

Psalm 48
God's Chosen City

Introduction: Similarities with Ps. 46. Found in the second book of Psalms (42-72).

Superscription: *A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.*

The Greek translation of the Old Testament adds that this is to be sung on the 2nd day of the week (Monday). Some denominations sing this on Whit Sunday associated with Pentecost. John Newton wrote “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken” based on this psalm.

Should we take this psalm literally? Yes, Jesus did in Matt. 5:35.

1) Understand there are contrasting responses to God's greatness—48:1-8

a) The appropriate response of praise—48:1-3

i) ¹ *Great is Yahweh and exceedingly praised in the city of our God. His holy mountain, ² beautiful in elevation, is the joy of the whole earth. Mount Zion, the summit of Zaphon (the Canaanite version of Mt. Olympus), is the city of the great King (cf. Matt. 5:35). ³ God, in her fortified palaces, has made Himself known as a stronghold.*

(1) God is great in His works—92:5

(2) God is great in His mercy [*chesed*]—117:2

(3) God is great in His tender mercies [*racham*]—119:156

(4) God is great in His glory—138:5

(5) God is great in His understanding—147:5

ii) Yahweh chose Jerusalem as earthly demonstration of His presence (Cf. Deut. 12:14, 18; Josh. 9:27).

iii) God is not present because Mount Zion is holy; the mountain is holy because of God's presence.

b) The appropriate response of terror by the anti-God conspiracy—48:4-7

i) ⁴ *For look, the kings assembled; they advanced together. ⁵ They looked and thus were astounded; they were terrified, they retreated. ⁶ Trembling seized them there, agony like a woman in labor. ⁷ With the east wind You shattered the ships of Tarshish (the strongest and largest ships known).*

c) Reassurance to those who trust God—48:8

i) Reassurance of God's consistency—48:8a

(1) ⁸ *Just as we have heard, so we have seen in the city of Yahweh of Hosts, in the city of our God;*

ii) Reassurance of God's provision—48:8b

(1) *God will establish her forever. [Selah]*

2) Contemplate God's loyal-love and righteousness—48:9-10

a) ⁹ *We have contemplated (fixed our attention on) Your loyal-love [*chesed*], O God, within Your temple.*

- b) ¹⁰ *Like Your name* (His self-disclosed nature), *O God, so Your praise* (what He deserves) *extends to the ends of the earth; Your right hand* (what He does) *is filled with righteousness* [*tsedeq*].

3) Obey the commands concerning God's faithfulness—48:11-14

- a) The first set of commands—48:11
- i) Who is to do what? (cf. 48:2, joining the whole earth)
 - (1) The capital city—¹¹ *Let Mount Zion be glad*,
 - (2) The surrounding suburbs and villages—*let the daughters of Judah rejoice*
 - (a) Because during a siege, they would retreat to the capital city
 - ii) Why are they to do this? *because of Your judgments* [*mishpat*].
 - (1) His fair and righteous decisions
- b) The second set of commands—48:12-14a
- i) What we need to do?
 - (1) Get a good view—¹² *Walk around Zion and encircle her*.
 - (2) Understand her defenses—*Count her towers*, ¹³ *ponder* (set your heart on) *her ramparts; review her fortified palaces*
 - ii) Why is this important? *so that you can tell the next generation* ¹⁴ *that this is God, our God, forever and ever*.
 - (1) The focal point is not Jerusalem's physical defenses but her God!
Without God the towers, ramparts, and fortified palaces are nothing.
 - (2) Note "our God." Is the true God **your** God?
 - (3) God is eternal. He can never go out of existence.
- c) Closing reassurance—48:14b **He** (emphatic) *will herd/guide us until death* (till our dying day).
- i) Cf. Ps. 78:52; 80:1; Is. 49:10; 63:14

4) Things we need to remember:

- a) It is God's presence that makes Jerusalem both beautiful and secure.
- b) Jerusalem belongs to Yahweh. It is for Him to give to whom He pleases. He has chosen to give it to Israel as a place to set His name (2 Kings 21:7; 2 Chron. 2:4; 33:7; Jer. 7:30)
- c) The day will come when this Psalm will be brought to completion when the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is established over the whole earth. Jerusalem will be His capital city. (Zech. 14:10-11)