

For the Love of God

God on the Move

Dr. David Platt

May 18, 2014



GOD ON THE MOVE Psalm 68

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to Psalm 68. It has been such a good day in the Word here already. As many of you know, we're in week 3 of our immersion in the Psalms as a faith family...and over a period of six weeks, each Sunday we're looking at different psalms in different worship gatherings...oftentimes with different preachers. So last week I preached Psalm 51 at 9:00, Pastor Jim preached Psalm 52 at 11:00, and Pastor Matt preached Psalm 57 at 6:00. And...if you haven't had a chance to do so, I would encourage you to go back and to listen to the sermons that you didn't hear. I had numerous people from different worship gatherings say, "I wish everybody in the church could have heard that." And...it was really cool just to see how they all fit together...Psalm 51 (God's mercy that covers over our sin) in the morning, Psalm 57 (God's mercy that comforts us in suffering) in the evening, and right in the middle, Psalm 52 (which focuses on the faithful, steadfast love of God). So...let me encourage you to potentially go back and listen to those different psalms...and then, this week happens to be the week when Jim and Matt are both out of town, so...I've had all three worship gatherings today...with three different psalms.

But this has been a good week for that. In the 9:00 gathering, I had the joy of preaching through Psalm 66, at 11:00 we dove into Psalm 67, and now, here at 6:00, we're going to explore Psalm 68 together. And as I have prepared for today, I have loved seeing how these psalms fit together so clearly...and not only that, but how these psalms align so powerfully with what we just prayed for. It is no accident that we would be in Psalm 66, 67, and 68 on the day when we commission about 30 missionaries from our faith family to go to the nations with the gospel. And I can't think of a better place to close out this day than in this psalm...and if you want to go back and listen to Psalm 66 and 67 at some point this week, you will see why this is a climax of sorts for this day in the church.

So let's read Psalm 68 together, and then let's pray for God to teach us and transform us (and teach and transform especially the worship life of this church) through it. I'll start reading in verse 1...

*God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered;
and those who hate him shall flee before him!
As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away;
as wax melts before fire,
so the wicked shall perish before God!
But the righteous shall be glad;
they shall exult before God;
they shall be jubilant with joy!*

*Sing to God, sing praises to his name;
lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts;
his name is the LORD;
exult before him!*

*Father of the fatherless and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.*

*God settles the solitary in a home;
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,
but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.*

*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 snow fall 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.*

*Blessed be the Lord,
who daily bears us up;
God is our salvation. Selah
Our God is a God of salvation,
and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death.
But God will strike the heads of his enemies,
the hairy crown of him who walks in his guilty ways.
The Lord said,
"I will bring them back from Bashan,
I will bring them back from the depths of the sea,
that you may strike your feet in their blood,
that the tongues of your dogs may have their portion from the foe."*

Your procession is seen, O God,

*the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary—
the singers in front, the musicians last,
between them virgins playing tambourines:
"Bless God in the great congregation,
the LORD, O you who are of Israel's fountain!"
There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead,
the princes of Judah in their throng,
the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.*

*Summon your power, O God,
the power, O God, by which you have worked for us.
Because of your temple at Jerusalem
kings shall bear gifts to you.
Rebuke the beasts that dwell among the reeds,
the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples.
Trample underfoot those who lust after tribute;
scatter the peoples who delight in war.
Nobles shall come from Egypt;
Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God.*

*O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God;
sing praises to the Lord, Selah
to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens;
behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.
Ascribe power to God,
whose majesty is over Israel,
and whose power is in the skies.
Awesome is God from his sanctuary;
the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people.
Blessed be God! (Psalm 68)*

Let's pray.

O God, we sit here right now with Your Word open, trusting that You have inspired every single one of these words to reveal Yourself to us and to teach us—to transform us. And so we pray, O God, that You would do that work in this room right now. Reveal Yourself, God. We pray that in the next few moments, by the power of Your Spirit, You would open our eyes, all across this room, maybe some for the first time, to see who You are. God, may it be so. Then even those who may have walked with You for years, God, we pray that You would open our eyes in the next few moments, by the power of Your Spirit, to greater understanding of Your grandeur. Help us to see You more clearly. God, we want to see You more clearly. We want to know You more truly. We want to love You more deeply.

