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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Psalm 68.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Psalm 68.

Topics.

- Sing to God who rides through the deserts and upon the heavens.
- When the God of Sinai marched through the wilderness, the earth quaked.
- The LORD gives the word and a great host of women announce the news.
- When the almighty scatters kings there, let snow fall on Zalmon.
- Mountain of Bashan; why look with hatred, at the mount where God dwells?
- The chariots of God are twice ten thousand and the LORD is among them.
- God ascended on high, leading a host of captives in his train.
- Strike your feet in their blood, that dogs have their portion from the foe.
- Kingdoms of the earth sing to God; who rides in the ancient heavens.

INTRODUCTION: Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

The order of the Psalm: -

1. David proclaims God's enemies will be scattered and the righteous will rejoice (v1-5).
2. David reflects on God's care for the lonely and oppressed and His judgment upon the wicked (v6).
3. David speaks about Moses leading Israel through the wilderness and God's provision for them (v7-11).
4. David reflects on all Israel's triumphant victories and the woman dividing their enemies spoils (v12).
5. David speaks of pagan nations being envious of Mount Zion and the city of God (v13-16).
6. David talks of God's angels, the glory of God and of nations bringing gifts to the sanctuary of God (v17-18).
7. David proclaims God is a God of salvation and deliverer from death, but will strike down the guilty (v19-21).
8. David speaks of Israel returning to God and bringing kings into God's temple at Jerusalem and offering him gifts (v22-29).
9. David asks God to bring to ruin false religious leaders who use God's people for their own advantage and those who use their followers' gifts and money for their own gain and crush those who enjoy war (v30).
10. David talks of nobles and princes and those under their influence willingly coming to God (v31).
11. David calls all the kingdoms of earth to praise the God of Israel for His awesome power (v32-35).

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

Book Two (Psalm 42-72)

To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David. A Song.

God shall Arise, His Enemies Scattered; Sing Praises to God's Name.

Psalm 68:1-3 ----- ¹God shall arise (Let God arise in KJV) his enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate him shall flee before him! ²As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away; as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God! ³But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!

Much of the Psalm-song most likely stems from the following three occasions: -

1. Israel carrying the Ark of the Covenant through the wilderness.
2. From the time David moved the Ark of the Covenant to Zion which was managed with great seriousness and devotion and with great rejoicing and celebration.
3. From the celebration of David's many victories which secured his throne and gave rest to the nation of Israel.

In general terms the Psalm is focused on the judgment of God on the wicked and upon the justice and goodness of His love, mercy and grace to the faithful being celebrated. This sentiment is illustrated by examples of God's dealings cited from Jewish history that are related in highly poetical terms. David suggest in the language of this Psalm-song an expectation of equal and even greater triumphs for God's people than Israel has seen so far and with this expectation summons all nations to unite in praises to the God of Israel.

God shall arise (Let God arise in KJV) his enemies shall be scattered: (v1)
God was in some manner present in the ark and His presence was the great security of the nation of Israel from the dangers of the wilderness and the power of their enemies. Moses, in the following verse addresses his prayer to God in similar words whenever the ark was taken up for their marches:-

- Whenever the ark set out, Moses said, "Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you." (Num. 10:35).

The same language was also employed by Solomon when the ark was removed to the temple and placed in the Most Holy Place: -

- Now arise, O LORD God, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. Let your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let your saints rejoice in your goodness. (2 Chron. 6:41).

Based on these verses and others like them it is safe to suppose that this Psalm was composed on a similar occasion. The ark was the symbol of God's divine presence so the expression, "Let God arise his enemies shall be scattered" (v1) carries the idea that where ever the ark was the enemies of God would be subdued or scattered by the armies of Israel and that it was only by the power of God whose presence in some manner resided with the ark that Israel's enemies could be overcome.

As beautiful as the ark was it had no power in itself, the power came from the presence of the LORD that went with the symbol. The words, "Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, suppose the LORD to have been passively patient suffering His enemies for some time while restraining His power to act, until Israel felt threatened and humbled themselves turned from their wicked ways and plead for Him to arise.

Those who hate Him shall flee before Him (v1) enemies here are said to hate God, there are very few people that directly have active conscious hate toward God, most are just indifferent to Him or don't believe He exists. The idea is that they hate God's laws, His will, His holy image and fight and persecute His people it is in this sense they hate God. Hating God's people is the same as hating God Himself. Paul wrote: -

- For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (Rom. 8:7).

Some say that to hate God is pointless since even the proudest of his enemies can do Him no injury, though this maybe true on one level it is not true on all levels since injuring those who love God also injures God. It is possible that this Psalm-song may have been written on some occasion when the armies of Israel were going out to war, but it is more likely that it is general language designed to illustrate the power of God and to state that His rising up, at any time, would be followed by the fear and fleeing of his enemies.

As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away: (v2) smoke rises from the earth in massive thick black clouds, but is soon scattered and dispersed by a strong wind so that no trace is left. Likewise God will do to the enemies of his people They may fume with pride and darken the sky with their malice as they mount up higher and higher in arrogance defiling those under their influence, but like the wind blows away the dark clouds of smoke God will with the power and force of His breath cause the wicked to vanish from the face of the earth.

As wax melts before fire: (v2) wax appears to be firm, hard and solid in appearance, yet, when brought to the fire, is soon melts and dissolves having no power in itself to resist the heat of the fire, likewise the prideful heart of the wicked will melt like wax and perish when the Lord returns in glory with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.

The righteous shall be jubilant with joy: (v3) not only jubilant for God's awesome might power and presence being with them, but also jubilant for God's great mercy. Israel saw in the ark, God seated upon the Mercy-Seat and they rejoiced in the omnipotence of such a manifestation of the God they worshipped. How much more clearly should the confidence of New Testament believers be for we see Jesus clothed with glory and majesty sitting at the right hand side of God. The invisible, immortal, Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life is to be praised as a God of awesome power, justice and mercy and of love and tender compassion and abundant grace.

Sing to God who Rides through the Deserts and upon the Heavens.

Psalm 68:4 ----- ⁴Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts (*`arabah*); his name is the LORD; exult before him!

