

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 • Read Psalm 68:19–35

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom does v19a bless? What has He done (v19b)? Who is He to us (v19c)? Who is He more generally (v20a)? What are His in v20b? What will He do to whom in v21a? How does v21b make this more vivid? Upon what heights may these enemies be found (v22a, cf. v15–16)? In what depths (v22b)? What will the Lord do to them? Why (v23)? To where does the scene change in v24? What is seen there? Who are in this procession (v25)? What is done in these assemblies (v26)? Who, specifically, are named in this assembly in v27? Who has commanded what for them (v28a)? What do they ask Him to strengthen (v28b)? Whom do they want Him to subdue (v29b–30b)? Until what (v30c)? By doing what (v30d)? Who, specifically, are named in this recovery (v31)? Then who will do what (v32)? Unto Whom? What does v33a call Him? How does He make all this happen (v33b)? What must His congregation do (v34)? How do they voice this praise in v35a—what is He more awesome than? What does He give to whom (v35b)? How does v35c summarize the entire Psalm?

Who must and will bless the Lord for what? Psalm 68:19–35 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these seventeen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **through Israel, God blesses, saves, gathers, and strengthens beloved servants from Israel and all the nations.**

Blessed be God! (v19a, 35c). The second half of this Psalm declares its theme at its two bookends. Of course, God is blessed in Himself. The question is how does He display and honor that blessedness in His creation. The answer is by blessing and saving a people (v19b,c). It must be He that saves is His people’s salvation (v19c), because to Him alone belongs all salvation (v20).

Accursed be His enemies (v21–23). Though His enemies be as high as Bashan (v22a, cf. v15–16), or as low as the depths of the sea (v22b), the Lord will find them and defeat them not only for Himself (v21) but for His people (v23).

But blessed be His people, Israel (v24–27). Their blessedness is to know and praise Him. In front and behind are the priests, leading the priestly music (v25a), and even their maidens in the middle are participating with their hands (v25b). His people, from the greatest (as represented in Benjamin and Judah, v27a–b) to the least (as represented in Zebulun and Naphtali, v27c) are a royal procession.

And blessed be His people: Egypt, Ethiopia, etc. (v28–32). If we were a little surprised to see Zebulun and Naphtali named, then we should be fully amazed by v31. God scatters the wicked (v30d), but among those kingdoms of the earth whom He gathers in Jerusalem to praise Him are even Egypt(v31a) and Ethiopia (v31b)! Truly, in the gatherings of the church in Christ to sing His praise, we find the climax of the blessing of God’s Name in this world (v32, cf. 22:22; Heb 2:12). Unto this end, the enthroned One (v18, cf. Eph 4:8) is building His church up into Himself (cf. Eph 4:9–16).

In God Himself is all their blessedness, indeed all blessedness altogether (v33–35). The Psalm concludes by dwarfing the entire creation as that which is beneath Him (v33), and the church which exists for the same purpose of praise (v34). His holy places are not impressive in themselves; rather, He is their impressiveness (v35a). His people are not strong in themselves; rather He is their strength (v35b). True blessing is to know Him and praise Him as the One in Whom all true blessedness resides.

What happens to God’s enemies? What happens to ones who become His people? Why?

Sample prayer: Blessed are You, O Lord, who daily load us with benefits! You are the God of our salvation, and You have saved us from death and gathered us to Yourself, so that we may be blessed in blessing Your Name. Now, by Your own grace, we come to offer ourselves as spiritual sacrifice, to sing Your praise as the One to Whom all blessedness belongs. Display Your excellence over us, and strengthen us even for this, Your worship, we ask in Jesus’s Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP68E “Sing Out Your Praises” or TPH68B “O Lord, Thou Hast Ascended”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 68 verses 19 through 35. These are God’s words blessed to be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits. The God of our salvation. Our God is the God of salvation. And to Yahweh, the Lord belong, escapes from death but God will wound the head of his enemies.

The hairy scalp of the one who still goes on and is stress passes. The Lord said, I will bring back from Bashan. I will bring them back from the depths of the sea that your foot, may crush them in blood and the tongs of your dogs, may have their portion from your enemies.

They have seen your procession of God. The procession of my God, my king into the sanctuary, a singers went before the players on instruments followed after among them were maidens. Playing Timbrels. Bless God in the congregation. The Lord, from the fountain of Israel, there is little Benjamin their leader, The princes of Judah and their company.

