

# God is our Salvation:

*The Rider of the Clouds and the Freeing of the Captives at the Gates of Hell*

**Psalm 68:1** *To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. A Song.*

God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate him shall flee before him!

<sup>2</sup> As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away; as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!

<sup>3</sup> But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!

<sup>4</sup> Sing to God,<sup>1</sup> sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the LORD; exult before him!

<sup>5</sup> Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

<sup>6</sup> God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

<sup>7</sup> O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, Selah

<sup>8</sup> the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel.

<sup>9</sup> Rain in abundance, O God, you shed abroad; you restored your inheritance as it languished;

<sup>10</sup> your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

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<sup>1</sup> Or “Sing, o gods, chant, o his heavens., pave the highway for the Rider of the Clouds!” (Dahood)

<sup>11</sup> The Lord gives the word; the women who announce the news are a great host:

<sup>12</sup> "The kings of the armies--<sup>2</sup> they flee, they flee!" The women at home divide the spoil--

<sup>13</sup> though you men lie among the sheepfolds-- the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with shimmering gold.

<sup>14</sup> When the Almighty scatters kings there, let snow fall on Zalmon.

<sup>15</sup> O mountain of God, mountain of Bashan; O many-peaked mountain, mountain of Bashan!

<sup>16</sup> Why do you look with hatred,<sup>3</sup> O many-peaked mountain, at the mount that God desired for his abode, yes, where the LORD will dwell forever?

<sup>17</sup> The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation.  
Selah

<sup>20</sup> Our God is a God of salvation, and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death.

<sup>21</sup> But God will strike the heads of his enemies, the hairy crown of him who walks in his guilty ways.

<sup>22</sup> The Lord said, "I will bring them back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>23</sup> that you may strike your feet in their blood, that the tongues of your dogs may have their portion from the foe."

<sup>24</sup> Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary--

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<sup>2</sup> Both **vv. 12 and 14**: Possibly poetic for the brighter stars since it describes the cosmic victory Christ won at his first coming (**Amos 5:26**; cf. **Ps 82:7**; **Job 22:12**; and especially **Jdg 5:20-21**). (Dahood)

<sup>3</sup> "Envy" (NAS, Dahood). "Watch stealthily" (Knohl). "This description connotes military ambush, which fits very well with the context of the central section of Ps 68) ... the high mountain is described as taking part in the ambush (see **Jdg 9:25**; **5:20**). The Targum reads, "Why are you dancing," the meaning would be dancing because of their fear due to the arrival of God and his armies (see **68:18**).

<sup>4</sup> Or, "I stifled the Serpent, muzzled the Deep Sea." (Dahood). Day has a lengthy study of why he thinks this is not correct. See **J. Day, God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea**, 114-16.

<sup>25</sup> the singers in front, the musicians last, between them virgins playing tambourines:

<sup>26</sup> "Bless God in the great congregation, the LORD, O you who are of Israel's fountain!"

<sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> Summon your power, O God, the power, O God, by which you have worked for us.

<sup>29</sup> Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings shall bear gifts to you.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> Nobles shall come from Egypt; Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God.

<sup>32</sup> O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord,<sup>5</sup> Selah

<sup>33</sup> to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.

<sup>34</sup> Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and whose power is in the skies.

<sup>35</sup> 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

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# Cosmic Geography and Psalm 68

**SIR CHARLES WARREN.** You've probably never heard of him. He became the head of the **London Metropolitan Police** from 1886-1888. Big deal, right? He became *infamous*

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<sup>5</sup> Or, "O kings of the earth, sing, o gods, sing praises to the Lord!"

as the Commissioner who botched what remains to this day perhaps the most notorious unsolved serial killer case in history—**Jack the Ripper** (Warren actually resigned his office to resume his longstanding military career on the day the last murder took place).<sup>i</sup> Until reading a short biography on him, I knew about Sir Charles from something completely different.<sup>ii</sup> Twenty years earlier he was examining the top of Israel’s highest peak: the 9,232 ft. **Mt. Hermon**, when he found something.

