

IN THE GRIP OF DEATH

I have never been in a situation where I thought my life was in imminent danger or might end. However, that is exactly the type of scenario that David is poetically describing in Psalm 18:4-5. We cannot be sure about which moment or time of David's life he is writing. We do have the ancient description from scribes at the beginning of the psalm informing us that David "sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul."

Regardless, David is describing one or more tremendously dangerous and extremely stressful time (or times) in his life. Let us notice the chilling picture he paints with verses 4 and 5. *The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave (Hebrew=Sheol) coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.*

Have you ever had a dream (nightmare really) of being trapped? I can imagine David sleeping on the ground in some cave while he is running for his life. He dreams of giant roots coming out of the ground, wrapping him up, and dragging him down into the underworld (Sheol could refer to the physical grave or the realm of disembodied spirits, similar to the Greek word Hades). If your a nerd like I am, this would be like the tentacles of whatever creature attacks Luke in the trash compacter, or, for younger nerds, the Devil's Snare plant that envelops Harry, Ron, and Hermione with it's tendrils at the end of The Sorcerer's Stone.

Back to David. He feels like he is caught in a trap set by Death personified. He also uses the image of a ship being severely battered by a fierce storm with huge waves threatening to engulf and sink it.

We may not feel physically threatened, but we can feel trapped by bad decisions we have made. Maybe the consequences of selfish (and sinful) choices have us wrapped up like a rope. Remember how David described the LORD in verse 2 (our previous article). As we further meditate upon this psalm, we will see how David envisions the LORD's response to his cries. We must always remember that no matter bad things seem in our lives, they are not too powerful for God to overcome. We must be willing to humble ourselves under his mighty hand and he will lift us up.

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