

2Samuel 22:1–20

“The Greatness of Our God, Our Troubles, and His Response”

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Why am I in such big trouble, and what am I to do? Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. 2Samuel 22:1–20 prepares us for the evening sermon on the coming Lord’s Day. In these twenty verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that as those in whom the Lord delights in Christ, the greatness of our troubles is meant to provoke us to cry out to our greater God, so that His greater response will result in His everlasting praise.

Friday, September 10, 2021 • Read 2Samuel 22:1–20

Questions from the Scripture text: To Whom is David speaking (v1a)? In response to what (v1b)? What nine things does he call Yahweh in vv2–3? What has Yahweh done (v3b)? To what will Yahweh respond by doing this again (v3–4)? What had been David’s circumstances in vv5–6? What did he do (v7a–b)? How does v7c–d communicate the personal nature of God’s response? How does v8a–b indicate the intensity of God’s response? How does v8c–9c indicate the attitude of God’s response? How do vv10–13 communicate the power of God’s response? What specific action do vv14, 16c describe Yahweh as taking? With what results, (v15–16)? But what is the nature of His interaction with His servant (v17, 19b)? From whom does He deliver him (v18–19a)? Why (v20)?

This chapter is found, almost verse for verse, in Psalm 18. Coming at the end of the Samuel material, it seems that this was a Psalm that David originally wrote upon deliverance from Saul, but had much more opportunity to sing over the rest of his life.

In this first third of the Psalm, the focus is upon how good the Lord has been to David. In the next section he sings especially of the Lord’s graciously sanctifying him, and then in the last section of the Lord’s graciously strengthening him. But in this section, it is especially the Lord being good in almighty strength. vv2–4 overflow with gushing praise to God.

The heart of this section is how David finds himself on earth in very dramatic trouble (v5–6), but when he cries out to God (v7), God’s response in heaven is described in terms that are even more dramatic (v8–16).

David is in very dramatic trouble. When we consider prayers and songs like this that God has given us, we mustn’t be surprised when we find ourselves in intense trouble. Death and the grave are closing in on David like a noose (v5a, 6a). It comes in waves (v5a), while the tide of ungodliness arise to swallow him like a flood (v5b), and death latches onto his legs like a snare to pull him down (v6b). Dear believer, don’t expect life in this world to be easy or painless!

But one thing the most dramatic trouble can’t do is cut off the believer’s access to the Lord. Romans 8 famously embraces how nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, or the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. But here in v7 we see that neither can death or Sheol separate the believer from the ears of God that are ours in Christ Jesus. However low the believer may find himself, when he calls upon Yahweh (v7a) and cries out to God (v7b), He hears us from His temple. There is no trouble so deep that the saint’s cry can be stopped from ascending all the way to the ears of his God!

And that spells great trouble for the trouble! It is difficult to convey the intensity of God’s response in vv8–18 to the crying out of this individual human in v7. The images conveyed by the poetry are great in their own right. Just read them in a voice that attempts to reflect the image, and “see”! But behind them is a much greater amplification than poetry: theology.

The images here are mixed in from the creation, from the flood, from Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Red Sea crossing, from Sinai, and from the Tabernacle. Lightness upon dark waters. Brightness before Him. Waters separated to expose the land. Quaking and fire and smoking and thunder. Brightness and cloud. It’s like the Holy Spirit was wadding up into one all of the greatest displays of the power of God thus far, and reminding us that it is this very God Who is pleased to move to action by means of our prayers.

In our pride and unbelief we sometimes think to ourselves as if things might be different if God would only take notice how intense our circumstances are on earth. But how very different would our hearts be, if we would only take into account by faith the infinitely greater intensity of our God and His response in heaven! And so, in this Psalm, the Holy Spirit pulls back the curtain to rub our noses in this glorious reality!

Dear believer, how great is your God! And how great is His power and His work as He responds to your Christ-borne prayers! Yahweh Himself is your support (v19), because having chosen you in Christ, He delights in you with His delight in Christ (v20)!

