

## Psalm 48

**Introduction** – Psalm 48 is another song of triumph, the third in a series of triumphal songs. They all surround the triumph of God for His people and over the nations while celebrating the great refuge that is God, from God, and for the glory of God. Psalm 48 specifically celebrates the glorious victory that is the city of God, the church, the bride of Christ. If you are in the communion of God’s people, you are in a great place where God is greatly to be praised. That praise of God in that great place is where the victory resides and from where it presses forward. Another way to say this is that music and battle go together. Praise is potent and music is the glory over God’s city, His people.

In 2 Chron 20, we are told of the great victory of God’s people over the combined armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir (Edom) in the time of Jehoshaphat. When word came of their impending attack, Jehoshaphat called on all of Judah to assemble before the LORD (2 Chron 20:5-13). They receive a prophetic word of coming victory – but that they will not need to fight. They are told to stand still and watch what God does (20:14-17) and then the Levites, specifically the Kohathites and the Korahites, sing praise to the LORD. Early the next morning, Jehoshaphat went out with his army, led by the singing Levites. When they reached the enemy camp, they found signs of a massacre, for the LORD had responded to their singing with a panicked confusion among the confederation of armies (20:22-24). The people of God collected an enormous spoil and then returned to assemble before God in His great city and they sang (20:27-30).

Many commentators consider this Psalm to be penned on the occasion of Jehoshaphat’s victory. Psalm 48 is “*A Psalm of the sons of Korah.*” God is great and is greatly to be praised in the beautiful, elevated city of the great King where He is known as the city’s refuge (vv1-3). Celebration is occurring because “*the kings assembled*” but something caused them to be “*troubled*” and “*they hastened away. Fear took hold of them there...*” (vv4-7). Just as they had heard (the prophetic word), so they saw (in the camps) and now recall and give thanks in the city of the LORD of armies (v8).

**The City of Our God** – As we have been told, the church is the city of God, and so this is a song of victory about us (Rev 21:9-10). How is the church “seen” in this psalm? It is the city of our God, it is His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation and the joy of the whole earth. God is known here, personal by all, and He is known as the refuge for the church. The church is a place where we remember what God has done for us in the past and cry out for Him to show forth His lovingkindness again, now, and forever and ever (v14). “*We worship no unknown God. We know him as our refuge in distress, we delight in him as such, and run to him in every time of need. We know nothing else as our refuge*” (Spurgeon).

**The Strength of God and the Glory of Panic** – God has promised us that just when we find ourselves outnumbered and out-maneuvered, and we turn to Him in faith, He reveals His glory by giving panic and confusion to the enemy (Deut 2:25, Lev 26:8). This He did with the Pharaoh’s army as they tried to drive through the parted sea (Exod 14:24), with the enemies of Gideon (Judges 7:21-22), and with the armies against Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 20:22-24). In that case, the people of God went out singing of the unending mercies of God and the Lord used that to set an ambush on the enemies, a spirit of confusion and panic. This is all very mysterious, but we see it in little ways. What is so important about the “12<sup>th</sup> man” in Seahawks stadium? How does momentum swing in an athletic competition? Last week, in Moscow, Idaho, 300 people gathered to sing psalms and it was as if a panic ensued upon the police. The next day there were 500 people and no police to be found while counter protestors provided additional percussion to the songs of God’s deliverance. God does inhabit the praise of His people (Psalm 22:3). In these days filled with much panic, the church can and should declare that the LORD has brought this panic, that we are the place where God is our strong refuge, and all through the glory of singing, preaching, and praying the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Story in the City** – We must complete this psalm still seeing it as metaphor. “*Walk about Zion and go all around her...*” (vv12-14). We are Zion, and the towers and bulwarks and palaces are the places of building up and out, of beautifying and strengthening, of protecting and promoting the church and her God. They are also the stories of God doing these things and so we are to walk around them studying them, “*that you may tell it to the generation following*” (v13). Your children need to know who God is, how mighty He is, how full of lovingkindness, what He has done and what He still promises to do. That bulwark over there is the Exodus story. The tower just behind it, that’s the Reformation. That palace the Great Awakening. But look over there, there is another tower going up, another bulwark, one more palace...what is God up to now in our midst?

We have a duty to bring our children up among these towers, in such a way that they take pride in, and have loyalty to, the city of their God. Instead the church continues to send their children off to the schools of Babylon where they can study their towers and interpret our bulwarks according to their philosophy. So, will you be celebrating Columbus Day or Indigenous Peoples' Day next week, Christmas or Winter Festival in December? Does it matter? What is going on? Maybe we should tell the story of the invasion of Canaan from the Hittites point of view or the citizens of Jericho. You know, they were there first! In other words, we always interpret history and all data from one tower or another. But not all cities and towers are equal. Zion is the high and lifted up city, "*beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth*" (v2). From that vantage point we are to see and direct the world.

**For This is God (v14)** – So, we are in days where we find ourselves in many possible panic situations. What did Jehoshaphat do? He called the people together in a great assembly *by faith*. He led them out into the danger with singing *by faith*. They saw the strength of their source of panic panic. They saw the troublers troubled. And all because *by faith* they sang, "*Praise the Lord, for His mercies endure forever!*" "*Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God...*"

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*Dave Hatcher – October 4, 2020*