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Lent Day 16: The Champion

4-5 minutes

Psalm 68: 7-18 (ESV)

*O God, when you went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness, Selah
the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain,
before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.
Rain in abundance, O God, you shed abroad;
you restored your inheritance as it languished;
your flock found a dwelling in it;
in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.
The Lord gives the word;
the women who announce the news are a great host:
“The kings of the armies — they flee, they flee!”
The women at home divide the spoil —
though you men lie among the sheepfolds —
the wings of a dove covered with silver,
its pinions with shimmering gold.
When the Almighty scatters kings there,
let snowfall on Zalmon.
O mountain of God, mountain of Bashan;
O many-peaked mountain, mountain of Bashan!*

*Why do you look with hatred, O many-peaked mountain,
at the mount that God desired for his abode,
yes, where the Lord will dwell forever?
The chariots of God are twice ten thousand,
thousands upon thousands;
the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary.
You ascended on high,
leading a host of captives in your train
and receiving gifts among men,
even among the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell there.*

Psalm 68:7-18 is a song of praise for the power of God as seen in salvation. There are three movements in this passage. Verses 7-10 describe the power of God in delivering the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. Then, verses 11-14 recount the power of God in the present to preserve his people as they lived amongst their enemies. Finally, verses 15-18 rejoice in the power of God that will safely bring his people home to the mountain of God.

These three movements describe the life of a Christian. We are those who have been brought out from the bondage of sin and death, are being preserved in our present journey, and have been given a promise that we shall arrive safely home. How are all these wonderful truths possible? These benefits are secured for us because of our champion.

Psalm 68:18 refers to one who ascended on high, leading forth a host of captives in his train. According to St. Paul, this passage is describing Christ Jesus, particularly the victory accomplished by him through his resurrection from the dead (Ephesians 4:8).

In Hebrews 12:2 we are told to keep our eyes on Jesus, the archegos of our faith. Although it has been variously translated as “author” or “pioneer,” the best translation would be “champion.” In other words, Jesus went toe-to-toe with sin and death and won! He fought the battle on our behalf with death and secured the victory. Now, we can rest in him, knowing that the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead is also at work in us (1 Corinthians 6:14).

Do you find yourself anxious today, maybe fearful of what the future holds? Let the truth of these verses be a reminder that the power of God is present in your life because of the work of our champion. Because of him we have been brought out of bondage, are being preserved day by day, and through his grace we shall arrive safely home.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the power present in our lives because of our champion, Christ Jesus, and would ask that today we would find ourselves equipped with courage and joy because of him who ascended on high. In Christ's Name, Amen.

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