The King James Bible says: -

- Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens (*`arabah*) by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. (Psalm 68:4)

The word heavens in this verse, comes from the Hebrew word (*`arabah*) which never means heaven, or the clouds, but refers to an arid tract of land, a desert, a sterile valley, a plain or a wilderness. It is the proper name for the Jordan valley and its continuation to the Red, but in poetical writings it can refer to any wilderness or desert as the following verses show: -

- The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert (*`arabah*) shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus. (Isaiah 35:1).
- The lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert (*`arabah*). (Isaiah 35:6).
- A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert (*`arabah*) a highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:3).

- I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive. I will set in the desert (*`arabah*) the cypress, the plane and the pine together. (Isaiah 41:19).
- For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert (*`arabah*) like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. (Isaiah 51:3).
- They did not say, "Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts (*`arabah*) and pits. in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?" (Jer. 2:6).
- He is like a shrub in the desert (*`arabah*) and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. (Jer. 17:6).
- Your mother shall be utterly shamed, and she who bore you shall be disgraced. Behold, she shall be the last of the nations, a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert (*`arabah*). (Jer. 50:12).
- He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the desert (*`arabah*) and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. (Ezek. 47:8).

The expression, "To him who rides through the deserts," in this Psalm-song is most likely to the Hebrews passage through the desert over which they wandered for forty years. The Hebrew word, *`arabah* that is used in the verse is still applied by the Arabs to that region today. The idea is of God marching over those deserts at the head of his people, and the call is to prepare a way for Him on his march (see v7-8) preparing the way carries the idea of making their hearts and their behaviour right before God and toward each other.

By his name JAH: (v4) (or His name is Jah) the word Jah comes from the Hebrew word (*Yahh*) which comes from the Hebrew word (*Y^ehovah*) meaning the same as Jah. It is the sacred name of the Lord, most vehement, the self-Existent and Eternal; Jehovah and the Jewish national name of God and the name of the invisible, immortal, Almighty God the creator of all things, the source of all life and heavenly Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The expression, "By His name JAH," carries the idea that God went before His people in the character of Yahweh the true God.

Exult and rejoice before him who rides through the deserts: (v4) David here exhorts the people of God to magnify with Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, Him who manifested His presence between the cherubim upon the mercy-seat of the ark, when it was carried through the wilderness as they marched along with it lead by the cloudy pillar.

Extol praise and worship Him not only means exalt Him above all other gods of the nations, but also to prepare the way before Him as He goes before His people in the march to the Promised Land. The call is to make ready the way before the LORD by removing all obstructions out of His path and to make the road smooth and level. He that rides (or that marches) in the context of this verse does not carry the idea of riding upon the heavens as other Scriptures do, but of riding at the head of Israel's armies on their march.

God in His Holiness is Father of the Fatherless and Protector of Widows.

Psalm 68:5-6 ----- ⁵Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. ⁶God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

God ever cares for the afflicted and oppressed especially the poor, widows and the fatherless. As one travels through the Bible it becomes very clear that one of the great abominations before God is the oppression of the poor for one's own gain and taking advantage of the helpless. All those in the global Kingdom of God are called to care and protect the helpless and the poor when it is in their power to do so.

God settles the solitary in a home: (v6) the word solitary comes from the Hebrew word (yachiyd) and in this context carries the idea of a beloved one being isolated or dwelling in a desert place or of one being lonely. When a man or woman makes God and the Lord Jesus Christ the King of their heart, mind and life God fills their inner most being with His love and grace especially when they are in such isolated places or lonely circumstances.

He leads out the prisoners to prosperity: (v6) this of course God did to His people Israel when they obeyed His Covenant and did what was right before Him, but it also echoes Christ leading those held captive to the Old Testament Levitical laws, ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions free from them and free from the bondage of the law and its condemnation to eternal darkness of death

The rebellious dwell in a parched land: (v6) this firstly applies to the land of Israel. God withheld rain, brought plagues, famines and war upon their land when Israel rebelled against Him and set their hearts diamond hard against the prophets and turned to other gods. But it also applies to those who aggressively deny God knowing nothing of His abundant love and grace dwelling in the heart and mind as the faithful who have made Him the King of their heart, mind and life do.

When the God of Sinai Marched through the Wilderness, the Earth Quaked.

Psalm 68:7-10 ----- ⁷O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, *Selah* ⁸the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel. ⁹Rain in abundance, O God, you shed abroad; you restored your inheritance as it languished; ¹⁰your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

Selah: is a musical pause.

O God, when you went forth before your people: (v7) most likely refers to Israel fleeing from Egypt the land of bondage and oppression and the LORD guiding them through the barren desert and wilderness by the pillar of fire at night and by the pillar of cloud by day to lead them into the Promised Land.

This expression reflects the paternal character of God as a Father who cares for his children. All that has been said of God in the previous verses is here in this verse confirmed by the provision which He made for their needs in their perilous journey through the wilderness. Here we see the warm and joyful association, "God and His people;" God before them, and His people following.

When the LORD goes before it matters not whether the Red Sea or burning sand lay in the way He will not only guide, lead and direct by the right way, but will also provide all things necessary for the journey and protect from all enemies so that all the faithful of His Kingdom from Genesis to Revelation enter the eternal heavenly and Holy City the New Jerusalem that God is at this time building for His people.

Some may think of Israel's wanderings as purposeless meanderings strolling through the desert wilderness without shape and order, but in reality they were a well-arranged and well-ordered march. Like God went before Israel of the Old Testament and led them into the Promised Land, Christ goes before his people and guides them as they pass through the wilderness of this world until he brings them safely to glory.

The earth quaked: (v8) (or trembled) the following verses show us that this expression can apply to the inhabitants of those parts of the earth trembling or to the actual earth itself trembling as a token of God's awesome presence.

- The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. (Exodus 15:14).
- On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.
¹⁷Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their

stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. (Exodus 19:16-18).

- What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? ⁶O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs? ⁷Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob (Psalm 114:5-7).

These verses show that Mount Sinai the hill that was so stable and high, bowed before the power of God. The God who had chosen Israel to be his own above all the nations of the earth and that God's own people trembled at His manifested presence.

