

Psalm 68:1-18

Psalm 68 commemorates the bringing the ark of the covenant up to Mount Zion at the city of Jerusalem. David understood this festive occasion to mark the triumphant conclusion of Israel's Exodus journey, begun when Moses departed from Mount Sinai with the ark of the covenant leading God's people.

Summary

Psalm 68 is a hymn of victory, looking back on the journey from Sinai, celebrating God's salvation, and looking forward to victory and peace to come for the people among whom God dwells.

1. God Arises vv. 1-2; 5-6

Moses led Israel out from Sinai with the ark of the covenant, the footstool of God's throne on earth, going before the people (**Num. 10:35**). As David brought up the ark to its resting place on Mount Zion, completing the Exodus, he announced his continued confidence in God in Mosaic language (**Psalm 68:1**).

David is confident that God will scatter His enemies, using pictorial language that describes overwhelming power (**Psalm 68:2**)

Not only does the Lord scatter his enemies, but his tender hands reach out to gather his people in safety and comfort (**Psalm 68:5-6**).

The Israelites in Egypt were bereft of a true home and comfort, so God brought them to the promised land, providing for them abundantly.

God continues to do so today making the church a place where castoffs may find acceptance and where the fatherless and widows find a family.

2. Joyful Praise vv. 3-4

As David celebrated his crowning achievement in settling the ark of the covenant on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, he could look back on what God had done for him: raising him up from obscurity, defending him from the attacks of King Saul, empowering him for victory and enthroning him in power and glory.

God is mighty and gracious to save his people in all places and at all times.

God's plan of salvation calls for the wicked to be destroyed, whilst God's humble people are exalted with Christ.

In light of God's commitment to grant us so great a salvation, David states: "the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy" (**Psalm 68:3**). David calls us to worship, simply because our God is so worthy of our best praise: "Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the LORD; exult before him" (**Psalm 68:4**).

3. Saving Presence vv. 7-16

In the rest of Psalm 68, David shows how God has achieved this salvation in the past and then praises God for what his people can be certain that he will do in the future. Looking on the past, David considers God's saving presence with Israel during the Exodus, going out before them and leading them safely until the time when David established the ark on Jerusalem's holy Mount Zion.

First, David presents a number of pictures from the Exodus that prove God's blessing in guiding and caring for his people (**Psalm 68:7-10**). God's saving blessings are located among his people, despite the troubles they may experience in this world.

Secondly, God defends His people by shattering the enemies who sought to destroy them or impede their progress (**Psalm 68:11-14**).

Thirdly, David sees the arrival of the ark at Mount Zion as proof of the way that God exalts the lowly in the presence of the mighty of the world (**Psalm 68:15-16**).

4. Highly Exalted vv. 17-18

David concludes the first half of Psalm 68 with words that are later applied in the New Testament to the ascension of Jesus Christ (**Psalm 68:17-18**).

Paul quotes these words of God as a conqueror leading his captives in reference to the ascension of Christ into heaven (**Eph 4:8**).

David wrote Psalm 68 out of his rejoicing for the ascension of the ark on Mount Zion, knowing that in this action God had finally established his people in the rest of the promised land.

From his "holy habitation" God would rise up to protect his people as they trusted him and called on him in prayer, and in the midst of his people the Lord would be a "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows" (**Psalm 68:5**).

As Christians look to heaven and realize that our Savior is ascended there in glory and power, with authority granted to him over all things for the church (**Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-22**), we should experience the same joyful peace and satisfaction that David felt.

If we rejoice in the truth of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension for our salvation, as David rejoiced in the ascension of the ark on Mount Zion, that belief will change everything about our lives.

We will especially desire to live in close communion with God, who has not only made his habitation among us, as the Lord did in Jerusalem, but actually come to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent.

Christ, who suffered and was forsaken for our sin, is now enthroned as the Lord of glory. Through faith, we must rejoice in serving the cause of Christ's glory, knowing that not only is he here with us now, but we will one day be with him.

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