

“ENVY OVER THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD”

PSALM 68:15-18

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INTRODUCTION

The preceding verses have just mentioned the God-led victory over nearby kings and concluded with a mention of snow on Mount Zalmon. This passage picks up with the mention of other mountains: Bashan and the mountain God has chosen—Zion, and the victory march up that mountain.

As majestic as the picture is, the NT carries the picture much further with Paul’s statement in Eph. 4:8 and Col. 2:15. Once again David is a type of Christ who wins the ultimate victory and ascends on high into Heaven.

THE LORD HAS CHOSEN HIS MOUNTAIN AND LED HIS VICTORY MARCH!

I. BASHAN IS A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN (15).

There are powerful foes surrounding God’s people. These bold mountain masses, rising in dark majesty, and producing the impression of everlasting strength, stand on one side” while tiny Zion stands on the other.

A. “Mountain of God” [or “mighty mountain”]

1. Created and controlled by Him.
2. Formidable and strong; tall and majestic.

B. “Mountain of many peaks”

C. Either Hermon to the northeast or Jebel Druze (the Hauran Range) to the East

II. GOD’S MOUNTAIN IS HIS CHOICE (16).

A. Bashan [mountain with many peaks] “looks with envy” —watches carefully, lurks like a hunter, beast of prey, or an enemy. Other peoples and nations surely felt such envy in reality.

B. God has desired/chosen Zion for His abode. On the exaltation of little Zion, see Ps. 48:2—“Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King.”

1. Zion is much less significant outwardly.

- Not as tall and majestic
- No significant peaks
- Rock formations much less substantial

2. God often has chosen those things that are despised, foolish, weak, base, things that are not—I Cor. 1:27-28.

C. Yahweh will dwell there forever. (His “abode.” The latter noun meaning “seat, dwelling, place.”)

- Notice that He uses His covenant name here. Compare Elohim above in this verse.
- “Forever” takes the picture well beyond OT Israel and even Israel in the Millennium.
- God’s grace makes His choice of seemingly inferior things by natural standards to be superior in reality.

III. GOD HAS A POWERFUL ARMY WHO WORK WITH HIM (17).

A. His chariots/angels fight for Him, carry Him, support Him.

1. They are double 10,000 or myriads.

2. They are thousands upon repetition—“thousands upon thousands”

3. Elisha prayed that his attendant might have his eyes opened to see that God “horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” were more in number than those of the Syrian armies (II K. 6:17).

4. In Dt. 33:2 the angels are called “holy myriads.” See Dan. 7:10 with a reference to the heavenly scene with “thousands upon thousands attending Him, and myriads upon myriads standing before Him.”

B. Adonai is among them.

It is not the sheer number of the angelic hosts that provides security to the believer, it is God's personal presence of their all-powerful *Lord*—Adonai—that gives them protection and safety.

C. Sinai in holiness—the new residence now has Sinai there also.

- “Sinai *is it* in holiness.” Thus the idea is, “Zion is a second Sinai”; “it (Zion) is a Sinai in holiness”
- It presents a spectacle such as Sinai presented when God by His appearing surrounded it with holiness.”
- Kidner brings out the meaning well: “Where God is, there is Sinai—and, we might add, every place of revelation or encounter. The new sanctuary at Zion has not to compete with Bethel, Sinai or any other spot; it is here that God has chosen to be found” (pp. 241-42). In both places the Ark of the Covenant was present, and the tables of stone with the “Law.” What was initiated at Sinai is renewed on Zion and continually legislated there.

IV. GOD HAS MADE HIS TRIUMPHAL MARCH (18).

Leupold notes how with hardly a hint at the long intervening time between Joshua and the Judges and David's current time David speaks of the time of the ark's ascent into Zion. God has conquered the land—both at the time of Joshua, Judges, but even more recently in David's time; now He settles His throne on Zion in His ark. Even the rebellious are subdued and the Conqueror has tribute and gifts in hand to verify submission.

A. He has ascended on high.

1. Delitzsch suggests the historical occasion of David's “storming of ‘the stronghold of Zion’ in II Sam. 5:6-10 as the prelude for the bringing up of the ark in chapter 6:12-19. Perhaps the best solution is to blend the two into one picture.
2. Likely David alludes to that original scene of God's victorious ascent up His Mountain in Jerusalem by picturing a more recent incident of victory in David's own time.

B. He has led His captives captive.

C. He has received gifts among men—those submitted to Him and defeated by Him pay tribute.

The NT application cannot determine the meaning of this text, and “gifts/tribute” from captive/defeated people is in view here. Moreover, men cannot be the gifts for the history of David knows nothing of prisoners who were sent as gifts to the sanctuary, nor of proselytes, who, as it were, gave themselves as gifts to God.

1. Those formerly rebellious will also pay tribute.
2. Or, these rebellious will be for a dwelling with Yah Elohim/Yah Elohim will dwell with them.

D. God will dwell there/among men

All shall be united in one kingdom, and God the Lord shall reign in the midst of them. God is King of all the earth, and His Son, Messiah, will reign universally. Thus, Paul takes this passage and applies it to the exalted and ascended Christ.

CONCLUSION

Read Paul's application in Eph. 4:8 and see Col. 2:15.

Paul's words are not a strict translation, for “receive” cannot mean “give.”

Yet, the potentate receives such gifts in order to give and distribute among His subjects.

THE NT application is to the grace gifts for His people—His church. Gifted leaders such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. All for the “perfecting of the saints.

CHRIST CONQUERED SIN, DEATH, SATAN, HELL; He has all power and authority.

Jerusalem/Zion has now become the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Yet, His plans for earthly Jerusalem continue as seen in Mic. 4:1-4; Is. 2:1-4.

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