



Messiah Triumphant!

Psalm 68

Dr. Deane J. Woods

ISN'T it true that everyone loves a winner? There's something engrossing in stories of victory and triumph. Take a look at men, for example, as they open a daily newspaper. Inevitably, they turn first to the Sports section on the back page and become buried immediately in the triumphant victories of their favourite team or their personal sporting heroes! This same phenomenon occurs with The Friends of Israel's bimonthly magazine, *Israel My Glory*, but in a totally different context, of course! Let me explain.

How often have we heard as we move around in Bible-teaching ministry that Zvi is the first article read when each bimonthly issue arrives. For over four decades, our beloved Brother-in-the LORD, Zvi Kalisher's testimonies of sharing Messiah's love and His gospel with his Jewish compatriots in Jerusalem and beyond have captured the hearts and minds of countless thousands – perhaps millions – of Jewish and gentile people around the world.

Intrinsic to each of Zvi's soul-stirring articles is a deeply rooted personal assurance of his Messiah-Saviour's triumph in His life, death and resurrection. His experience of this wonderful message of God's love and forgiveness transformed his life. Such was this radical turnaround that impacted this Holocaust survivor that he sensed his obligation to share Messiah's triumphant salvation with all people – especially those of his fellow Israeli citizens who were descendants of Abraham.

Always self-effacing, yet convincingly bold in his witness to his Saviour and LORD, Zvi was ever available to share Messiah's Triumph with his people. To him (as the Scriptures teach), there is only one way to have a personal relationship with HaShem (God) and

that is to repent of one's sins and have faith in Jesus' sacrificial, atoning death, burial and triumphant resurrection. Moreover, Zvi knew for sure that this personal Messiah lives as our Great High Priest and is coming back to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Zvi's message is the essential message of Psalm 68. It's all about the **Messiah's triumphant victory procession to Kingly glory which establishes His people and scatters His enemies!**

1. Messiah Comes to His People with Victorious Deliverance! (vv 1-6)

The psalm opens with a dramatic picture of God on the march! David called on Him



to arise and lead His victory procession, His people following in His train would thereby be established and His enemies scattered (v 1).

The lot of the LORD's people was seen as diametrically opposed to that of the wicked. The righteous (redeemed) are glad and rejoicing (vv 3-4). Their God is a *father to the fatherless* and a *defender of widows* (v 5); He *sets the solitary in families* (makes a home for the lonely – NASB) and leads *those who are bound into prosperity* (v 6).

On the other hand, God's enemies are scattered in destructive flight before Him

as smoke swept aside or wax melting (vv 1-2). Indeed, *the rebellious dwell in a dry land* (v 6).

Could the picture be more vivid? God is on the march and He comes to His people with victory and deliverance! He initiates His salvific purposes! He accomplishes His divine plans! No one nor anything thwarts His sovereign acts! Through grace, those who respond in faith are saved while those who rebel against Him are lost!

Psalm 68 is thus a victorious hymn most probably written for David's procession with the Ark from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12). It is also interesting to note the many parallels here with The Song of Deborah (Judges 5), though in this psalm the emphasis is on the LORD's mighty deliverance of His people and His choice of Jerusalem for His ultimate dwelling place (Ps 68:16). The psalm is clearly messianic, not only because the apostle Paul quotes verse 18 in Ephesians 4:8 (principlising the quote ['gave' as against 'received'] in his application of gifts by the ascended Christ to the Church), but also as seen in the various names for God that are used here. *Elohim* (God) is used 23 times, *Adonai* (Lord, Master) is used 6 times, as well as *Ja* (Jehovah = YHWH = LORD) and *Shaddai* (Almighty/Strong, Sufficient One). Scripture reveals that all these (and other) Names for God encompass the Person and ministry of Messiah.

Dear readers and fellow travellers, have you thanked this eternal One who comes to you in grace and offers forgiveness and a personal relationship because of His triumphant victory over sin, death and Hell? This word of salvation of which Zvi always testified, is *near*. It is not *far away* (Dt 30:12-14 and Rom 10:6-8)! Do what Zvi did when an elderly lady

offered him a copy of the Scriptures and he opened to a page in the Psalms which read: *When my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up* (Ps 27:10, KJV). He called on the name of the LORD and was saved (Rom 10:9-10, 13, 17ff). You can do the same, and with the same result! The good news of the Messiah is that anyone “starving in a desert wasteland in rebellion” can be transformed into being “at home with full family privileges” by turning to God and His Messiah (Jesus) in faith, believing that He died and rose again for you, and receiving Him as your Saviour (Ps 32:1-2; Prov 28:13; Isa 53:5-7; Luke 15:11-32; Eph 2:8-10; cf. 1:3; 1 Cor 15:2-3; Jn 1:10-12).

