Psalms have averaged 10 verses.
  - e) Fifth: Psalm 18 is a *Kingship Psalm*, and since Paul quotes Psalm 18:49 with reference to Jesus and the salvation of the Nations of the earth, Psalm 18 is also considered a *Messianic Psalm* ...
 

*For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." (Romans 15:8-9)*
  - f) Sixth: Psalm 18 has *10 stanzas* of uneven length: A long Psalm to be covered in a short period. (i.e., in *summary form*)
  - g) Seventh: *Psalm 18 is a prayer of praise. It asks God for nothing!*
10. Allow me to suggest this: *Salvation is presented in 10 Metaphors which describe who God the Savior is to us.*

## I. UNDERSTANDING GOD OUR SAVIOR

### A. God is the Rock of Salvation (Ps. 18:1-3)

1. *I love you, O Lord, my strength.  
The 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.  
I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,  
and I am saved from my enemies. (Ps. 18:1-3)*

2. *Rock ... fortress ... shield ... deliverer ...*
3. Repeated accolades and attestation about who God our Redeemer really is.
  - a) In the Psalm God is called *the rock* 20 times
  - b) And 5 times God's salvation is called *a rock*
  - c) *Hear my cry, O God,  
listen to my prayer;  
from the end of the earth I call to you  
when my heart is faint.  
Lead me to the rock  
that is higher than I, (Psalm 61:1-2)*

4. David drew this language from Moses in the Exodus

*Moses said, "Please show me your glory." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen." (Ex. 33:18-23)*

5. He saw God as a Hebrew did, as Paul the Apostle did ...

*For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10:1-4)*

6. We know this imagery from **Augustus Toplady** and his famous hymn:

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee; let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power.*

7. Here is a picture of a God the Rock: Unshakeable, firm and unmovable, a place in which to hide, a "higher place" on which to stand, a miraculous source of water in the wilderness of this life.

*In you, O Lord, do I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
in your righteousness deliver me!  
Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me speedily!  
Be a rock of refuge for me,  
a strong fortress to save me!  
For you are my rock and my fortress;*

*and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; (Ps. 31:1-3)*

*For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will lift me high upon a rock. (Ps. 27:5)*

B. God is the Temple Rescuer (Ps. 18:4-6)

1. *The cords of death encompassed me;  
the torrents of destruction assailed me;  
the cords of Sheol entangled me;  
the snares of death confronted me.  
In 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. (Ps. 18:4-6)*

2. Repeatedly, in the Psalter, David and the Levites present the picture of God, in the Temple

- a) Seeing the affairs of men
- b) Hearing the prayers of the saints
- c) Going forth to deliver His people
- d) *The Lord is in his holy temple;  
the Lord's throne is in heaven;  
his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man. (Ps. 11:4)*
- e) *I cried aloud to the Lord,  
and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah (Ps. 3:4)*
- f) *Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!  
  
When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people,  
let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad. (Ps 14:7)*

3. For David, God dwelt in Zion – the City of God – and His Temple was His Royal Palace; His throne, the Ark of the Covenant!
4. Here is a reminder that God our Savior is *accessible to us* in His Church; His NT Temple is His People. God is ever near to us.

- a) *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. (1 Cor. 3:16-17)*
- b) *I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:14-15)*

C. God is the Divine Warrior (Ps. 18:7-15)

1. *Then the earth reeled and rocked;*

*the foundations also of the mountains trembled  
and quaked, because he was angry.  
Smoke went up from his nostrils,  
and devouring fire from his mouth;  
glowing coals flamed forth from him.  
He bowed the heavens and came down;  
thick darkness was under his feet.  
He rode on a cherub and flew;  
he came swiftly on the wings of the wind.  
He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him,  
thick clouds dark with water.  
Out of the brightness before him  
hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds.  
The Lord also thundered in the heavens,  
and the Most High uttered his voice,  
hailstones and coals of fire.  
And he sent out his arrows and scattered them;  
he flashed forth lightnings and routed them.  
Then 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. (Ps. 18:7-15)*

2. God is portrayed as *angry* and riding on a *cherub*, firing His *arrows* to scatter His (and David's) enemies, bending the heavens, shaking the earth, attended by signs and wonders!
3. Again, David is borrowing from the stories and imagery of God judging Egypt and destroying Pharaoh's army.
4. David is thinking of *God the Warrior*

*Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and said,  
“I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted;  
The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea.  
“The Lord is my strength and song,  
And He has become my salvation;  
This is my God, and I will praise Him;  
My father’s God, and I will extol Him.  
“The Lord is a warrior;  
The Lord is His name. (Ex. 15:1-3 NASB)*

*“Who is like You among the gods, O Lord?  
Who is like You, majestic in holiness,  
Awesome in praises, working wonders?  
“You stretched out Your right hand,  
The earth swallowed them. (Ex. 15:11-12 NASB)*

