

## The Ascended King

Jesus in the Psalms

*Psalm 68*

Stuart W. Bryan

### I. The Secret Weapon of the Reformation

### II. The Ascended King (cf. Num 10:35; 2 Sam 6:12-19)

Psalm 68:1 alludes to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the covenant which symbolized God's presence with His people. "So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: 'Rise up, O Lord! Let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You'" (Num 10:35). Hence, it is likely that this psalm was composed by David for the procession of the \_\_\_\_\_ into Jerusalem. This joyful procession is described in 2 Samuel 6:12ff:

*<sup>12</sup>... So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. <sup>13</sup>And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. <sup>14</sup>Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. <sup>15</sup>So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet... <sup>17</sup>So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. <sup>18</sup>And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. <sup>19</sup>Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.*

#### A. Let God arise, His enemies flee, and His people sing! (1-6)

*<sup>1</sup>Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered; Let those also who hate Him flee before Him. <sup>2</sup>As smoke is driven away, So drive them away; As wax melts before the fire, So let the wicked perish at the presence of God. <sup>3</sup>But let the righteous be glad; Let them rejoice before God; Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly. <sup>4</sup>Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Extol Him who rides on the clouds, By His name YAH, And rejoice before Him. <sup>5</sup>A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation. <sup>6</sup>God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.*

#### B. The Lord has ascended His holy hill of Zion (7-18)

#### C. Bless God in the congregation! (19-27)

#### D. Strengthen us, O God, and conquer the nations! (28-35)

Psalm 68 summons God to arise and vindicate His Name and people in the face of His enemies. The psalm looks back at the ways God has done this in the past, praises God for these acts of salvation, and then prays that God would accomplish yet more. In other words, it looks both *back to the \_\_\_\_\_* and *forward to the \_\_\_\_\_*.

### III. Application

#### A. Jesus is the Ascended King (cf. Eph 4:7-16)

Jesus' incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension are the fulfillment of the prayer of this Psalm. Jesus is the climax of God's revelation of Himself and His mighty power as well as of His determination to bring all nations to worship and serve Him. Jesus has now \_\_\_\_\_ high over the heavens and has been installed as King of all nations. He has not taken His seat in the copy and shadow of the earthly tabernacle and temple, but in heaven itself. As Lord of all, He is going forth to conquer the nations and to bless His people. So Paul writes:

*<sup>7</sup>But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup>Therefore He says: "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." <sup>9</sup>(Now this, "HE ASCENDED"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup>He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup>And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... (Eph 4:7-13)*

#### B. Wage the Good Warfare

Psalm 68 teaches us how to wage war against the spiritual forces of darkness. Paul urged Timothy to "*wage the good warfare*" (1 Tim 1:18). How do we do this?

- First, we look to God in faith and summon Him to arise, to scatter His enemies, and to cause His people to rejoice (1,3). And what is our confidence as we do this? It is that God delights to protect the vulnerable and the helpless (5,7).
- Second, Psalm 68 teaches us to look \_\_\_\_\_ and to look ahead – to look back to the ways God has saved our fathers in the past and to look \_\_\_\_\_ to the ways God will deliver us in the future. So what do we look back upon? We have Christ's incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension. We have the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, the spread of the Gospel throughout the world, the immense number of Christ's disciples in every part of the globe. The psalm tells us to meditate upon these acts of God in history and then to anticipate yet further works in the future: when all the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth join us to worship the Living God.
- Finally, Psalm 68 reminds us to fight in \_\_\_\_\_. The victory shall be ours. Wherever God's enemies flee for refuge, He will find them and conquer them (21-23). The gates of hell shall not withstand the onslaught of the people of God (Mt 16:18). We shall be victorious through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Robert Rayburn reminds us:

*We have our enemies; the psalm admits it. We have our burdens. But, meantime, we have our gracious and merciful God, a father of the fatherless and defender of widows to help us and, after all, our enemies are his! What God has already done confirms that what he has promised will certainly come to pass. We will win the day! So, let's fight bravely in the meantime, believing in what God has already done and what he will certainly do in time to come. After all, no soldier who is under attack, sticks his head above the rim of the trench and asks in a whine: "Why are they firing at me? Was it something I said?" He understands that he is in the thick of the fight because of the side he is on and the cause he is fighting for. Well, so with every Christian, no matter where he or she is fighting at that moment: in the culture, in the church, in one's workplace, in one's family, in one's marriage, in one's own heart. No matter your enemies, "You will strike your feet in the blood of your foes, that the tongues of your dogs will have their share."*

### IV. Conclusion