2. Messiah Goes Before His People with Victorious Demonstrations! (vv 7-18)

David’s joyous account next focused on God on the march in His victorious train of triumph from Egypt to Jerusalem. Throughout the

is duplicated in the topography of Mt Zion and the three allied Valleys: The Kidron; Tyropean (Valley of the Cheesemakers) and Gehinnom (Gehenna). The Hebrew letter is the abbreviation for one of the names of God, *El Shaddai*. Think of it: God has carved His Name on His City – Jerusalem (cf 2 Chron 6:6)!

Second, He repeated the theme that in His Victorious Procession He has the sovereign ability to establish His people (the righteous) and to scatter His enemies (vv 11-14). Notice how Israel’s victories were often celebrated by women singing and dancing (v 11; cf. Ex 15:20; 1 Sam 18:6-7). When God dispersed the kings of Canaan, it was like snowflakes driven by the wind against the dark, afforested slopes of Zalmon, a hill near Shechem (v 14).

Third, the majestic presence of God was established on high and will withstand all

the dead and His exaltation to the Father’s right hand from whence He would send the Coronation Gift of the Holy Spirit to establish the Church consisting of all Jewish and gentile believers (Jn 14:17; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:1-4ff; 1 Cor 12:13). This exalted, glorified LORD gave charismata (gifts of grace) gifts severally to whom He would (1 Cor 12:7) for the edification of the (one) Body (1 Cor 14:4, 6, 12, 17, 26).

Messiah’s demonstrations of triumph were never given simply for show. Neither are prophetic fore-shadowings of the Messiah meant to tickle our ears or be considered in isolation as individual entities. They must be read and understood as being fully realised in the Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in the relevant corresponding passage/s in the New Testament. As shadows of things to come, they always point to the consummative Substance – Jesus, the Messiah, Himself (Col



royal procession, He displayed various demonstrations of His sovereign victory and triumph.

First, reference was made to His Presence at the head of the Victory Parade which caused heaven and earth to quake (vv 7-10). Furthermore, He provided for His people with plentiful rain, both literally and of manna and quails (Dt 11:10-17; Ps 78:24, 27; Ex 16:13, 15). In grace, He provided in His goodness for the poor (v 10). What an incomparable God He is for His people! He freely provides a home for them; and makes a way for a home for Himself as well – Mt Zion, Jerusalem! It is no wonder that His choice of the Holy City brought so much envy from Mt. Hermon (2,800 metres/9,200 feet) and surrounding peaks (vv 15-16a). His dwelling place is incomparably higher!

Look carefully at the inter-related images reproduced here. The Hebrew letter Shi’n

attacks of envy or pride for He shall make His abode there (Jerusalem, vv 16, 29). Here He is said to dwell (v 16b) for it is His chosen city – His home, for He has put His name there, forever (Dt 12:5; 2 Chron 6:6; Ps 132:13-14; 48:1-2)!

The picture of God going before His people so victoriously was consummated with verses 17 and 18:

*The chariots of God are twenty thousand,
even thousands of thousands.*

*The LORD is among them as in Sinai,
in the Holy Place.*

You have ascended on high,

You have led captivity captive;

You have received gifts among men,

Even from the rebellious,

That the LORD God might dwell there.

The picture here looks forward prophetically to the Messiah’s triumphant resurrection from

2:17; Jn 5:39; Lk 24:26ff, 44)! What is more, the one who has personally entered into such a relationship with God through the Messiah, has hope – now and for eternity future (1 Jn 3:1-3) – because His ways are always perfect and purposeful, as Psalm 18:30 and 32 inform us.

This was Zvi’s hope – a hope now fully realized after a lifetime of faithful service that issued from the assurance that ‘Jesus is mine – O what a foretaste of glory divine!’ How the grace of God was seen in his life: only three years formal schooling because of the war, yet he spoke nine languages! Fearlessly, this diminutive waif from the Warsaw ghetto smuggled food through the sewers to the helpless and hapless victims there. Living on his wits and being exceedingly street wise, he survived riding on top of trains all over Europe as the war raged on, and fleeing from a German farmer and his family when

he overheard them speaking in that language that they would kill this fair-haired, blue eyed farm hand to recompense the death of their young sons in the German army. Eventually, Zvi got to the British Mandated territory of Palestine as it was then known, served in the rag-tag Jewish army amidst the atrocities at Latrun and the war of Independence in 1948. Then till his promotion to glory in 2014, he exercised his God-given gifts of personal evangelism and faithful witness to the LORD to sow the seed of his victorious Saviour's gospel to all who would listen. He was never trained in a formal Bible School, Yeshiva, or Seminary, yet as an apologist who knew what the Scriptures say about his Messiah, he was a servant whose simple faith in the Word of God always out spoke his erstwhile detractors from Orthodox Jewry!