5. **Tremper Longman:** *Psalms: TOTC; pp. 113-114*

- a) *God did indeed hear, and he rushed down from heaven in order to save the psalmist. God appeared as a Warrior in order to fight against his enemies. When the Warrior appears, the earth and the very mountains themselves shake. God was angry with the treatment the psalmist had received. The picture of God coming to the rescue riding a cloud (dark clouds were under his feet, v. 9b) derives ultimately from Ancient Near Eastern storm-god imagery and is also found elsewhere in Scripture. The cherubim were among God's most powerful angelic forces. They were stationed at the entrance of the Garden of Eden with flaming swords after Adam and Eve had been forced out (Gen. 3:24). They also accompanied God's chariot when he abandoned the temple in Ezekiel 9-11. In short, they are God's bodyguards in the heavenly army, and they came with him now to rescue the psalmist. The picture here is of the cloud as the chariot, and the cherubim as the means of propulsion of the chariots, as God rode to the aid of the distressed psalmist. God's anger and power are so great that they exposed the valleys of the sea. Again, the waters, in this case the sea, often personify the forces of chaos and evil ranged against God. But here they are no match for the Divine Warrior.*
  - b) *The Divine Warrior = #1 motif for God in the Bible!*
  - c) *"The Lord is a warrior;  
The Lord is His name. (Ex. 15:3 NASB)*
6. David remembers this from the OT stories he heard as a child!
- a) *And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." (Ex. 14:13-14)*
  - b) *Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses. (Ex. 14:30-31)*
- D. God the Guardian Lifeguard (Ps. 18:16-19)
1. *He sent from on high, he took me;  
he drew me out of many waters.  
  
He rescued me from my strong enemy  
and from those who hated me,  
for they were too mighty for me.  
  
They confronted me in the day of my calamity,  
but the Lord was my support.  
  
He brought me out into a broad place;  
he rescued me, because he delighted in me. (Ps. 18:16-19)*
  2. God is pictured as a Rescue Lifeguard who “drew (David) out of many waters.”
  3. This imagery David often uses to describe the danger he feels:
- Save me, O God!  
For the waters have come up to my neck.  
I sink in deep mire,*

*where there is no foothold;  
I have come into deep waters,  
and the flood sweeps over me. (Ps. 69:1-2)*

*Deliver me  
from sinking in the mire;  
let me be delivered from my enemies  
and from the deep waters.  
Let not the flood sweep over me,  
or the deep swallow me up,  
or the pit close its mouth over me. (Ps. 69:14-15)*

4. **Illustration:** One of my favorite movies is called *The Guardian*, starring **Kevin Costner**. It's a story about Coast Guard rescue swimmers, and the heroic things they do to save the shipwrecked, drowning and lost at sea.

- a) These rescue swimmers are taught to say to those in the water: *I am a Coast Guard rescue swimmer. I am here to help you. I will not leave you out here alone.*
- b) At the end of the movie a Coast Guard Captain says ...

*There's a legend of a man who lives beneath the sea. He is a fisher of men, the last hope of all those who have been left behind. Many survivors claim to have felt his gripping hands beneath them, pushing them up to the surface, whispering strength until help could arrive. He is known as "The Guardian."*

5. Jesus is that: *The Fisher of Men*. He is here to save us. He will not leave us alone. He will pull us from the waters of death!

#### E. God is the Righteous Judge (Ps. 18:20-24)

1. *The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness;  
according to the cleanliness of my hands he rewarded me.  
For I have kept the ways of the Lord,  
and have not wickedly departed from my God.  
For all his rules were before me,  
and his statutes I did not put away from me.  
I was blameless before him,  
and I kept myself from my guilt.  
So the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanliness of my hands  
in his sight. (Ps. 18:20-24)*

2. Here is David's Biblical way of thinking that we modern Evangelicals stupidly call "self-righteousness." Not so!

- a) We saw this in David's Prayer of Psalm 17, last Sunday.

*You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night,  
you have tested me, and you will find nothing;  
I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.  
With regard to the works of man, by the word of your lips  
I have avoided the ways of the violent.*

*My steps have held fast to your paths;  
my feet have not slipped. (Ps. 17:3-5)*

- b) David is **appealing to** a general rule of life: *God upholds the righteous but the wicked He destroys.*
- c) **The #1 Spiritual Rule of Life**
- d) *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;  
for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish. (Ps. 1:5-6)*

3. **James M. Boice** explains David's statement (*Psalms: Volume 1*; p. ?)