And I know I can't manufacture that. None of us can manufacture that. I don't often understand my own thoughts, and we're all prone to be distracted in our thoughts, O God. Fix our attention and our affection on Your Word. Help me to speak only Your Word. Help us to hear Your Word. Show us Who You are and show us what this means for our lives. We don't take this lightly. We don't take the time with God tonight, with our Bibles, lightly. We know You're speaking. So we pray, do a supernatural work in this place right now to the glory of Your Name. We pray these things in Jesus' name, that You may be glorified. Amen.

Oh...there is so much in this psalm...35 verses of pure goodness and greatness...and I have struggled with how to best walk us through it. These psalms don't always follow a

progression like one of Paul's letters might...where this truth leads to that truth which leads to this conclusion. Instead, there are interlocking themes all throughout these psalms that come together poetically in potent ways.

And many commentators say that this is the most difficult of all the Psalms to understand, particularly because of a few verses that seem somewhat obscure in their meaning. But my goal is not to get down into the weeds here, but to step back from the landscape, and to see the beauty and wonder of what lies before us. Because—here's what's unique about this psalm—maybe more than any other psalm, it contains all kinds of different names for God and titles for God. At least six different Hebrew names of God are used in this psalm: *Yah*, *Yahweh*, *Adonai*, *Shaddai*, *El*, *Elohim* (which, by itself, is used 23 times). And then on top of that, you've got all kinds of different titles for God dispersed throughout. And all of this comes together to paint a majestic portrait of who God is and what God has done, and is doing, in history.

I want to show us a portrait of God in Psalm 68. Specifically, I want to show us 25 different attributes and activities of God that are described in this psalm. And don't get worried...we're not going to be here all night...we'll go Secret Church style at some points...and don't worry that you don't have blanks to fill in...most of these attributes and activities are easy to write down. But I just want us to see God in this room tonight...to see His revelation of Himself. And then, based upon this portrait of God, I want to draw two simple yet massive implications for our lives...and for this church.

The Portrait of God...

Alright, here goes. The portrait of God. We'll kind of go in order from the beginning to the end of the psalm, but there are some of these names and attributes and activities of God that appear in one place and then again later in the psalm, so we'll end up jumping around some.

God is awesome.

But behold your God. First brush on this canvass that Psalm 68 is painting: God is awesome. So I'm jumping ahead already, actually to the last verse of the psalm, where the psalmist writes, *"Awesome is God from his sanctuary."* And the reason I'm jumping ahead is because that one statement in verse 35 sums up everything we see in the 34 verses before that. Everything here points to the earth-shaking power, mind-boggling majesty, and awe-inducing splendor of the God who saves.

The psalm (which is attributed to David) pictures God as a whole, throughout history, marching across the heavens and the earth, riding upon clouds, scattering enemies, causing the earth to quake and showers to fall...and all of these images cause you to step back in awe. You can't read this psalm casually. You can't consider this God without being overwhelmed by His greatness. A greatness that is revealed in what He does.

God is active.

That leads to the second attribute of God: God is active. Back to verse 1 – the psalm begins by saying, *"God shall arise..."* Now, hold your place here in Psalm 68 and turn back with me real quickly to something we read just a couple of weeks ago in our Bible reading through Numbers – Numbers 10. Because this opening verse is a deliberate allusion to what would happen when God's people were wandering in the wilderness.

You'll remember that at Mount Sinai, God gave His people His law, and He also gave them instructions for how He would dwell in their midst through the ark of the covenant, which would be a physical symbol of God's presence with and protection of His people. So look at the last few verses of Numbers 10, starting in verse 33.

So they set out from the mount of the LORD three days' journey. And the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the LORD was over them by day, whenever they set out from the camp. (Numbers 10:33-34)

So the picture was God leading His people with a pillar of cloud over them during the day that centered around the ark of the covenant—this symbol of God's guidance, presence, and protection. And then, look at verses 35 and 36.

And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, "Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you." And when it rested, he said, "Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel." (Numbers 10:35-36)

Obviously, you see the similarities between Numbers 10:35 and Psalm 68:1. The psalm starts with this picture of enemies scattering before the presence of God when He is on the move. And then the rest of the psalm shows God on the move. Verses 4-6, He is riding through the deserts. Verses 7-10, He is going out before His people, marching through the wilderness. Verses 11-14, He is leading them to conquer the land of Canaan.

