
Church in Campbell Weekly News

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CHRIST AS THE CENTER OF GOD'S MOVE ON THE EARTH

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Scripture Reading: Psa. 68:1-18; Num. 9:15a; 10:35;
Eph. 4:8, 11-12; 6:12; 2:22

In this message we will begin to study Psalm 68. As we come to this psalm, we should regard it as the highest psalm among the one hundred fifty psalms.

Psalm 68 is extremely difficult to understand. Examples of this difficulty are found in verses 11b through 13. "The women who bear the glad tidings are a great host./The kings of the armies flee./They flee!/And she who abides at home / Divides the spoil./Though you lie among the sheepfolds,/There are dove wings covered with silver,/And its pinions, with greenish yellow gold." Who are the women who bear the glad tidings and are a great host? Who is she who abides at home and divides the spoil? There seems to be no antecedent for the pronoun "she" here. To whom does this pronoun refer? Furthermore, who is the "you" lying among the sheepfolds? We also need to inquire concerning the dove wings covered with silver and the pinions covered with greenish yellow gold. We must admit that it is difficult for us to know what these things mean and to understand them.

As we will see, the dove, the silver, and the gold refer to the Triune God. The dove symbolizes the Spirit of God; in typology silver signifies Christ as the Redeemer who accomplished redemption for God's salvation; and gold signifies God in His nature. Here the gold is greenish yellow, with green signifying the divine life and yellow, the divine glory. Hence, greenish yellow gold signifies God in His nature glittering in His life and glory. Here we have the Triune God—the Spirit, Christ, and God—with all His accomplishments for us to enjoy.

Verse 12 speaks of dividing the spoil. What is this spoil? It is something reaped as the result of fighting a battle. In His death, resurrection, and ascension, Christ fought the battle, and the spoil reaped by Him has become our enjoyment. Christ gained some spoil in every step of His fighting; He reaped spoil in His death, in His resurrection, and in His ascension, at which time, according to Colossians 2, the evil ones tried to hold Him back. The spoil gained, reaped, by Christ is actually the Triune God. This means that the

spoil in verse 12 is the Spirit as the dove, Christ the Son as the silver, and God the Father as the gold.

To illustrate further how hard it is to understand Psalm 68, let us also consider verses 25 through 27. "Singers go before; players after;/In the midst of virgins sounding the tambourines./Bless God in the congregations,/Even Jehovah, O you who are of the fountain of Israel./There are little Benjamin, who rules them,/And the princes of Judah in their company, /The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali." Do you understand all this? Why are the names of four of the twelve tribes mentioned—Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, and Naphtali—but not the names of the other tribes? Once again, we must admit that this matter is difficult to understand.

An even more difficult matter to understand is the reason Psalm 68 was written. Why was this psalm written, and why was it composed in the way it was? In order to answer this question, we need to consider the way the psalm begins. Verse 1 says, "Let God arise; let His enemies be scattered;/And let those who hate Him flee before Him." This is a quotation of Moses' prayer in Numbers 10:35, uttered when the ark of the covenant set out from Mount Sinai.

After Moses brought the children of Israel to Mount Sinai, they stayed there for quite a long time. During that time, God decreed His law to them through Moses. However, the main thing that happened at that time was not the decreeing of the law but God's charging Moses to build the tabernacle with the ark, the incense altar, the lampstand, the showbread table, the laver, the altar, and all the utensils.

What was God's purpose in decreeing the law and in charging Moses to build the ark and the tabernacle with all its furnishings? The law was decreed for the purpose of exposing and subduing Israel. God intended to use the law to expose the people's weakness, incapacity, defects, and shortages in order to make them realize that they were sinful and could do nothing for Him. Thus, the law was decreed to convince them of this and even to condemn them.

