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Psalm 108

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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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 perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 108.

Topics.

- God's steadfast love and faithfulness is above the heavens.
- God will divide up Shechem and the Vale of Succoth.
- Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah, is mine.
- Moab, Edom and Philistia.
- Who will lead me to Edom and the fortified city?
- God? You do not go forth, with our armies' grant us help against foes.
- With God we shall do valiantly; it is He who will tread down our foes.

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.

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.

1

BOOK FIVE (PSALM 107-150)

PSALM 108:1-6

A Song. A Psalm of David.

God's Steadfast Love and Faithfulness is above the Heavens.

- **Psalm 108:1-6:** My heart is steadfast, O God! I will sing and make melody with all my being! ²Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! ³I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. ⁴For your steadfast love is great above the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. ⁵Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! ⁶That your beloved ones may be delivered, give salvation by your right hand and answer me!

Verse eleven shows us that David at the time of writing this Psalm feels the LORD has rejected him and Israel, and that God is not with their armies when they go to battle. He asks God to help them against their enemies because he knows that without God they will fail, but with God they will do valiantly (v6-13). Even though David feels rejected he proclaims that his heart is steadfast toward the LORD, he will sing to music with all his being and make melody in his heart praising God for His faithfulness and steadfast love (v1-4).

There is a principal we all can learn in this Psalm: David's love for God was never dependant on his outward circumstances or his inward condition (whether they are good or bad). David's faith always soared above his wealth or lack of it, his sickness, his sin, his defeats by his enemies, his despair and his depression etc. It did not matter what emotional or physical condition he was in it did not affect his faith and his

love for God or God's love for him. This is because great faith is not dependent on success, good feelings or emotions true faith soars above all circumstances, trials and troubles. David could be lying on his bed in deep depression with his friends plotting to kill him and his armies defeated, yet his love for God did not fail, neither did he ever think God did not love him. Next to God's steadfast love David's greatest desire was to see God's glory, cover the earth. (v5).

Give salvation by your right hand and answer me: (v6) in this context God's right hand refers to His power, David is praying God would save those He loves from their enemies by His power.

PSALM 108:7

God will Divide Up Shechem and the Vale of Succoth.

- **Psalm 108:7:** God has promised in his holiness: "With exultation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the Valley of Succoth.

God has promised in His Holiness: (v7) means God spoke as a holy God; a God who is true and whose promises are always fulfilled. The idea is, that the Holiness of God was the pledge and assurance that what He had promised He would certainly perform. In reference to David the expression carries the following ideas:

- God has spoken to David in the sanctuary were David would ask counsel from God and from where God usually gave out his oracles.
- God did not simply speak, but swore an oath and promised by His Holy character and His word.
- God spoke to David's through His holy prophets Samuel and Nathan who regularly spoke with David.
- God spoke to David by the Holy Spirit in the inner being.
- God spoke by the perfection of his holy character and nature in which He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

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Though all of these may apply it is more likely that the words, "God has spoken in His Holiness," refers to the following promise God made to Abraham and his future generations concerning the whole land of Canaan (Palestine) and the boundaries of the Promised Land God swore with and oath to put into the possession of Abraham and his seed.

- The LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him." (Gen. 12:7).
- I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen. 17:8).
- He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. ⁹Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; ¹⁰And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: ¹¹Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance. (Psalm 105:8-11).

The original promise of the land under the general name of Canaan embraced the whole territory from the river (that divided the land from Egypt) to the Euphrates:

- In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: (Genesis 15:18).

This would embrace the country of Edom, as well as the other countries which are specified in this Psalm. The boundary of the land on the east according to the promise was the river Euphrates; the boundary on the

west was Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea and the boundary on the south was the outer limits of Edom. It is certain that David's goal was to carry out what God has spoken in His Holiness in His promise to Abraham and secure the possession of all that had been promised to the Hebrews as the descendants of Abraham. This no doubt was the reason why David desiring to make the Euphrates River the eastern border and boundary of Israel's land was carrying his conquests toward the east

- David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates. (2 Sam. 8:3).
- David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to establish his dominion by the river Euphrates. (1 Chron. 18:3).

It was no doubt for the same purpose that David was anxious to subdue Edom so the entire territory promised to Abraham might be put in possession of the Hebrews, and that he might pass on the kingdom in the fullness of the original promise to his future offspring.

I will rejoice: (6) meaning I will raise a shout of triumph and turn my prayers into praises and rejoicings for what God has promised He will do on my behalf. God speaking in His Holiness resulted in such triumphant joy for David that he now describes the conquest as already made since God's promised oath is certain to come to pass. Faith can only rejoice when it trusts in the promise of God. The holiness of God secures the fulfilment of God's own covenant and promise and therefore David was able to speak confidently. Faith regards the promise of God not as fiction, but fact, and therefore rejoices in it.