*David broadens what he says about himself in verses 20-24 to express the principle that God honors righteousness and judges sin even in this life. This is not a promise that the righteous will always prosper. Some suffer the experience of Job. It does not even mean that there is anyone who does right all the time. But as a general principle, when we live for God and try to go in his way, he cares for us and blesses us. When we go our own way, we bring misery and destruction on ourselves. This is all David is saying.*

4. We should thank God that He always sides with the righteous against the wicked – even when the only righteous are those righteous in Christ! God honors His Son's righteousness!

F. God is the Lamplighter (Psalm 18:25-29)

1. *With the merciful you show yourself merciful;  
with the blameless man you show yourself blameless;  
with the purified you show yourself pure;  
and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous.  
For you save a humble people,  
but the haughty eyes you bring down.  
For it is you who light my lamp;  
the Lord my God lightens my darkness.  
For by you I can run against a troop,  
and by my God I can leap over a wall. (Ps. 18:25-29)*

2. Here is what David says in these verses –

- a) *If merciful* God will show mercy,
  - b) *If blameless* God will be upright,
  - c) *If purified* God will be pure,
  - d) *If crooked* God will confuse and confound them!
3. The Gist: *People can't fool God. Those who sincerely seek God's grace, salvation, favor will receive it, unless they are a fake. Then God will seem "tortuously" incomprehensible.*
  4. The last part of the verse 26 could perhaps better be translated: *with the crooked (perverse) you will show yourself shrewd (astute).*
  5. Meaning: **You can't fool God.**

6. God prefers to “*light the lamp*” of His Word, and have men come into the light for salvation.
- a) *Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.  
I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,  
to keep your righteous rules.  
I am severely afflicted;  
give me life, O Lord, according to your word! (Ps. 119:105-107)*
  - b) *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (John 3:16-21)*
  - c) *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)*
  - d) *So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. (John 12:35-36)*
7. God saves not because we are perfect but because we are honest and come to His light for forgiveness and guidance.

#### G. God is a Shield of Protection (Ps. 18:30-36)

- 1. *This 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?—  
the God who equipped me with strength  
and made my way blameless.  
He made my feet like the feet of a deer  
and set me secure on the heights.  
He trains my hands for war,  
so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.  
You have given me the shield of your salvation,  
and your right hand supported me,  
and your gentleness made me great.  
You gave a wide place for my steps under me,  
and my feet did not slip. (Ps. 18:30-36)*

2. God is here presented in another of David's favorite metaphors: *a shield*.
3. David was a Warrior King himself; a fighting King; Whom God called "*a man of bloodshed*." He knew how life-saving the battle shield was to a warrior.
4. God was a good *Quarter Master* and *Drill Sargent*: He trained David for warfare and provided his equipment.
5. God provided us with the Holy Spirit and Divine Armor for our spiritual warfare –

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, (Eph. 6:10-17)*

6. When God saves us He enlists us, but He also trains, equips and shields us while we learn to "fight the fight of faith."

*Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Tim. 6:12)*

#### H. God is the Royal Captain (Ps. 18:37-42)

1. *I pursued my enemies and overtook them, and did not turn back till they were consumed. I thrust them through, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. For you equipped me with strength for the battle; you made those who rise against me sink under me. You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and those who hated me I destroyed. They 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. (Ps. 18:37-42)*

2. David is recounting how all his enemies – Saul, the Philistines, all his detractors and conspirators – have fallen before him *because God fought for him!*

*For you equipped me with strength for the battle; you made those who rise against me sink under me. You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and those who hated me I destroyed. They cried for help, but there was none to save; they cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them. (Ps. 18:39-41)*

3. **Rolf A. Jacobson:** *The Book of Psalms: NICOT; p. 200*

- a) *Equipped by the Lord with strength and martial puissance, the psalmist now attributes the victories that he had gained over his foes to the faithfulness of the Lord. Because the Lord had girded the king with strength for battle, the king was able to pursue his enemies and be victorious. The king then, in hyperbolic language that was typical of the royal propaganda of the ancient Near East describes how he completely vanquished his enemies.*
- b) *I beat them fine as dust before the wind;  
I cast them out like the mire of the streets. (Ps. 18:42)*

4. God is “the Captain of the well-fought fight,” according to the pen of hymn-writer **William W. How:** *For All the Saints*

*Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might;*

*Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight;*

*Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Oh, may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,*

*Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old*

*And win with them the victor's crown of gold.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*But, lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day;*

*The saints triumphant rise in bright array;*

*The King of Glory passes on His way.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*

I. God is the King Maker (Ps. 18:43-45)

1. *You delivered me from strife with the people;  
you made me the head of the nations;  
people whom I had not known served me.  
As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me;  
foreigners came cringing to me.  
Foreigners lost heart  
and came trembling out of their fortresses. (Ps. 18:43-45)*
2. God is the one who anointed David as King –

*The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” (1 Sam. 16:1)*

*When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” And Jesse made*

*seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.” Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. (1 Sam. 16:6-13)*

3. It is usually **not** a complementary thing to be called a *King-maker*. Its connotation is of one who wants to rule through others.
  - a) Pastors often warn other pastors of elders, deacons or laymen who were *King Makers* in their previous churches.
  - b) i.e., they want to get close to a pastor, become his confidante, and *anoint* him for the pastorate.
  - c) in reality they want inordinate influence and control over the pastor so they can run the church.
  - d) They are **King-makers**: a person who brings leaders to power through the exercise of political influence and personal suasion.

