

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes Book of Psalms
1-5-11

The Story of Psalm 47

The Story Behind the Psalm

David has come to the end of his reign. He looks back with thanksgiving and shouts, "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph." With a marvelous reign behind him he shouts in verse 6, "Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises." 'Ah, what a God! What a King! What a Saviour! Such a shout of praise can be on the lips of each of us if we will but live our lives and serve our God all the days of our lives. Imagine the pageantry of an old king handing the reigns and the throne to his son and looking back with thanksgiving to God for all that God had done and penning and singing the words of Psalm 47.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

Psalm 47 was sung at the anointing of Solomon and at his ascension to the throne. It was a congregational Psalm. It was sung by all the people together. It was also sung at thanksgiving feasts and at the anointing of all kings.

Are you coming to the close of the rearing of your children? Are you about to retire after years of service and hard work? Are you coming to the close of a pastorate where God has blessed? Then read Psalm 47 and join with the sweet singer of Israel, David, as he rejoices because of God's blessings. Ah, what a Psalm for senior citizens and those who are coming to the sunset years of life!

Theme: God is still King of the world. All nations of the earth will eventually recognize his lordship.

Author: The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah

PSALM 47:1

This psalm may have been written about the same event as Psalm 46—the Assyrian invasion of Judah by Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13–19:37).

PSALM 47:2

The Lord Most High is awesome beyond words, but this didn't keep Bible writers from trying to describe him. And it shouldn't keep us from talking about him either. We can't describe God completely, but we can tell others what he has done for us. Don't let the indescribable aspects of God's greatness prevent you from telling others what you know about him.

PSALM 47:9

Abraham was the father of the Israelite nation. The one true God was sometimes called the "God of Abraham" (Exodus 3:6; 1 Kings 18:36). In a spiritual sense, God's promises to Abraham apply to all who believe in God, Jew or Gentile (Romans 4:11, 12; Galatians 3:7-9). Thus, the God of Abraham is our God, too.

The Story of Psalm 48

The Story Behind the Psalm

This psalm, as the two former, is a triumphant song; some think it was penned on occasion of Jehoshaphat's victory (2 Chr. 20), others of Sennacherib's defeat, when his army laid siege to Jerusalem in Hezekiah's time

The Way It Was Used by God's People

The 48th Psalm was one of the favorites upon celebrating a victory. Especially was this Psalm used when this victory was obviously of God and not through the might of man or armies.

Theme: God's presence is our joy, security, and salvation. God is praised as the defender of Jerusalem, the holy city of the Jews. He is also our defender and guide forever.

Author: The sons of Korah (Temple assistants) *A psalm of the descendants of Korah.*

PSALM 48:2

Why is Mount Zion—Jerusalem—"the city of the great King"? Because the Temple was located in Jerusalem, the city was seen as the center of God's presence in the world. The Bible pictures Jerusalem as the place where believers will gather in the last days (Isaiah 2:2ff) and as the spiritual home of all believers, where God will live among them (Revelation 21:2, 3).

PSALM 48:8

Because Jerusalem has been destroyed several times since this psalm was written, the phrase God "will make it safe forever" may refer prophetically to the new Jerusalem, where God will judge all nations and live with all believers (Revelation 21).

PSALM 48:11

The people of Judah were from Israel's largest tribe, which settled in the southern part of Canaan, where Jerusalem was located (Joshua 15:1-12). David was from Judah, and he made Jerusalem his capital and the center of the nation's worship. Jesus was also a member of the tribe of Judah. The psalmist was saying that the day would come when God would bring justice to the land, and God's people would get the respect they deserved.

PSALM 48:12, 13

After an enemy army had unsuccessfully besieged Jerusalem, it was important for the people to make a tour of the city, inspecting its defenses and praising God for the protection it had offered. In times of great joy or after God has brought us through some great trial, we ought to inspect our defenses to make sure that the foundations—faith in God, knowledge of his Word, and the fellowship and prayers of the body of believers—remain strong (Ephesians 2:20-22). Then we should praise God for his protection!

PSALM 48:14

We often pray for God's guidance as we struggle with decisions. What we need is both a map that gives us directions and a constant companion who has an intimate knowledge of the way and will make sure we interpret the map correctly. The Bible is such a map, and the Holy Spirit is our constant companion and guide. As you make your way through life, use both the map and your Guide.