The heavens poured down rain (v8) such rain as never fell before dropped on the desert sand, bread from heaven (manna) and winged fowls fell all around the host; good gifts were poured upon them; rivers leaped forth from rocks. Their foot did not swell all those forty years. When they were exhausted, God was not, when they were weary, He was not. They were His chosen heritage. Should God lead His people into a wilderness, He will be sure to go before them and provide for them and bring them out of it as He did in the wilderness and in the land of Canaan.

This truth also applies spiritually to the faithful, should they find themselves in what seems like a spiritual desert they can rest assured if they remain faithful and endure God will bring them through and they will not only have grown closer to the Lord in understanding and in love and grace, but will also have grown greater spiritual muscles and make up the Lords treasured possession in the world to come.

The expression, "The heavens poured down rain," can refer to natural showers of rain to nourish the dry ground or carry the idea of God's love and the Gospel of grace as showers of spiritual rain falling upon those who bath themselves in the Lord. Christ by his Spirit nourishes those who by faith receive him as showers nourish the earth to bring forth fruit.

The joyful celebration of Israel's natural battles and triumphant victories over their enemies should also be applied to the victory Christ the King and Saviour of the faithful has won through the bloodstained cross of Calvary over death for all who belong to his global Kingdom and who will make up his eternal treasured possession.

You restored your inheritance as it languished: (v9) of course applies to the restoration of God's people Israel. Often they turned from the Lord their God to idols and pagan gods, but each time they humbled themselves, repented before God and turned from their wicked ways God showed great mercy and forgave them and restored them back to their promised inheritance. This verse can also be applied to the slaves of sin and death, when converted to Christ, when justified and sanctified by him and are saved. When they are raised to eternal glory all the remains of their sinful state will disappear and they will be made as white and clean as new fallen snow.

O God, you provided for the needy: (v10) within the camp of Israel all were poor in comparison to the riches of Egypt, yet there were no beggars, for Gods Spirit and power was with them. We, too although poor and needy because of our fallen corrupted nature are enriched by God's Spirit, love and grace as we wander in the wilderness of this sinful world. God provided for the needy also carries that those who belong to His Kingdom provide and care for each other.

The New Testament teaching is that those who have should provide help for those who have not and when those who have not get out of their difficult circumstances and struggles they in turn help others so that the cycle of helping is continually played forward. The New Testament principal is that everyone's goal is to work and provide for their own family and should they have more than they need then they are to help those who for whatever reason (i.e., sickness, natural disasters or can't find work) are struggling so that no one has more than they need and no one goes without.

The Lord gives the Word and a Great Host of Women Announce the News.

Psalm 68:11-13 ----- ¹¹The Lord gives the word; the women who announce the news are a great host: ¹²"The kings of the armies—they flee, they flee!" The women at home divide the spoil— ¹³though you men lie among the sheepfolds—the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with shimmering gold.

These verses do not refer to one single event, but embrace the entire conquest of Canaan, the long history of which is, here crowded into one supreme and crowning moment: a word from God, and all was done.

The expression, "The Lord gives the word," could refer to: -

- God announcing the conflict and the triumphal victory of it.
- God giving the words of the song of celebration and triumph to the women.
- God giving the word which fed them and led them through, the wilderness; guided them into Canaan; watered and refreshed the land with showers of rain and rendered it fruitful.
- God giving triumphant songs of all Israel's successes, victories and triumphs of which many are celebrated in this Psalm.

The following verses make it evident that there is an allusion here to the Ark of the Covenant, and to the victories which Israel had achieved when the ark went before them. The idea seems to be that in all the victories which had been achieved the word or the command came from God, and that its announcement was immediately made by a great company of women who joyfully published it.

When the enemy was near the silver trumpet from the tabernacle door was God's mouth to warn the camp. After the trumpet sounded there was a general telling of the news. The women would run from tent to tent and rouse the men to battle. As the women of Israel were always ready to sing the song of victory likewise they were equally swift to publish throughout the camp the fact that the battle-note had been sounded.

The ten thousand maids of Israel, like good handmaids of the LORD, aroused the sleepers and the valiant men to arise to the cry. It was also the manner of the Hebrews, that when the men returned victorious from the battle these faithful handmaids of the LORD would go out to meet the valiant men with joyful songs of triumph.

Following are Scriptures of faithful women of the LORD singing: -

- Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. ²¹And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea." (Exodus 15:20-21).
- Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. (Judges 11:34).
- When David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. (1 Sam. 18:6).
- The women sang to one another as they celebrated, "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (1 Sam. 18:7).
- Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary— ²⁵the singers in front, the musicians last, between them virgins playing tambourines (Psalm 68:24-25).
- See also the song Deborah in Judges Chapter five.

The expression, "The women who announce the news are a great host" (v11) is not to be thought of as one large body of women celebrating one particular victory, but successive events of women celebrating frequent triumphs of victory following one after another. The idea is that when God commanded his people to go out to battle, and to take with them the ark the female singers of the land were ready to make known the proclamation to celebrate the will of the LORD by songs and dances to cheer and encourage their husbands, brothers, and fathers, as they went out to the conflict.

The women at home divide the spoil: (v12) with the ark going before Israel's armies their enemies fled and Israel marched on to conquer kings and armies and all the women at home who had published the war-cry shared the rewards and divided the abundance of the spoils of their defeated enemies so that even those who had no strength as a trained soldier in Israel had a portion of the spoils of the victories. Loving husbands (the gallant warriors) gave their spoils to the women that they may enjoy the wealth and treasures of their enemies.

When the Almighty Scatters Kings there, Let Snow Fall on Zalmon.

Psalm 68:14 ----- ¹⁴When the Almighty scatters kings there, let snow fall on Zalmon.

The King James Bible says: -

- When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was *white* as snow in Salmon. (Psalm 68:14)

Zalmon: comes from the Hebrew word (*Tsalmown*) and means shady. It was the name of a mountain in Samaria, near Shechem (Judges 9: 46-48) that would have snow lying upon it for long periods of time.