What troubles have surprised you with their intensity? What intense troubles have you perhaps downplayed? How does this portion of the Psalm free you to own how great your troubles are, without despairing over their greatness? What are you able to do, no matter how great the trouble is? How does the greatness of God’s response compare, no matter how great the trouble is?

Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You, our Rock, our Fortress, our Deliverer, our God, our Trust, our Shield, our Horn of salvation, our Stronghold, our Refuge, our Savior! Whenever Your people have cried out to You from great trouble, they have found You and Your response to be infinitely greater than the trouble. Yet, in our unbelief, we often feel and act as if we have somehow discovered the first difficulty that is simply too great. Forgive us! And grant that when we need it, Your Spirit would bring this Word readily to mind, so that we might call upon Your Name in Jesus Christ, through Whom we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP18A “I Love You, Lord” or TPH520 “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Second Samuel, 22 versus 1 through 20. These are God's words then. David spoke to y'all who the words of this song on the day when you always had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies.

And from the hand of Saul and he said y'all, they is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, the god of my strength in him, I will trust my shield and the horn of my salvation, my strong hold, and my refuge my savior. You saved me from violence? I will call upon y'all.

A who is worthy to be praised. So shall I be saved from my enemies? When the waves of deaths around me? The floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of sheol surrounded me. The snares of death. Confronted me in my distress, I called upon Yahweh. Right out to my God, heard my voice from his temple, My cry and entered his ears, Then the earth shook and trembled.

The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken because he was angry smoke went up from his nostrils and devouring fire from his mouth Kohls were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens. Also and came down with darkness under his feet. He rode upon a cherub and flew. And he was seen upon the wings of the wind, he made darkness canopies around him, dark waters and thick clouds of the skies from the brightness before him.

Coals a firework handled Yahweh. Thundered from heaven, the most I high uttered, his voice, he sent out, arrows and scattered them, lightning bolts, and he vanished them. Then the channels of the sea were seen. The foundations of the world were uncovered that the rebuke of Yahweh at the blast of the breadth of his nostrils.

He sent from above, he took me he drew me out of many waters, he delivered me from my strong enemy from those who hated me for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but y'all who it was my support, he also brought me out into a broad place.

He delivered me because he delighted in me so far the reading of God's inspired and inerrant word.

Because some comes at the end of the Samuel material, first and second Samuel. And it says that it was something that David wrote on the day when you only had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies. And from the hand of Saul, the implication seems to be that David had many opportunities for writing parts of this song.

Perhaps, he wrote the whole thing, the first on some original great deliverance and that it became a tradition for him. Every time he was subsequently delivered from another enemy. He got to sing this psalm again or perhaps it was written a little bit at a time and towards the end of his life, it had reached, its final form but help of the Holy Spirit and David recorded it and it was included in the solder.

And whoever from the school of Samuel finished writing Samuel recorded also here and second Samuel 22. Anyway, it is a psalm of how God delivers us as if we work perfectly righteous. And that the great part of this deliverance is deliverance from sin in which he makes us not just strong for our enemies, but makes us to walk in the way of righteousness.

So that what he does for us, according to his promise and according to Jesus is salvation matches what he does in us, according to his promise and according to Jesus's salvation. So he best saves us from every trouble which we don't deserve, but Jesus deserves it for us. But what Jesus also deserves for everyone whom he is saving is that we would be made holy and righteous.

And so the justness of God is seen in the fact that his deliverances of us and is supporting us and sustaining us and helping us in the middle of our troubles matches the godliness that he works in us and I believe her. When he's crying out to God, he cries out for both of those things, those aren't in competition.

It's not wrong for you. When you're in trouble to cry out to God, save me from my trouble. What is wrong is for you. Not also to cry out, save me from sinning in the midst of my trouble and deal with me according to the righteousness that you work.

In me that you help me walk in. So those are the dynamics of the psalm as a whole, the opening section focuses on the greatness of God, the greatness of David's trouble and the greatness of God's answer. When David cries out in his trouble, the greatness of God, you see him pile up the language with what God has been to him, whom God has made himself to be to his servant.

