

Psalm 18: A Royal Identity

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We are committed here at Sovereign Hope to spending a year inside of the book of Psalms. We love the Psalms, most people love the Psalms. But the Psalms are also in the OT, and most people struggle or don't like reading inside the OT.

I know in my own personal life up until a few years ago, Psalms and Proverbs were like the eye of the storm. On one side of them you have the law and the history, and on the other side the minor and major prophets, but right in the middle you have the wisdom literature which is the *crem de la crem*.

When David and others wrote the Psalms, they wrote a pretty raw dialogue to God. The Psalms are real, they deal with real issues, real emotions, and real people. It is really easy to read ourselves into the Psalms; to see it as our story, our problems, our issues and our emotions. Which is not a bad thing, the Bible is immensely practical.

But we must be careful that in reading the Psalms, we do not read it separate from the overarching story line of the Bible. The Psalms are not merely chicken soup for the Christian soul where we pick it up and become centered and encouraged in our own life and problems. The Psalms are deeply personal, but they are also relevant to holistic story line in the Bible.

In reading ourselves into the Psalms, we must be careful not to read God's global plan out of the Psalms. While the Psalms are deeply personal, they are still God centered literature.

That is what I hope to do today. I want us to read Psalm 18 and look at it in light of the whole theme of scripture, and I want that to be our motivator to worship. I want that to highlight our identity in this book.

Let's Pray

We are looking at Psalm 18 today and Psalm 18 is what we call a Royal Psalm, because it keys on the royal monarchy of King David, it emphasizes the Davidic kingdom.

If we turn to 2 Samuel 7, we see why this is important. In this passage David has just taken the Kingship of Israel and he wants to build a temple for God. But God had different plans. So God grabbed the prophet Nathan and he said, "Tell this to David. " **2 Sam 7:8-11.**

God told David, you are the Prince over my people. I will make your name great. You will not build me a house, I will build you a house.

This is the institution of what is called the Davidic covenant. God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis that the nation of Israel would be a great nation, and in the Davidic covenant, God refines that down even more, and he says Israel will be great because the line of David will rule over it. The strength of Israel lies in the line of David and the kings that will rule from his offspring.

This is where Psalm 18 comes into play. Psalm 18 highlights the benefit of the line of David. In 2 Samuel 7, God covenants himself to David, covenants with him to make his name great. The rest of 2 Samuel largely speaks to David massive military conquests. He is destroying nations after nations as God is protecting Israel from its enemies. In 2 Samuel 21, David wins some pretty big military battles against the Philistines. Then in 2 Samuel 22, David stops and he sings.

Look at what he sings, **2 Sam 22:2-4.**

Now look at the first three verses of our Psalm today, **Ps 18:1-3.**

Psalms 18 is nearly a word for word match to David's song in 2 Samuel 22. The introduction to

Psalms 18 sheds some more light on this passage. **Introduction.**

This Psalm was written to the choirmaster to celebrate how God had delivered and maintained the line of David. These two songs are very similar, but they are also different. The 2 Samuel song was sung by David to celebrate how God had blessed and delivered him, Psalm 18 was adapted for the whole nation of Israel to sing. This was a corporate worship song that Israel would sing to account the great things that God had done through the line of David.

In singing about the line of David, they were singing about their own identity. As God said in 2 Samuel 7, as the line of David reigns, so reigns Israel. This is their hope. This is their existence. This is their King.

Now this Psalm is 50 verses long, so I am not going to read the whole passage to us today, but I encourage you to read it on your own this week. Do it as your devotions, there are a couple great memory verses in this Psalm I would encourage you to memorize them, especially if you have kids, make this a family exercise. Verse 30, 46 and 49-50 are all great verses to store up in your heart.

1. The Line of David is Unique

Psalm 18:1-6

The line of David is unique, because as we just saw, God delighted to rescue it from trouble. In fact if you go to verse **19**, we see God delighted in David.

God did not covenant himself to the line of Benjamin, which was the line that King Saul was from. He did not covenant himself to the line of King James, or of George Washington or George Bush, or Barak Obama, God covenanted himself to Israel through the line of David.

The line of David is unique, because many nations and many people have cried out to God for help, but not everyone has gotten it. In fact if you look at church history, there are entire people groups of Christians who have been wiped out by various movements. I am sure they cried out to God, but God chose not to deliver those people here on the earth.

This does not mean that the line of David will not encounter troubles, and lose battles, but it means that God has covenanted with them, to never let their line be destroyed and to make Israel great through that line. God is obligated to the line of David, not because his arm was twisted, but because God desired to show himself as powerful and merciful through his covenant towards David. God put his own restrictions on himself, and he will keep them for his own glory.

2. The Line of David is Obedient

Psalm 18:20-24.

Back in 2 Samuel 7, God tells David in verse 14, that when he commits iniquity, God will discipline him with the rod of men. Meaning that God has covenanted to eventually make the line of David great, but if the Kings in the line of David fail to walk in accordance to God's laws, they will be conquered and harassed by other men.

If we look at what David just said in verses 20-24, he is boasting to God about how he has kept the commandments. He has followed the law. As Luhmann mentioned a few weeks ago, David is not claiming to be sinless here, but he is claiming to have ruled and reigned justly. He has been obedient to God in his Kingship.