Exodus 19 speaks of the experience of the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. On the one hand, they were fearful, for they heard the thunder, saw the lightning and the thick cloud, and realized that God was

present with them at the mountain. On the other hand, they were proud of all these things concerning God. When Moses laid before them all the words which God had commanded him, the people answered and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (v. 8). Moses told the words of the people to the Lord, and then He came in to decree the law. Even before the law had been decreed to the children of Israel, they broke the Ten Commandments and committed sin by worshipping the golden calf. When Moses learned about this, he became angry and broke the two tablets of stone. The point here is that the law was given in order to expose the people of Israel, to convince, condemn, and subdue them, and to cause them to realize that they could not do anything to please God. This was God's purpose in decreeing the law.

Now we need to see God's purpose concerning the building of the tabernacle. God wanted the children of Israel to build Him a tabernacle so that He could dwell among them and they could contact Him and even dwell with Him. However, because they were sinful, they needed an altar to take care of their sins. In addition, they needed the showbread table for spiritual food, the lampstand for spiritual light, and the incense altar for them to pray to the Lord.

The tabernacle built and erected at Mount Sinai was a type of Christ as the real tabernacle. This real tabernacle was set up through Christ's incarnation. John 1:14 tells us that the Word, which is God, became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and reality. Whereas the tabernacle built up by Israel under Moses was a type, or a shadow, Jesus Christ, the incarnated God, is the real tabernacle for God's dwelling on the earth and for God's people to contact Him and dwell with Him.

During their years in the wilderness, the children of Israel did nothing except deal with the law and the tabernacle with the altar, the laver, the showbread table, the lampstand, the incense altar, and the ark. Whenever it was time for them to move on in their journey, they packed up the tabernacle and its furnishings and utensils and carried them with them in their move. Eventually they would stop, and the tabernacle and everything related to it would be set up again.

The people also had to present the various offerings to God. Otherwise, they would have been condemned by the law because of their sins in breaking God's commandments. However, the blood of the sin offering that was sprinkled on the cover of the ark fulfilled the requirements of the law and enabled the people to be at peace and to contact God.

Before the incarnation of Christ, God did not do anything for the accomplishment of His New Testament economy. In the Old Testament, God called Abraham, having chosen him and his descendants to be His people, His called race. Centuries later, God brought the people of Israel to Mount Sinai to train them and to help them to know their sinfulness and thereby to convince and subdue them. Whereas the law decreed through Moses was a reality, the tabernacle with all its furnishings and utensils was a type of Christ. Nevertheless, God could dwell in that tabernacle, and the people had a way to contact Him. Throughout the remainder of the Old Testament, in all the books of history and of the prophets, God continued to expose Israel. He exposed them in Joshua and in Judges; He exposed them in the books of Samuel and of the Kings; and He exposed them in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and all the other prophets, both major and minor. It seems that God did not move but rather did only one thing—expose the people of Israel.

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for coming YP conference at Alliance Redwood
- Pray for coming Thanksgiving conference, saints' participation of the conference.
- Pray for the growth of the feeling of the Body of Christ.
- Pray for spreading to nearby cities
- For daily exercise in GOW training: prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth and attend Lord's day meeting on time.
- For gospel preaching on West Valley College campus, as well as for English-speaking testimony in Campbell.

Announcement

- Morning Revival on Psalms Week 10
- YP Bible reading : John chapter 5.
- Prayer meeting Tuesday (11/22) at meeting hall.
- GOW 5th term registration is open, deadline 12/4, register with brother Liu.
- 11/24-11/27 Thanksgiving Conference at San Jose McEnery Convention Center, Exhibit Hall 1, 150 West San Carlos St., San Jose, CA 95110
Thur. 7:30pm, Fri. 10AM, 7:30PM, Sat. 10AM, 7:30PM, Lord's day 9:30AM. **NO MEETING AT CAMPBELL on 11/27.**
- 11/23 or 24 ~ 27, UC Davis students (14) will visit and blend with us during the Thanksgiving Conference, need hospitality. On Fri. 11/25, 2~4pm hiking on Villa Montalvo, 4:30~6pm meeting, 6~7pm love feast (catering).