Ultimately, He's leading them from Mount Sinai in verse 1 to Mount Zion in verses 15-18, where His presence settles among His people in Jerusalem. In fact, some commentators believe this psalm was sung when the ark of the covenant was brought into Jerusalem...we don't know that for sure, and regardless, it doesn't really affect the meaning of the psalm...because the point is: "God is not dormant. This awesome God is not asleep; He is active." If I were to give a title to this psalm (or this message, for that matter), it would be "God on the Move," because that is the picture that's portrayed here. This is God acting in history among and for His people...and the effects of God's actions upon all peoples. Which leads to number 3...so what does this awe-inducing, active God do in the world?

He subdues all who rebel against Him.

Third picture in this portrait of God: He subdues all who rebel against Him. When God arises, his enemies scatter. Those who hate him flee from him. Like smoke is driven away the wind. Like wax melting before fire, *"so the wicked perish before God!"* (verse 2) Verse 6, *"He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious (those who rebel against God) dwell in a parched land."* Verse 12, *"The kings of the armies" who oppose God – "they flee, they flee!"* Verse 14, *"The Almighty scatters kings" like snow on Mount Zalmon.* Verses 21-23 are particularly graphic – *"God strikes the heads of his enemies, the hairy crown of him who walks in his guilty ways"* – likely a reference to the youthfulness and strength of those who set themselves up against God – God says (verse 22), *"I will bring them back from the depths of the sea, that [my people] may strike [their] feet in their blood, that the tongues of [their] dogs may have their portion from their foe."*

We don't know what all these images mean, but we can't help but to think about the fall of Babylon in Revelation 18-19, which symbolized the world system and all of its ways that are arrayed against God, falling down in utter destruction. Mark it down: God eventually, completely, and ultimately subdues all who rebel against Him.

God satisfies all who trust in Him.

And at the same time, God satisfies all who trust in Him. So this is number 4. At the end of verse 2 – *"So the wicked shall perish before God! But...the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!"* We get the point...glad exultation, joyful jubilation...the righteous have nothing to fear before this God, for His favor is upon them. God satisfies to the uttermost all who trust in Him.

He is the one true God.

Keep going – number 5 in this portrait of God: He is the one true God. When verse 4 says, *"Lift up a song to whom who rides through the deserts,"* and later verse 33 echoes this, saying, *"To him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens"* (verse 33), *"whose power is in the skies"* (verse 34) and who brings *"rain in abundance"* on the earth, almost all commentators believe this is a deliberate reference to the Canaanite rain god, Baal. The Canaanites worshiped Baal, calling him the "Rider on the clouds," attributing the rain to His doing. And so David is making clear here exactly what we read about in the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 17-18: Baal doesn't bring the rain. God brings the rain. Baal can't bring fire from the sky. God brings fire from the sky. Baal isn't god over the heavens. God is the only God over the heavens. He is the one true God.

He is the covenant keeping Lord.

Number 6, He is the covenant keeping Lord. So verse 4 says, *"Sing to Yah,"* which is the name for God that's used here in the beginning of the verse. But then in the middle of the verse, David says, *"His name is the LORD,"* and he uses *Yahweh* there...the covenant name that God revealed to His people as an expression of His commitment to love and to care for them. So this awesome, active God, this one true God who subdues rebels and satisfies the righteous, is committed to His people. Evidence is in these next characteristics of God.

He is Father of the fatherless.

Number 7, He is Father of the fatherless. Oh, don't you love this? The majestic God over all creation...cares for the orphan.

He is Protector of the widow.

Number 8, He is Protector of the widow. That's who God is in His holy habitation (verse 5). One writer said, *"Compassionate concern emanates from God's divine residence"* (Wilson).

He loves the lonely.

He cares for the fatherless, He protects the widow, and, number 9, He loves the lonely. Verse 6 – *"God settles the solitary in a home."* The picture here is a pursuing God who goes after the abandoned and the alone and the imprisoned.

He rescues the captive.

Number 10, He rescues the captive. He pursues the oppressed and the enslaved, bringing them from their imprisonment to His prosperity.

He provides for the needy.

And in all this, number 11, He provides for the needy. Listen to this imagery, starting in verse 7, and remember this is what happens when God *"rides through the deserts"* – through the wasteland? What does God do when His people are in the wilderness?