This Psalm was written at the peak of his power. Wealth and military conquest were abundant, this was the most powerful Kingdom of the time. But we all know that David did not die a man in power, he died a man on the run.

That is because David committed murder and adultery with Bathsheba. Eventually David failed to be obedient and he was disciplined with the Rod of Men. In the same way his son Solomon was even more powerful than his father, yet when he allowed himself to have many wives, God removed him from the throne because of his disobedience.

As David and Solomon fell, so did Israel. The people paid for their Kings disobedience. So long as a just and

obedient King sat on the throne, Israel did well. If the King was disobedient, all of Israel was punished. That is why they sing of their King's obedience.

3. The Line of David is Divinely Strengthened

Psalm 18: 25-30

So we just saw in those verses that the line of David is blessed by two attributes of God. The first is that they are blessed by God's lust for justice. To the merciful God shows himself merciful, to the blameless he shows himself blameless. Yet the crooked have no place in the grace of God.

God valued justice, and his covenant with David enhanced that desire, as those who did evil to David were destroyed, those who blessed him were blessed.

We also say that it was God's Power that brought the covenant weight. Look back at the subject in those last four verses: **For you save a humble people, For it is you who light my lamp, For by you I can run against a troop, This God—His way is perfect.**

While David and his line were required to be obedient, none of the benefits, none of the power, none of the deliverance was up to them. It was the nature of God's power that maintained this covenant. This is an unequal covenant. This is a grace filled covenant.

Because even though David will screw up, the promise was not voided. Even through the disobedience of Solomon, a King still came.

David brought nothing to the table. God rather brought himself to the table. God is the one who both gave and guaranteed this covenant. God is both the power and the presence to Israel's glory.

4. The Line of David is a Powerful Kingdom

Psalms 18:43-45

I love these verses because these verses show God's grace. David is just being obedient, but in his obedience God is bringing nations to his feet. People who he did not even know came crawling under his authority. His enemies were shaken from their hiding and put under his Kingship.

If we go way back to God's covenant with Abraham, we begin to see this coming to fruition. In Genesis 15 God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, and here, under the Davidic rule, we see nations coming under the banner of Israel.

They are coming because God is fulfilling his covenant. Through his power, and his vessel, God is bringing people into his glory. God is furthering his worship.

I love the last few verses of this Psalm because it gets at the heart of what David is singing about here. **Psalm 18:49-50.**

Great among the nations is the Salvation that God brings to Israel. Steadfast love he gives to his anointed, because our God is covenant keeping God.

Good stuff. But I want to dig a little deeper here in closing. Why is this important to us? Why do we care about the line of David, as most of us here are not Jews? We do not get to claim this, we do not get the benefits of this.

In order to understand this, we must once more turn back to 2 Samuel 7 and finish the covenant God made to David. **2 Samuel 7:12-16**

In the first sense of this passage, God is talking about David's son Solomon. Solomon's rule was even greater than his father. In fact God told Solomon that no king will ever have greater wealth or power than Solomon. Solomon also build a house for God, he built the temple.

But the beauty of those passages are the "forever's." Because in one sense this was talking about Solomon, in

the future sense it was prophesying Jesus. Solomon's temple was destroyed. Solomon's throne was lost.

But the beauty of the Davidic covenant is **The Line of David is Jesus**.

When we start with the new testament, and read backwards into the Old, we see Jesus more clearly.

In Psalm **18:31**, The man after God's own heart, says who is like our God. David knew in all of his glory he did not compare. Yet Jesus n was God incarnate. Jesus was like God. Jesus was the true rock of David.

Jesus was unique in that he was the firstborn of all creation and that from him and through him and to him are all things. God's covenant with David foreshadowed the covenant he makes with all people through Jesus.

Jesus is the rightful king, and those who subscribe to his rule are blessed forever through the beauty of their king.

Jesus is the ultimate obedient king from the line of David. Unlike David, unlike Solomon, he never sinned. He was spotless and blameless. God told David in 2 Samuel 7 that if he disobeyed he would be punished with the rod, and beaten with the stripes of men. Jesus never sinned, yet as the prophet Isaiah said, by his stripes, we are healed.

The only blameless king died for his condemned people.

Jesus is Divine in that his power was in himself being both the just and the justifier. The power of Christ is the hope for his people.

And Jesus brings forth a nation more powerful than David could ever imagine. Because Jesus has brought a new Israel. Jesus brings the Kingdom and unlike those nations who came to David, trembling and scared, Jesus' Kingdom runs to him with worship on their lips and glory on their hearts.

In fact Paul quotes Psalm 18:49 in **Romans 15:9**. Paul quotes this verse because he knows that it is through Jesus, as the fulfiller of the covenant of David, that all nations are brought to the worship of Christ.

You see this Psalm, is our Psalm. As the people of Israel sang of the beauty of the covenant through David, under the new covenant this Psalm testifies to the wonder of our covenant through Christ.

Our identity is tied to the royal line of David, our well-being is tied to the beauty of Christ. Our salvation, our existence is tied to our King being King of King and Lord of Lord.

This Psalm is a Psalm which celebrates deliverance through covenant. People of Christ, whatever may happen in this life, we have a covenant keeping God. We are secure in Christ, follow him, love him, worship him. Our future glory lies in Christ keeping his covenant to us, and that is a solid hope.

Pray

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.