When the Almighty scatters kings: (v14) the language used here is so general that it can be applied to any act in Israel's history to which they waged wars of defence or of offence and their enemies abandon their purposes of invasion and fled in fear to their own countries or to their enemies fleeing in terror from their own towns and villages when they were being invaded. Because the language is so general there have been differing opinions as to what the expression, "When the Almighty scatters kings" may refer to, the five most common thoughts are: -

1. To wicked kings arising up against God and His people and such fear coming upon them that they abandon their evil purpose and flee in terror as the kings in the following verses did: -
 - Behold, the kings assembled; they came on together. ⁵As soon as they saw it (Jerusalem the city of Israel's God and great King) they were astounded; they were in panic; they took to flight. (Psalm 48:1-5).
2. To the kings the prophet Isaiah speaks of in the following verse: -
 - Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame. (Isaiah 49:23)
3. To the apostles, ministers, preachers, pastors and teachers who God has scattered throughout the world to spread the Gospel and who are spiritual kings and governors over God's people and the churches.
4. To the Lord bringing into his churches new believers who are made kings and priests unto God and are then scattered throughout the world to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. To the kings spoken of in the following verses at the battle of Armageddon
 - For they (unclean spirits like frogs) are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. (Rev. 16:14).

Whether the expression, “when the Almighty scatters kings” applies to kings who are enemies of God being scattered or to the faithful who are called kings who are scattered throughout the world to proclaim the Gospel matters little since both can be applied. Should God rise up against an enemy it is certain who the victor will be and it is true there are many who Christ considers kings spreading the Gospel throughout all nations of the world.

There are also differing opinions as to what the expression, “the land was white as snow” means, some say: -

- It was white from the bones of the slain which covered the surface of the land as they were left unburied and therefore were bleached by the sun so that the land seemed to be white as snow.
- When war was waged on the kings and the people they fell as fast as snow-flakes fall on Mount Zalmon fall so the idea is not the whiteness of the land, but that the enemy fell in great numbers as snow-flakes do.
- The word Zalmon should not be taken as a proper name, but a common name, signifying darkness and therefore the verse means that the Almighty made the mountain snow-white where there was once darkness.

It is perhaps not possible to determine which of these explanations is correct. Either of them would accord with the meaning of the words and the general sense of the psalm. Perhaps the best summary might be to say that the land of Canaan was in utter spiritual darkness as Mount Zalmon was in natural darkness because of its many native trees that covered it with shade and darkness until the snow fell upon it and only the clean white snow could be seen.

Likewise the LORD led His people into the spiritual darkness of the land of Canaan and they covered it with His light and truth making it a beautiful land to look upon as Mount Zalmon is when the white snow covers it. Every observer standing on the plain looking at Mount Zalmon would see the pure whiteness of the snow covering the darkness of the many shady trees.

By extension the words “Let snow fall on Zalmon,” (v14) could be applied to the faithful believer and the faithful global church since snow often reflects the purity of God’s people and of the church through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to them. The prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18).

In the book of Revelation it is written: -

- I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands (Rev. 7:9).
- It was granted her (Christ’s Bride) to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. (Rev. 19:8).
- The armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him (the King of kings and Lord of lords) on white horses. (Rev. 19:14).

The faithful in Christ are pictured as being clothed in clean white linen and washed as white as snow and as white as the purest wool.

Mountain of Bashan; Why Look with Hatred, at the Mount where God dwells?

Psalm 68:15-16 ----- ¹⁵O mountain of God, (referring to Zion not Bashan) mountain of Bashan; O many-peaked mountain, mountain of Bashan! ¹⁶Why do you (Bashan) look with hatred, O many-peaked mountain, at the mount (Zion) that God desired for his abode, yes, where the LORD will dwell forever?

The expression “the hill of God,” or “The mountain of God,” is only applied in Scripture to the following two mountains: -

Mount Sinai (also called Mount Horeb)

- Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to *Horeb, the mountain of God*. (Exodus 3:1)
- Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at *the mountain of God*. (Exodus 18:5)
- Elijah arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to *Horeb, the mount of God*. (1 Kings 19:8).

Mount Zion.

- Who shall ascend the *hill of the LORD*? And who shall stand in his holy place? (Psalm 24:3).
- You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to *the mountain of the LORD*, to the Rock of Israel. (Isaiah 30:29).

There is no reason for supposing that there is a reference in (v15-16) to Mount Sinai (also called Horeb) as the Psalm does not specifically relate to that mountain, and as there is nothing in the Psalm to bring that mountain into comparison with other mountains. The words, “O mountain of God” (v15) refers to Mount Zion and not Mount Bashan. The mountain of Bashan is a mountain with many peaks it is personified as looking at God's Holy Mountain Zion with hatred. (Mount Bashan became a symbol of those who hate God).

The allusion is, clearly to Mount Zion. The idea is that that Mount Zion though it is not distinguished for its elevation or grandeur and though it had nothing in itself to claim attention or to excite wonder, it was the most exalted and honoured above all mountains because it was selected as the place where God was to be worshipped and the place where God's city and God's temple is built and God's worship is established.

The towering ranges and high peaks of Bashan are pictured as being envious of the distinction given to the lesser peaks of Judæa. The contrast here is between the smallness of Israel and the largeness of the nations that surround them and the jealousy with which these prideful surrounding nations had toward Israel which is represented by the high mountain ranges of Bashan watching Mount Zion with great hatred

By extension the mountains of Bashan and their jealousy and hatred toward Mount Zion can be seen as a symbol of the all those in the world who have aggressive hatred toward God and the faithful believer and the faithful church dwelling amongst the world.

The Chariots of God are Twice Ten Thousand and the Lord is Among Them.

Psalm 68:17 ----- 17 The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands (of angels in the KJV); the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary (Holy Place in KJV).

The chariots (angels in the KJV) of God: though these angels are not in the original Hebrew text the following verses show that they do form a myriad host of God: -

- The LORD came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand. (Deut. 33:2).
- But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering (Heb. 12:22).

- Jesus said: “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26:53).
- This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. (Luke 2:12-14)
- Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. (Gal. 3:19).

Here we read of the LORD coming with ten thousands of holy ones and of an innumerable company of angels being upon Mount Zion so it is most likely that the translators added the word angels to the text based upon these verses.

