

# Psalm 68

by Henry Law

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*The sermon emphasizes God's mercies, glory, and presence, and calls the righteous to rejoice and praise Him, while God's enemies are driven into perdition.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 68:1-32

**Topics:** "Gods Triumph", "Divine Providence"

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## Description

Henry Law preaches on the joyous occasion when the ark, symbolizing Jesus, was brought to Zion, emphasizing the triumph of Jesus over His enemies and the abundant mercies of God proclaimed throughout history. The hymn used reflects on past victories and looks forward to Jesus' ultimate triumph. It calls for the righteous to rejoice in God's presence and praises His care for the fatherless, widows, and prisoners, contrasting it with the fate of rebels. The sermon highlights God's wondrous deeds in leading His people through the wilderness, His provision for the weary, and His defeat of enemy kings.

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## Transcript

Happy was the occasion of this hymn. David was permitted to see the joyful day when the ark, the type of the blessed Jesus, was brought to its resting-place in Zion. It was a fit occasion for joy and gladness; and joy and gladness were largely manifested. The hymn thus used looks back to the history, and looks onward to the time when Jesus, having subdued all foes, ascends in triumph to the heaven of heavens. God's mercies are throughout abundantly proclaimed. May we realize these mercies, and call upon our every faculty to give praise!

1-3. "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let those also who hate Him flee before Him. 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. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yes, let them exceedingly rejoice."

God's glory is most dear to all His people. It is their anguish when His name is blasphemed and His cause reviled. Therefore their constant aspiration that God would arise and gird Himself with strength, and drive His foes into perdition. The prayer continually goes up that this ruin may be complete. Let smoke ascend in thick clouds and darken all the view. Let now a breeze arise; the mass immediately dissolves, and vanishes from sight. So let the enemies of God be driven into nothingness. As the wax seems to be a solid mass, but instantly dissolves and flows away when heat is applied, so let these enemies melt and be nowhere found; but let the righteous rejoice in God's gladdening favor; let there be no bounds to their exulting praise.

4-6. "Sing praises to God and to his name! Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds. His name is the LORD-- rejoice in his presence! Father to the fatherless, defender of widows--this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy. But for rebels, there is only famine and distress."

How abundant are the topics of our praise! Who can reach the heights--who can fathom the depths--who can measure the infinitudes of the incommunicable name, Jehovah! This tells His glory as the cause of His own being, as the giver of life to all who live. Above the heaven of heavens He sits, thus surpassing all thoughts of glory. We cannot praise Him according to His greatness, but let us praise Him according to our abilities. But though He is thus infinitely great, He condescends to look in pity on the feeblest and weakest of our race; He supplies parental support to poor orphans; He does not permit the widow to be oppressed; He causes the inmates of the house to rejoice in happy fellowship, and mutually to supply each other's need; He delivers from captivity those who have been bound with fetters, and leads forth His people from Egyptian bondage.

7-8. "O God, when You went forth before Your people, when You marched through the wilderness; the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God; even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel."

It is faith's happy exercise to fly back and ponder all God's gracious dealings from the birth of time. On all there is inscribed the evidence of His gracious care. All His attributes are manifested planning and executing mercies for His people. In the work past we have assurance of His present care and of His never-failing providence. He who loved the fathers of our family still loves with the same love, and will love forever. The Psalmist reverts to God's wondrous goodness as He preceded His people through the wilderness. The redemption from Egypt's bondage is a pledge of our redemption from the captivity of sin and Satan. The awesome marvels displayed on Sinai, when the Mount trembled, and terror shook all hearts, teach us to this day to regard with awe the majesty of our God.

9-10. "You, O God, sent a plentiful rain, whereby You confirmed Your inheritance, when it was weary. Your congregation has dwelt therein; You, O God, have prepared of Your goodness for the poor."

Did God supply the need of the camp? Did manna never cease to fall and the stream to trickle? So to the present hour His bounty sustains and replenishes His people. They may be poor and needy, but the Lord thinks on them, and makes preparation for them.

11-12. "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those who published it. Kings of armies fled apace; and she who tarried at home divided the spoil."

It is not the Lord's will that His goodness should be disregarded or unacknowledged. Therefore in every age He has raised up faithful men to bear record of His grace and love. How earnestly should we pray that He would supply a band of faithful ministers, and give them the tidings that they should proclaim. Then all enemies will flee, and the weakest will be enriched with spoil.

13-14. "Though they lived among the sheepfolds, now they are covered with silver and gold, as a dove is covered by its wings. The Almighty scattered the enemy kings like a blowing snowstorm on Mount Zalmon."

The Lord's people sometimes lie in depths of degradation, and their hands are soiled by servile work. In Egypt the children of Israel were debased to the drudgery of the lowest slaves; but the time of vile service passed away, and they shone brightly as the honored and admired upon earth. They changed their garbs of degradation for the splendor of magnificent estate. When in Canaan, God appeared in their behalf, and the frightened kings fled in vain for concealment; then they shone forth arrayed in panoply of royal state; the snow-capped mountain glittering beneath the sun's rays was an emblem of their high supremacy. Believers now may be poorly clad in clothing of corruption; but yet a little while, and their corruptible shall put on incorruption, and they shall shine arrayed in glory far brighter than the sun in his strength.

