

# Outcomes of Depending on God

## 2 Samuel 21 & 22

### Key Bible Texts

2 Samuel 21 & 22

### Key Bible Verse(s)

“And he said, The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.” (2 Samuel 22:2)

## Background to the Study

A three-year famine strikes Israel. David seeks God's guidance, and it is revealed that the famine is due to Saul's breach of a treaty with the Gibeonites by killing many of them. Some 400 years before this time, the Gibeonites had tricked Joshua into making a treaty with them (Joshua 9). It was due to this treaty that the Gibeonites were allowed to remain in the land, though essentially, they were slaves of the Israelites. To atone for Saul's actions, David consults the Gibeonites. They demand the death of seven of Saul's descendants. David agrees and hands over seven men, including the two sons of Rizpah and five sons of Merab.

According to the Law, bodies were to be buried on the day of death. However, these bodies were unburied until the rain came – the evidence that the famine would end. Rizpah protected the bodies from April until October – the harvest season. Her actions prompted David to gather the bones of Saul and of his sons to give them a proper burial in the family tomb, which was important to an Israelite.

The battles listed in verses 15-22 happened earlier and are recounted here. It highlights the valour of David's warriors, including the defeat of several giants who were descendants of the giants from Gath. After this conflict, David's military commanders declared that he was too valuable to go with them to the battlefield anymore.

2 Samuel 22 records a song of praise and thanksgiving by David, celebrating God's deliverance and faithfulness throughout his life. This chapter parallels Psalm 18 and contains rich poetic imagery and expressions of gratitude. It is significant that Saul is not named as one of David's enemies, even though he tried at least five times to kill him. David considered Saul to be God's anointed and would not harm him even when he had the opportunity, waiting instead until he was removed in God's time.

In verses 2 and 3, David begins by proclaiming God as his rock, fortress, and deliverer. He reflects on how God saved him from his enemies and provided strength in times of trouble and describes his

reliance on and experience of God's care and protection.

David recounts how he cried out to God in his distress and how God responded with powerful deliverance. God is depicted as intervening in dramatic and cosmic ways to rescue David. Then God rescued David and moved him to a place of safety and freedom.

David acknowledges that God rewarded him according to his righteousness and integrity. He praises God's faithfulness to those who are faithful and upright. David understood that the only way to please God is through submission to Him. In verse 29, David thanked God for being his "lamp," and "lighting his darkness." He then acknowledged that God was giving him safety and victory. God's love gave David victory after victory and placed him on a secure throne. No wonder he exclaimed "The Lord liveth!" (vs. 47). The gods of the nations around him were dead idols, made from wood, stone, or metal, but God heard David's prayers and answered them!

## TESTIMONIES FROM OUR DAY

*Not too long ago, I was traveling on a scenic highway in the northern region of Washington State. The mountains, the autumn colours, the streams, the clear skies, and the terrain were breathtaking. Then, while standing on a ridge of solid rock, I noticed something that seemed to be a little out of character. Right in front of me was a small tree with a trunk as gnarled as any I had ever seen. It was projecting out over a 600-foot drop-off in an almost horizontal position. This tree did not compare in beauty with the majestic pines in the mountains nearby, yet the leaves were a beautiful green. In this terrain and high altitude, the winters are harsh. Looking at that small tree, I wondered how it could have survived through the rough conditions winter brings. Looking more closely, I found that the base and the roots were right under the platform of rock where I was standing. It was safe and solidly anchored, no matter what came.*

*This can be compared to our Christian walk. Trials and temptations will come our way, and at times we may feel as though they could overwhelm us. Yet, like that tree, we know that our Rock, Christ Jesus, will never move. David was like that tree. He knew that he was rooted and grounded in a strong Rock – his Fortress and Deliverer. Chapter 22:1 explains that David sang this song as a prayer, thanking the Lord for delivering him from his enemies and King Saul. Being in exile and running for your life would be quite a trial. Yet, David found peace knowing that God was on his side. There is nothing more comforting and assuring than knowing that our Foundation is secure!*

## A Closer Look

### Question 1

How long was the famine in Israel and Judah and why did the famine occur? Compare Saul's actions and the resulting deaths of his sons and grandsons, with sin and its results. II Samuel 21:1-2, 8-9

### Question 2

How can we apply the example of Rizpah's devotion to our lives? II Samuel 21:10-12

**Question 3**

Why do you think the author of 2 Samuel 21:15-22 recorded the giants who were killed?

**Question 4**

What do you believe was David's primary motivation for living a righteous life - pleasing God or receiving protection and blessings? II Samuel 22: 2-3, 7, 21. 47, 50

**Question 5**

2 Samuel 22:35 states, "He teacheth my hands to war." In verse 36, David says, "thy gentleness hath made me great." How can we reconcile the seeming contradiction of these two statements?

**Question 6**

II Samuel 22 is filled with significant insights into God and what it means to have Him as our God. What major themes are developed in David's song as recorded in this chapter? (II Samuel 22: 2-3, 22, 30, 36, 47) David's song covers many years of his life. Why would it be a good thing to look back over our lives and thank God for what He has done?

## Take Home

Often when people choose to do things their own way rather than looking to God and striving to follow His will, it ends in tragedy. Both the famine and the killings of Saul's sons and grandsons could have been avoided, if Saul had looked to the Lord for guidance. In our lives too, we can avoid trouble and problems by following God's plan rather than our own.

2 Samuel 22 is a psalm of praise that expresses David's reliance on God, his humility and desire to let others know what God can do for them if they rely on Him. He obeyed God's law and saw the great value in having a "conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." (Acts 24:16). The trust David had put in God while he was a shepherd, had grown to include every aspect of his life. We can follow in the steps of humility, trust, and obedience, knowing God will provide for our needs each day.