

BLESS OUR GOD OF SALVATION!

Psalm 68: 1-35 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Beloved, at the heart of this 68th psalm is a need for deep understanding of when God shall arise. I believe with all my heart that God rises to the occasion most often when His people are submissive to His will. That's why I actually prefer the translation of the NASB of Psalm 68: 1-3. There I read, not "God shall arise, but let God arise." I read there, "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered, And let those who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; As wax melts before the fire, So let the wicked perish before God. But let the righteous be glad; let them exult before God; Yes, let them rejoice with gladness." This is a unique psalm penned by David. The exact time of this psalm being penned is unknown, but it appears definitely to be associated with the Ark of the Covenant. That leads us to the distinct possibility that this psalm was written when the ark was being transported by the priests at the command of King David to finally arrive at Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. The narrative of this event is chronicled in I Chronicles 15: 1- 29. This then could have been the time when David was dancing and rejoicing before the Lord, and these may have been some of his very words he was singing and dancing to.

The Ark of the Covenant, don't confuse it with Noah's ark, was significant to the children of Israel. Created at Mt. Sinai, it became the most important symbol of God's presence in Israel's history as recorded in Exodus 25:10-22. Whenever Israel traveled in the wilderness, the ark would go before them. When placed inside the tabernacle and the temple, it was placed in the most sacred room, the Holy of Holies, and this place was the designated place where Israel could meet with God. The High Priest would appear before God once a year with the offering for the sins of Israel. It was so sacred, that Jehovah commanded how the ark was to be transported and how anyone was struck dead who touched it. The ark accompanied Israel as they encircled Jericho. It was carried with them into battle. Psalm 68 is a reminder of the greatness of God against His enemies and His greatness in protecting His own people. Everything in this psalm would have been suitable to be sung as the Ark was being moved to Jerusalem. It is also a reminder of how God is to be revered. In this psalm are reminders for us, lessons for us to learn if we submit to God and let Him arise among us. What are the major lessons in this awesome song for us to learn as we submit to God and to His will? Notice what happens when we submit to God, and cooperate with His will.

THOSE WHO LET GOD ARISE, WHO SUBMIT TO HIM, SEE HIS ENEMIES SCATTERED BEFORE HIM. (I.) Have you sung the spirited scripture song from this very text? "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered, Let

God arise, let His enemies be scattered. Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered. Let God, let God arise.” A week ago, last Saturday, I used a devotional reading when I was counseling. We read—Day 363 from “Thoughts From The Diary Of A Desperate Man,” entitled, “Agreement, Submission, and Cooperation.” These were the few powerful words of Walter A. Henrichsen based on God’s Word: “That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:6. Agreement and submission are frequently confused in those relationships in life where one is under the authority of another. For example, a wife says, “I submit to my husband most of the time.” What she means is, most of the time we are in agreement, and the infrequent occasion when we are not in agreement I find cause not to submit. You test submission by doing what you don’t want to do, not by doing what you agree needs to be done. Many know how to pretend to submit when in fact they are only agreeing, and many know how to rebel. **Few** know how to cooperate in a spirit of submission. You can easily yield to your authority in an act of submission, without being willing to cooperate. When told you must do it, you obey in a perfunctory manner with no heart to make it work properly. “And he (King Amaziah) did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.” (II Chronicles 25: 2) Submission is more than an act; it is an attitude of the heart. Only you and God know your heart, and He will judge you, in part, by the heart attitude you carry into the execution of His request. “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” (Colossians 3: 23, 24)

Beloved, when we really submit to God’s Word, His will, and the promptings of the Holy Spirit, God will, He shall arise. Notice Psalm 68: 1-3. Notice what happens when we submit to God, and cooperate with His will. I read, “God shall arise, His enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate Him shall flee before Him! As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away; as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God! But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!” The words, “Let God arise” were the words pronounced every time when the ark was moved to a new location in the wilderness. These were the actual words of Moses every time the ark moved. We read in Numbers 10: 33-36, specifically in v. 35, “And it came to pass, as the ark set forward, that Moses said, “Rise up, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.” For just a moment, suppose you were part of that company of 3 million Jews in the Exodus, and suppose you decided to let the company leave, but you and your family would stay where you were. It was not Moses or the people who initiated the move. Flesh had no part in that decision. It was God’s doing alone. Suppose by afternoon, as you stayed behind, you noticed the intensity of the desert sun. The Glory of the

