

WHEN GOD RIDES IN

Thursday, February 15

Reading: Psalm 18:1-28

Psalm 18:1 *I love you, LORD, my strength. 2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies.*

There always seems to be that moment in the old westerns when all seems lost. The settlers are hopelessly outnumbered and surrounded by Indians. But just as they are about to be overrun you hear that bugle call and the cavalry comes riding in to save the day. That's how it works in the movies anyway. The actual history of the conflict between Native Americans and the military reads much different.

The first half of Psalm 18 has a "cavalry call" as well. Only this time it is the Lord riding in to rescue David. The heading tells us this psalm was written after God had defeated David's enemies and made him king of Israel instead of Saul. As David looked back on those dark days of fleeing and fighting (see 1 Samuel 18-30) David praises God for His protection and deliverance.

He says, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress." David had hidden in many rocky fortresses while hiding from King Saul. But he now realized that his true source of protection was God Himself. He shouts out with a loud voice, "I love you, LORD!"

David uses very poetic language to describe how God rode in and rescued him when death seemed imminent. While God had appeared with quakes, fire, and darkness at various times (giving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, for instance - Exodus 19:16-18), we never read of God rescuing David with supernatural events like this. David uses this language to remind us that whether it be by a spectacular visible rescue or His working behind the scenes to save, when God shows up things happen.

The image of God flying on the cherubim (18:10) is a picture from the Ark of the Covenant, that most holy box that contained the Ten Commandments and on whose lid the blood of forgiveness was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement. There was a cherubim on each side of the Ark looking down on the lid called the mercy seat where the blood was sprinkled. The Jews believed that God lived between these cherubim. His visible presence was seen in the pillar of smoke and fire that rested there. It is a picture of God's presence with His people. He "rides" to their rescue because He is already present with them.

David attributes his rescue to God's delight in his faithfulness and humility (18:19-27). He can boldly say that he is blameless before God. This does not mean that he was sinless, but that his heart's desire was to be faithful and obedient to the Lord. When he failed, he humbly turned to God in repentance and received forgiveness.

We all need God to ride in and save us. He did so at the cross. He also rode in when He touched our lives and changed our dark sinful hearts to light through His forgiveness. He guides and protects His children every day, whether we can see His hand or not. Can you say with David, "I love you, LORD, my strength"?

THRU THE BIBLE Reading: Leviticus 7-9; Mark 6