Chariots were often armed with scythes attached to their axles and were among the most powerful means of attack or defence in ancient warfare the more chariots an army had the more likely their victory and for this reason they are used in poetical writing to signify great power and the strength and protection of the LORD'S people and ministering spirits that do the work of the LORD for His honour and glory. This is why chariots and angels in prophetic and poetical language can be used interchangeably.

The meaning of the expression, “The chariots of God,” is that even though Mount Zion has less natural strength than many other places have and though other higher mountains may be represented as looking on this hill with contempt and being incapable of defending itself, God who has selected it as his dwelling place is fully able to defend it.

The LORD among them: ten thousand, thousands upon thousands is a certain number being put forward for an uncertain number it means God's chariots of angels are innumerable, and the LORD rides in them amongst his people. The heathen boast of the might of their great armies and the multitude of their chariots in which their primary strength lies, but their boast is foolishness, because God has in Zion ten thousand times more, even and innumerable hosts of angels, who attend upon God, to fulfil His eternal plans and purposes upon earth at their appointed time and when God so chooses.

Sinai is now in the sanctuary (Holy Place in KJV): (v17) David having exalted Mount Zion above all other hills equals it to that esteemed and revered hill of Sinai, which the divine majesty honoured with his awesome presence. David seems to be transported by the prophetic spirit, from the narration of the previous triumphs and victories spoken of to now prove the excellence of Zion over Mount Sinai in that Mount Sinai had all the awesome glory of the Almighty God descend upon it and the law came from there, but from Mount Zion came the Messiah the Christ attended by a multitude of angels celebrating his birth and on Mount Zion the Messiah the Christ came into his own temple as Malachi in the following verse prophesied concerning him.

- Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:1).

Added to all this royal glory, multitudes of angels ministered to the Lord in his temptation, at his resurrection and accompanied him in his ascension all from Mount Zion. The expression, “Sinai is now in the sanctuary” (v17) can refer to: -

- The LORD has come from Mount Sinai the mountain of the Old Covenant of Law into the Holy Place in the sanctuary on Mount Zion the mountain of the New Covenant of Grace.
- God is in Zion as the Commander-in-chief of his countless hosts, and where he is, there is holiness. The throne of grace on Zion is as holy as the throne of justice on Sinai. Mount Sinai glory of the law pales when stood before Mount Zion's grace and the Messiah the Christ's death and resurrection upon it.

- The universal law the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God on Mount Sinai is now in the Ark of the Covenant under the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy place of the sanctuary in the city of Jerusalem on Mount Zion so in this sense it is right and proper to say, "Sinai is now in the sanctuary."

Neither Mount Sinai nor Mount Zion can glory and boast in themselves for the following reasons. Mount Sinai is not famous or respected as a holy mountain and a mountain of God because of any majesty of itself, but because it was upon this mountain God descended and gave the Ten Commandments. It is this awesome and holy event that exalts Mount Sinai and not the mountain itself.

Likewise Mount Zion has no fame or glory of itself, its glory comes from being the honoured mountain God chose to build His Holy city upon and is the mountain that the Messiah the Christ the Saviour of the world died and rose again from. Likewise those who belong to the global Kingdom of God have nothing in themselves to boast in before God, their glory before God comes from the Spirit of Christ that dwells within and his righteousness that clothes them.

God Ascended on High, Leading a Host of Captives in His Train.

Psalm 68:18-19 ----- ¹⁸You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men (gifts for men in the KJV), even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there. ¹⁹Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. *Selah*

The King James Bible says: -

- 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*.
¹⁹Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits*, *even* the God of our salvation. *Selah*. (Psalm 68:18-19).

The ark was carried to the summit of Zion; God Himself took possession of the high places of the earth, being extolled and very high. Likewise the Lord Jesus Christ has ascended into the heavens with the suffering marks of triumph high above all things, he is now exalted.

You ascended on high is cited by Paul in the following verse: -

- Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (Ephes. 4:8).

Christ received as the purchase of his death, the gifts needful for salvation. These he continually bestows upon even the lowest child of Adam that the Lord might dwell among all those who come to him as their King and Saviour. In the book of John it is written: -

- When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. (John 17:1-2)

Having received power to give eternal life, the Lord Jesus gave gifts (i.e., forgiveness of sin, grace, deliverance from death, eternal life etc.) that lead to eternal life to as many as would come to him. Christ came to a fallen and corrupt world, not to condemn, but that through him it might be saved. The glory of Zion's King is that he is a King and Saviour and rewarder to all the faithful and a consuming fire to all who persist in rebellion against him.

The Lord Jesus has authority and power to rescue his people from the dominion of death, by taking away the sting of it when they die, and giving them complete victory over it when they rise again. The crown of the enemy and the chief pride and glory of his power through sin and death will be crushed when Christ returns in glory to gather the faithful to himself and crush sin and death and the head of the serpent.

Leading a host of captives in your train (v18) a multitude of faithful are the willing captives of Christ's love and grace. To be led into captivity by Christ brings about our deliverance from our captivity to the condemnation of the law and bondage to death. The Lord Jesus Christ destroyed our enemy death by his own death and resurrection and by his love and grace led the willing faithful who were once captive to condemnation and death now captive to his love and grace.

Receiving gifts among men: (v18) Because the English Standard Bible says, "The Lord is receiving gifts among men," and the King James Bible says, "The Lord has received gifts for men," there are differing views held amongst Christianity as to what the expression actually means. Following are the two most common ones: -

1. The English Standard Bibles view: "The Lord is receiving gifts among men," if it is God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ who are receiving the gifts it means that the faithful have willingly and with joyful hearts offered sacrifices and gifts of treasures and labour to build the temple and paid tithes etc., and faithfully followed him giving him their hearts and mind and even giving up their lives for His sake.
2. The King James Bible view: "The Lord has received gifts for men," if it means the Lord has received gifts to give to the people it refers to the prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and all their varied endowments and to the Gospel and Christ's love, grace and forgiveness and the gift of eternal life and everlasting happiness which Christ purchased for them on the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

Whichever of these two scenarios David had in mind matters little since both can be applied and both are true to the word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is a God of Salvation and Deliver from Death who Strikes His Enemies.

