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Follow God Into the Heavens; Psalm 68
GPBC
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Introduction – Psalm 68 is believed to have been composed in celebration of moving the ark from the home of Obededom to the temple. As it made its way up to the temple, carried on poles, it ascended to its rightful place in the holy of holies. The ark, of course, was meant to symbolize the presence of God. The temple, then, was to be a representation of the heavens where God dwells.

Psalm 68 looks to the ascent of the ark to the temple and rejoices in the ascent of the Lord above all on His throne in the heavens. The ark and the temple were visible representations of God and heaven, just as the Lord's Supper is a visual representation of Christ's death and baptism of the risen, new eternal life in Christ. So just as we are not to place our faith in the Lord's Supper or baptism but rather in the eternal realities they symbolize, so it was the same for the people of Israel in looking at the ark and the temple. They didn't place their faith in these heavenly symbols but rather in the eternal realities these symbols represented. That's precisely how Psalm 68 is written. Watching the ark enter the temple and rejoicing in the Lord reigning in the heavens.

In a way then, just as Psalm 67 is the realization of Psalms 65 and 66, Psalm 68 is the culmination of Psalm 67. When all the earth has heard and rejoices, all the earth will know Psalm 68.

The first three verses of the psalm introduce the three main themes of the psalm.

- I. God Rises to His Throne. (v1a)
 - a. God shall arise. God may be ignored, disputed, neglected, and rejected, but He shall rise. Meaning, He shall be recognized, worshipped, and honored as God over all, by all, amen.
 - b. This is an indisputable, unchangeable fact. You can deny that God exists, you can choose to not believe in Him, but that will not keep Him from rising. Or, you can rejoice in Him, love Him, trust Him because you know that when history is said and done, God will arise!
 - c. V18. Cf Eph 4:7-10

- i. So Paul reads this psalm as a prophetic word concerning Christ and His resurrection – and so should we. Jesus said in Luke 24 the psalms are about Him. He is God and He has risen. God shall arise, and God did arise, defeating death, conquering His foes, and delivering every single one of His people.
 - d. That glorious, historical, factual event of the literal, bodily resurrection of Christ inaugurated the kingdom of God, and upon His return, the kingdom of God will be consummated. Therefore, the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee that all that follows in this psalm will indeed follow one day in history.
 - e. The first words – God shall arise - are the foundation and certainty of fulfillment for what is to follow – the next two themes.
- II. He Brings His People with Him. (v3)
 - a. If we are in Christ, we have been risen with Him to new life and when He returns we will rise to life eternal. Because Christ has risen, we rejoice today, but our joy will be full and complete upon His return. When all of the world sees the King in His glory, Oh how we His people shall be glad and exult and be jubilant with joy! When every knee bows and every tongue confesses Jesus as Lord, oh how we who belong to Him shall celebrate and overflow with gladness.
 - b. There is a joy to come like we have yet to taste. A thrill beyond compare. A bliss indescribable. And it is all due to Christ, His resurrection, His triumphant return, and His salvation of all His people.
 - c. So the psalm says, go ahead and rejoice now. Your redemption draws nigh! V4.
 - d. But even before that glorious day, God has carried and sustained His people along the way to glory. We know final salvation will come because daily salvation is known.
 - e. V5. The weakest among us have known the care and provision and fatherhood of God.
 - f. V6a – the lonely among us have found God to be their home
 - g. V6b – all of us who were imprisoned in sin have known the power of God to set us free from the shackles of sin and despair and hopelessness that bound us. Spiritually imprisoned to spiritually prosperous.

III. Shawshank Redemption

- h. V7 – God’s watchful eye and sustaining hand has been known throughout the history of His people – v10. III. Numbers
 - i. V19 – every single child of God can testify to His daily, sufficient grace. The anchor holds in spite of the storm.
 - j. If God has brought us this far, without exception, He shall bring us with Him into His everlasting kingdom – vv24-28.
 - k. V20 – you see all this confident hope is rooted in the very first words of the psalm – God shall arise. So as He has conquered death, so will He conquer our death as well.
 - l. But not only will God ultimately save every one of His people into everlasting glory, He will defeat every single one of His foes.
- III. No Power on Earth Can Oppose Him. (vv1b-2)
- a. V11-12, 14.
 - b. Vv15-17.
 - c. Vv29-31.
 - d. The enemies of God have a day. Those who defy and scoff at truth have a season. The mockers have a say. The forces of evil take a stand. But they will all bow beneath the power of the Almighty.
 - e. Therefore, since God shall arise, and in rising, save His people and quell His foes, there is only one response adequate for the kingdoms of this world – vv32-35.

Conclusion – Just as this psalm foretells the resurrection of Christ and therefore the redemption of His people, it also foretells how the power of God will crush His foes in the end. With just a word. All the evil of hell and all the arrayed forces of men who deny God will fall flat at just a word.

V11a, v33b

Jesus foreshadowed this event in the garden when the soldiers came to arrest Him, didn’t He? John 18:4-6

The prophecy of Psalm 68 and the foreshadow of Jesus’ arrest finds its fulfillment in Jesus’ return – Rev 19:11-16

What else can we do but believe and rejoice?