Lord encompassing the camp had shaded the camp, but now you are blistering in the sun. In the morning, you go out to get some manna for breakfast, but at this location, staying behind, you find no manna has fallen. You go to the rock that gushed with water, but you can't find it. The Rock has moved and gone before the company of Israelites. Beloved, when we say, "Let God arise, it means we either get up, submit to God, do His bidding, and cooperate with His will or we find ourselves in blistering sun, spiritually speaking, without manna or water. Only those who obey God and cooperate with His will, see God drive away the enemy as smoke is driven away, and as wax melts in the presence of the fire, so they see God's enemies perish before God, v. 2. Only those who obey God and cooperate with His will are the righteous who rejoice for God is with them. And with them, God overcomes His enemies and the righteous are glad, they exult before God and they become jubilant with joy. Secondly,

**THOSE WHO LET GOD ARISE, WHO SUBMIT TO HIM, SEE GOD
BECOME THE HELPER OF THE HELPLESS.** (II.) Notice verses 4-6. "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! Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in His holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home; He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land." Those who submit, sing, and they have something to sing about. Beloved, those who submit to God, those who cooperate with His will and obey it, whether they like God's plan or not, those believers begin to lift up a song to Jesus. God is the God of the downtrodden and the helpless. Our Father of the fatherless and protector of widows, stoops to help the solitary or lonely folk in their homes, providing for prisoners who have come to trust Him. God is there for the lowly and those looked down upon by society. But the un-submissive will dwell in a parched land. Notice verse 6, for the Hebrew word for rebellious is **carar**. It means those who turn away, who are stubborn, those who revolt, withdraw, who slide back, who backslide, and are refractory, meaning disobedient, unmanageable, non-compliant, and perverse, resisting ordinary treatment. God is declaring that He will not arise for the rebellious, unsubmitive, but something else will arise. The word, parched land is from the Hebrew word, dry as a bone, under the glaring blistering hot sun. Beloved, look back and consider what you stand up to God and say, "I will not or I will never do that." I call us to reconsider, so He will help us. Thirdly,

**THOSE WHO LET GOD ARISE, WHO SUBMIT TO HIM, SEE GOD
MANIFEST HIS PRESENCE BEFORE HIS PEOPLE.** (III.) Notice v. 7-10.

"O God, when You went out before Your people, when You marched through the wilderness, Selah, the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel. Rain in abundance, O God, You shed

abroad; You restored Your inheritance as it languished; Your flock found a dwelling in it; in Your goodness, O God, You provided for the needy.” Certainly, the Ark of the Covenant was a manifestation of God’s presence in Israel. Yet, God demonstrated His presence in many other ways throughout their history. Notice two other ways David describes God. (1) First, v. 7,8, God demonstrated His power as the God of Sinai, the God of boundaries that must be kept, and the God not to be rejected. Study this at home in Exodus 19: 16-25. This was the scene as God warned the people not to break the boundaries set around Mt. Sinai when God gave Moses the Law. For if God’s people rebelled, those very people would perish. The second demonstration of God’s power, (2) v. 9,10, was God’s sustaining of His people during the wilderness wanderings. In that way, God was the God of Israel, giving manna, rain, and restoring them to the Promised Land. Asaph spoke of this as well in Psalm 78: 24, 25, saying, “He rained down on them, manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven, Men ate the bread of angels, He sent them food in abundance.” For the languishing, an inheritance, for the needy, provision, 4thly,

THOSE WHO LET GOD ARISE, WHO SUBMIT TO HIM, SEE GOD PROVE HE IS GREATER THAN ANY ARMY OR INVENTION OF MAN.

(IV.) Notice verses 11-23. “The Lord gives the word; the women who announce the news are a great host: “The kings of the armies—they flee, they flee!” The women at home divide the spoil--though you men lie among the sheepfolds—the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with shimmering gold. When the Almighty scatters kings there, let snow fall on Zalmon. O mountain of God, mountain of Bashan; O many-peaked mountain, mountain of Bashan! Why do you look with hatred, O many-peaked mountain, at the mount that God desired for His abode, yes, where the LORD will dwell forever? The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary. You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men. even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there. Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. Selah. Our God is a God of salvation, and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death. But God will strike the heads of His enemies, the hairy crown of him who walks in his guilty ways. The Lord said, “I will bring them back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea, that you may strike your feet in their blood, that the tongues of your dogs may have their portion from the foe.” Were these words, the triumphal words of David and the other Israelites as they returned the ark to Jerusalem? There is a good chance, it is so! The words are a personal recounting of the words spoken after God’s many defeats of the enemy. I love how this section begins. God gives the word and the women of God announcing His good news are a mighty host. Thank God in every generation for faithful women who announce the Gospel good news. At the word of the Lord

being announced, the enemies flee. And the triumph has the men, the tired soldiers lying down in the sheepfolds like doves covered in silver with feathers of gold. And in the place where God scattered the kings, God sent snow to cover the bloody battlefield-v. 14. This mountain of God, Bashan, in v. 15, was the fertile region east of the Sea of Galilee and its northern border was the great Mt. Hermon. David seems to speak as if the highest mountains were showing a face of contempt or hatred toward Jerusalem because God chose where He wanted to reveal His presence—there in Jerusalem. God didn't choose the highest mountain, but He knew the place He desired, and chose the mountain of Jerusalem.