#### 4. **But God is rightfully THE KING-MAKER.**

##### J. God is the Covenant Keeper (Ps. 18:46-50)

1. *The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock,  
and exalted be the God of my salvation—  
the God who gave me vengeance  
and subdued peoples under me,  
who delivered me from my enemies;  
yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me;  
you rescued me from the man of violence.  
For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations,  
and sing to your name.  
Great salvation he brings to his king,  
and shows steadfast love to his anointed,  
to David and his offspring forever. (Ps. 18:46-50)*

2. David's final five verses of this Psalm both repeat its main themes and summarize its general message.
  - a) *The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock,  
and exalted be the God of my salvation—  
the God who gave me vengeance  
and subdued peoples under me,  
who delivered me from my enemies;  
yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me;  
you rescued me from the man of violence. (Ps. 18:46-48)*

- b) God the Rock and Redeemer
  - c) Victory over enemies
  - d) Rescue from violent men
  - e) Exaltation to power and glory
3. But then David adds one final thought: His favorite word in the Psalms –

- a) *For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to your name. Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever. (Ps. 18:49-50)*
- b) *Great Salvation = God's "steadfast love"*
- c) God's covenant love and loyalty to David and His people, Israel.
- d) *"steadfast love to His anointed, to David and his offspring forever."*

*And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:7-8)*

*You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Ex. 20:4-6)*

4. God is to be loved, praised, believed in and served for one reason above all else: **His covenant of Grace with His Church ...**

*"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34)*

## II. HOW TO PRAY PSALM 18

- A. **First:** We can pray this psalm almost word for word because God is still all these things for us that he was for David
1. Our Rock – *the rock of ages who clefts for us*
  2. Our Temple Rescuer – *who hears and answers our prayers*

3. The Divine Warrior – *who fights for us against Satan*
4. The Guardian Lifeguard – *who rescues us from deep waters of trouble*
5. The Righteous Judge – *who rewards righteousness*
6. The Lamplighter – *whose Word lights our path*
7. The Shield of Protection – *who covers us with grace*
8. Our Royal Captain – *who wins victories for us*
9. The King Maker – *who makes us sons and daughters of God*
10. The Covenant-Keepering God – *whose steadfast love endures forever.*

B. **Second:** We pray Psalm 18 by finding all these metaphors fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and reflected in our great Christian Hymns.

1. *Rock of Ages, Cleft for me* (Rock)
2. *Bow Down Thine ear, O Lord, and Hear* (Temple Rescuer)
3. *The Son of God Goes Forth to War* (Divine Warrior)
4. *Rescue the Perishing* (Guardian Lifeguard)
5. *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Coming of the Lord* (Judge)
6. *Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet* (The Lamplighter)
7. *For All the Saints Who From Their Labors Rest* (Shield)
8. *Victory in Jesus* (Royal Captain)
9. *Crown Him with Many Crowns* (King Maker)
10. *Great is Thy Faithfulness* (Covenant Keeper)

C. **Third:** We could only pray this Psalm if we really saw ourselves as God's people, immersed in a great warfare, for the souls of people and the Kingdom of God.

1. **Eugene Peterson:** *Reversed Thunder; pp. 160-161*

*Salvation comes into being, in the face of furious opposition. When Jesus taught us to pray, “Deliver us from evil,” he was arming us for a life of salvation. St. Paul, preaching salvation, did not organize ethical societies around the Mediterranean basin; he fought battles and developed an extensive vocabulary to name the evil opposition: powers (Rom. 8:38), rulers (1 Cor. 2:8), thrones (Col. 1:16), dominions (Eph. 1:21). He didn’t seem to be in the least bit intimidated by these ominous forces. He was always working from a stance of accomplished victory, since Jesus on the cross “disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him” (Col. 2:15). If we suppose (which many seem to) that salvation is a diploma that qualifies us for eternity, a diploma we can frame and hang on our bedroom wall, then we have it all wrong. It is battle. Readers of the gospels are accustomed to this aggressive dimension of salvation. Jesus’ attacks on the forces of evil and the deceptions of hypocrisy are as common as his gregarious meals with sinners, prostitutes, and friends.*

2. And the best way to fight this battle is *on our knees*, with Psalm 18 open before us.

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph. 6:10-20)*