*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. (Psalm 68:7-10)*

Oh, you can't help but to read this and just picture God's provision for His people in the wilderness. When they were thirsty, he would give them water from rocks. When they were hungry, he would literally rain down bread from heaven. Oh, see it: God is near to the needy. He delights in providing for the destitute. He finds pleasure in harnessing all of His power on behalf of the fatherless and the widow and the lonely and the captive and the needy. Yes.

A well-known pastor, James Boice said, "The kings and other rulers of this world do not act like this. They surround themselves with the noblest and richest of their lands, those who can enhance their glory and strengthen their power. The highest glory of God is that he cares for the miserable and surrounds himself with them." God is the Father of the fatherless, Protector of the widow...He loves the lonely, He rescues the captive. Yet as you see Him surrounded by the weak, don't think for a second that He is weak.

God is sovereign over nature.

Number 12, God is sovereign over nature. He owns the rain. He owns it. He determines when it falls on the earth, and when it is withheld in the clouds. Remember Job 38 – God asks Job,

*Have you entered the storehouses of the snow,
or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
which I have reserved for the time of trouble,
for the day of battle and war? . . .*

*Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain
and a way for the thunderbolt . . .*

*Has the rain a father,
or who has begotten the drops of dew? . . .*

*Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
that a flood of waters may cover you?
Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go
and say to you, "Here we are"?
Who has put wisdom in the inward parts
or given understanding to the mind?
Who can number the clouds by wisdom?
Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens? (Job 38:22-37)*

And the answer is clear: Only God. The Author of creation has authority over creation.

He is sovereign over nations.

He is sovereign over nature, and, number 13, He is sovereign over nations. So it's not just the rain that responds to His bidding...it's kings who come and go according to His command. In verse 11, kings flee (they flee!) before God. And then in verse 29, they bring gifts to God. And God is sovereign over both activities. He causes them to run from

Him...and He causes them to revere Him. He holds the kings of the earth in the palm of His hand.

He is powerful above us.

Which reminds us, number 14, God is powerful above us. Verse 14 is one of only two times in all the Psalms when the Hebrew word *Shaddai* is used to refer to God. It's a name of God that emphasizes His might and majesty, and this word, when translated into the Greek in 2 Corinthians 6:18 in the New Testament, literally means "all powerful."

So we see His omnipotence here, but behold the beauty of this psalm...for in all of His awe-evoking might, God is not just powerful above us.

He is present with us.

Number 15, God is present with us. Isn't this wonderful? That this psalm which depicts God in all of His might and all of His power and all of His glory...pictures God with His people...among His people. That's what verses 15-16 are all about...how God has chosen to dwell among His people. David basically does a bit of trash talk with the mountains, saying to Mount Bashan, known as a towering, many-peaked mountain, "You think you're great...but you look with hatred, with envy that God has chosen Mount Zion on which to dwell." And Zion was (and is) virtually a hill in comparison with a mountain like Bashan, but this hill in Jerusalem is the place where God chose to establish His people, and eventually for Solomon to build His temple. Psalm 132:13-14 says, *"The Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place."* God says, *"This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell."*

And that's the point. Mount Bashan may be marked by height, but Mount Zion is marked by holiness, for it is the place in the OT where God chose to dwell among His people...and it basically becomes the focal point for the rest of the psalm. It's the place where the people of God and the enemies of God and, eventually, the kingdoms of the earth will come...symbolically a picture of all the earth ultimately worshiping God, who has revealed Himself to us. So the God who is powerful above us is also the God who is present with us.

Alright, we're getting there...just keep seeing these paintbrushes glide across this portrait of God.

He commands a heavenly army.

Number 16, God commands a heavenly army. Verse 17 depicts God coming to dwell among His people, surrounded by "twice ten thousand," or 20,000, and "thousands upon thousands" of chariots. What a picture! And if this psalm was sung when the people of God brought the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem, you can only imagine the thrill of that scene...as this journey which began at Mount Sinai centuries before with the ark of the covenant, God's presence and power leading His people, now culminates in the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem. So David depicts the presence of God flanked by thousands upon thousands of chariots.

He conquers in earthly victory.