Psalm 68:20-22 ----- ²⁰Our God is a God of salvation, and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death. ²¹But God will strike the heads of his enemies, the hairy crown of him who walks in his guilty ways. ²²The Lord said, "I will bring them back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea.

The words, "God is a God of salvation, to the Lord, belong deliverances from death," (v20) can be applied to the following three events: -

1. To God's deliverance of His people Israel from all their enemies no matter how much greater the armies of their enemies may have out-numbered them or how much greater they were in might, skill and power over them.
2. To deliverance from sin and death the greatest enemy of every man and woman dwelling upon earth.
3. To the raising of the dead at the Great White Throne Judgment whether buried in a grave or death came by wild beasts or drowned in the sea as spoken of in the following verse.
 - The sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Rev. 20:13

The Lord said: (v22) this statement carries the idea that the Lord within Himself and in His own heart and mind resolved and purposed what should be done and inspired His prophets to speak it to the people.

I will bring them back from Bashan: (v22) is more than likely an allusion to Israel's great victory over Og, king of Bashan, in the time of Moses. It would be safe to suppose the LORD was saying, "I will repeat my ancient favours, and give my people, by David, as great a deliverance as I formerly gave Israel when I saved them from the hand of Og, king of Bashan, who came out against them with all his forces." This deliverance is often mentioned in succeeding parts of Scripture as one of the most eminent for Israel.

- They turned and went up by the way to Bashan. And Og the king of Bashan came out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. ³⁴But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have given him into your hand, and all his people, and his land. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon." ³⁵So they defeated him and his sons and all his people, until he had no survivor left. And they possessed his land. (Num. 21:33-35).

By extension the words, "I will bring them back from Bashan," (v22) can be applied to God purposing and promising to deliver us from the domain of darkness and transfer us into the Kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13)

David prayed: -

- Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; ¹³they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. (Psalm 22:12-13)

And verses twenty-nine of the same Psalm says: -

- All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. (Psalm 22:29).

Based on the words of these verses the strong bulls of Bashan can be seen as the prideful and arrogant kings' princes and rulers who have power over the earth.

I will bring them back from the depth of the sea: (v22) the depth of the sea signifies the severest of afflictions the allusion is to God leading His people through the Red Sea.

- The people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. (Exod. 14:22).

The idea is that God will appear as powerfully for Israel as He did when He delivered them from the Egyptian army, by giving them a safe passage through the Red sea and delivering them from all enemies who come against them to destroy them. Naturally this promise only applies if Israel obeys the covenant they entered into with the LORD at Mount Sinai and do what is right before God.

The words, "I will bring them back from Bashan and the depth of the sea," can also be seen as an allusion to the Lord's gathering of his people from the east and from the west, the east being signified by Bashan and the west being signified by the depths of the sea.

- Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. (Isaiah 43:5).

Strike your Feet in their Blood, that Dogs have their Portion from the Foe.

Psalm 68:23 ----- ²³that you may strike your feet in their blood, that the tongues of your dogs may have their portion from the foe.

Out of all afflictions God will bring Israel out, the symbolism used here is not implying savage cruelty, but signifying the completeness of the conquest as expressed in the following verses.

- When they came back and told him, he said, "This is the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, 'In the territory of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel (2 Kings 9:36).
- Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." ²Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? ³"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood splattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. ⁴For the day of

vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. ⁵I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. ⁶I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth." (Isaiah 63:1-6)

- I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, declares the LORD: the sword to kill, the dogs to tear, and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. (Jer. 15:3).

The meaning is, that if the enemies of God's people continue to invade and harass them by war, they will be entirely cut off by the sword, and their slaughter be so great, that the victorious army is forced to trample on their dead and bloody bodies, and wild and hungry dogs (and wild animals and birds) will feed off the bleeding corpses to satisfy their hunger. The words of verse twenty-three are not an expression of acts of cruelty, but the description of a complete victory and of the horrors that happens after bloody battles of war.

God's Singers and Virgins playing tambourines is Seen into the Sanctuary.

Psalm 68:24-26 ----- ²⁴Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary—
²⁵the singers in front, the musicians last, between them virgins playing tambourines:
²⁶"Bless God in the great congregation, the LORD, O you who are of Israel's fountain!"

When the armies of Israel returned from battle in triumph and victory singers musicians and virgin maidens playing tambourines all rejoicing and celebrating would sing songs of praise and joy before the LORD their God as they marched and danced in joy up to the sanctuary to give God the honour and thanksgiving for the victory.

- David danced before the LORD with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD (into the city of David) with shouting and with the sound of the horn. (2 Sam. 6:14-15).

Bless God in the great congregation: (v26) the great congregation embraces all the faithful of every generation from Genesis to Revelation. God is mighty amongst their midst. This is not only evidenced by the mighty wonders and miracles God has performed on behalf of His people, but also evidenced by the fact that despite great persecution and mockery the global spiritual Kingdom of God is continuing to grow worldwide and the Bible is still one of the most read books in the world.

God the fountain of Israel: (v26) a person would have to be blind not to see the truth in this statement. Israel would not exist if God was not the supreme head of their nation and their faith. True they have not yet recognised Christ as their Messiah (but even this is in the eternal plan of God) and Zechariah speaking by the inspired word of prophecy wrote: -

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. ¹¹On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great and each family will mourn by itself (Zech. 12:10-14).

Though the veil has not yet been lifted from their eyes to the truth that Christ is the promised Messiah that all their faithful prophets proclaimed was to come and that the Scriptures they love proclaim only the foolish would doubt the enormous faith they have toward the invisible, immortal Almighty God of all creation and the source of all life the God of Abraham, David and all the Old Testament prophets.

There is Benjamin and the Princes of Judah of Zebulun, and of Naphtali.

Psalm 68:27 ----- ²⁷There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead, the princes of Judah in their throng, the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

The King James Bible says: -

- There *is* little Benjamin *with* their ruler, the princes of Judah *and* their council, the princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali. ²⁸Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. (Psalm 68:27-28).

Council and throng: comes from the Hebrew word (rigmah) and means a throng (i.e., multitude, mass, crowd or host) and council (i.e., assembly, crowd and congregation).