He always is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, God of my strength and whom I will trust my shield, the horn of my salvation, my strong, hold my refuge. My savior is the one who says me from violence is

worthy to be praised. Social, I be saved from my enemies so because the Lord is worthy of praise for these 10.

Other things. I will be delivered from my enemies so that he can get the 10 fold or really infinite. Praise that he is worthy of. Remember God who is saving. You has invested himself and the honor of his name and his being praised forever and ever. Even if you end up loving, not your life even unto death, yet you will be in the company of those who overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of his testimony.

And since God's plan is for the redeemed to praise him forever and ever and ever, you know, that he will be those 10 things to you and he will deliver you that shall all turn out for your ultimate deliverance. As we will all agree. It has done on the last day in the new heavens and the new earth with perfected souls and resurrected bodies.

So the fact that we have been saved in order to praise him forever and ever makes it certain that we will be delivered. So that's the first part of the passage here, the greatness of our God. The second part is the greatness of the trouble that David finds himself in note, the greatness of our God does not mean that we will never have trouble or that.

We will only have a few or that they will be light. There's nothing could be more opposite. What's going on when the waves of death surrounded me and so there's crashing waves, but they're not just coming from one direction. They're closing in from all directions and a military maneuver where where he's being in circled like a noose.

So you've got waves and the waves are made out of death and the death waves are closing in like a noose. It is a very vivid image isn't it. He's piling it up. If a beginning, you know, third grader had their first poetry assignment, and they wrote this, you know, their teacher might say, well, that's a bit much.

Well, the teacher the third grader is not describing the troubles of the godly in this life and David is being carried along by the Holy Spirit, and if you expect that, you will have an easy trouble, free life. Then you may be need to take into account that God has given you.

This psalm to pray and to sing when the waves of death surrounded me, the floods of ungodliness made me afraid the sorrows of shale surrounded me. Okay, so now you got battles of the three armies. Okay there's the waves of death. There's the floods of ungodliness right behind the waves of death.

There are the sorrows of the grave. So the source of the grave are assuming that the death ways are gonna accomplish their mission and what comes death, the great, what comes after death, the grave or shale. So the sores of shields surrounded me the snares of death confronted me.

Now that is closed all the way in and the the trigger where you step and it snaps gets you as right there on every side it's arrived and my distress. I called upon Yahweh. Now, one of our favorite passages. Hopefully for you. One of my favorite passages for sure.

Romans chapter 8 talks about all the different things that can never separate you from the love of God. Well, none of those things can separate you either from the ear of God, even if you had no tongue, you cry out to him from your heart and it goes up to his ear.

As I were, he hears, he doesn't have actual physical ears. He gave us ears so that we could understand the intensity with which he inclines himself towards the cries of his people. So, we have ears, and we can turn our heads and we can bend our bodies and with those physical things that he gave us.

He enables us to appreciate a little hint of how ready the the Lord is to listen to the prayer that comes to him in Jesus Christ his son, okay? So the greatness of God, the greatness of the distress and then the greatness of God's response and the bulk of the passage is actually the greatness of God's response.

There is this wicked unbelieving. Thought that we may sometimes have. I hope you don't have it but knowing that you are my children it is quite possible that you like I have. Had this feeling like your troubles are too intense and if only with someone would just notice how great your troubles are, well David's troubles are great and they are intense and there's no minimizing that here except by comparison to the intensity of God's response.

So whenever you start to feel like your situation is too intense, or if only, someone could notice how great your troubles are, perhaps, what you need is for the Holy Spirit to help you, notice how great God's response is. Now, in this section, David weaves together, things that happen during the flood things, that happened at Mount Sinai, things that happened in the parting of the Red Sea, things that happened in the wilderness things that happened on the banks of Egypt's things that happened during the conquest of the land.

And so you have earthquakes and heaven and earth shaking in verse 8 and you have smoke and fire from God himself in verse 9 and you know the people who had seen it all. And then there they were at the base of the mountain of Sinai. And they were terrified and Moses was terrified, he reminds us, he bows

the heavens and comes down with darkness under his feet.

