

**Adam Clarke Commentary 2 Samuel 22**

**Adam Clarke:**

**Introduction**

David's psalm of thanksgiving for God's powerful deliverance and manifold blessings, including prophetic declarations relative to the humiliation and exaltation of the Messiah, vv. 1-51.

**Verse 1**

David spake unto the Lord the words of this song - This is the same in substance, and almost in words, with Psalm 18:1-50, and therefore the exposition of it must be reserved till it occurs in its course in that book, with the exception of a very few observations, and Dr. Kennicott's general view of the subject.

**Verse 5**

When the waves of death compassed me - Though in a primary sense many of these things belong to David, yet generally and fully they belong to the Messiah alone.

**Verse 11**

He rode upon a cherub, and did fly - he was seen upon the things of the wind - In the original of this sublime passage, sense and sound are astonishingly well connected. I shall insert the Hebrew, represent it in English letters for the sake of the unlearned reader, and have only to observe, he must read from the right to the left.

d x"xox — x)x xax<sup>TM</sup> xcxœ xox<sup>TM</sup>x"xox xox<sup>TM</sup>xcx£ x)x"xox' xcxœ xox<sup>TM</sup>x"xox'

d  
d (ruach) (canphey) (al) (vaiyera) (vaiyaoph) (kerub) (al) (vayirkab)

d  
d wind theof wings theuponseen was he and;fly did andcherubuponrode he

d  
d  
The clap of the wing, the agitation and rush through the air are expressed here in a very extraordinary manner. Other beauties of this kind will be noted in the exposition of the Psalm alluded to above.

I now subjoin Dr. Kennicott's remarks on this chapter: -  
 œThe very sublime poetry contained in this chapter is universally admired, and yet it cannot be perfectly understood, till it is known Who is the speaker, who the person thus triumphant over mighty enemies, whose Sufferings occasioned such a dreadful convulsion of nature, and, who, upon his deliverance, inflicted such vengeance on his own people, and also became thus a king over the heathen. Should we be told that this person was David, it will be very difficult to show how this description can possibly agree with that character: but if it did in fact agree, yet would it contradict St. Paul, who quotes part of it as predicting the conversion of the Gentiles under Christ the Messiah. Romans 15:9; Hebrews 2:13; and see Peirce's Commentary, p. 50. Now if the person represented as speaking through this Divine ode be David only, the Messiah is excluded. In consequence of the difficulties resulting from each of these suppositions, the general idea has been that it relates both to David and to the Messiah as a prophecy of a double sense; first, as spoken by David of himself, and yet to be understood in a secondary sense, of the Messiah. But it must be remarked here, that if spoken only of David, it is not a prediction of any thing future, but a thanksgiving for favors past, and therefore is no prophecy at all. And farther, it could not be a prophecy descriptive of David unless the particulars agreed to David, which they evidently do not. If then David be here necessarily excluded from the single sense, he must be excluded also from the double sense, because nothing can be intended by any sacred writer, to relate to two persons, unless it be True of both; but it not being the case here as to David, we must conclude that this song relates only to the Messiah; and on this subject an excellent Dissertation, by the late Mr. Peirce, is subjoined to his comment on the Epistle to the Hebrews. It may be necessary to add here two remarks: the twenty-fourth verse now ends with, I have kept myself from mine iniquity, which words, it is objected, are not proper, if applied to the Messiah. But this difficulty is removed, in part, by the context, which represents the speaker as perfectly innocent and righteous; and this exactly agrees with the proof arising from the Syriac and Arabic versions, and also the Chaldee paraphrase, that this word was anciently xzxcox x<sup>TM</sup>xox ab iniquitatibus; consequently, this is one of the many instances where the xox final (mem) is improperly omitted by the Jewish transcribers. See my General Dissertation. Lastly, the difficulty arising from the title, which ascribes the Psalm to David, and which seems to make him the speaker in it, may be removed, either by supposing that the title here, like those now prefixed to several Psalms, is of no sufficient authority; or rather, by considering this title as only meant to describe the time when David composed this prophetic hymn, that when delivered from all his other enemies as well as from the hand of Saul, he then consecrated his leisure by composing this sublime

prophecy concerning Messiah, his son, whom he represents here as speaking, (just as in Psalm 22, 40, and other places), and as describing,

- 1.His triumph over death and hell;
- 2.The manifestations of Omnipotence in his favor, earth and heaven, trembling at God's awful presence;
- 3.The speaker's innocence thus divinely attested;
- 4.The vengeance he was to take on his own people the Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem; and,
- 5.The adoption of the heathen, over whom he was to be the head and ruler.

Another instance of a title denoting only the time of a prophecy, occurs in the very next chapter; where a prophecy concerning the Messiah is entitled, The Last words of David; i.e., a hymn which he composed a little before his death, after all his other prophecies. And perhaps this ode in 2 Samuel 22, which immediately precedes that in 2 Samuel 23, was composed but a little while before; namely, when all his wars were over. Let it be added, that Josephus, immediately before he speaks of David's mighty men, which follow in this same chapter of Samuel, considers the two hymns in 2 Samuel 22 and 23, as both written after his wars were over - *Jam Davides, bellis et periculis perfunctus, pacemque deinceps profundam agitans, odas in Deum hymnosque composuit. Tom. i., page 401.*