Warren came to Mt. Hermon via the Rock of Gibraltar, where a couple years earlier, he had become a rather famous surveyor in her majesty’s *Corps of Royal Engineers*, creating two 26 ft. long scale models of the city and its famous rock, one of which is still on display in a museum there. Promoted to the rank of Captain for this work, he was sent to the Holy Land on a “reconnaissance” mission to survey and to excavate. His work on the Temple Mount ushered in a new era of Biblical archaeology. But it was his discovery on Mt. Hermon, some 120 miles north of the holy city, that is the most fascinating and relevant to us today.

Before that, let me explain why I want to tell you about this. Imagine for a moment if I started talking about **Mt.**

**Sinai** and **Mt. Zion** as if you knew all about them, when in fact you had never heard of them before. You have no idea that Sinai is where God came to Moses or Zion is where the Temple was placed. Those are incredibly important pieces of information that, because so many have heard the stories so often, they just take for granted. But if you did not know those things, my telling you about these two famous mountains would be about as meaningful as me telling you about Mt. Logan or Mt. Kailash or Mt. Chomolungma or Mt. Haystack. I'm a mountain guy; I've climbed a lot of them, and read even more. Every one is fascinating to me, but to you who have never heard of them ... who cares. Yet, can you imagine saying, "Who cares" about Mt. Sinai or Mt. Zion? That's how you should feel about Hermon by the time we're finished.

So what is it about Mt. Hermon? Everyone in ancient times—and I mean everyone—knew the story. We'll begin with Mr. Warren's discovery. Someone writes, "There is a sacred building made of hewn blocks of stone on the summit of Mount Hermon. Known as Qasr Antar, it was the highest temple of the ancient world, sitting at 2,814 ["meters"] above sea level."<sup>iii</sup> The temple was Roman, but that was

built upon an even earlier Greek temple (which in turn was almost certainly built on even earlier temples).<sup>iv</sup> Warren explains how in the oldest part, “We found a stone 4ft. by 18in. by 12in. with a Greek inscription on the face very roughly cut ... the inscription does not appear to have been noticed by travelers before.”<sup>v</sup> One well-respected scholar dates this inscription to the third century A.D., but as it is stone it could of course be older. It reads,

*kata keleusin theou megistou kai agiou oi omnuontes enteuthen*  
 (“According to the command of the greatest and holy God,  
those who take an oath proceed from here”).<sup>vi</sup>



FIG. 4.—Greek Inscription from Mount Hermon.

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So what? Well, this brief inscription actually tells the saga of Mt. Hermon in one sentence. Some might call it a whopper, but it is 100% biblical. But since other sources tell the stone's story quite overtly, I'm going to do this from two portions of a story that is older (probably far older) than this stone, older even than the NT. This version comes from a book well known to the Apostles, alluded to many times in the NT,<sup>viii</sup> and even quoted directly by the half-brother of our Lord himself.<sup>ix</sup> It held so much weight in those early days that some of the earliest and most revered church fathers even cite it as "Scripture"<sup>x</sup> (though I feel no need to go that far).

Concerning the elect I said, and took up my parable concerning them: **The Holy Great One** will come forth from His dwelling, <sup>4</sup> And the eternal God will tread upon the earth, (even) on Mount Sinai, [[And appear from His camp]] And appear in the strength of His might from the heaven of heavens.<sup>5</sup> And all shall be smitten with fear, And the Watchers shall quake, And great fear and trembling shall seize them unto the ends of the earth.