David in this poetical Psalm-song sees in his mind a procession of the twelve tribes marching together in a national celebration in well-ordered formation carrying with great rejoicing the ark to Jerusalem the city of David, but only mentions Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun and Naphtali. Following are some of the reasons why only these tribes are mentioned.

There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead: (27) Benjamin is most likely mentioned because they gave the nation their first king; they submitted to David more than any other tribe; they were the tribe nearest to Judah and to the place to which the ark was carried and they willingly fought with David at Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him as the following verses show..

- Now these are the men who came to David at Ziklag, while he could not move about freely because of Saul the son of Kish. And they were among the mighty men who helped him in war. ²They were bowmen and could shoot arrows and sling stones with either the right or the left hand; they were Benjaminites, Saul's kinsmen. (1 Chronicles 12:1-2).
- Some of the men of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. ¹⁷David went out to meet them and said to them, "If you have come to me in friendship to help me, my heart will be joined to you. (1 Chron. 12:16-17).

Now go to verse eighteen: -

- They said, "We are yours, O David, and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helpers! For your God helps you." Then David received them and made them officers of his troops. (1 Chron. 12:18).

Now go to verse twenty-three: -

- These came to David at Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the word of the LORD. (1 Chron. 12:23).

The tribe is called little, partly because it was the youngest, as being descended from Jacob's youngest son, and principally because it was exceedingly diminished, and almost annihilated under the judges (Judges Chapter 20-21) so it was amongst the smallest of the tribes of Israel so small that after the revolt of the ten tribes, the name of Benjamin was lost from the two tribes and they were called after the tribe of Judah (Jews). Nevertheless though small it is given the pre-eminence on this occasion.

The princes of Judah in their throng: (v27) Judah was also known as the tribe of David since he was from the tribe of Judah and elected by them to be their king. In contrast to the tribe of Benjamin which was few in number Judah was one of the largest of the tribes of Israel and as such occupied the most honourable place as having charge of the arrangements and the chief support of the Israelites in overseeing their constitution, council and government.

Added to this honour it was from the tribe of Judah the Messiah the Christ came.

- The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. ¹¹Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. (Gen. 49:10-11).

The princes of Zebulun and the princes of Naphtali: (v27) both of these tribes maybe mentioned to show that it was a national celebration in which all the tribes were represented since both Zebulun and Naphtali were remote border tribes. They are also given great praise in the song of Deborah.

- Deborah sang: “Zebulun is a people who risked their lives to the death; Naphtali, too, on the heights of the field.” (Judges 5:18).

Zebulun and Naphtali may also be mention because they willing complied with David and in his service more than the rest and came from the ends of the land to David in Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him.

- These came to David at Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the word of the LORD. (1 Chron. 12:23).

Now go to verse thirty-three: -

- Of Zebulun 50,000 seasoned troops, equipped for battle with all the weapons of war, to help David with singleness of purpose. ³⁴Of Naphtali 1,000 commanders with whom were 37,000 men armed with shield and spear. (1 Chron. 12:33-34).

Added to these they lived in the remotest parts of the land of Canaan. And so by naming two of the nearest tribes (Benjamin and Judah) and two of the furthest tribes (Zebulun and Naphtali), he leaves it to be understood that the other tribes also were marching in this celebration as is pictured in the following verses: -

- David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn into the city of David --- NOW GO TO VERSE EIGHTEEN --- ¹⁸when David had finished offering the burnt offerings the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women all departed, each to his house. (2 Samuel 6:15-19)
- David said to all the assembly of Israel, “let us bring again the ark of our God to us,” and all the assembly agreed to do so. David assembled all Israel to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim ⁷And they carried the ark of God on a new cart, from the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio were driving the cart. ⁸And David and all Israel were rejoicing before God with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets. (1 Chron. 13:2-8).
- David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it --- NOW GO TO VERSE TWENTY-EIGHT --- ²⁸So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and made loud music on harps and lyres. (1 Chron. 15:3) (1 Chron. 15:28).

The princes of Zebulun and Naphtali are added, as the most remote, to show that the unanimity of the whole nation and of all the tribes far and near are attending this celebration to testify of their willing acknowledgment of David for their king, and their joyful acknowledgment that Jerusalem, the city of David, should be declared and esteemed the capital of the whole nation.

Trample underfoot those who lust after tribute and delight in war.

Psalm 68:28-30 ----- ²⁸Summon your power, O God, the power, O God, by which you have worked for us. ²⁹Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings shall bear gifts to you. ³⁰Rebuke 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.

Beasts and bulls: signifies powerful and authoritative religious leaders who use their privileged position to take advantage of God’s people for their own advantage.

Reeds and calves: signifies the innocent and faithful people of God.

David acknowledges the mighty works, triumphs and victories God has favoured him with and now not only calls upon the LORD to protect His people and the

temple at Jerusalem, but also asks the LORD to rebuke all powerful kings and deceitful religious rulers who come among the flock to lead them astray and crush those who take money and gifts from God's people for their own gain and bring to ruin those who enjoy war (most likely because of the gain of the enemies spoils).

Nobles shall Come from Egypt and Cush.

Psalm 68:31 ----- 31 Nobles (princes in KJV) shall come from Egypt; Cush (Ethiopia in KJV) shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God.

Princes: comes from the Hebrew word (*chashman*) and means firm or abundant in resources and carries the idea of being wealthy and by implication powerful and authoritative.

Princes shall come out of Egypt: meaning they will come and acknowledge the true God. Egypt is referred to here as one of the most prominent of the foreign nations then known. The idea is that the distinguished men of foreign nations the rulers and princes of the world would come and humbly submit themselves to God, and be united to his people.

Shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God: implies an act of eagerness, swiftness and hurriedness with which it would be done, the act is an act of supplication, humble submission and begging God for mercy and of prayer to the true God in contrast to idols and pagan gods and offering up the gifts spoken of in verse twenty-nine. The country referred to would become subject to the true God. It is a view of the future time when the nations would be converted to the true faith and acknowledge the true God.

