



# GOD, MY EXCEEDING JOY

## A JOYFUL JOURNEY THRU THE PSALMS

OCTOBER 18, 2020

### Psalm 68 – THE GOD OF DELIVERANCES

#### I. GENRE: Song of Victory for Procession

A. Ps 68 does not neatly fit into any standard category of psalm types and features many kinds of poetic lines.

B. It mentions a religious procession into Zion (vv. 24-27), and this may be the occasion for the song itself.

Imprecation	1-2
Praise	3-4, 32-35
Remembrance	7-10
Song of Zion	15-18
Trust	20-23
Temple ceremony	24-27
Prayer for help	28-31

#### C. SETTING & USAGE

A. **AUTHOR:** David.

#### B. BACKGROUND:

1. It is possible that David wrote this song in relation to the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem in 1003 BC. **2 Samuel 6**

a. The ps adapts words from the “March of the Ark.” **Numbers 10:35-36; Ps 68:1-2, 17**

b. The procession in vv. 24-27 may describe the day the Ark was first marched into Jerusalem.

c. Psalm 68 may have been written to accompany the ceremony that day or written to memorialize that event.

d. Ps 132 & possibly Ps 24 are also written about the ark’s arrival.

2. Of course, we can only make educated conjecture as to its origin.

#### C. PLACEMENT:

1. Ps 68 is the climax to Pss 65-68, each of which are called “songs.”

2. These pss all speak about God’s lordship over all the nations.

a. Ps 68 stresses God’s dominance over all the world’s great powers.

b. It ends by calling on all the nations to worship him.

#### III. STRUCTURE: Prelude (1-6), Review of Past Triumphs (7-18), Forecast of New Triumphs (19-31), and a Closing Call to Worship (32-35).

A. The term “Selah” is used in an unusual way in this psalm, coming not before but after the opening verse of each new section (vv. 7, 19, 32).

B. Ps 68 moves forward in very unexpected ways, shifting suddenly from one kind of utterance to another, recalling numerous ancient events, & describing a large religious march into the temple.

#### IV. NOTES & APPLICATION

A. **COMPLICATED:** Ps 68 is widely regarded as the most difficult ps to translate & interpret. It contains 15 Hebrew words used nowhere else in the OT, and numerous unusual phrases & cryptic images. While many verses raise some questions, some of the most challenging verses are 9, 13, 14, and 30.

B. **VICTORIOUS:** While some of the parts of Ps 68 are debated, the overall message is clear: God is the Victor of His people who continues to deliver us day by day. This ps encourages us to look back to what God has done as we pray to Him for help today and in the days to come.

C. **GOD-CENTERED:** The ps recounts God’s many victories & wonders in ages past. Israel’s great leaders are not mentioned directly, so all the glory goes to God. He is referred to 42 times under 8 different names.

D. **MOUNTANOUS:** The psalm mentions several mountains: Sinai (8, 17), Zalmon (14), Bashan (15-16), and Zion (16). The first and last are places of God’s presence while the middle two were sacred high mtns of the pagans.

E. **LITURGICAL:** Verses 24-27 explicitly refer to a ceremonial march into Zion. It is possible that the entire song was written as accompaniment for the march. This might explain the sometimes-unexpected changes in topic.

F. **TYPOLOGICAL:** The NT quotes v. 18 in Ephesians 4:8, making application to Jesus’ ascension after his victorious resurrection. Ps 68 is not a prophecy about Jesus but a celebration of God’s OT victories. But that victory casts a type that Jesus fulfills in His even greater victory over sin, death, and Hell.

# PSALM 68

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**PURPOSE:** David reviews God’s deliverance of Israel in ages past & confidently prays for ongoing deliverance. God’s march of victory took Israel out of Egypt into possession of Canaan where He established His house at Zion. God’s great rescue of Israel reveals how trustworthy He is to deliver in the days & years to come.

**Type:** Victory Song for a Procession **Author:** David  
**Date:** Perhaps for the installation of the Ark in the Tabernacle in Zion, c. 1003 BC  
**Note:** Includes many rare words & unexpected phrases resulting in a variety of translations

HEADINGS	PRELUDE: OPENING CALLS FOR DIVINE ACTION & THANKFUL WORSHIP vv. 1-6	REVIEW OF PAST TRIUMPHS: CELEBRATION OF GOD’S MARCH FROM EGYPT TO ZION vv. 7-18	FORECAST OF NEW TRIUMPHS: CELEBRATION OF GOD’S ONGOING PROTECTION OF THE REALM vv. 19-31	POSTLUDE: CONCLUDING CALLS FOR WORLD-WIDE WORSHIP vv. 32-35
<p><b>Authorization</b> Consigned to the Sanctuary Choir Director</p> <p><b>Song Type</b> “Psalm”</p> <p><b>Authorship</b> David</p> <p><b>Song Type</b> “Song”</p>	<p><b>Confident Call for Divine Action against Enemies</b> vv. 1-2</p> <p>Evoking the Battle Cry of the Ark v. 1</p> <p>Envisioning the Dissolution of the Wicked v. 2</p> <p><b>Triumphant Call to Rejoice in God’s Deliverance</b> vv. 3-6</p> <p>Invitation for the Righteous to Rejoice in God’s Great Ride to Victory vv. 3-4</p> <p>Celebration of God’s Great Justice in Liberation &amp; Judgment vv. 5-6</p>	<p><b>Introduction of the Theme: Recalling the Mighty Exodus</b> v. 7</p> <p>[Selah]</p> <p><b>God’s Wondrous Sinai Theophany</b> v. 8</p> <p><b>God’s Loving Provision of the Land</b> vv. 9-10</p> <p><b>Israel’s Pleasant Peace after War</b> vv. 11-14</p> <p>The Good News of Victory v. 11</p> <p>Women Divvying up the Spoils vv. 12-13</p> <p>The Quieting Snow at Battle’s End v. 14</p> <p><b>God’s Sovereign Choice of Mt. Zion</b> vv. 15-18</p> <p>God’s Mountain Greater than Bashan vv. 15-16</p> <p>God’s Citadel at Zion Enriched with the Spoils of Conquest vv. 17-18</p>	<p><b>Introductory Praise for God’s Daily Help</b> v. 19</p> <p>[Selah]</p> <p><b>Confidence in Future Victories</b> v. 20-23</p> <p>Confession of Trust in God’s Help v. 20</p> <p>Certainty of Complete Victory over Evil Enemies vv. 21-23</p> <p><b>Celebration of God’s Presence through a Holy Procession</b> vv. 24-27</p> <p>The Great Procession Recalled v. 24</p> <p>The Great Procession Described: Musicians, Worshipers, Tribal Representatives vv. 25-27</p> <p><b>Prayer for New Victories</b> vv. 28-31</p> <p>Confident Plea for God’s Show of Strength vv. 28-29</p> <p>Confident Plea for the Defeat of Egypt (“Reeds”) vv. 30-31</p>	<p><b>Introductory Call to Praise</b> v. 32</p> <p>[Selah]</p> <p><b>Laud for God’s Legendary Ride to Victory</b> v. 33</p> <p><b>Call for the Nations to Acknowledge God’s Majesty</b> v. 34</p> <p><b>Concluding Word of Praise for the Strength-Giving God</b> v. 35</p>