

The City of the King

Psalm 48: 1-8

Again we have a psalm that many attribute to Hezekiah, likely written following their miraculous deliverance from the Assyrian host that had besieged the city. This certainly would fit the writing of the psalm, which clearly is a song of rejoicing and praise for the preservation of Jerusalem.

As I considered this beautiful psalm, I was reminded of the range of application it reveals. There is practical application for those who dwelt in Jerusalem at that moment in time. There is also a prophetic application that speaks of the coming Kingdom, and beyond that, the New Jerusalem that will come down from God out of heaven. Regardless of the application, the principles remain the same.

As we look at the [principles](#) within the text, I want to consider: [The City of the King](#).

I. The Reference to the City (1) – [Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness](#). The psalm begins with a reference to the city of God. We see:

A. The Preeminence – As the psalmist begins this song of praise, he declared the greatness of the LORD. Being in all caps, we know he referred to Yahweh, Jehovah God. This is the proper name of God, revealing His self-existence. It is always associated with deliverance. The psalmist offered praise and worship to the preeminent God he served.

B. The Praise – [Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God](#). He was also compelled to offer praise unto the LORD within the city of God. This should come as no surprise, especially if this psalm was written by Hezekiah. They had been delivered by His mighty hand, and were compelled to praise Him. (Every believer has experienced deliverance from condemnation, sin, and death. We too should feel compelled to praise our Lord and Savior!)

C. The Purity – We also see an awareness of their location. They were in Jerusalem, the city of God, known as the mountain of holiness. This was the place where the Temple was located. It was there that God chose to reveal His glory, above the mercy seat. The city was regarded as a place of holiness by the people. (I fear we have become too casual with our Lord. While He is a friend of sinners, He is also holy God. He is worthy of our fear, reverence, and worship! He is pure and sinless, the sole source of our salvation and reconciliation to God.)

II. The Refuge within the City (2-3) – Again, considering the possibility of Hezekiah as the writer, being mindful of the refuge within the city is fitting. He spoke of:

A. The Elevation (2a) – Beautiful for situation...He spoke of the beauty of the city's situation. This actually refers to the height, the elevation of the city. Jerusalem is situated on a hill, some 2500 feet in elevation. It sits raised above the surrounding landscape. This provided a vantage point for enemies that might approach, and it also allowed the surrounding area to view the city from a distance. Jerusalem was elevated, a beautiful sight to behold.

- While her elevation is factual in a physical sense, she is also elevated in a spiritual sense. Jerusalem housed the Temple, where the high priest encountered the Shekinah glory. Jerusalem will be the location of Jesus' reign in the Millennial Kingdom. The New Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven. Spiritually and literally, our King will reign from that city!

B. The Jubilation (2a) – Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion. The joy felt at this moment in Jerusalem was unrivaled anywhere in the world. The city was filled with joy and praise. The mightiest kingdom on earth had been defeated by the mighty hand of God, and His people rejoiced for deliverance.

- We cannot begin to imagine the joy we shall experience in the New Jerusalem. The Tribulation will have ended, Satan will have been cast into the lake of fire, and eternity will have begun. We will spend one eternal day with our sovereign King and Lord. *Rev.21:2-4 – And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. [4] And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

C. The Identification (2b) – Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, **on the sides of the north, the city of the great King**. There is much debate as to what this means exactly, especially in regard to the sides of the north. However, there is consensus that it declares Jerusalem as the city inhabited by the great King, the true and living God.

- As we look forward to the Millennial Kingdom and the New Jerusalem, Jesus Christ himself will be the sovereign King who rules and reigns. Nothing will exceed His great power and glory. The kings of the earth will bow in humble submission to our King. He will never suffer defeat or be unseated from His throne!

D. The Protection (3) – *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.* If written by Hezekiah, likely he rejoiced for the presence and protection of God within the city. His hand of provision provided a safe haven of refuge within the city walls as the enemy came against them. Those within the city were safe and secure, shielded by the mighty hand of God.

- We enjoy that place of refuge in Christ Jesus today. He hides us under the shadow of His mighty hand. In the time to come, Jerusalem will be a place of refuge as our King rules with a rod of iron in righteousness. The New Jerusalem will be free of all sin, pain, and any form of hurt. *Rev.21:27 – And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

III. The Resilience of the City (4-8) – In the remaining verses of our text, the psalmist rejoiced for the resilience of Jerusalem. He declared:

A. It is Despised (4) – *For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.* If the setting is what we believe it to be, Jerusalem had just endured a long period of being besieged by the Assyrians. The armies of Sennacherib had come against them, planning to destroy the city. He was not the first, and he wouldn't be the last. For centuries, nations had risen up against Jerusalem. She would eventually be taken by the Babylonians, but she would not utterly be destroyed. A remnant would return, and centuries later the Romans would destroy the city, dispersing the Jews throughout the world. She is once again a sovereign nation, and with the exception of a few nations, Israel is despised by a majority today.

B. It is Defended (5-7) – *They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.*^[6] *Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.*^[7] *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.* Many had come against Jerusalem, and many of them left in haste and defeat. God in His sovereignty had a plan for Jerusalem, and He continues to do so today. She has been restored as a nation. The armies of the world will come against the city, planning to finally destroy the city. Unfortunately for them, like so many before, these will not consider the plans and power of God. The Lord will defend the city in that day, utterly defeating her enemies with the word of His mouth. Those who come against the city of God never stop to figure God into the equation. He has defended the city since it was declared the capital city, and He will continue to do so. *Rev.19:19-21 – And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.*^[20] *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire*

burning with brimstone. ^[21] And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

C. It is Destined (8) – As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah. God's sovereign hand had been on Jerusalem since the reign of David, with the promise of a perpetual kingdom. At times some may have thought God had failed to keep His word, but He has never forsaken His people. Jerusalem will remain throughout eternity, although it will be a much different city than it is today. The lineage of David will continue to rule and reign throughout eternity, with the sovereign King, Jesus Christ, seated upon the throne! The promises and provision of God are absolute and certain. All who are saved by His grace are kept within His mighty hand. All of the redeemed will one day inhabit the New Jerusalem, where we will worship our Lord and King forever!

Conclusion: This has been an interesting and informative passage. While it was likely written following Jerusalem's deliverance from Assyria, it has application for all who are in Christ. All the saved will experience the New Jerusalem, as Christ our Lord sits upon His throne. What a glorious day that will be! I am thankful I have made preparation for that day. His kingdom will endure for eternity. All of the saved, and only the saved, will be there. Are you ready for that eternal kingdom? If not, come in repentance and faith unto salvation!