

Psalm 48

In the Exodus reading, mention is made of sacrifices and offerings:

Exodus 10:25 - "And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God."

This psalm is an expansion on that theme, focusing on the Temple and God's presence with his people in Mount Zion in the "city of our God," as well as the impending doom of Israel's enemies.

Elsewhere there is an echo in the days of Messiah and the New Jerusalem.

Isaiah 24:23 - "Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders."

Hebrews 12:22-23 - "...you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to myriads of angels in joyful assembly, to the congregation of the firstborn, enrolled in heaven."

Psalm 48:1 - "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness."

Rashi - sees this as in the days of Messiah: In the future, when He builds His city, He will be great and praised because of it.

Psalm 48:2 - "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."

situation = *nôph*. A word only found here, but explained from a cognate Arabic word to mean elevation. But as an adverb it means "highly beautiful."

Rashi - situation = "The fairest of branches" a city that is a fair branch; an expression of the branches (פני) of a tree. Another explanation: A fair bride, for in the coastal cities they call a bride *ninfe* (*nymphé* in Greek) (R. H. 26a) Mt. Zion was called "the fairest of branches" because it is (near Shem Ephraim) the Mount of Olives. So also agree Luther and Jerome.

The sides of the north - a description of the position of the Temple on Mount Zion, the great King being Messiah.

But Rashi says: The northern side of the altar [was] where sin offerings and guilt offerings were slaughtered, and whoever was grieved because of the sins he had committed would bring a sin offering or a guilt offering, and he would be forgiven. Burnt offerings were also slaughtered here (Leviticus 1:11). The offerer would then emerge happy, and the sacrifices would benefit the entire world. This is also where Ezekiel saw

"to the north of the altar gate was this idol of jealousy at the entrance"(Ezekiel 8:5) which tries to obscure or do away with the Grace which the sacrifices represent.

Psalm 48:3 - "God is known in her palaces [or citadels] for a refuge." [In the days of Messiah according to Rashi]

Psalm 48:4-7 - The "assembled kings" are defeated [Rashi - they will assemble to wage war against Mount Zion in the wars of Gog and Magog.]

This could refer historically to the days of Hezekiah when Sennacherib king of Assyria threatened Jerusalem. "And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria" (**2 Chronicles 32**).

Isaiah 10:8 - "For it (Assyria) says, "Are not my princes all kings?"

Psalm 48:7 - "Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind."

An east wind brought the plague of locusts upon Egypt (**Exodus 10:13**) and God used an east wind to part the Red Sea (**Exodus 14:21**).

Psalm 48:8 - "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it (preserve it) forever. Selah."

Aben Ezra - "the Israelites shall say in that day, as we have heard the prophets, who prophesied of the fall of Gog and Magog, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts."

Psalm 48:10 - "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness."

Rashi - Just as Your name is great, so is Your praise great in everyone's mouth.

Psalm 48:13 - "Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."

Resonates with the admonition in **Exodus 10:2** - "And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt"

Psalm 48:14 - "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

for ever and ever= *olam* - '*elohiym olam* "God of *olam*/eternity"

"he will be our guide" - Jesus is the Way.

John 16:13 - "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all

truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

A strange phrase:

"even unto death" = *Mûwth lab-bên* "to die for the son," possibly the title of a song when it is used in the superscript to **Psalm 9:1**; a word of uncertain authority. The context requires it to mean "eternity, for ever" - Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon

Rashi - or, as a man who leads his young son slowly. Menachem interpreted it as an expression of eternity, and so is its interpretation: will lead us to eternity.