

GROUP LEADERS NOTES ON PSALM 18

Question 1

- a) Metaphors: Rock, fortress, strength (horn), protection (shield), deliverer and stronghold.
- b) The images of the opening 6 verses are defensive: e.g. Rock is something firm to stand on; a fortress is a place of defence and safety from the enemy.
- c) David is continuously confronted by the enemy but finds protection in God's character.

Question 2

- a) Verses 1-6 are full of 'I' and 'my' descriptions as David sets out the position he is in.
- b) David writes about God hearing his cry in verse 6 and then about God's deliverance in verse 16 onwards. In between we have in verses 7-15 God acting and it is all about 'He' and 'His'!
- c) What we also have between in verses 7-15 is the opposite of the theme of safety and defence we observed in the earlier part of the psalm. They speak of attack and aggression.

Question 3

- a) This is a manifestation of the living God! The technical term for a description such as this is a 'theophany.'
- b) There is no record of any earthquake accompanying any of David's deliverances so this is descriptive.
- c) The main thrust of this part of the Psalm is the immense power of God the Creator. Hence the psalmist calls on aspects of nature to express actions.
- d) To all intents and purposes everything seems completely out of control. Man can only look on helplessly as God shows His complete control of all things.

Question 4

- a) During redemptive history God visited His people in these ways literally.
- b) The impact of his coming in such graphic ways was to impress upon them His mighty power and glory in serving them, in saving and in keeping them.
- c) Verses 7-8 are reminiscent of when God gave Moses the 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai: **Exodus 19:17-19**.
- d) God revealed Himself in a similar way to Elijah in **1 Kings 19:11-12**.
- e) Although it happened after David's time we can also point to God's appearance to Ezekiel in **Ezekiel 1:4-5**.
- f) Verse 15 could be a reference to God's control over nature at the Red Sea; both in salvation and judgement (note reference to nostrils again).

Question 5

- a) Verse 8: Smoke in Isa 6:4 speaks of the reaction of holiness to sin. The nostrils in Hebrew are the organ of anger.
- b) We sometimes speak of someone's nostrils flaring when they are angry.
- c) Fire is often associated in scripture with judgement.
- d) In **Deuteronomy 4:24** it relates to God's jealousy towards His idolatrous people.
- e) In verses 9-12 God comes down from the heavens. He is a God of revelation and intervention.
- f) Note that God takes the initiative (v9). He also acts quickly (v10).
- g) Whilst this description speaks of God coming in judgement over David's enemies it also serves to show God's coming in salvation. (We can mention that in the gospel God did not send someone else; He came Himself, Immanuel).

Question 6

- a) In 1952, J.B. Phillips wrote a book called, 'Your God Is Too Small'. His theory was that many believers had misconceptions about God that were no more than superimposed human characteristics and that we limit our understanding of God in order that God might serve our own purposes.
- b) Whilst we may not be able to adequately describe God; the more we see the awesomeness of Him, the more we realise His sovereignty over all things: **Psalm 36:5-6**.
- c) The greatness of God over all nations and rulers is expressed in terms of His creative power in **Isaiah 40:12-15**.
- d) This same God came into the world to save sinners: "*He bowed the heavens and came down*" (v9).