The picture is even more descriptive as God's chariots are twice ten thousand, and thousands upon thousands chariots. God sent before the Israelites divine chariots, think of it. In a land too full of crags and ditches and gulches and deep un-traversable canyons, where enemy chariots could not go, God's divine chariots came riding on the clouds of glory. God is greater than any army or invention of man. Paul said, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"--Rom. 8:31. Notice David now in v. 18, becomes a Messianic prophet, that Paul refers to in Ephesians 4: 8-10 speaking of Christ's ascension, after his crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection. This refers not just to Jewish victories, but to God's ultimate victory over Satan, capturing captivity—or freeing those in the bondage of sin, Hebrews 2: 14, 15. God sustains us daily, defeating the enemies plans and plots, v. 19, and God gives us in Jesus, the ultimate blessing of salvation, for He is the God of deliverances, v. 20. Think of it; to God belong all our escapes from death. And v. 21, the Lord Jesus, Messiah, strikes the heads of His enemies, and God strikes the hairy crown of him who walks in his guilty ways. There is a nugget in this Hebrew word who walks. The KJV states "who goeth on still in his trespasses. The Hebrew word is **haliykah**. Haliykak means those who are in the large processional, the march, the caravan, or a large company. Who gets it on the head besides Satan's head wound at the cross? David is speaking of those in the parade against God—in the large armies mounting against Him. Verse 22 states God's greatness is rising from the dead and bringing those who obey and submit to His will back from the depths of the sea, back from Bashan with the spoils. Remember the words concerning our Lord in Psalm 22—speaking of Christ's crucifixion—Psalm 22: 12, saying, "Many bulls encompass me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me. David is here prefiguring and prophesying that in Jesus, we escape spiritual death and we all will be raised one day. We will one day strike our feet in the blood of the enemy, v. 23 and our dogs will lap up the blood. What a picture! Paul picks up this psalm's truth in Romans 16: 19, 20 where I read, "For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good, and innocent as to what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." God is greater than our enemy! 5thly,

THOSE WHO LET GOD ARISE, WHO SUBMIT TO HIM, TRIUMPH IN THE ARK OF HIS PRESENCE AND BRING GIFTS TO HIM. (V.) Notice

verses 24-32. “Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary—the singers in front, the musicians last, between them virgins playing tambourines: “Bless God in the great congregation, the LORD, O you who are of Israel's fountain!” There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead, the princes of Judah in their throng, the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali. Summon your power, O God, the power, O God, by which you have worked for us. Because of your temple at Jerusalem, kings shall bear gifts to you. Rebuke the beasts that dwell among the reeds, the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples. Trample underfoot those who lust after tribute; scatter the peoples who delight in war. Nobles shall come from Egypt; Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God. O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, Selah.” The picture here is of the ark entering Jerusalem, awaiting soon the building of the temple to house it. All Israel saw this procession, but all God’s enemies saw it too, and witnessed God’s power over them defeating them. The words of v. 28, “Summon Your power, O God, literally mean--“Be strong, prevail with Your power, Oh God, with the power by which You have worked miracles for us. Then v. 29 brings kings with gifts to Messiah—the hope of Israel as David prophesies the building of the temple. And this goes on until everyone submits—including all Israel’s enemies that fall. Even the beasts in the reeds, the crocodiles submit. The herd of bulls submit, those lusting after tribute from Israel are trampled underfoot, and the people delighting in war are scattered. God says Egypt will then submit to God—that’s Arabs who would never dream of worshipping Jesus now, and Ethiopians, Cush, will stretch out their hands to God. And all the kingdoms of the earth will sing to God, and sing praises to the Lord. (v. 32) Sixthly, and lastly,

THOSE WHO LET GOD ARISE, WHO SUBMIT TO HIM, WILL ASCRIBE STRENGTH TO OUR AWESOME GOD. (VI.) Notice verses 33-

35. “To Him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold, He sends out His voice, His mighty voice. Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and whose power is in the skies. Awesome is God from His sanctuary; the God of Israel—He is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!” This doxology prophesies a coming doxology in Rev. 5: 13 where we get to sing, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and power forever.” Will we let God arise in our lives? Will we quit trying to hold Him down, and quit trying to put limitations on what He wants in our lives? Do we desire a fresh move of God in our lives, in our children and grandchildren? Then let God arise in your life. Submit now to His Word, His will, His ways, and His promptings by His Spirit. Do not delay. Let God arise! Let God arise... Amen.