

PSALM 68

Category: Praise ~ Occasion: Kingdom Conquest

Author: David

To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David.

1 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.

The Point:

God is worthy to be praised because He conquers His enemies and saves His people.

How do we feel in the recitation of this psalm?

This is an extravagant song of praise to God. We exult in God's power. We shout the words of this psalm as an army shouts its cries of allegiance and its intent to conquer as it charges into the battle. Be aware that it will take courage to read this psalm or to sing it.

What does this psalm say?

Verses 1–3. The first three verses offer two petitions—one for the wicked and the other for the righteous. In reference to the wicked, David prays that God would bring them down. For God, such work is child's play. As smoke is at the mercy of the wind and as wax is quickly consumed by the fire, even so the wicked are handily destroyed by God's righteous judgment. But as for the righteous, David prays that God would cause them to rejoice before the Lord.

Please carefully note the antithesis that marks biblical worship. From the outset of this psalm there is a strong contrast set between those that love God and fear Him and those that will not fear Him.

Verses 4–6. The remainder of the psalm contains encouragements to praise God and reasons why we should do so. The God whom we worship is figured as One who is both powerful and merciful, One who rides like a general at the front of a warring cavalry, as well as the One who tenderly cares for the widow and orphan. He is both transcendent and immanent. While He rides on the heavens, He is not so distant that He

cannot minister to one solitary orphan wandering the streets of Lusaka, Zambia.

Verses 7–14. Now David records the mighty acts of God in the history of His people Israel. Beginning in the wilderness, we remember how Sinai quaked and how God brought rain to the desert sands that He might care for His people. By simply speaking the word, He conquered great kings in order that His people might inhabit the land. Verses 13 and 14 contrast the ignominious beginnings of God’s people to the beautiful state to which God brings them. The Lord takes a common pot, the kind you use for cereal in the morning, and makes it a beautiful silver dove with feathers of rare gold. Here is a metaphor for the way God takes us, His people, at one time worthless, vain sinners, and turns us into vessels of honor made for eternal praise.

Verses 15–18. Using prophetic words, the Psalmist now speaks of the high hill in which God dwells as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may remember that we have referred to Jerusalem, Zion, or the high hill as the church many times throughout the book of Psalms. At the time the psalms were written, the people of Israel could only see the church in terms of Jerusalem. But with the coming of the Messiah, and His ascension on high (v. 18; Eph. 4:8), we know that He has given the church marvelous gifts, and now He dwells with that church. What an encouraging thought to read these precious words—that our God *desires* to dwell in this high hill called “the church”! “Where two or three are gathered,” there is He in the midst.

Verses 19–23. Again, God’s mercy and judgment are set side by side in these verses as cause to praise God and bless His holy name. We bless God for His gracious salvation, and at the very same time we exalt in His acts of judgment as He brings a maul down hard on the head of the rebellious. Some would say that we are not to glory in the judgment of the wicked, but that is precisely what the Psalmist does here. But let us be careful. We do not know the specific names of the persons that insist

on continuing in their trespasses. In point of fact, the most wicked leaders in the world may repent on their death beds. Nevertheless, there are a number of persons who will never repent of their sins and will continue in rebellion until they die. We exalt in their judgment, but not because we are better or wiser than they. Remember, the Psalmist has just proclaimed that we are recipients of God's merciful salvation. As we dip our feet in the blood of the wicked upon their demise, we are acknowledging the power, glory, and pure holiness of Almighty God.

Verses 24–35. As you read these final verses, you can feel the joy and exaltation that enraptures the people of God in His worship. You can almost experience the joy David felt when he danced before the Lord as the ark was brought into Jerusalem. Everyone joins into the worship—from the little girls shaking the timbrels to the leaders and elders of the tribes. Even as we meet together in the large congregation, it is easy to become confident in our own size and strength. But in verses 28 and 35, we acknowledge that our strength comes from God and our prayer is that God would keep strengthening us as He grows His kingdom in and through us. The desire that burns in the heart of the worshiper is that God would maintain His kingdom with peace and strength. How easy it is for the church to break down from inner quarrels or external attacks! Therefore, David prays for the peace of the church and an increase in the kingdom. He would that the kingdoms of the earth would sing praises to God. Isn't this the desire and goal of our lives—that God would be worshiped in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa?

How do we apply this psalm?

It is impossible to lift up praises to our great God when we are proud and confident in ourselves. Occasionally, God's people grow strong, and many voices join together to worship God on a Sunday morning. Instead of capitulating to the temptation to become proud in ourselves and our own accomplishments,

let us ascribe our salvation and strength to God alone. Instead of consuming what strength we have received with our own proud boasts, why not channel it all into the worship of God? Let us see ourselves as weak and continually cry out to God for His strength. True faith rests on God alone.

How does this psalm teach us to worship God?

1. You may have noticed that this psalm shifts between speaking about God and speaking to God. Worship will simultaneously speak to God's people about God while speaking to God. When we are in worship, we step into the presence of God. Not only are we conscious of His presence, but we speak as those who are truly and intimately aware of that presence. This may sound strange to unbelievers, but this is the worship of true faith. We turn around and speak to the people who are assembled in worship, and then we turn back to God and speak directly to Him. We worship *coram deo*, in the face of God. Therefore, in proper worship, our prayers, preaching, and praise will alternate between speaking of God and speaking to God.

2. Worship is humble and haughty at the same time. We are, simultaneously, in the dust and lifted into the skies. How is this possible? In worship we are humbled before God and absolutely reliant on His mercy for our life and salvation. At the same time, we proclaim the victory over God's enemies, boast in the majesty and strength of God, and command the nations to join in with these praises of the Almighty.

