

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adults Sunday School

PSALM 18 – PRAISING GOD WHO DELIVERS! (Part 2)

I. REMEMBERING PAST DELIVERANCE

While going through the present troubles, it is important to reflect and look back to the times how God has delivered us by His mercy and grace. This is what the psalmist is doing in this next section of the psalm. From verses 7 to 15, he recounted in a figurative language using nature to describe how God has delivered him from all his enemies.

When we remember past deliverances which God has blessed, it reassures us again that God will continue to deliver us as He did before. And of course, we must not approach God with the attitude that we deserve to be delivered by God. It is entirely according to His good pleasure and will when we should be delivered.

Verse 7, “Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wrath.”

God's wrath and indignation had been described by the manner in which the earth shook and trembled. Earthquakes are being used to compare with God's anger. Indeed it is frightening when the earth moves against each other. Buildings begin to crumble and fall. And the loud noise as the earth “rubbed against each other” is like the voice of God.

The key thought in this verse is “because he was wrath.” The word “wrath” means heated up literally. God is angry and His wrath is greatly kindled. And it is growing in intensity. What will God be angry with? Is it not sin? Is it not when men became unfaithful and did not honour Him as Creator and King of their life? “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

Verse 8, “There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.”

The anger of the Lord continues to be described by nature and in this verse, it is by fire and smoke. The result of such fire and smoke is that everything is being burnt up and turned into ashes. No one can escape the flame of fire that came from God. Those who are guilty will be consumed by the fire. This fire is not a sanctifying fire that purged out whatever impurities were found. This fire is a fire of judgment and came as a form of punishment. Indeed how much will remain of all enemies after going through the fiery judgment of God? Will it not be a complete wipeout?

Verse 9, “He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.”

By bowing the heavens, it means it brought heaven closer to the earth. Moreover God came down, not to bless but to judge. In other words, God is not far away from meting out His judgment. Wicked men wished that God's judgment will never come. By ignorance or denial, they thought they can get away with their wickedness and will never be called to account for what they had done.

Darkness is often caused by thick clouds forming in the sky. Even though it may be day time, the sky has turned dark because of the thick clouds. It is indicative of a great storm that is coming. Therefore in like manner God's judgment is coming very soon as spiritual darkness is already looming above and over us. Will you escape?

Verse 10, “And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.”

The psalmist is now describing how fast God's judgment will surely come and be fulfilled swiftly. Cherub is believed to be an angelic being which is spiritual. It can fly. It is not human. It is first measured in terms of action and by the first word “fly.” It is full of action, moving and it is not going to stop.

And then we see the second word “fly” (a different Hebrew word is used compared with the first) emphasizes on speed. How fast? And the speed is described to be as fast as even the wind. The psalmist had witnessed God's sure deliverance by His swiftness to judge the wicked. No one is to take it easy that just because God is loving, gracious and merciful that He might not judge after all. God is also just and righteous. He is a consuming fire. And He hates sin. Beware, His judgment will come and is coming very soon! Will you not repent now?

Verse 11, “He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.”

The “secret place” refers to a place that is hidden and private. And with the support of the word “pavilion”, this place is meant to be covered and not openly known. In other words, the enemies were kept in the dark what God will be doing to them to make them pay for the consequences of their wickedness. Their understanding has been darkened and therefore will not be able to discern all the warning signs. The dark waters and the thick clouds of the skies describe a great storm that is coming. It is that moment of an impending storm that will fall upon them before it finally breaks.

Verse 12, “At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, hail *stones* and coals of fire.”

It breaks at the time when brightness shined through the dark clouds. This brightness is not the sun or that day has come. This brightness came from fire of judgment as it drew across the dark sky. It is Judgment! Hail stones and coals of fire were poured down as rain. And everything is consumed and completely destroyed. There is no escape and nowhere is safe under the heavens. Not the mountain, not under the waters. The fire pierced through every covering and prevailed over all.

Verse 13, “The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail *stones* and coals of fire.”

At the same time, while fire gives out the light of judgment being poured down, the loud voice of God thundered upon the whole earth. Who can bear with both visual and sound that were extraordinary? Combined together, they were terrible, enough to make the enemies afraid and there is no one who can defend them. They will surely be destroyed and their destruction is total.

The psalmist addressed the LORD as the Highest. There is no one who is higher than Him. This emphasized His supreme and elevated position which no one is higher than Him. God commands the call and all has to obey with no exception. Judgment is called by Him, and all those who are found guilty will in no wise be left out of the judgment.

This is the confidence that the psalmist possessed in him. No matter how powerful his enemies were, God is even more powerful than them. Therefore he has nothing to be afraid of when God is on His sight. God will mete out His judgment accordingly and it will come to pass according to His timing, not ours.

Verse 14, “Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.”

Arrows were supposed to hit directly and pierce through the target. You can be sure that God's aim at the enemies will be bull's eye. He will not missed a single shot of it. Every shot hit the target perfectly. And it caused the enemies to be scattered every where that they will not be able to gather strength and be united together as one to fight against God.

The destruction of the enemies is in every way and aspect. They will eventually be disarmed, thrown into confusion, and fear is in every heart. They begin to panic and turn against each other. No one can be trusted even among their own. They were suspicious of one another and therefore harbour evil against one another. That's how the Lord discomfited them.

Verse 15, “Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.”

Surely with the powerful earthquakes, the great storms of rain and wind (after breaking of the dark clouds), everything underneath were exposed and revealed. That's what God's judgment will do. All the evil and wickedness will all be made known. Every single step that comes with the evil intent will all be spelt out and known to all. To the guilty, it is to their shame. To God's people who suffered, it is a vindication for them.

God's rebuke is powerful. He is able to deliver not just the psalmist but also all of His children from all their enemies. With the past deliverances God gave, let us not forget them but always serve as a constant reminder how we must continue to trust in His deliverance for the present even to the future. To forget is human. It takes a good effort to try to remember God's goodness and faithfulness in the past. When we do just that, we know that we can trust in God to deliver us again in the present as well as for the future. May God help us. Amen.

(To be continued)