

Psalm 68

1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm *or* Song of David. Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. **2** As smoke is driven away, *so* drive *them* away: as wax melteth before the fire, *so* let the wicked perish at the presence of God. **3** But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. **4** Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. **5** A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation. **6** God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*. **7** O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah: **8** The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: *even* Sinai itself *was moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel. **9** Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. **10** Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor. **11** The Lord gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it*. **12** Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil. **13** Though ye have lien among the pots, *yet shall ye be as* the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. **14** When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was *white* as snow in Salmon. **15** The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan; an high hill *as* the hill of Bashan. **16** Why leap ye, ye high hills? *this is* the hill *which* God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever. **17** The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, *even* thousands of angels: the Lord *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the holy *place*. **18** Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*.

19 Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits*, *even* the God of our salvation. Selah. **20** *He that is* our God *is* the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord *belong* the issues from death. **21** But God shall wound the head of his enemies, *and* the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. **22** The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring *my people* again from the depths of the sea: **23** That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of *thine* enemies, *and* the tongue of thy dogs in the same. **24** They have seen thy goings, O God; *even* the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. **25** The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after; among *them were* the damsels playing with timbrels. **26** Bless ye God in the congregations, *even* the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. **27** There *is* little Benjamin *with* their ruler, the princes of Judah *and* their council, the princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali. **28** Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. **29** Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee. **30** Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, *till every one* submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people *that* delight in war. **31** Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. **32** Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: **33** To him that

rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice. **34** Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength *is* in the clouds. **35** O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed *be* God. Psalms 68:1-35 (KJV)

ASCRIBE YE STRENGTH UNTO GOD

OUTLINE

- (1) Strength to establish the witness of His chosen nation (v1-19)
 - (a) His enemies scattered (v1-2)
 - (b) His despised people rejoice (v3-6)
 - (i) Deliverance from Egypt (v7-8)
 - (ii) Established in Canaan (v9-18)
 - (c) His people comes in thanksgiving for salvation (v19)

- (2) Strength sufficient to establish His Kingdom (v20-32)
 - (a) His enemies' defeat announced (v20-23)
 - (c) He is King among His people (v24-32)
 - (i) Thanksgiving from His people (v24-28)
 - (ii) Tribute from the company of vanquished foes (v29-32)

- (3) Know therefore God the source of strength (v33-35)
 - (a) God's perennial rule acknowledged (v33)
 - (b) Strength He gives to His own (v34-35)

INTRODUCTION

Wherewithal cometh your strength for every spiritual battle and victory in life's journey? The psalmist David attributed and credited all his strength to come from his God, JAH (v4), the covenant God of Israel, the short form of Jehovah "יהוה" the covenant name of the God of Israel, our God (v16, 26).

This psalm is a victory march as God's people pressed forward in conquest from Egypt, the land of their captivity to Mount Zion, the hill of God (v15), the capital of the nation of Israel established by her God. More than that, God established His kingdom on earth and the nations of the earth comes to Jerusalem to give due honour to their King!

We observed God established His glory by His great strength, giving victory to His weak people. He is called "Almighty" (v14) and "King" (v24). All power is ascribed to Him.

Therefore, the psalmist cannot but gratefully acknowledge in thanksgiving by blessing His LORD in private devotion and in public acknowledgement in the congregation of God's people (v19, 26, 35).

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Notice also that God is addressed 7 times as “Lord” “אֲדֹנָי” “adonay” (v11, 17, 19, 20, 22, 26, 32), six times it is with the root word “אֲדֹנָי” which means “Master” except in v26 it is also “יְהוָה”.

What is the significance? If we trace the progression, we notice (1) the Lord gave the word (v11) that is effectual in destroying His enemies, (2) the Lord has myriad of angels at His behest to protect His people (v17), (3) the Lord be thanked for blessing His children (v19), (4) the Lord has the power over death (v20), (5) the Lord causes His people to triumph over their enemies (v22), (6) the Lord is the fountain of Israel’s blessing (v26), (7) the Lord is therefore worthy of praise (v32).

I believe the message is that our Lord is a worthy Master to follow. He is not a taskmaster like Pharaoh but He is kind, good and loving, a protector and the Source of our blessings.

One of the hallmarks of a servant to his Master is obedience.

It reminds us of the medley of two choruses taught by Dr John Sung:

I will Follow Where He Leadeth, I will pasture where He feedeth, I will follow all the way Lord, I will follow Jesus every day.

Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus, anywhere, everywhere, I will follow Him, follow, follow, I will follow Jesus, everywhere He leadeth I will follow on.

The one use of “יְהוָה” translated “Lord” instead of the usual “LORD” by the King James translators perhaps alluded to emphasize God’s suzerainty covenant in choosing His people, “the righteous” (v3). A covenant made between unequal parties.

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It is all of God and none of His people's merit or worthiness – the God of our salvation (v19). Pause therefore and consider this truth. Were they better? No, they were sinners through and through, yet God saved and bless them. What privilege! Therefore, the rightful response in gratitude is obedience to follow all that our Master bids us to do.

The Exodus is a demonstration of God in battle. It is His power that delivered His people and speed them along the way to the Promised Land (v7-8).

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

God is the Giver of rain to bring the harvest to fruition. He is the One that proppers their way. When rain is withheld, drought and famine ensues.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor. 11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

Indeed, the message of coming to know and acknowledge the living and true God is decidedly the mission of the nation of Israel. Israel was established to be a witness to all the nations of the world.

The church is established as a witness to the veracity of the living and true God through His Foremost Son Jesus Christ.

The Prophet Amos said in Amos 8:11 *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."* Our Lord Jesus said likewise, Luke 18:8 *"...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"*

But God will not be without His witness as in time of Elijah, 1 Kings 19:18 *"Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."* May all His people hold forth His Word for the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil. 13 Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. 14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon. 15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. 16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever.

Indeed, the mountains range of Bashan and the peak of Mount Salmon, located near Mount Hermon in the north, majestic though towering heights in the land compared with Mount Zion, pales in glory because it is in Mount Zion that God establishes His presence.

17 *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*

God's army of angels by the thousands fight God's battles on behalf of His people. Victory is secured and assured.

18 *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. 19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*

Indeed, God's kingdom will be established and tribute and gifts are exchanged between the King and His subjects.

(2) Strength sufficient to establish His Kingdom (v20-32)

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20 *He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death. 21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. 22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea: 23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same. 24 They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. 25 The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. 26 Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. 27 There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. 28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. 29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee. 30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war. 31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. 32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:*

Our Lord is King both in heaven and on earth. He has the power over death, affirming the infinite power that man does not possess. This scene depicting the triumph of the King in His earthly Temple in Jerusalem gave much jubilation amongst His people. Yet today, the Temple is no more in Israel.

There will come a time when the King Jesus shall return to establish His throne again in Jerusalem. See the account of triumph at the 2nd coming of Christ to save all Israel by destroying all of Israel's enemies and to establish His Kingdom on earth in the account by Apostle John in Revelation 19:11-16 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in

righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Also, Revelation 20:1-6 "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Isaiah 2:1-4 *"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."*

Zechariah 14:16-21 *And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe*

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therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Truly, that day is soon. Let us be ready!

(3) Know therefore God the source of strength (v33-35)

(a) God's perennial rule acknowledged (v33)

(b) Strength He gives to His own (v34-35)

May God's people acknowledge that they can do nothing without Him. He is the giver of strength to His people. Therefore, may we ascribe strength unto God, be His faithful and obedient followers in season and out of season. Amen.