(1En 1:3-5)

In those days, when the children of man had multiplied, it happened that there were born unto them handsome and beautiful daughters. <sup>2</sup> And the angels [called “Watchers” throughout the book], the children of heaven, saw them and desired them; and they said to one another, “Come, let us choose wives for ourselves from among the daughters of man and beget us children.” <sup>3</sup> And Semyaz, being their leader, said unto them, “I fear that perhaps you will not consent that this deed should be done, and I alone will become (responsible) for this great sin.” <sup>4</sup> But they all responded to him, “Let us all **swear an oath** and bind everyone among us by a curse not to abandon this suggestion but to do the deed.” <sup>5</sup> Then they all **swore together** and bound one another by (the curse). <sup>6</sup> And they were altogether two hundred; and they descended in the days of Jared into 'ArDOS, which is **the summit of Mount Hermon**. And they called the mount Armon [**Hermon**], for they swore and bound one another by a curse [*herem*]. <sup>7</sup> And their names are as follows: [listing 18 angelic names including Azazel, and calling them all “chiefs”].

(1En 6:1-6)

This story sounds familiar because it is 1Enoch's take on **Genesis 6:1-4**. It tells the story of fallen sons of God (i.e. “angels” or “**watchers**,” all the same thing) and their original

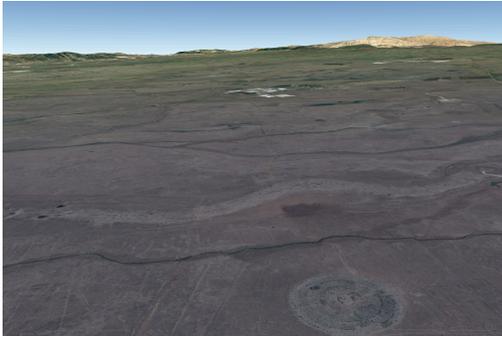
transgression as **it started right there on Mt. Hermon.**<sup>xi</sup> The important thing for us is that almost everything on the inscription, including the taking an oath and proceeding forth from Hermon as well as one of Enoch's favorite titles for deity ("The greatest and holy God") are so easily seen here (see bold above).

This is no coincidence. **The inscription is remembering something truly ancient** that took place at a time that the Bible places prior to the Flood. This story of Mt. Hermon and the coming down to earth of fallen angels upon its summit was known to peoples as diverse as the Israelites, Canaanites, Babylonians, Akkadians, Greeks, Romans, and Christians, even though they were literally thousands of miles apart and sometimes as far from Hermon itself.<sup>xii</sup>

It is even remembered in **the name of Hermon** (הרמון, *hrmn*) which means "devote," and is closely related to a Hebrew word (הרם, *hrm*) used throughout the Bible for OT Holy-War. It the word used whenever Israel "**devotes to destruction**" certain peoples in the OT who are always in some way associated with the events of those days, particularly through the offspring of the unholy union of

angels and women: the **Nephilim** (**Gen 6:4**).<sup>xiii</sup> These same three letters are also the root for the words “sacred” and “forbidden.”<sup>xiv</sup> In Enoch, the word means “curse.” Obviously, the word Hermon all by itself is telling a story.

The Nephilim/Rephaim (giants) are closely related to Hermon because of where they lived. Hermon is the tallest mountain of the **Bashan**—the northern most part of that region (today’s Golan Heights). “**Og king of Bashan, one of the remnant of the Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei and ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and all Bashan to the boundary of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and over half of Gilead to the boundary of Sihon king of Heshbon**” (**Josh 12:4-5**). When a Nephilim (like Og) died, the second temple Jews and early Christians (and for that matter even the Greeks and Canaanites, though they conceived of this a little differently), said that their spirits became the demons.<sup>xv</sup> This land was filled, as Moses tells us (**Deut 2**), with giants. **Psalm 22:12** depicts them as “**strong bulls of Bashan,**”<sup>xvi</sup> which, along with other supernatural beasts, show up in our Psalm (**Ps 68:30**).



