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# PSALM 48: THE GREAT GOD AND HIS BELOVED CHURCH

## I. Introduction

- A. To people bombarded by a sense of all that is average, below average, and even dysfunctional about the universal church and our local churches in particular, Psalm 48 lifts our gaze to see something quite different.
- B. In a way this text gives us God's answer to the question: What is the Church?

## II. A People Who See God's Glory (vs. 1-3)

- A. We know that God gets glory from the whole of His created world.
- B. Psalm 48 speaks of a glory that God reveals in Mount Zion, in His city, among His people.
- C. He reveals Himself in ways that awaken awe, worship, and joy.
- D. Let's not be short-sighted in our evaluation of what God is doing as our local churches gather, and then as they scatter.
- E. Yes, God is everywhere present, but God's schedule is pre-set. On Sunday morning, God comes to Church.

## III. A People Rescued (vs. 4-8)

- A. Here we find out that God is not only Lord over His people. He is Lord over all people.
- B. He is sovereign and He governs history in a way that ensures that His people are protected from ultimate harm.
- C. So when pagan kings come together in Ps 48:4 (see also Ps. 2:2; Rev. 17:13) to overthrow God's people, the outcome is not a nail-biter.

Revelation 17:14 "They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called chosen and faithful."

- D. In our sinful condition, God's presence is a fearful thing, because He is holy. But if we turn and trust in what Christ has done on the cross for our forgiveness, the One whom we ought to fear becomes to us a Fortress.

#### **IV. A People Who Remember and Proclaim (vs. 9-14)**

- A. The thematic center of the Temple worship gatherings was the steadfast love of God. (vs. 9)
- B. This had been the thematic center of Temple worship from day one:
  - “For He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.” (2 Chronicles 5:13) (See also Psalm 106, 107)
- C. This Temple dedication took place some 3000 yrs ago, and the steadfast love of God continues to be the thematic center of the worship of God's people.
- D. We don't come together to boast about how steadfastly we have loved God this week. The glorious reality we celebrate is we have a God who has shown us steadfast love.
- E. It is God's love that makes Him a fortress.
- F. When the message of the gospel becomes our passion, it leads to two things:
  - 1. The praise of the nations. (vs 10)
  - 2. The joy of God's people. (vs. 11)
- G. The Psalmist, having reflected on God's love and protection of His people, invites them to look around at concrete expressions of God's love for His people. (vs. 12-13)
- H. May we never rob God of the glory He gets when we reflect on our lives and reflect on God's grace in our local churches, and count the ways He has been faithful.

**V. A People Who Transfer the Gospel and Trust God's Faithfulness (vs. 13-14)**

- A. It's not enough to just count the blessings. Verse 13 says we must teach another generation how to count them as well.
- B. The parting words of this Psalm are not simply looking back into past grace: "look how God has guided us and protected us." They are marked by confidence in future grace: "He will guide us forever."

"The victory lies not with us, but with Christ, who has taken on Him both to conquer *for* us and to conquer *in* us. The victory lies neither in our own strength to get it, nor in our enemies' strength to defeat it. If it lay with us, we might justly fear. But Christ will maintain His own government in us and take our part against our corruptions. They are His enemies as well as ours. Let us therefore be 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might' (Eph. 6:10). Let us not look so much at who our enemies are as at who our Judge and Captain is, nor at what they threaten, but at what He promises. We have more for us than against us." -Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*

- C. This is our Great God. And He loves His people.