

**SBC – Dec. 11, 2022**

**Psalm 48 (NKJV) - “The City of Messiah-King”**

Psalm 45-48 flow together. They are all attributed to the sons of Korah. They all have a Messianic theme in view to one degree or another.

**Slide # 1**

***The Messianic Flow of Psalms 45-48***

Psalm 45 – The Wedding of Messiah-King Who is Lord-God.

Psalm 46 - God helps the city of God, and in making wars to cease is exalted in the earth.

Psalm 47 – The Great King ascends the throne.

Psalm 48 – The City of the great King.

Psalm 48 is a Messianic Psalm in that it directly references the city of the great King Who as Scripture shows is Jesus. Jesus was worshiped as King of the Jews at His birth (Mt. 2:1-12) and will return in glory at His Second Coming as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:15). In Matthew 5:35 with Himself in view Jesus specifically referenced Psalm 48:2 in emphasizing that Jerusalem is “***the city of the great King.***”

In Psalm 47 the emphasis is on celebrating the great King over all the earth Who properly takes His throne and reigns over the nations. In Psalm 48 the emphasis is on the **city** of the great King which is Jerusalem which will serve as the King’s capital from where He will rule the world.

A few years ago, we had the privilege to go to Israel and a highlight of our trip was to be able to visit Jerusalem. In our trip Jerusalem was saved for last because it was presented as the HIGHLIGHT of the entire trip.

In preparation for our trip, I noted various Psalms that highlight Jerusalem which I read and meditated on during our time there. They included Psalm 2, 48, 84, 122, 125, and 137. Tonight, we are focused on Psalm 48 which emphasizes how special Jerusalem is as the city of the great King.

The earliest mention of the city of Jerusalem is found in Gen. 14 where it is referred to as Salem. The term “Salem” is similar to the Hebrew word Shalom meaning peace. Jerusalem means “***City of Peace***” but it has known precious little of it in its history. Scholars say it has been razed perhaps more than any other city in the world.

There is something about Jerusalem that is unique. Biblically it is the special place that God has chosen for Himself above all other places on the earth.

### **A Prescribed Place of Worship.**

In Deut. 12 God repeatedly tells the people they can only worship in a centralized place of His choosing (cf. Deut. 12:5, 10-11, 13-14, 18, 21). Prior to the building of the temple there were several prescribed places of centralized worship. But as time went along God made it clear that Jerusalem was to be the "**PERMANENT**" special place of worship.

Jerusalem is mentioned more than any other place in the Bible, being found more than 800 times. It was king David who captured the city (cf. 2 Sam. 5:6-9) which was then named "**the city of David**" (cf. 1 Chron. 11:7). Then it was there that Solomon constructed the Temple (cf. 1 Ki. 5-6, 2 Chron. 3-4).

### **Slide # 2**

#### **Psalm 87:2 (NKJV)**

**2** The LORD loves the gates of Zion More than all the dwellings of Jacob.

#### **Psalm 132:13–14 (NKJV)**

**13** For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place:

**14** "This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

We don't have to wonder about how God feels about Jerusalem because He has plainly told us. This right here gives us spiritual insight into why this city is so hotly contested. Ultimately there is great spiritual warfare behind the struggle for this city. This is God's special place and the devil being the devil is doing everything he can to contest it.

The Temple Mount consists of 35 acres of land, and it is the most fiercely contested piece of real-estate on the planet. Islam believes in the land of the peace and the land of the sword. The land of peace is that which is already conquered, and the land of the sword is that which is yet to be conquered. Once a land is conquered for Allah in their minds it forever belongs to Allah and Muslims are honor bound to keep it that way. Today they control the Temple Mount with the Dome of the Rock shrine as a constant reminder that this land has been conquered for Allah.

Psalm 48 is a song about Jerusalem and what makes it special is God's preservation of it and ultimately His presence in it.

Psalm 48 commemorates a special event (unspecified) in which God protected the city and dismayed His enemies. It therefore celebrates God's greatness as seen in His care of and preservation of this special place. So, even though the Psalm highlights the city – it really is magnifying the great God Who is behind the city.

### **Slide # 3**

### **Psalm 48**

#### ***“The City of the Great King”***

vv. 1-3 The Great God of the Great city of the Great King

vv. 4-7 Jerusalem's Enemies are Dismayed

vv. 8-11 Joy Over God's Saving Acts

vv. 12-14 Reflecting on God and His Preservation

### **Psalm 48 (NKJV)**

A Song. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

The Messiah/Zion theme is a favorite of the Sons of Korah. Again, we note that 11 Psalms are attributed to them (cf. Ps. 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 84, 85, 87, 88).