Could this be said of you, dear friend, as you read this article about Zvi's Messiah? Have you come to appreciate that the God of whom Psalm 68 speaks is your personal Saviour and Friend? Do you know personally that he is on the march and goes before you as a gracious (yet sovereign) Shepherd: guiding, protecting, teaching and feeding you from His Word, if only you would stop and listen? He's promised to do this for you because He is the good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep (Jn 10:1-18); He is the Great Shepherd by virtue of His triumphant resurrection (Heb. 13:20); and He is the Chief Shepherd whose Second Advent will announce to the world His coming again to Jerusalem to reign over the world as King of Kings and Lord of Lords! (1 Pet 5:4; Rev 19:11-16; cf. 2 Sam 7:7-14; Is 2:1-4). Let Him feed you, then you feed others in the Church by using your spiritual gift/s to edify them (1 Cor 14:4, 5, 12, 17, 26).

3. Messiah Dwells with His People with Victorious Delight! (vv 19-27)

David continued in his dramatic descriptions of God on the march by emphasizing two major themes in verse 19 through 27.

First, he reiterated the truth that God rescues His people but shatters His enemies (vv 19-23). God delivers His People and *daily bears our burdens*. He is the God of our salvation, the God of deliverances for He provides the only means by which we may *escape from death* (vv 19-20).

In stark contrast, God shatters His enemies, that is, those described as the *hairy crown*

of him who goes on in his guilty deeds. God brings all His enemies back to a place of accountability and destruction (vv 21-23).

Second, Messiah's Victory Procession entered the Sanctuary with the King now ensconced in His Royal Court (vv 24-27). A closer reading of the text will indicate that all the tribes are included in this grand event, since Benjamin in representing the southern tribes, and Zebulun and Naphtali in representing the northern tribes, are to be understood as examples of the southernmost and northernmost of the Twelve Tribes. All God's redeemed people are therefore included!

This all inclusiveness should surely give solace to all God's blood-bought children. Their salvation is eternally secure (cf. Mal



4:6; Jn 10:28-30; Rom 8:1-39, esp. verses 37-39). Think of it: He *delights* to dwell with His people (Ex 25-40; Jn 1:14; 14:1-3; Rev 20-22)!

4. Messiah will Receive Universal Tributes from All People! (vv 28-35)

Psalm 68 concludes with David stressing two final emphases. First, he spoke of the enthroned King demonstrating His strength by scattering His enemies and receiving tribute from them (vv 28-31).

Second, he underscores the truth that the One referred to throughout all the preceding descriptions is none other than the God who is on the march in triumphant, majestic strength and is singularly worthy of hymns of praise from all people (vv 32-35). Meditate prayerfully on these final verses:

³² Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth;
O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:

³³ To him that rides upon the heavens
of heavens, which were of old;

Lo, he sends out his voice,
and that a mighty voice.

³⁴ Ascribe strength unto God:
his excellency is over Israel,
and his strength is in the clouds.

³⁵ O God, Thou art terrible
out of thy holy places:
the God of Israel is he that gives
strength and power unto his people.
Blessed be God! (KJV)

Thus, Psalm 68 records David's account of God's repeated victories throughout the history of the Jewish people, and in so doing, pointed to the culminating and ultimate eschatological victory of the Messiah.

Zvi's attitude on earth evidenced his submission to this all powerful, all conquering, God. His life and testimony pointed to the majesty of his sovereign LORD, the Messiah who cared enough to leave heaven's glory, come to earth and live amongst men, and ultimately die a despised and rejected criminal's death for him. He considered Him, now at the Father's right hand, *ran the race that was before him faithfully and well* and now is in His eternal presence where there is *fullness of joy*, worshiping and adoring Him, possibly with these last words of David in Psalm 68: "*Blessed be God!*" Will that be true of you?

Conclusion

This Psalm of Messiah's Triumph should surely evoke answers to such devotional and practical questions as:

- *Am I eager to see God arise (v 1), spring into action and be on the march in my life and in others? Am I assured I am on God's side rather than His being on our side?*
- *Do I share God's heart for being a 'father to the fatherless', for pursuing 'justice for widows', for making 'the lonely feel part of a family', for seeking deliverance and prosperity for those in bondage (vv 4-6)?*
- *Am I struggling along carrying my own burdens when the all-powerful God desires to 'daily bear our burdens' and be to us 'a God of deliverances' (vv*

19-20)? Am I enjoying His triumphant victory? (see vv 33-35 especially; cf. Ps 106:47; 1 Cor 15:57-58; 2 Cor 2:14ff)

- Have I considered how God's enemies fare in the face of His majestic strength and triumphant power? Am I prepared to be available to do something about the lost? Do I appropriate the truth of the psalmist in v 35: "O God, Thou art awesome from Thy sanctuary. The God of Israel Himself gives strength and power to the people. Blessed Be God!", and be motivated to action on their behalf?