God will divide up Shechem and Succoth: (6) meaning God will divide up the whole land according to His promised inheritance to be possessed. It seems most probable that Shechem and Succoth are mentioned because Shechem was a place west of the Jordan and Succoth was a place east of the Jordan and therefore the two would represent the conquest of the whole of the land of Canaan from east to west within and without Jordan.

PSALM 108:8

Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah, is Mine.

- **Psalm 108:8:** Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet, Judah my scepter (is my lawgiver in KJV).

Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine and Judah is mine meaning my dominion and authority according to the promise of God is extended over these regions. David claims the whole land on account of the promise. Gilead comprehending the country on the east of Jordan, and Ephraim and Judah comprehending the country on the west, are employed to denote the whole dominion of the land. The idea here is the same as in the previous verse which is that David's dominion extended over the country on both sides of the Jordan and that in the direction of east and west it embraced all that had been promised, from the great sea to the river Euphrates. In verse seven, this same idea is expressed by selecting two towns Shechem on the west, and Succoth on the east; as representatives of the whole country. In this verse, the same idea is expressed by a reference to the two regions Gilead and Manasseh on the east side of the River Jordan and Ephraim and Judah on the west. These two portions would, therefore, embrace the whole of the Promised Land.

Ephraim is my helmet: (8) meaning the strength of my head. Ephraim: means "double fruit," he was Joseph second born son and the progenitor of the tribe called by his name. He became such a leader in the new Northern Kingdom (the ten tribes) that in addition to its more common name Israel, the kingdom was also called Ephraim. The soldiers' helmet

in battle protects the head and saves the life of those whose head it is upon this honour was given to the tribe of Ephraim because they were one of the largest tribes, and because Ephraim was situated in the very centre of the land. They were very numerous in number, valiant and rich and a chief part of David's strength to defend his kingdom.

Judah is my sceptre and lawgiver: (8) the king being of the tribe of Judah sent forth his laws out of her midst and it was amongst the tribe of Judah that civil power went out. Judah is my lawgiver means the chief seat of my throne and kingdom. Judah, by its position, its numbers, and the prominence given to it in the prophecies gave law to the nation so its influence was felt in all the institutions of the land. The authority of Judah was most likely recognized, because of the importance it was given in the Scriptures and in the following prophecies:

- There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David. (Psalm 122:5).
- Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. ⁹Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? ¹⁰The 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. ¹²His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk. (Gen. 49:8-12).
- 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. (Gen. 49:10).

David's kingdom is from this tribe it is the chief seat of his throne and it is from the tribe of Judah his kingdom will be established. This of course will be when the great Lawgiver Christ himself who came from this tribe returns in glory and has dominion over the whole of the Promised Land. The faithful know no lawgiver, but the King and Saviour who came out of Judah. Those who abide in him are free from all other ecclesiastical rule, but that of their King who came as a Lamb to be slaughtered on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and who will return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to conquer, it is to him the faithful give joyful obedience.

Judah: was a member of the tribe of Judah who founded the tribe of Judah. The greater part of Israel withdrew from the Judean rule to form the Northern Kingdom of Israel (the ten tribes) while the Davidic dynasty continued to rule at Jerusalem over the remaining two tribes in Jerusalem and the land of Judah until the destruction of the city by the Babylonians in 587BC.

PSALM 108:9

Moab, Edom and Philistia.

- **Psalm 108:9:** Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast my shoe; over Philistia I shout in triumph." (Philistia, triumph thou because of me in KJV).

Moab is my washpot: (v9) this expression refers to a pot of water used for washing dirty feet. Since the early generations did not have roads and paths of cement as we do today, but dust and dirt to walk upon it was a common custom to wash the feet before entering a house and especially a place of worship. The idea is that Moab will be as a foot-bath for David's kingdom. This is very fitting picture of Moab for the following two reasons:

1. The Moabites defiled Israel according to the counsel of Balaam so it is fitting they should be likened to a vessel used for washing dirty feet.
2. The feet are the lowest part of the body likewise Moab was of little value and not regarded as adding much to David's strength or to the value of his kingdom compared with others.