Interestingly their ancestor Korah was in the privileged position of being a Levite but coveted more in wanting to be in the MAIN position of Aaron and Moses. For this great sin God caused the earth to open up and swallow him and all that were involved with him in this great sin (Num. 16).

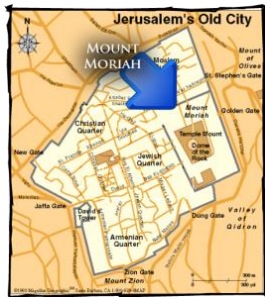
However, his sons were spared and they became KEY worship leaders in Israel as noted here (Num. 26:11).

**1 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, In His holy mountain.**

Psalm 48 begins with a summary statement emphasizing YHWH's greatness and therefore that He is to be praised in the city of our God in His holy mountain.

The holy mountain is Mount Moriah on the edge of which the temple was built (2 Chron. 3:1). This is where God's presence was uniquely displayed and for the Jews was the central place of worship.

### **Slide # 4**



The Jews go back to Abraham who prepared to sacrifice Isaac on this very Mount as seen in Genesis 22. The first 2 temples of Israel were built right on this very spot. Forever in their hearts this place is sacred and nothing else will do. This is the HOLY Mount.

Ultimately what makes Jerusalem unique and special is that this is the WORSHIP CENTER ordained by God for His people Israel. It was the Temple Mount that was central in the Jewish experience. There God dwelt in a special sense. This was the place of intimate Worship.

**2 Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King.**

Whatever direction one comes from he goes UP to Jerusalem. There is a whole set of Psalms called the ASCENT PSALMS which are found in Ps. 120-134.

When we were in Israel visiting an old synagogue where Jesus may have visited our guide noted that one always goes up into the place of worship. Certainly, this is true of Jerusalem. The Temple located on this Mount serves to remind us that God is exalted and to be in the place of worship is to draw near to the exalted One. Worship is always a “going up” experience.

A well-known Jewish proverb says: “Ten measures of beauty came down to the earth. Jerusalem got nine of them. The rest of the world got one. Ten measures of suffering came down to the earth. Jerusalem got nine of them.”

Its loftiness and secure position are described as “beautiful”. It’s highness is ultimately seen in its significance as the most important city in the world in the eyes of God (cf. Lam. 2:15).

And it is the “joy of the whole earth”. Certainly, there is a prophetic ring to this phrase as in the kingdom it will be heralded by the whole world as the KEY source of joy.

Spiritually speaking today, the city has brought joy to all the earth, because outside its walls Jesus died for the sins of the world, and from Jerusalem first sounded out the gospel of Jesus Christ. One day in the future, Jerusalem will be the center of Christ’s glorious kingdom (Is. 2:2ff.; 60:1ff.). **-Warren Wiersbe**

It is here that Mount Zion is found “on the sides of the north”. Commentators point out that Canaanite mythology held that the gods resided in the north. So, this seems to be a polemical way of saying that the One true God is the God of Israel and that this is the place where He actually lives. So the “sides of the north” is an idiom for the sacred space of Zion’s summit on the north side of David’s Jerusalem which happens to be God’s most favored spot on planet earth (cf. Ps. 48:2; 87:2; Ps. 132).

The word Zion literally means ***“fortification”***. The first mention of Zion in the Bible is found in 2 Sam. 5:7 when David captured an ancient Jebusite fortress which was thereafter called “the city of David”. Zion is essentially synonymous with Jerusalem and is called “the city of David” as well as “the city of God”. Zion in effect is OLD Jerusalem in the historical sense of the word. Zion signifies the epicenter of God’s rule and presence on earth.

The word Zion is found 154 times in the Old Testament and 7 times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament Zion represented the special dwelling place of God (cf. Ps. 9:11). In the millennial kingdom Mount Zion will represent the special dwelling place of God from where the Messiah will reign (cf. Isa. 24:23). In eternity the saints will be forever identified with Mount Zion and the eternal city of the living God (cf. Heb. 12:22-24).

But what makes this city so very special is God’s unique presence there.

### **Slide # 5**

- v. 1 city of our God
- v. 2 city of the great King

Note these are essentially linked together. The city of God is the city of the great King because they are one and the same. The great King is in fact God Himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **3 God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge.**

Palaces here is probably better understood as citadels (meaning fortresses). It is here that the people of God find refuge. It is actually God Himself that is the basis for security represented here.

