

Psalms 46-48

Psalms 48:1,2 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

The three Psalms for today are closely related. The speculation is that they may have been written in celebration of the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib during the reign of Hezekiah.

Psalms 46: The level of praise in this and the Psalms that follow is very high. The City of Jerusalem was under siege and probably within days of falling when the Angel of the Lord smote 185,000 Assyrians sending Sennacherib home to his death. The dramatic turn no doubt heightened the elation experienced by the people of Jerusalem who had come so close to being destroyed. We prefer no discomfort, no trials, no losses, no narrow escapes but in the world we live in all of these things often occur. But God is present and can be seen more clearly when we do encounter the unwelcome.

Psalms 46 begins with a celebration of God who is our refuge and strength. This is true

even in the most extreme of circumstances. If the earth is removed, if the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, through roaring and troubled waters and shaking and swelling mountains. There is no circumstance in which God is not present. God is in the midst of the city, providing a river of refreshment, The Holy place is the dwelling of the Most High God. Against the raging nations He utters His voice. He makes wars to cease. He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot with fire. "Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Psalms 47: Here the enemies of the Lord and Jacob have been vanquished. The celebration is on! Clap your hands! Shout! Praise! Sing! In victory, the Lord is awesome. He is triumphant. His love is certain. There are lessons in victory. We are to praise with understanding. God does reign over the nations. He sits on His Holy throne. The people will gather together to exalt His name.

Psalms 48: God is seen here as nearly one with the holy city of Jerusalem. God had chosen the city as the dwelling place of His temple. The Holy of Holies was there. Sennacherib was not the first to assault the

city and he was not the first to fail. In the wake of that failure the people expressed their confidence. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised... The recent experience of threat is recounted. "The kings assembled, they passed by together. They saw it and so they marveled; They were troubled, they hastened away. Fear took hold of them there, and pain as of a woman in birth pangs, as when You break the ships of Tarshish with an East wind." The conclusion reached was, "In the city of our God, He will establish it forever."

We can see in this Psalm an anticipation of the Kingdom, Christ reigning from Jerusalem over all of the earth. This view looks past the failure and destruction of Jerusalem that would soon occur. At the time of the fall of Jerusalem the majority held the belief that their city was invincible. God's deliverance was remembered but the circumstances of that deliverance were forgotten. Sennacherib had mocked Israel's God and Hezekiah and all of Israel had humbly pleaded with God for deliverance. God answered their prayers. When Jerusalem fell the people assumed that no matter what, God would save His city. They felt no need to repent of sin and seek the Lord. Pride proceeded destruction.