Moab: (was the father of the Moabites) he was the child that the firstborn and eldest daughter had to her father Lot. Their land was on the east side of the River Jordan in the land of Moab on the east of the Dead Sea, extending as far north as the river Arnon. Moabites were forbidden to enter the assembly of the LORD and Israel was not to seek peace or prosperity with Moab. This was because Moab did not meet Israel with bread and water when Israel came out of Egypt and Balak their king hired Balaam against Israel to curse them, but the LORD would not allow Balaam to speak against Israel and turned the curse into a blessing, because the LORD loved Israel. Nevertheless Balaam (to win the favour of the king and his reward) later taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the men of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality (Rev. 2:14). The stumbling block was to allow the beautiful Moabite woman to mingle with the Israelite men and seduce them to their gods. Balak followed Balaam's advice and the men began to whore with the daughters of Moab and the Moabite women invited them to offer sacrifices to their gods and the people of Israel ate and bowed down to their gods so Israel yoked themselves to Baal (Num. 25:1-3). The full story of Balaam and Balak is in (Numbers chapter 22, 23, 24, 25).

Upon Edom I cast my shoe: (v9) Edom (includes Idumea) the people of Edom were called Edomites and were descendants of Esau). Edom was a region whose possession was necessary to complete the achievement of territory that properly pertained to the Promised Land. There needed only be the territory of Edom, on the south, to complete the conquest, and place the whole of the Promised Land under David's dominion and he was now intent on acquiring it. Various scholars have suggested that David's expression "Upon Edom I cast my shoe" can refer to the following five ideas: -

1. Obtaining dominion over Edom would be as easily achieved as a man casts a shoe to one side.
2. Edom will be disgraced to the character of slave whose master tosses his sandals down to so that he would have to clean them.
3. Edom was a corrupt nation since casting sandals outside the door of a temple or a house during ancient times portrayed the idea of vileness and profanation.
4. The land of Edom would become the land of Israel because handing a shoe to another person was a symbol of transferring a possession.
 - Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging; to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. (Ruth 4:7).
- 5 Edom would be defeated since putting the foot (supposedly with a shoe on it) on the neck of an enemy was a symbol of their defeat.
 - Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, "Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings." Then they came near and put their feet on their necks. ²⁵And Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." (Joshua 10:24-25).

It would be pointless to debate which of these David had in mind since they all carry the same idea which is that Edom would be defeated by the hand of Israel and become subject to them.

Philistia I shout in triumph: (v9) (the people are called Philistines they are the same as the Palestine's). The English Standard Bible says, "Over Philistia I shout in triumph," while the King James Bible says, "Philistia, triumph thou because of me." The first statement implies David is to shout in triumph over Philistia, while the second statement implies Philistia will shout in triumph because of David so which is right? Following are the three most common thoughts:

1. In a very similar Psalm David says, "Over Philistia I shout in triumph." (Psalm 108:9) and from verse five to eight of the Psalm we are looking at the language is that of triumph over foes so the most likely interpretation is that David will triumph over Philistia especially since his kingdom through Christ will triumph over all kingdoms.
2. It could be seen as a taunt, "Philistia, triumph over me as you did in former years" which carries the idea that Philistia would no longer be in a situation to triumph over him.
3. The words, "Philistia, triumph thou because of me," could carry the idea that Philistia will triumph because of the eventual sovereignty of David's kingdom and therefore be referring to the exultation and shouting which would ensue on Philistia reception of King David as their sovereign or by extension of the Lord Jesus Christ as their King.

It is pointless to debate or spend further time on which of these three David had in mind since all three can be applied.

PSALM 108:10

Who will Lead Me to Edom and the Fortified City?

- **Psalm 108:10:** Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom?

Edom: the name Edom was given to Esau the elder twin-brother of Jacob and son of Isaac. Esau was given the name Edom after he had eaten the red pottage and because he was born red all over and his name means red so it was in a sense a nickname. His descendants were called Edomites

Idumea: the name Idumea was used to refer to a smaller area in the same region as Edom which was occupied by him (Israel and Edom were constantly at odds).

Petra and Sela: is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Sela, the capital of Edom and strong and fortified city of (v10). Sela/Petra was in the land of Edom and located about fifty miles south of the Dead Sea and 170 miles southwest of modern Amman, Jordan. Petra was in the land of Edom. Petra and Sela both mean rock an appropriate name since Sela is the rock-city of Idumæa and much of the city is carved into sandstone cliffs and Idumæa literally means a craggy rock a fortress and strong hold and figuratively carries the idea of being lofty. Petra is not mentioned in the Bible by the name Petra, but rather by its Hebrew name, Sela as the following verses show:

- Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from *Sela* to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion. (Isaiah 16:1).
- He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took *Selah* by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day. (2 Kings 14:7).