The princes of Zebulun and the princes of Napoli. Your God has commanded your strength, Strengthen O God what you have done for us because of your temple. A Jerusalem kings will bring presents to you rebuke the beasts of the reeds. The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples, Till everyone submits himself with pieces of silver scatter.

The people who delighted in war Envoys will come out of Egypt. Ethiopia will quickly stretch out. Her hands to God, sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth. I was saying praises to the Lord to him who rides on the heaven of heavens which were of old Indeed. He sends out his voice, a mighty voice, ascribe strength to God.

Is excellence is over Israel. And his strength is in the clouds. Oh God, you are more awesome than your holy places. The God of Israel, as he who gives strength and power to his people blessed, be God. So for the reading of God’s inspired and inherent word, this all is a response to verse 18.

God ascending victorious, and giving gifts among leading captivity. Captive at giving gifts among men, receiving gifts among men. This is a response to Jesus. Of

course, then as Ephesians 4 teaches us. And we know that he is the one who ascends and enters, and the everlasting doors from the earlier, Psalms make way for him.

The king is Jesus and in the second half of the Psalm, here we have one of those passages of scripture that begin and end with, with the same ideas, sometimes a very same words, verse 19 blessed, be the Lord, and the end of verse 35.

Blessed be the name of the Blessed God, and we are to rejoice in Jesus, and in his victory and in his salvation. And so this, this half of the Psalm teaches us for what we are blessing him and it is because all salvation belongs to him. He is verse 19, the God of our salvation.

He the one who loads us with benefits and who has redeemed us from death. So we bless Jesus as God from whom all blessing comes and from whom all salvation comes and who has chosen to display himself as God precisely by blessing us. And by saving us. So that's the first theme here, blessed to be God at the beginning.

And the end knowing that this is how he is. Displayed himself to us but his blessing and saving us doesn't mean that there are no enemies. One of the things that we've begun to see and are going to see as one of the main themes in the rest of the book of Acts is that while Jesus sits on his throne in heaven, giving his salvation to all those for whom he has secured, it applying his redemption to all those for whom he has accomplished it.

While Jesus does that his people on earth are much opposed, and persecuted, and attacked, and many times even killed. So being saved by God and blessed by God, does not in this life mean having no enemies. And so you see that in verses 21 through 23, there are enemies, but what does God do?

He wounds the head of his enemies and we remember then, of course, Genesis 3 and the, the serpent who had bruise. Christ's the serpent who bruised Christ's heel, but Christ would crush his head. And so he deals, the death blow and second half of verse 21 it uses poetic language to do.

Similarly to zooming in and showing the reality and intensity of this, the hairy scalp of the one who still goes on and his trespasses. The one who doesn't see that the patient kindness of God is meant to lead us to repentance, but instead of turning from their sin because they have not been punished with hell, yet they persist and their sin and they store up against themselves wrath against the day of wrath.

And it says you there with the head and the scalp and the hair sticking out of your scalp, you who are continuing in your trespasses and continue to make yourself into enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are the one who needs to be saved, who needs to be?

Given repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ, to be washed in his blood and forgiven of your sin because God will wound the head of his enemies. The hairy scalp of the one who still goes on in his trespasses and those who are God's enemies are His people and enemies.

We saw even in the passage on the Lord's day. How quickly those who just didn't have a saving response to the preaching of the Word and they were kind of indifferent polite, but rather uninterested, a church members quickly became those who blaspheme and contradict and oppose. And we'll see in next week's passage in Acts.

How such people quickly even become those who plot to kill Christians. Jesus says, he is not come to bring peace, but a sword of course, he's come to bring peace between God and men for all for whom he dies and to whom he brings to faith. But these he brings a sword between them and all the rest of humanity, even between parents and children and husband and wife.

So those who are God's enemies are our enemies. Romans 16 the Apostle says that God will soon crush Satan under our feet and you see that connection here, the Lord's getting from the highest mountain which we saw represented earlier in the Psalm with Bashan and here, it appears again.

And that sort of usage first, half of verse 22 from the highest mountain to the lowest sea. None of his enemies will escape and they will be brought that your foot. Verse 23, may crush them in blood and the tongs of your dogs, may have their portion from enemies.

And so a curse would be God's enemies. This is one of the ways that God is the blessed God by destroying His and our enemies. But blessed to be his people, his people who are in his procession, God alone is the king, of course, but as he goes into the sanctuary here, note, those who are the priestly accompaniment of Jesus, Jesus is the new great type priest and the old priesthood, it was only Levites.