God commands a heavenly army, and, number 17, God conquers in earthly victory. The language in verse 18 refers to God ascending on high, leading a host of all He has captured in His train, and receiving gifts among men, even from among those who rebelled against Him. The picture is likened to an earthly king returning from battle in victory, now encompassed by all the spoils of that victory. You just think about this – and we're reading this history in the book of Numbers right now – but God's people brought out of slavery in Egypt...through wilderness wanderings into the land of Canaan...where they claimed the land

that God had promised to them, conquering pagan nations around them...and now, finally, they are settling here...celebrating the God who has protected His people and conquered their enemies. God commands a heavenly army, and he conquers in earthly victory.

He daily bears our burdens.

Number 18, He daily bears our burdens. Verse 19 – *"Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up"* – oh, isn't that a great verse? So David has recounted centuries of history to this point, but now he transitions to say, "This is not just in the past. God – this same God – daily bears us up." Literally, "Day by day He carries our load." God carries us. "How did we get here?" David asks. God carried us. And He will continue to carry us.

He ultimately saves our souls.

He daily bears our burdens, and, number 19, He ultimately saves our souls. The end of verse 19 says, *"God is our salvation."* The beginning of verse 20 says, *"Our God is a God of salvation, and to God, the Lord, belong deliverances from death."* Yes! God doesn't just daily bear our burdens; He ultimately saves our souls! Not only has God led us in the past...and not only will God carry us in the present...but God will deliver us in the future...ultimately from death.

Oh, brothers and sisters, to get news this week of a brother in our faith family who is looking right at death in the face right now, and to have met with him see the joyful smile on his face! He just doesn't stop smiling. Death can't take away the smile on his face, because he knows the God who ultimately saves his soul...who delivers from death. What confidence we can have in this God! What confidence you can have in this God. What confidence *you* can have in this God!

He is my God and King.

Which leads right to the next one. Number 20. He is my God and King. After recounting God's destruction of His enemies again in verses 21-23, David says in verse 24, *"Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary..."* Did you catch that? He says, *"Your procession is seen, O God,"* and He's referring to the grand, majestic God whom he has described for the last 23 verses, but then, he stops and says, "This is not just the procession of God...this is the procession of *my* God, *my* King, into the sanctuary." This is not just the God and the King over *all*; this is the God and the King over *me*.

There's a sense of pride here, isn't there. I think about the procession of my 6-year-old in kindergarten graduation recently...just seeing him smiling, wearing his kindergarten cap and gown...and I'm thinking, "That's *my* son."

And so the psalmist looks up and essentially says, "The last 23 verses, this God that I've been describing in all of His grandeur and might and beauty and glory...this is *my* God...He is *my* King." There's a personal picture to the psalmist's praise here. Now that doesn't mean he's disconnected Himself from the people of God. Because right after this, he says, *"Bless God in the great congregation, the Lord, O you who are of Israel's fountain!"* And then he begins describing tribes from the north to the south.

He is our God and King.

Which leads to characteristic number 21, He is our God and King. So He's God over me, and He's God over us. He's King over me, and He's King over all.

He draws peoples to Himself.

Which leads to the next characteristic, this one an activity, of God. Number 22, He draws peoples to Himself. God draws people to himself. So David says in verse 28, *"Summon your power, O God, the power, O God, by which you have worked for us."* And you read that, and you begin to think, "What does David want God to do? What does David want God to summon His power for?" And the answer is in the verses that follow.

*Because of your temple at Jerusalem
kings shall bear gifts to you.
Rebuke the beasts that dwell among the reeds,
the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples.
Trample underfoot those who lust after tribute;
scatter the peoples who delight in war.
Nobles shall come from Egypt;
Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God. (Psalm 68:29-31)*

The whole picture is precisely what is prophesied throughout the rest of the Old Testament and into the New Testament...summon Your power to draw kings to worship you. To draw peoples from Egypt and Cush (or Ethiopia) to worship You. This psalm is describing the ingathering of all the nations, all the peoples, to give praise and honor and glory to God. Even the hardest among them. "The beast among the reeds" in verse 30 was basically a nickname for Egypt, the nation that had for centuries oppressed the people of Israel. The "bulls" and "calves" symbolize hostile peoples, both large and small, and the psalmist says, "Summon your power, O God, to draw them to Yourself."

He deserves praise throughout the earth.

He draws peoples to Himself because, number 23, He deserves praise throughout the earth. The psalmist erupts in verse 32, *"O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens."* And the rest of the psalm is addressed to these kingdoms all across the earth, a synonym for the peoples and nations of the world, and David says to all of them, *"Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and whose power is in the skies. Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!"*

Oh, see the connection. It's exactly what the 11:00 gathering saw in Psalm 67...but God dwells among His people...He protects His people...He provides for His people...He shows His power among His people...for a purpose! He gives power and strength to His people so that all the peoples might come and give Him praise.