Verses 4-7 represent an occasion of threat by the enemies of Jerusalem, but up on encountering the city they are made to quickly pass off the scene in terror. Some think the victory that God gave Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20 may be in view. Others believe that this is a tribute to when God supernaturally delivered Jerusalem from the invading Assyrians who were right at the door of the city. In one night God supernaturally killed 185,000 resulting in the Assyrians promptly leaving and going back home in dismay (cf. Isa. 36-37; 2 Kg. 19:35-36).

Whatever the actual occasion God obviously supernaturally intervened resulting in the preservation and safekeeping of Jerusalem.

**4 For behold, the kings assembled, They passed by together.**

**5 They saw it, and so they marveled; They were troubled, they hastened away.**

**6 Fear took hold of them there, And pain, as of a woman in birth pangs,**

**7 As when You break the ships of Tarshish With an east wind.**

God caused these would-be attackers to marvel and be troubled and then hasten away. And in the process, they experienced “fear” meaning “trembling” or “quaking fear” (cf. Ps. 2:11).

God suddenly broke them as when He breaks the ships of Tarshish with an overwhelming east wind.

Tarshish was considered to be in the far west by Spain and was famous for its great ships (cf. Isa. 23:14; 60:9; Ezek. 27:25; Ps. 72:10; Jonah 1:3; 4:2; Isa. 66:19). But they were no match for God’s power as evidenced in a great storm. In a great storm they would be broken and destroyed. That is the picture here of these would be attackers on Jerusalem.

**8 As we have heard, So we have seen In the city of the LORD of hosts,  
In the city of our God: God will establish it forever. Selah**

Verse 8 is the KEY verse in the chapter which captures the essence of the main point being made in this Psalm.

They had heard about God's power but now they have witnessed it (cf. Job 42:5). "The LORD of hosts" is literally "the LORD of armies" and is often used in a military context with the sense of YHWH being "the God of the armies of heaven".

The divinity of the King in terms of the linkage comes shining through in this chapter.

**Slide # 6**

- v. 1 the city of **our God**
- v. 2 The city of the **great King**
- v. 8 the city of the **LORD of hosts**
- v. 8 the city of **our God**

God's got a total claim on this city. It is uniquely HIS CITY. And because of this God will establish it forever. Selah – stop and let the soak it.

If Psalm 48:8 is true Jerusalem is not going anywhere! Its preservation and endurance is just as sure as the person of God.

But leave it up to the devil to challenge this reality. As the Day of the Lord comes to a climax the devil is going to organize an all out assault on Jerusalem in which all the nations of the world will be rallied against the city of God. It will be the city of God versus the nations. How do you suppose that is going to turn out?

**Slide # 7**

**Zechariah 12:2–3 (NKJV)**

**2** "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem.

**3** And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; **all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.**

When it comes to Jerusalem there is NOT safety in numbers!

### **Slide # 8**

**Zechariah 14:2–3 (NKJV)**

**2** For **I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;** The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

**3** **Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations,** As He fights in the day of battle.

### **Slide # 9**

**Joel 3:16–17 (NKJV)**

**16** The **LORD also will roar from Zion,** And **utter His voice from Jerusalem;** The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.

**17** **“So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”**

The great King is coming to His city and He is going to take over and reign. The devil will then be bound for 1000 years. But then he will be released again and immediately he will go out to deceive the nations and the legions who follow him will mount one more attack upon the Holy City of Jerusalem.

### **Slide # 10**

**Revelation 20:9–10 (NKJV)**

**9** They went up on the breadth of the earth and **surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.** And **fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.**

**10** The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.



End of story! Then comes the final White Throne judgment followed by the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

### **9 We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness, In the midst of Your temple.**

The reality that God will preserve Jerusalem forever is worthy of thoughtful contemplation as it reflects the truth of Who God is. The writer says, “We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness”.

Lovingkindness is the rich Hebrew word “hesed” which is used 248 times in the OT (cf. Jer. 9:24; 32:18; Lam. 3:22; Dan. 9:4). This has been called an undefinable word. It is so glorious it is hard to get your mind around it. The KJV translators initially translated it 14 different ways, eventually ending up with the compound word “loving-kindness”. It is often translated as “steadfast love” or “loyal love”.

It underscores God’s covenant FAITHFULNESS or covenant love. It is God’s FAITHFULNESS flavored with MERCY. It denotes undeserved kindnesses. This is a word that seeks to express the multifaceted nature of God’s indescribable GRACE (cf. 2 Cor. 9:15, 1 Pet. 4:10). Lovingkindness emphasizes God’s persistent, unconditional, love that never stops caring for His people. It underscores tenderness, compassion, kindness, and mercy, that just won’t quit. Above all it underscores God’s unfailing FAITHFULNESS!