The words, "Who will lead me to Edom the fortified city? (v9) means into the strong and prideful city Petra the capital of Edom and the whole land to subdue it and bring the impregnable and prideful city of the rock down to the ground.

- Thus says the Lord GOD concerning *Edom (the region (Idumæa))*: We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations: "Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!" ²Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be utterly despised. ³The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?" (Obadiah 1:1-3)

David's question, "Who will lead me into Petra the capitol of Edom?" (v10) is explained by the following two facts, firstly, there are only two possible approaches to the city, each of them long, narrow and tortuous and the place itself is so buried in ravines that it cannot be seen from any spot in

its neighbourhood whether far or near. Secondly it was such a high and rocky country fortified by nature that it was enormously difficult to be taken by an enemy. This is why David asked the question, who among his captains, his mighty men, would undertake the task of taking such a city since none can do it but God.

PSALM 108:11-12

O God? You do Not Go with our Armies Grant us Help against Foes.

- **Psalm 108:11-12:** Have you not rejected us, O God? You do not go out, O God, with our armies. ¹²Oh grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man!

Have you not rejected us, O God? (v11) the meaning is that even though God had seemed to reject and forsake David and the people of Israel they had no other hope other than to appeal to God that He might still be willing to turn back and be favourable to his people and not forsake them altogether. Although God has rejected Israel, He has not rejected them as His people, His rejection in this context means God has withdrawn His blessing and favour it does not mean that His love is not flowing out waiting for their return. The same principal applies to Christians today, should they slip into gross wickedness as Israel did God may leave us for a time as He did Israel to discouragement and the darkness of despair, yet when we come to our senses we realise that we have no other resource, but to turn to God and his mercy and plead for his love, favour and blessings to be restored. The chastising of God is Israel's only hope. He loves His people, but because of their rebellion and gross sin God in His Holiness for a small moment is forced to forsake them, but with great mercy will gather them again should they repent. God is both strong to discipline and strong to save. David understands that the God who did not go out with his armies is the same God that he clings to by faith. David's attitude was, "Though you slay us, we trust in you, and look for your merciful help."

PSALM 108:13

With God we Shall Do Valiantly; He Treads down our Foes.

- **Psalm 108:13:** With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.

Clearly this verse expresses the great faith and trust David had in God, but it also echoes the faith of all the faithful of all periods of history. The true Israel of God is the faithful of all generations who have lived with faith in the promised Messiah the Christ. Some may think that Christ blood cleanses only those who are saved after Christ's death and resurrection, but this is not so. Though Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God they were not saved by them, they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish the Saviour to come and it is his blood that cleanses them. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

And Peter wrote:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain

from the foundation of the world. The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual invisible river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ. The faithful of the Old Testament were saved by their faith that the blood of their sin sacrifices (shadows of Christ) covered their sin and by their faith in the promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Genesis 3:15); in the prophet Moses said was to come like him; in God's promise to Abraham that from his seed a deliver would come and by their faith in the promised seed of David, the Messiah and Saviour to come.

The faithful of the New Testament are saved by their faith in looking back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and by looking forward to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This shines a glorious spotlight on the truth that whether a man or woman is of the Old or New Testament we are all saved by the same cleansing power, the same cleansing blood and the same Deliverer, King and Saviour. This is because God in his eternal mind planned and purposed before time began that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of all mankind for all eternity. Truly, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22).

The beauty of the Gospel: though there may be times when we may think that the Lord has cast us off, he will forever bring us into the strong city if we approach him in honest repentance. Faith in God's promise and the message of the bloodstain cross of Calvary should assure all those in Christ that it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom. Though we are guaranteed by God's promise eternal life and everlasting happiness through faith in Christ and God's grace it does not mean we are yet made perfect or complete conquerors. But this truth should never be used as an excuse to indulge in the sinful ways of the world and thereby abuse Christ's love and God's grace.

David's confident faith: David's statement, "It is He who will tread down our foes" (v13) shines a brilliant spotlight upon his confident faith that with God on Israel's side they will overcome all their enemies no matter how powerful or mighty their armies might be. But it is not limited to David only, but by extension applies to all who have faith in the King and Saviour who died on the bloodstained cross of Calvary overcoming all enemies that would hinder them from obtaining eternal life and everlasting happiness in the New Age to come who trust in Christ's righteousness and God's grace and not their own self-righteousness.

CONCLUSION

David believed with God on Israel's side all the following nations would eventually be in Israel's possession according to the promised inheritance God swore by an oath to give to Abraham and his offspring. the land of Shechem, the valley of Succoth, the land of Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim, Judah, Moab, Philistia and Edom

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