Zvi did! And his printed stories testify to it!

Now with the LORD, this faithful servant (though no longer gracing this earthly scene), yet speaks (cf. Heb 11:4). His previously unpublished, gripping articles are presently titled *Apples of Gold* in The Friends of Israel's publication, *Israel My Glory* magazine. People all over tell us repeatedly that they read Zvi's article first. A faithful witness to Messiah Triumphant will never lose its intrinsic appeal and response!

Introducing

Mark & Kathy Rogers

Mark Rogers (along with his wife, Kathy) are the latest to come on board with The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (Australia) Inc. Mark began ministry with the Mission on the 1st June, 2015. Here's the story of their spiritual journey and their testimony of how the LORD led them to join FOI-Australia.

My wife Kathy and I live not too far north of Sydney in the City of Newcastle. This is Kathy's hometown, but I have lived in many parts of the Great Southland having been born in Adelaide, then (due to my father being in the Army) moving to Holsworthy on the western side of Sydney. This was followed by moves to Kingswood and Penrith.

It was in Penrith that I came under the sound of the Gospel through my Sunday School teacher. The Holy Spirit worked the miracle of the New Birth in my young heart through hearing the Gospel message and seeing it lived out in this dear man who demonstrated Christlike living to us boys. When my Dad

was away in Vietnam with the Army in 1969-70 my Christian friends became a virtual second family to me.

At the end of school I sensed God's call to full-time ministry. By God's grace, a man from the Church Army – an Anglican ministry affiliate – came and spoke at our church. At that time, Dad came home one day to tell us that we were moving to Perth for what was to be his last posting in the Army. Whilst there, I was involved in a Christian Folk group and my musical skills were refined to a level whereby they became a vehicle for the Gospel.

On my return to Sydney I went to the Church Army College of Evangelism for two years to train in the field of Evangelistic work. I was commissioned in November, 1978. Following this, I was appointed to minister in Wagga Wagga, then Redcliffe, Qld, Dalby, Qld, Waratah, NSW, and Canterbury. I also ministered in Youth and Children's ministries and Hospital Chaplaincy around Newcastle for another 8 years as well as working with disabled children at the Hunter Orthopaedic School. In 1996 I was led to take up a position at the Woodlands Aged Care Hostel as an Activity Officer. This became my work for the next 14 years, finally working with Baptist Care in Residential and Community Care as a Chaplain for five years while I doubled as a Pastor at our local church, 2/3 days a week.

As life often takes its twists and turns, both these positions came to a close at the same time. The very next day after my final day at the church I had a call from Dr Deane Woods from FOI Australia asking if I would pray about applying as a Ministry Representative with the Mission. I was overwhelmed. God was clearly leading and providing. In January, 2015, I applied and was duly accepted as a Field Ministry Representative.

The Lord has opened doors of ministry already in my first month of service. This has come through contact with the Newcastle Synagogue and also with Montefiore Homes in Sydney. There was another opportunity for serving the LORD late in the first month and into the second. It could be described as a 'baptism of fire' as Deane and I drove through southern New South Wales, western Victoria and South Australia to take meetings, services, make contacts and

record radio broadcasts. We travelled 5,650 kms (3,500 miles) in those two and one half weeks. What a wonderful time this was as we met so many dear people who pray for and support FOI- Australia. Many others were enlightened about our ministry and the Hope there is in Jesus, the Messiah! For this, we give all the praise and glory to God!

Please pray for me in these various and sometimes new fields of ministry; and for Kathy, as she continues to work at St Philip's Christian College as the Principal's Personal Assistant. She expects to remain in this supportive role, and for me, too, unless and until possible relocation as the Mission's leadership might chose.

Please pray also that the "veil will be lifted" from the eyes of Jewish folk in our community to see their Messiah (Yeshua) as their eternal Hope, as mentioned in Deane's accompanying article on Psalm 68.

Love and Peace to you,
Shalom,

Mark and Kathy



The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (Australia) Inc.

P0 Box 171 Melrose Park SA
5039 Australia

Office and Books:

c/o EBC Community Centre
Suite 406 (Upstairs)
Cnr. Rothesay Ave and Dorene St
St Marys SA 5042 AUSTRALIA
Phone/Fax: (+ 618) 08 8276 1333
Email: australianoffice@foi.org