15-16. "The majestic mountains of Bashan stretch high into the sky. Why do you look with envy, O rugged mountains, at Mount Zion, where God has chosen to live, where the Lord himself will live forever?"

Zion is here presented to admiration as far surpassing in beauty all surrounding heights. This Zion is a type of the Church of Christ. Where shall we find words to commend its all-surpassing beauty? It is beautified with the glories of salvation, and shines as the chosen, the beloved, the honored of the Lord. How utterly vain is the self-exaltation of other institutions! how contemptible their puny efforts to aggrandize themselves! They are of the earth and earthy, and with the earth shall be laid low. The Church is of heaven and heavenly. It is the chosen abode of God. God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not be moved. He dwells forever in her as His favored abode. Never will He leave her or desert her. Salvation is her walls and bulwarks. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God will rest forever in His loved abode.

17-18. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

The terrors of Sinai are an instructive study. God is represented as moving in majestic procession, attended by countless hosts of angels. Let us clasp to our hearts the precious knowledge that He sends forth these spirits to be our constant guardians and to minister to our protection. The ark ascending Zion's hill has a prophetic voice. It foreshadows our Jesus returning to take His seat at God's right hand, the mighty Conqueror over sin and death and hell, and all the legion who had fought against Him. The cruel enemy who had subjugated man is dragged as a captive fast bound to our Lord's victorious chariot. The Conqueror receives for His people the gifts and graces which He had so gloriously won; He pours down sanctifying graces into His people's hearts, that so their hearts may be a fit abode for the indwelling God.

19-23. "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. He who is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. But God shall wound the head of His enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses. The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan; I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea; that your foot may be dipped in the blood of your enemies, and the tongue of your dogs in the same."

The goodness of our God each day heaps blessings on us so vast that we can scarcely bear the load; for each, responsive thanks should swell to heaven. His crowning blessing is eternal salvation and deliverance from the grasp of death. Let us study the title--"God of our salvation." Let us study the blessing--Escape from "the issues of death." But while His people thus live and are thus saved, what terrors overwhelm the wretched multitudes who reject His offers of pardon and of life! What dreadful images predict their doom!

24-25. "They have seen Your goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels."

The grand design of public ordinances is here commended. The ways and works of God are openly proclaimed. His character is displayed. True worship should exhibit God in the wonders of His grace and love, His power and glory. We should attend the service of the sanctuary with hearts intent to learn saving lessons of redemption's design and work. Happy the worshiper who retires bearing testimony, 'I have seen the goings of my God, my King.'

Every faculty and every arrangement should be devoted to render due praise. In the infancy of the Church external rites were diligently used to teach the truth that devotion should engage all our powers. Now that the true light shines and symbols have passed away, the essence of true devotion should grow stronger.

26-27. "Bless God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali."

Happy is the congregation from which true praise ascends to heaven! It is the very foretaste of heaven, when united voices swell the chorus, and harmony with one heart is raised by delighted crowds. All who spring from the common lineage of Israel are here invited to this blessed work. But the call applies to us; for if we are Christ's, then we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Let us obey, and bless the Lord in the assemblies of His people. In this happy service all the families of man should join. The tribes were all assembled to bring the ark with all rejoicing to the hill of Zion. So all ranks, all stations, all degrees should gladly join in publicly ascribing honor to our God.

28. "Your God has commanded your strength; strengthen, O God, that which You have wrought for us."

The covenant of grace contains all things needful for the Church's well-being. The command is therein registered, that strength for all service and all work should surely abound. It is our privilege to convert these provisions into prayer. Acceptance surely awaits the petitions which wrestle with God for the performance of His pledged design, and for perfecting the work begun in His servants.

29-31. "Because of Your temple at Jerusalem kings shall bring presents to You. Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, until everyone submit himself with pieces of silver; scatter the people who delight in war. Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."

The public acknowledgment of God in the services of the temple shall attract extensive attention and awaken general homage. God's power shall subdue all adversaries. The rebels, senseless as creatures of the lowest grade, shall bring tokens of submission. The cruel, who take pleasure in the miseries and carnage of war, shall be dispersed. Potentates from afar shall recognize the supremacy of God, and shall flock to do homage, and to lay their treasures at His feet. Wise indeed are the rulers who reverence the King of kings and Lord of lords, and who rejoice to be His devoted subjects.

32-35. "Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises to the Lord. To Him who rides upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; look, He sends out His voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe strength to God; His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds. O God, You are awesome out of Your holy places; the God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people. Blessed be

God."

It is the wisdom as also the duty of the kingdoms of the earth to give glory to God. The exhortation is predictive, and tells of the coming day, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. All worship of idols, of stocks and stones, shall be cast to the bats, and God shall be adored enthroned in the heaven of heavens, and spreading awe throughout the world by the voice of His thunder. Let all might and power be ascribed to God. Let Him be adored as the giver of all strength to His people. Worthy indeed is He that every voice of every inhabitant of earth should shout from the inmost soul; "Blessed be God!"

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