This is everyone and this is not just men, but even women are in this processional. So the singers went before the players on instruments followed after among them were the maidens playing timbrels anything. Wait a minute, the priestly musicians were only men in the in the temple. When the Levitical priests were ordained in their looking forward to Christ and his priesthood, what are women doing playing the Timbrels in the sanctuary here?

The answer is because Christ is the only worship leading priest, the great high priest, all of his people become part of the choir. All of his people become have the role that the that the instruments had. Jesus, of course, being the great musician who makes us to sing with that melody in the heart.

That is grace in the heart. Not timbrels and harps and all those sorts of things. But just like earlier, whereas the women of Israel were, kindly they, the declared the word, the declared, their victory, and they divide the spoil and so forth. So also the women here in the wake of Christ's victory, gets to be get to be connected to Christ and in the sanctuary as in priestly function as it were every bit as much as the men.

This is one of the one of the great advances in Christ's ascension and Christ sitting down on the throne even is that the women get the covenant sign? They didn't get the covenant sign in the administration under Moses, but they get the covenant sign and the administration under Jesus.

So the blessed, the blessing of his people Israel is that even the least. And that's the role of Zebulun and Napolee. They get mentioned with Benjamin and Judah, which were, which were some of the more prominent tribes in verse 27. But even Zebulun and even and even draftily two tribes from which you don't hear very much are very often are there with their princess.

In this great procession of King Jesus, an innumerable multitude of kings and queens as it were, and the scripture uses that language, doesn't it of the church? A royal priesthood. And the holy nation are all who belong to the Lord. Jesus Christ. The blessed be His people. Israel here.

Benjamin Judah, Zebulun Naphily, but we find some unlikely. Not just the, there are women and not just that, there are people from less prominent tribes but some unlikely members of Christ's kingdom in verse 31. Envoys will come out of Egypt. Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God.

Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth though. Sing praises to the Lord. And so, the strength that God has displayed, and that we are to ascribe to him, especially in song as something not just for Benjamin Judah, Zebulun, Napoli. But even Ethiopia even Egypt, which in their role as the the great enemy from which the Lord initially delivered.

His people as he was first constituting them as a church. And as a state, it's marvelous here to see Egyptians in the great assembly. And so we return, then to the theme of the first 17 verses that God himself is the Blessedness and strength of his people to him who rides in the heavens of heavens sink to him.

His first 32 and then to him who rides in the heavens hunt, a heaven of heavens Sing to him as a God overall creation, who sends out his voice, a mighty voice, not just that he created by. But now, by which he has redeemed ascribe strength to God, is excellence is over Israel.

His strength is in the clouds and then oh God you are more awesome than your holy places that the assembly of the Lord's people and the place where he makes his glory most to be displayed his holy places, the greatness of that assembly, the greatness of that place, the greatness of the public worship.

There's not the worship acts, but God Himself, who is glorified in those acts? That is he who is our strength? That is he who is our power verse 35 and got himself as all of the Blessedness and strength. Indeed in God, himself is all blessedness and strength. Full stop.

But all of the Blessedness and strength of His people. And so the purpose and the conclusion and the praise of what Jesus has accomplished, what is prophesied here? In Psalm 68 is the blessedness of our God who has chosen to show that blessedness by being our Savior. And then let's pray Our Father in heaven.

We thank you for this. Psalm as a whole and this portion of it that is our portion today and on the coming, Lord's day in the beginning, part of the worship service, We pray O, Lord that you would bless to us. It's truth that your spirit would make that which we have studied to have its effect in the way that we think.

And the way that we live you O Lord are all the blessedness of your people. You have displayed your glory and the clouds and the heavens of the heavens. Man, sends a telescope out. A few hundred thousand miles to try to peak as far as he can and all he can do is see some of the hints of the display of your glory.

So we thank you that your favorite display of your glorious to be our Savior to save us from our sin to take us from being enemies and make us to kiss the Sun before his wrath as quickly kindled that we wouldn't perish. And so we pray. Lord, that you would be stirring up in our heart, knowledge of you, knowing you, as our strength, knowing you, as our happiness, knowing you, as our reward, knowing you as our God, knowing you as our Savior that we would marvel at you and adore you and praise you.

Even Marveling that we who are descended from Egypt could be named in contradiction to what our people were guilty of. As those whom you bring to yourself to praise you as our Savior. So be glorified O God and all that you have done, we ask and Jesus name. Amen.