Hermon from the "Wheel of Giants" and "Serpent Mound" (Google Earth)



Hermon from the Wheel (Serpent Mound in view)



Some Cows of Bashan Hermon in background

One more important piece of information about Hermon is necessary. We've seen the Roman Temple and the Greek stone inscription. Sometime, perhaps in the third century B.C., the Greeks placed a shrine at the foot of Mt. Hermon. This is different from the one at the top. This shrine was to the satyr (goat) god-demon Pan. This is also intimately related to what we've just talked about.

Do you remember the Day of Atonement and the two goats? One goat was for the LORD. The other was for Azazel, the goat demon (Lev 16:8-10). Azazel just so happens to show up in Enoch and the Genesis 6 story in the Targums as one of the main leaders—perhaps the main leader—of the rebellion.<sup>xvii</sup> In Enoch, Azazel is the tenth(!) of twenty leaders mentioned immediately after we stopped our citation (1En 6:7). He is the other angel mentioned along-

side of Samyaz (Shamhazai) in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Gen 6:4.<sup>xviii</sup>

Through a series of rather sick character trait similarities such as insatiable lust for and assaults on women, skill at warcraft, and taking an active role in divulging secret heavenly knowledge to men, **Pan can be connected directly to Azazel**, the fallen Watcher of 1Enoch, with one scholar calling Pan “**a perfect analog for Azazel.**” All of this makes Mt. Hermon and the area of Bashan not only a mountain brimming with the supernatural, but with profound *supernatural evil*. It is ground zero for it. Though it is beautiful in the eyes of men, one could call the place literally “hell on earth.” In fact, that is exactly how the Canaanites viewed it!

This is **also exactly what our Lord Jesus** does too. Though, I’m not going to tell you any more about this just yet. Instead, I’m telling you all of this other already incredibly strange information because you need to be aware of the history of this place. It is the history of Mt. Hermon that makes our Psalm today not only come alive, but on a more basic level, simply understandable.

Someone has said that Psalm 68 is, “Widely admitted as textually and exegetically the most difficult and obscure of all the psalms.”<sup>xix</sup> Another calls it “among the most difficult psalms to interpret.”<sup>xx</sup> Besides the archaic language, the geography is an example.<sup>xxi</sup> Mt. Hermon shows up three times in our song, except that if you don’t know the history, not only would you not get the point, you wouldn’t even realize it to start. For the word “Hermon” isn’t in the Psalm. The word “Bashan” is. Three times we read about Mt. Bashan, even though there is no such mountain. But through the poetry, Bashan—a place that actually means “the serpent,” and as such its name is also directly linked to the fall of the seraphim (i.e. serpentine-like) angels upon Hermon, is talking about Mt. Hermon.<sup>xxii</sup>

Not only that, this psalm is full of mountains. Sinai. Zion. Another called Zalmon—probably a mountain in the eastern most part of Bashan in Syria is here.<sup>xxiii</sup> What is their purpose? Why are these so many specific mountains in Psalm 68? It is because it is upon these mountains that great cosmic wars between supernatural beings are being fought. This is what Psalm 68 is all about. If you don’t believe in fallen angels or Satan or Jesus’ work as partly doing something

about their tyrannical evil rule, feel free to tune out the rest of the sermon. If you do, hold on to your seat.

## Leading Captivity Captive and the Gates of Hell

Let's begin slowly. Psalm 68 is the last of four songs of praise that form a small unit (Ps 65-68). We looked at 65-67 together last time. But Psalm 68 needs to be done by itself. For one thing, it is quite long—thirty-five verses. It is “to the Choirmaster” or “For the End” (LXX), and in this case this is very much prophetic of something that will come 1,000 years from the time it was first written. It has been called a “triumphal hymn.” It shares much in common with Moses song of the Exodus from Egypt (Ex 15) and Deborah's song of victory over Sisera (Jdg 5). This makes Psalm 68 a military psalm of conquest and victory. And what a victory it tells!

