

Psalm 68:19-35

Psalm 68 is a great hymn of victory commemorating the pinnacle of David's achievement in bringing the ark of the covenant up to Mount Zion at the city of Jerusalem, which David had captured. The great objective of God's victory over His enemies is to gather His people before Him to glory in His grace.

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. Praised God vv. 19-20

Despite the achievements of men to secure freedoms and rights, it is God who permanently secures the freedom of his people to worship him and serve the gospel (**Psalm 68:19**). Since God's glory is the reason for our salvation, our response to God's mercies should be to praise his name. (**Psalm 68:19-20**).

When David speaks of God as "our salvation," he reminds us that God's saving grace "daily bears us up" (**Psalm 68:19**). The picture is that of a shepherd who takes up in his arms a sheep that is lame, weak, or wayward, and delivers it to safety.

As an example of God's constant mercy, David speaks of God's delivering his people from death (**Psalm 68:20**). In addition to preserving our lives daily in ways of which we may not even be aware, God also delivers us from the fear and dread of death.

2. Striken Enemies vv. 21-23

For the encouragement and comfort of suffering believers, David writes of God's judgment of the wicked (**Psalm 68:21**). This promise of protection does not mean that God does not permit his people to suffer, but rather that he will not allow his enemies to succeed in destroying the gospel and the church. David goes on to show how impossible it is for the wicked to evade God's judgment (**Psalm 68:22**).

God not only judges the wicked but also causes His people to exult in the overthrow of their enemies (**Psalm 68:23**). Persecuted Christians are comforted by both their knowledge of God's justice and the triumph of his gospel.

Many today scoff at the idea of God's vengeful wrath against sinners, but the Bible plainly declares the vast, terrible, and eternal condemnation awaiting those who oppose God's will and refuse to honor Christ in penitent faith (**Heb 10:31**).

3. Tribal Procession vv. 24-27

The psalm concludes by returning to the ark and the tabernacle, picturing the universal worship that God will gain for himself. Both the salvation of his people and the judgment of his enemies serve the same purpose of bringing glory to the Lord.

Psalm 68:24 describes the ark's ascension. The song of adoration from the Lord's grateful people, praises God as the source of life for his people (**Psalm 68:25-26**). These verses form "a prelude to that voice of universal exultation, with which the Christian church, in her holy services, now celebrates the resurrection and ascension of her Redeemer."

As God proceeds up to Mount Zion, David sees the tribes of his people also parading up with the Lord (**Psalm 68:27**). This picture reminds us that the gathering of God's people for worship is not so much the means but the end of our salvation.

4. Summoned Nations vv. 29-31

As David thinks about the ascension of the ark and prophesies the saving works of God, he sees not only the worship of Israel but the gathering of people from all nations to worship the Lord.

The final vision of Psalm 68 reminds us that God preserves his gospel so that sinners from all over the earth may be saved.

First, David foresees the homage of rulers from afar (**Psalm 68:29**).

Secondly, David sees the nations themselves streaming up to the temple to worship the Lord (**Psalm 68:31**).

The call of the gospel throughout the world is accompanied by a warning of judgment to the wicked (**Psalm 68:30a**).

This plea reminds Christians that in this world we will never be free from opposition and worldly danger, but will always have to pray for God's protection from evil powers. These enemies will be trampled under God's feet, just as those who delight in slaughter and conquest will be broken and dispersed (**Psalm 68:30b**).

5. Awesome God of Grace vs. 28

David credits this gathering of the nations, as well as the smiting of the wicked, to God's power alone (**Psalm 68:28**).

Israel could survive in the ancient world only by God's preserving might.

In the same manner, the preservation of the church, the spread of the gospel, and the ingathering of the nations to Christ can happen only by God's sovereign power.

David relies specifically on God's power as it is gloriously revealed at the temple (**Psalm 68:35**). By picturing God's power emanating from the sanctuary, David shows that saving grace always flows from the promises and blessings secured by God's covenant with his people.

Psalm 68 offers comfort and hope to the believer. Through faith in Christ, God will bear him up to face today's troubles and deliver him from the power of death.

Even if a believer loses his life, his spirit goes immediately into the presence of Christ, whilst his body waits for its final resurrection upon Christ's return. Meanwhile, nothing that evil men can do will ever defeat the gospel or destroy the church that belongs to the Lord.

Psalm 68:19-35 Outline