He's seen upon the wings of the wind makes darkness canopies around him. Darkness thick clouds. There's a brightness before him and coals of fire are kindled. You reminder of the glory cloud, both in the wilderness, and then that had descended upon the tabernacle. The Lord thundering and sending lightning bolts reminds us the storms of the flood.

The channels of the sea are seen. The foundations of the world are uncovered reminds us of the parting of the Red Sea, the rebuke of the Lord, the blast of the breadth of his nostrils. So if we forgot, when we were talking about fire, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah he sent me from above, he took me he drew me out of many waters picture, there of both Noah, and the Ark and Moses and the art.

Remember the only other use of that word arc and God being the God, who saves his people. And in that way, he delivered me from my strong enemy. Those who hated me for, they were too strong for me the whole exodus event. They confronted me in the day of my calamity but y'all with my support he brought me out into a broad place unless it's both the wilderness and promise end but especially gathering them to in itself and wilderness he delivered me because he delighted in me.

So, David takes all of the most amazing glorious glimpses that God has given of his glory and how he exercises, his glorious power and displays the greatness of his glory and the greatness of his power and saving his people, he takes all of those. And and he says that's, that's the god who leaps into action when I prayed now and David's own deliverances.

There were often by the skin of his teeth. Things like saw hearing that there's trouble somewhere else and leaving right before he's about to capture or acting crazy. And the listened king saying, do I lack madman or the other Philistine general saying don't bring him along, things like that?

And but David knows that when he prayed it was the God of creation, the God of the flood, the God of Sinai, the God of the Exodus, the God who destroyed, Sodom the God who caused Moses to be drawn up by, who are there is the same God who was delivering him in the same love of the same power?

And of course, you know that or ought to know that for yourself, some of the reasons why the Holy Spirit gives us this song to sing. Not just because it's something God did for David a few times or many many times in his life but that it's the same God to whom you pray and cry out and he is exercising the same power in the same love for the same reason and we have just a hint of that at the end of our passage, we'll have a lot more of it next week.

By God's help Lord willing. He delivered me because he delighted in me. The Lord has delighted in those who he is saving from before the world began. He's chosen those whom he's going to say in the beloved, the Lord Jesus and he makes them righteous with the righteousness of Jesus.

If you belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ, it's because he's been delighting in you in his son. He's been, he enhances from heaven, and Jesus is baptism, and Jesus is transfiguration. This is my beloved son with him. I'm well please, this is my son. I love him.

I'm delighted in him when God listens to you. When you pray, when you it's because he loves you in his son, he's adopted you in his son, he loves you and his son. He's delighted in you in his son, the reason you come to him through faith in Jesus Christ and pray is because he is adopted you as his child, he loves you, his adopted you as his child and his son, he loves you and his son, he's delighted in you and in his son.

And so when you come to God through Jesus Christ, the righteousness and sacrifice of Jesus, in whatever your trouble is and you may know that this almighty God is exercising. This power for your sake, might not see it on earth, but the Holy Spirit, grant you to see it by faith by remembering his work and all the mighty works of your Lord.

And how this psalm teaches you to think of those mighty works. When you are crying out to your God, spray Our father in heaven. We do praise you. You are our rock, our strong, hold our refuge, our salvation. All of these things that we have just read and heard about in this passage, we pray that you would help us to not have unreasonable expectations of at the easiness of life.

But also we pray that you would make us to have reasonable expectations about your greatness, as our God. And when we see the troubles becoming intense, make us to remember that your salvation and your defense and your response to our prayer is even more intense in the Lord Jesus because you have delighted in us for his sake.

And in him from before the world begin. Oh, Lord. Help us to bring these gospel truths to bear on our own hearts and our own minds grant that your spirit would bring these gospel truths to bear on our hearts and our minds when we pray to you. That every time we cry out, we would marvel that we are able to cry out to you through Jesus.

That nothing can separate us from your love, and Christ, and nothing can separate us from your ear in Christ. And grant to us to rejoice, even in the midst of trouble, Knowing that you are hearing us for his sake and working, all things for your glory. And for our good, we ask that your spirit would do this in our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

Amen.