The shape of the poem puts the center of its huge chiasm right around vs. 19 and the “selah.”<sup>xxiv</sup> Indeed, the whole thing is one breathtaking “pause.” On either side of it, vs. 19 ends, “God is our salvation” and vs. 20 begins, “Our God is a God of salvation.” Salvation is thus the key theme of the

poem. But **salvation from what?** This is what I want to proclaim to you today. Its message is one part well-known, one-part nearly forgotten, and all parts glorious. It is part polemical (an attack against someone/thing), part eschatological, and all worshipful. The main character is God, or Yahweh. His enemies are primarily invisible to us: supernatural, heavenly, and evil. Truly, the whole thing should make us pause, then pray, and finally praise God for his power and provision and providence.

As we work our way out from the center, we come to **vs. 18**, one of the most important verses in the song. The verse says, “**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**” (**Ps 68:18**). One of the reasons this verse is so important is because it is quoted in the NT in Ephesians: “**Therefore it says, ‘When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.’**” (**Eph 4:8**). This is the only time in all of Ephesians that he begins an OT quote with a formula (“Therefore it says).” In other words, this is important.

But you will immediately notice there is a big difference. The Psalm says the Lord “**received**” gifts “among” men. The

Apostle says he “gave” gifts “to” men. Does Paul not know his OT? Of course he does. Is this a quote taken badly out of context? Absolutely not. So what is going on? This summary of Ephesians is helpful to understanding Paul’s intention:

Paul’s description of God’s powerful work on behalf of his Gentile readers in 2:11–22 led him in 3:1–21 to pray that God would give them the power to grasp “the breadth and length and height and depth ... of the love of Christ” (3:18–19). This prayer included ... Paul’s divine commission “to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable wealth of Christ” (3:8) and to illumine all people about the mystery that Gentiles and Jews who believe in Christ are one body (3:3–9) ... Paul [then] says that ... Unity and peace should therefore characterize God’s ... church (4:1–6).<sup>xxv</sup>

This is the context into which giving gifts to men arises. Importantly, **these gifts are not “things”** such as “helps” or “prophecy” or “faith” as they are in a place like 1 Corinthians 12. Rather, **these gifts are *people*** (prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers; vs. 11). These people-

gifts are to help the Ephesians understand better God's incredible power and love and the unfathomable wealth they have in Jesus Christ. He is able to give anything he desires to his people. Where did they come from? How are these people-gifts "gotten" by God to then be distributed among the churches? This is the amazing part. And it is all about their salvation. But how? Through a war.

Let's return to the Psalm. Many have made the observation **Psalm 68:18** is similar in theme to Deborah's Song when it sings, "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, break out in a song! Arise, Barak, lead away your captives, O son of Abinoam" (**Jdg 5:12**).<sup>xxvi</sup> So somehow the Psalm verse is harkening back to this great victory and leading captives away in the days of Deborah.

To help us understand this better, the parallel on the other side of the chiasm is, "But God will strike the heads of his enemies, the hairy crown of him who walks in his guilty ways" (**Ps 68:21**). You may not see a parallel, until you realize that this language also comes from Deborah's song. "She sent her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workmen's mallet; she struck Sisera; she crushed his head; she shattered and pierced his temple" (**Jdg 5:26**). The parallel

between Psalm 68:18 and 21 is not linguistic, but conceptual. Both use of the victory in Deborah's song to illuminate a greater victory sung about in the Psalm. It is a victory won by Jesus Christ. It is a crushing of the head (think Gen 3:15) of the serpent through the imagery of the "hairy" head, where "hairy" [*sear*] is a word perhaps deliberately chosen to remind one of Satyrs (*sairim*) like Pan.<sup>xxvii</sup>

The second Judges reference shows us clearly that what is in mind in Psalm 68:18 is the spoils of a war. Dr. Heiser explains,

Psalm 68 gives us a standard description of conquest, known from other ancient texts and even from ancient sculpture and iconography. The victorious captain of the army leads the enemy captives behind him; they are the human booty of war.<sup>xxviii</sup>

But what war is Psalm 68 talking about?