Whether this refers to the Cush in Arabia, or to the Cush in Africa (Ethiopia as commonly understood), it is a description of what will yet occur for all these lands, and all other lands that will be converted to the true faith, and who will stretch out their hands in supplication and prayer and will find acceptance with God. Even injured Africa, who has been greatly wronged, degraded and oppressed, will stretch out their hands to God and the worship of her people will be as acceptable to the Almighty God the heavenly Father as that of any other people that dwell on the earth.

To stretch out her hands: is an idiom expressing hasty submission. David mentions Egypt and Ethiopia (Cush) as having been the great and ancient enemies of God and a most wicked and idolatrous people to signify all other nations of a like character. It is his expressed hope that the victories which he and the Israelites should gain over the neighbouring nations would encourage those which were more remote and addicted to idolatry to come to Jerusalem and join themselves to the worshippers of the true God.

David's hopes were realized when the surrounding hostile powers were overthrown by David and his armies and Israel's kingdom was fully established and the more distant nations which had been given to idolatry pursued their friendship and came to Jerusalem with gifts and offerings. He names Egypt and Ethiopia who were idolatrous and corrupt nations and great and ancient enemies of God and of His people to signify all other nations and people of like character.

Echoes of Christ and his return: within the language of certain verses of this Psalm is a faint prophecy that belong to the time Christ walked on earth and Gentiles (under the names of Egypt and Ethiopia in this Psalm) were brought into the knowledge and worship of the true God and the era of the New Covenant of grace. The Gospel is said to be preached in Egypt by Mark in Ethiopia by Matthew, and it is certain Matthias a famous Ethiopian that was converted and baptized by Philip (Acts 8:27) went on to proclaim his new found faith.

Symbolically the conversion of every sinner is a coming out of Egypt the house of bondage and spiritual darkness into the light of God to be set amongst Christ's treasured possession. Many of the events in this Psalm ultimately refer to Christ's millennial age when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's

Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Kingdoms of the Earth, Sing to God; Who Rides in the Ancient Heavens.

Psalms 68:32-35 ----- ³²O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, *Selah* ³³to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice. ³⁴Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and whose power is in the skies. ³⁵Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!

God who rides in the ancient heavens: (v33) carries the idea that God's laws, rules, statutes and ways, His love, mercy and grace are not something new, but go back to the beginning of time.

God sends out his voice, his mighty voice: (v33) this would firstly apply to the following words of creation: -

- The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
²Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:1-3).

Secondly it would obviously apply to the prophets, the apostles, the word of God and all the faithful who share their faith and the message of the bloodstained cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's majesty is over Israel: (v34) applies to the following two things: -

1. The awesome power, wonders and protection God has favoured Israel and the city of Jerusalem with.
2. The fact Israel still exists as a nation. Throughout history they have had enemies who have had far greater armies come against them in battle, their city has been completely brought to ruin and their land to waste, they have been scattered throughout the world yet they not only still exist as a nation, but whatever happens to them affects the world and becomes global news.

God whose power is in the skies: (v34) refers to the moon, the sun, the milky-way, the billions of stars, the endless universe, the blue sky that surrounds the earth, the thunderous stormy clouds and the awesome breathtaking power of lightning as it lights up the entire darkness of the skies.

Awesome is God from His sanctuary: (v35) applies firstly to the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary in which the Ark of the Covenant was placed and God's presence was in some mysterious way upon it between the two cherubim's above the mercy seat. When Israel obeyed the covenant they entered into with the LORD at Mount Sinai and did what was right God from the sanctuary favoured them and by His Spirit and awesome power and wonders favoured their armies and destroyed their enemies.

God gives power and strength to His people: (v35) firstly applies to Old Testament Israel, He protected them, prospered their land and all they did. Their crops flourished and their livestock abundantly produced and their enemies fled when they did right before the LORD. Secondly it applies to the mercy and grace God gives to all the faithful to be saved to eternal life and everlasting happiness. It is to this awesome invisible, immortal Almighty God, the God of all creation and source of all life and of love and grace that David calls all the kingdoms and nations of the earth to praise

FOOTNOTE:

In this Psalm little Benjamin is pictured as leading the twelve tribes of Israel (the congregation of God) in the joyful march of carrying the ark of God's presence into the holy city of God with great rejoicing and celebration. This by extension can be seen as

- The congregation of God being led by Christ in the triumphal procession proclaiming the Gospel in Judea, and in the Gentile world, by the ministry of Christ's word.
- The apostle Paul who was of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1) and was a young man when he was converted (Acts 7:58). His bodily presence was considered weak (2 Cor. 10:10) and in his own eyes he considered himself less than the least of all the faithful, and the chief of sinners, unworthy to be called an apostle, yet he was greatly honoured by Christ and could be said to be the very chief of the apostles and principal leader in the growth of the church from Jerusalem to the surrounding nations and today to all the world through the word of God.

This Psalm begins with the words: -

- God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate him shall flee before him! (Psalm 68:1).

Whenever the ark set out, Moses said: -

- Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you. (Num. 10:35).

David being a prophet knew very well that both himself and the ark were types of Christ, and that the people of Israel were a type of the universal church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles and that the ceremonial rites and sacrifices were symbols pointing forward to Christ's death and resurrection and the Gospel. Being a prophet he by the Spirit of prophecy, looked through and beyond the present actions and types to the great mysteries of Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, and of the special privileges of the Christian church, and of the conversion of the Gentiles to God.

With this spiritual insight he inter-mixes some passages which directly and immediately belong to the present actions and present time, but so arranges the structure of the language that there is in it a secondary sense that carries an allusion (though somewhat obscure) to a greater and more perfect fulfilment of the events spoken of.

This Psalm contains such a mixture of things, some statements belong to the specific actions and events of a certain historical period of time, while others though speaking of certain past historical events also contain allusions to Christ the Gospel and future events. The brilliant skill in composing such writings in such a manner should not surprise us since these men of God were wholly inspired and moved by the Holy Spirit.

- No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21).

Some were inspired by God's word coming to their mind while others were transported in the Spirit and carried away to speak of the highest mysteries of God and the Gospel which at times even they themselves did not fully understand as we who can look back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary do.

The apostle Peter wrote: -

- Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. (1 Peter 1:10-11)

End.