In connection with preserving Jerusalem in God’s presence at the temple they contemplated on how this underscored God’s loyal covenant FAITHFULNESS!

### **10 According to Your name, O God, So is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.**

Their meditation breaks out in praise to God. God’s name here represents His reputation. “As His reputation is known throughout the whole earth, so His praise will be to the ends of the earth.” (Moody Bible Commentary). God’s right hand of power moves in righteousness – doing what is right.

It’s almost now as if the people are given a victory tour to celebrate what God has done in reference to Jerusalem.

**11 Let Mount Zion rejoice, Let the daughters of Judah be glad,  
Because of Your judgments.**

**12 Walk about Zion, And go all around her. Count her towers;**

**13 Mark well her bulwarks; Consider her palaces; That you may tell it  
to the generation following.**

As inventory is made of Jerusalem nothing is harmed. All her watchtowers are accounted for. All her bulwarks or defense walls are in place. All her palaces (that is citadels or fortresses) are still standing. God has brought the city through the great threat it was facing and that totally unharmed. This was clearly a God-thing.

And as such this story needs to be told to the following generation so that they too can appreciate the greatness of the God Who takes care of this special city that He calls His own.

**14 For this is God, Our God forever and ever; He will be our guide  
Even to death.**

It is the God who supernaturally preserves Jerusalem Who is the God of true believers. He is our God forever and ever. Eternally He will be our God. Our relationship with Him is forever and will never change.

### **Slide # 11**

#### **Psalm 125:1–2 (NKJV)**

**1** Those who trust in the LORD Are like Mount Zion, Which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

**2** As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the LORD surrounds His people From this time forth and forever.

I love this: He will be our guide even to death – but it goes on beyond that because He is our God “forever and ever” which means the reality of this relationship goes beyond death.

He will be our guide even to death is more literally “over death”. In God the believer ultimately triumphs over death. Even death cannot stop God or get in the way of His preserving care of His own. Indeed, God is our guide even over death!

Someone has written: “This God is our God from eternity to eternity. He will be our guide even unto death, over death, and beyond death.” Amen!

Ps. 48:2 refers to Jerusalem as "the city of the great King". From the divine perspective Jerusalem is the CENTER of the world as seen in Ezekiel 5:5. Jerusalem is the apple of God's eye (cf. Zech. 2:8). This is the place above all others which is God's chosen habitation (cf. Ps. 132:13-14). It shall be called "The Throne of the LORD" and "all the nations of the world shall be gathered to it" (Jer. 3:17).

Jerusalem in the kingdom shall be "called the City of Truth" (Zech. 8:3). It will be the TRUTH CENTER for the entire world! It is to this city that the LORD will return and dwell in her midst (Zech. 8:3). Jerusalem is called "The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain" (cf. Zech. 8:3, Isa. 2:2-3). Jerusalem is like a "magnet" that ultimately will attract all the nations of the world to her (Zech. 14:2, 16).

Today Jerusalem is important to three world religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The 35 acre Temple Mount is the most volatile piece of real estate in the world. Jerusalem means "City of Peace" but the one thing that has consistently been missing from Jerusalem for the last 3000 years is PEACE. It's with this backdrop that we as believers are instructed to pray...

### **Slide # 12**

#### **Psalm 122:6 (NKJV)**

**6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:** "May they prosper who love you.

#### **Isaiah 62:7 (NKJV)**

**7 And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.**

As the Jews were scattered throughout the world as they celebrated Passover at the close it they would always say, "next year in Jerusalem" indicating that ultimately God's plan and purposes for Jerusalem will yet be fulfilled.

When I visited Jerusalem as I left I thought "I will be back" – if not next year, certainly when the Lord returns. When Christ comes for His Church the Bible says, "And so we will be with the Lord forever." (1 Thess. 4:17). Wherever the Lord goes we are going! And do you know where He is going? He is going to set up headquarters in Jerusalem for it is "The city of the great King" and we will be with Him.

Thus, as a believer Jerusalem figures prominent in your future. In all your planning, plan on going to Jerusalem for this is the ultimate destination for the great King and for all those who belong to Him.

Perhaps, "Next Year in Jerusalem" but if not next year certainly in due time in accordance with the Lord's calendar.

Marnatha! (Our Lord comes!)