Questions:

1. What important contrast is brought out in this Worship psalm?
2. What mighty acts of God in history does David refer to here in this psalm?
3. What does the "high hill" stand for in this psalm?
4. How can we glory in the judgment of the wicked?
5. What are the little girls doing in the worship?
6. Give several examples of Praise psalms.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. Are we aware of the presence of God in worship right now? When we pray, do we really believe that God listens to our prayers?
2. Are we comfortable praising God's judgment as well as His mercy? Is New Testament worship any different in this area than Old Testament worship? (Refer to Rev. 15:3-4.)

PSALM 69

Category: Deliverance/Messianic ~ Occasion: Persecution

Author: David

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, A Psalm of David.

1 Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.

2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.

5 O God, Thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from Thee.

6 Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek Thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

7 Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

9 For the zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me.

10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.

12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.

13 *But as for me, my prayer is unto Thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of Thy mercy hear me, in the truth of Thy salvation.*

14 *Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.*

15 *Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*

16 *Hear me, O LORD; for Thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies.*

17 *And hide not Thy face from Thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.*

18 *Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.*

19 *Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before Thee.*

20 *Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*

21 *They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

22 *Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*

23 *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.*

24 *Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them.*

25 *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.*

26 *For they persecute him whom Thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded.*

27 *Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into Thy righteousness.*

28 *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

29 *But I am poor and sorrowful: let Thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.*

30 *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.*

31 This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not His prisoners.

34 Let the heaven and earth praise Him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.

35 For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.

36 The seed also of His servants shall inherit it: and they that love His name shall dwell therein.

The Point:

Though you may be alone and persecuted, you can count on the salvation of God and the destruction of His enemies.

How do we feel in the recitation of this psalm?

You feel the abandonment of friends and the persecution of the enemy. You feel as though you are about to drown in a sea of opposition and trial. If you have ever walked into the furnace of persecution, you know that it is not easy to be subjected to dishonor, shame, spitting, slander, and torture. While it is doubtful you will ever feel the full brunt of the painful sentiments contained in this psalm, there will be times in your life when you will be able to identify with parts of it.

Since this is a Messianic psalm, we know that our Head, our Savior Jesus Christ, felt every nuance of these words to the ultimate degree. We should therefore, at the least, identify ourselves with our Savior in these words. As we read the psalm, remember that the eternally-blessed Son of God humbled Himself to the shame of the cross. Therefore, out of a zeal for Christ and His precious church, we should be willing to take on all persecution and reproach for His cause. Yet, with the saints of all ages, we still cry out to God for vindication and deliverance.

What does this psalm say?

Verses 1–3. Young children are not always aware of the fierceness of the battle, the pressures of life, and the pain of persecution. But as children mature into their teenage years and young adulthood, they will begin to understand psalms like this. They will begin to experience the feelings of overwhelming discouragement and even depression. They will experience the loss of loved ones, the abandonment of friends, and the oppression of the enemy.

The Psalmist pictures himself as one sinking in quicksand or drowning in a flood. If you have ever experienced such traumatic circumstances, you know the feeling of helplessness and the sinking sense that your life is slipping away. He is also weighed down by his troubles, and he has cried so much that he is about to collapse from sheer exhaustion.

Verses 4–12. David continues with a compendium of the troubles that overwhelm his soul. Of all of the pressures of life, there is probably nothing more difficult than living with the constant awareness that there are people who hate you and want to kill you. Sometimes they falsely accuse you of having done terrible things, and it is impossible to vindicate yourself. This is what David is up against here in this psalm.

To complicate the burdens in his life, David adds the matter of his own sins in verse 5. It is one thing to come under attack from enemies; it is quite another for your conscience to accuse you of your own sin and foolishness. David meets this sin head to head by confessing it to God.

Another consideration in this matter of persecution is the effect that it has on other believers. If a Christian leader is slandered by the world, falsely accused, and imprisoned, what effect might that have on other believers? If, for example, I am arrested and put in prison for my faith, will others think that Christians are evil people? David is concerned that the shame and reproach he bears will be shared with his brothers and sisters in the Lord. His concern for the reputation of the house

of God is preeminent. When the persecuted saints in China and North Korea are tortured and the church is forced into hiding, we should cry out to God as David did, “For the zeal of Your house has eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached You are fallen upon me.” Jesus quoted this passage when He cleansed the temple of those who were perverting the worship.

When a man is overcome with grief and weeps for many days, he is typically despised by the world about him. Nobody wants to invite him to parties. Some may pity him, but most despise him. Even the town drunks look down upon him and make up songs to mock him.

Verses 13–18. In the ultimate sense, David is not concerned about what others think about him. Relationships are always in flux, and we apply both time and energy to sustain them. But of all of the hundreds of relationships that we will maintain throughout our lifetimes, there is only one that is of primary importance. Only our relationship with God is of essence. Only God has the power to save us from all of the predicaments of our life. Our salvation, redemption, safety, and success in the rest of our relationships are all in His hands. So here David deals with God and God alone. In his tears, he wrestles with God for favor, mercy, and strength. Throughout these six verses David repeatedly asks God to save him, come close to him, hear him, turn to him, and deliver him from his troubles.

Verses 19–28. In what will turn out to be a prophetic reference to David’s son, Jesus Christ, in His sufferings at the cross, David again recounts the shame he has suffered because of his enemies. He begs God for vindication. But how does this comport with the words of Jesus when He says, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”? We must draw a distinction between God’s enemies and our enemies. If you refer to verse 26, you can see that David shifts from speaking of his enemies to speaking of those who persecute the One whom God has smitten. And, we know that the One whom God has smitten is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man. As