God doesn't just deserve praise from one people. God deserves praise from all peoples. He deserves praise throughout the earth. And He will get it. That's the whole point of the psalm.

He is the Divine Warrior.

Characteristic number 24, God is the Divine Warrior.

He is the Divine Warrior who is on the move in the world...blessing His people...leading His people...guiding His people...empowering His people...for the sake of His praise among all the peoples. He is caring for orphans and widows and the enslaved and the impoverished...and He is conquering enemies left and right...so that all the nations...all the kingdoms...might know that He is God.

He speaks a dependable Word.

He is the Divine Warrior who (number 25) speaks a dependable Word. Here's what I mean by that...oh, don't miss this! This psalm is reveling the reality that God will be praised among all the peoples. That was the whole point back in verse 11 – look back at it with me – *"The Lord gives the word; the women who announce the news are a great host."* This verse hearkens back to Exodus 15, where, after God delivered His people from Egypt, bringing them out of slavery and across the Red Sea, Miriam the prophetess takes a tambourine in her hand, and all the women go out after her with tambourines and dancing, and they shout, *"Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea"* (Exodus 15:1,21).

God gives the Word...He will conquer...and He will deliver...and He will lead...and He will guide...all things according to His purpose...and so they sing. And now the psalm ends in verse 33: *"To him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice."*

Mark it down, ladies and gentlemen... God is awesome and God is active. He subdues all who rebel against Him and He satisfies all who trust in Him. He is the one true God, the covenant keeping Lord, the Father of the fatherless, the Protector of the widow, the lover of the lonely, the rescuer of the captive, and the provider for the needy. He is sovereign over nature and nations. He is both powerful above us and present with us. He commands a heavenly army filled with thousands upon thousands of chariots, and He comes to conquer in earthly victory. He daily bears our burdens and ultimately saves our souls. This is my God and King. This is our God and King. And mark it down: He will draw the peoples to Himself because He deserves praise throughout the earth. He is the Divine Warrior, and He has spoken a dependable Word.

You say, "How do you know?" We know all these things because Psalm 68 is not the end of this story of this God on the move. For, centuries after this, this awesome God actively came to us in the person of Jesus the Christ.

He subdued demons. He satisfied sinners. The one true God came to His people, announcing, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"* (Luke 4:18-19).

Oh, the One who is all-powerful above us came to be bodily present with us...and He came to conquer. He lived a perfect life, He died a sinner's death, and then He rose from the grave, conquering sin, Satan, and death itself, canceling the debt that stood against men and women. Colossians 2:15 says He nailed that debt to a cross. *"He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them."*

Christ has conquered, and He has said to all who are weary and burdened, "Come to Me, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29). He will bear our burdens today (cast your cares on Him, for He cares for you—1 Peter 5:7) and He will save your soul forever.

The One who is sovereign over nature (the wind and the waves obey His bidding) is sovereign over the nations...and one day *"every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (Philippians 2:10-11).

The Implications for Us...

Give glory to this God.

So what does this mean for us? We see twenty-five attributes/activities of God in Psalm 68 and two mammoth implications for us. One, give glory to this God. "*Sing to this God!*" (Psalm 68:32) "*Sing praises to the Lord, who rides in the heavens.*" (Psalm 68:32-33) "*Ascribe power to God...whose power is in the skies.*" (Psalm 68:34)

Stand in awe of Him. Do not be casual with this God. Do not be complacent with this God. Oh, do not rebel against this God. Confess your sin to this God. Receive mercy from His throne, find salvation from your sin, and experience satisfaction for your soul. Blessed be God.

Give your life to His mission.

Give glory to this God, and give your life to His mission. Oh, don't miss this! God is still on the move. This didn't stop with an ark entering into Jerusalem...or the building of a temple in Mount Zion...for when Jesus came and died, the curtain of that temple was torn in two...and God's presence now dwells in every person on the planet who turns from their sin and trusts in Him.

Christian, the presence – the Spirit – of this God dwells in you. And His Spirit is on the move. He has not saved you from your sin and filled you with His power so that you can sit on the sidelines as a spectator in the church. He has saved you for the salvation of the nations.

Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth, and He has told us, our heavenly commander has charged us: "Go and make disciples of all the nations..." (Matthew 28:19-20). Bring all the kingdoms of the earth, all the nations of the earth, all the peoples of the earth, to praise My Name.

And so we pray...and we give—oh, we give sacrificially...we rearrange our lives so that we can give more to the mission of God—we pray, we give, and we go. We go wherever God leads whenever God moves us...because we love His glory more than we love our lives. And we know...we know...this Divine Warrior has spoken a dependable Word...so we go with total confidence that every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (even the hardest nations, tribes, tongues, and people) will one day gather around the throne of God and give Him the universal praise He is due.

I want you to hear an illustration that I hope will instill that kind of confidence in you. I want to ask Jonathan B. to join me up here, our Global Disciple-Making Pastor. I have asked him to share a story that he recounted to me a few weeks ago...a story that goes back to something he shared many years ago at Brook Hills...and I just want you to hear a story about the Divine Warrior who is on the move...

Pastor Jonathan B.: "Yes, our God is still on the move today. This story began 15 years ago. I was actually backpacking through Northern Vietnam. We were way up in the mountains and hills of Vietnam. We'd flown into the capital and taken an all-night train, then ridden in an all-day bus, then spent three or four days bouncing around in a jeep up in the mountains of Northern Vietnam. We came to this one village on the other side of a muddy river. We scrambled down and yelled across, trying to get somebody to hear us. Somebody came across in a dugout canoe and we teeter-tottered our way back across that river into this little village with thatched-roof huts on stilts. We were scurried into a home

with sixty of our new best friends. All the kids were peeking their faces through the window and the doorway.

"We began to ask questions about what these people believed and tried to understand what they worshipped. We said, 'Do you believe in the Buddha?' which is common in that area. They said, 'No. We don't believe anything like that.' I said, 'What about spirits in the forest?' They said, 'No, nothing like that.' 'Well, what about your fathers and mothers when they die? Do you worship them?' They said, 'No, nothing like that.' So, out of desperation, I thought I'd be kind of smart, and said, 'Well, what makes your crops grow?' They said, 'The rain!' I said, 'Good answer. What makes the rains come?' 'We just hope.' 'Well, what makes the sun come?' 'We just hope.' And out of desperation, we asked, 'You don't believe anything about what happens to you after you die?' And back to the translator came the response, 'No, no one has come and told us about that yet.'

"That's a moment in my life when I realized that I had disconnected the blessings I had received from God from the purpose for which I had been blessed. I've shared that story now for fifteen years and every time I share that story, someone has come up afterwards and said, 'Jonathan, what happened to that village?' And I've had to say, 'I don't know.' We shared the gospel and we later found out that this was an unreached people group with no known believers, previously unclassified. They didn't even know this people group existed. So that's all we knew. We didn't know what happened to that people group or that village until just recently. David always says God's got this whole thing rigged, and it's so true. Through a series of divinely ordained circumstances that we couldn't have brought about, I got an email from our original contact there in Vietnam.

"Let me read to you what they said about what happened next. They said,

'A believer stopped at that village sometime during the next year after you guys had been there. He was evidently on his way to the city to get medical treatment and he felt the Lord lead him to stop there. The good news was shared again and around twenty people believed and a church was born.' Praise God! They went on to say, 'I have no doubt that this was a result of the seeds that were planted and prayers that were raised and the pure grace and faithfulness of our God to bring the Mang to Himself. You see, the Mang are that people group in that village, and not only is there a church in that particular village, there are now a few hundred Mang believers spread across Northern Vietnam.'

"Oh, this is just a window in. One little peek into all that God is doing to bring great glory and honor to Himself. We must have great confidence that God has promised to accomplish His mission, and God will accomplish His mission. And by His grace, He allows you and I—think about that—you and I to participate in the accomplishment of His purpose to be glorified by all peoples everywhere—including this people, the Mang, and those who are yet to hear, because He is gathering a people from every nation, tongue and tribe to glorify His name forevermore."

Pastor David Platt: Give glory to this God, and give your life to His mission. This God is on the move. He's on the move in Birmingham. He's on the move in the nations. So give Him glory and give your life to His mission.

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided that you do not alter it in any way, use the material in its entirety, and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to the media on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Radical.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By David Platt. © David Platt & Radical.
Website: Radical.net