Obviously, it is prophetic, and that's why Paul sees it being fulfilled by Jesus. But Jesus fought in a war? I thought he was a man of peace? Our Lord Jesus came to us as a man

of peace so that he might bring reconciliation between man and God. Upon his return in the Second Coming, he will come as a warrior riding a white horse with his powerful Word as a sword to judge the living and the dead. But this judgment is not confined only to the Second Coming. And peace was not the only reason he came to this earth, even the first time.

You see, at his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension the Lord Jesus was **fighting an invisible war**—invisible to you and I that is. No one realized what he was doing. Not even in heaven. Until it was too late. **Colossians 2:15** explains it to us this way. At the cross, “**He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.**” These “**rulers**” and “**authorities**” are not merely human, but also heavenly. They are the gods of the nations who are over the kings of the earth. They are the fallen angelic entities whose Pearl Harbor moment was way back in Genesis 6 on Mt. Hermon, when they declared war in a kamikaze suicide mission against on Yahweh.

# Transfiguration: Declaration of War against the Watchers

Astonishingly, it was on Mt. Hermon itself that our Lord Jesus announced to *them* who he was. What am I talking about. A little more history. Around 4 B. C., Philip, son of Herod the Great, expanded the grotto to Pan and renamed it. He renamed it after Caesar. He renamed it also, of course, after himself. It became known as **Caesarea Philippi**.

Jesus was making his way to the farthest northern region of his ministry in Israel. It says, “**Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’**” (**Matt 16:13**). A vital question! Peter is the one who answers it saying, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God**” (**16:16**). Peter knows! But Jesus told him that he only knows because the Father in heaven revealed it to him (**17**). An important statement on many levels. Peter had to have the Father do this, because he wouldn’t come to that conclusion on his own. But the Father was not revealing this to very many others ... yet.

Just then, Jesus makes that most famous declaration, “I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (18). What rock? For too long, Christians have fought over this text as if it was talking about Peter as the first Pope (his name means “Rock”) or whether it was Peter’s confession that was the rock (he confessed “Christ” who is “the Rock”). While Peter and his confession are certainly part of all this, what most have not realized is that the text is pointing us to another rock, a very literal rock. They were standing upon it. It was the old grotto to Pan, and at its entrance was a cave that was believed to be the entrance to hell (OT Sheol) itself, because inside was a spring that was thought to be an outlet of the great Deep itself.<sup>xxix</sup> **The gate of hell!**<sup>xxx</sup>



The story concludes by telling us, “Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Matt 16:20-21).

In the very next story, Jesus himself tells a select few that Peter was exactly right. He is THE Son of God. “And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.” What mountain? It is most likely the same mountain they have been sitting under the shadow of at Caesarea Philippi: Mt. Hermon. It is at this spot that Jesus chooses to transfigure himself, showing everyone within eyeshot exactly who he is. Everyone. And there are more there than just Peter, James, and John, as the visitation from Moses and Elijah prove. Who else do you suppose saw this event? Friends, this is the mountain of the Watchers. Even the Babylonians knew that.

Then it says, “And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, ‘Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead’” (Matt 17:9).

This links this story to the previous one, where Jesus said almost exactly the same thing. What’s all this about keeping his identity, his death, and his resurrection a secret? It has to do with why he would transfigure in the first place, and why he would go to this place to do it. And this in turn explains to us Psalm 68.

**The goal was** that by revealing his glory to *all* who could see, at the very gates of hell, that not only would his disciples be encouraged and strengthened, but this would incite the evil angels to kill him before he could accomplish their defeat on earth—not realizing, of course, that it was through killing him that they would meet their defeat! What a plan! And “**None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory**” (1Co 2:8). From that moment on, Jesus makes his way back to Jerusalem where he would be killed.

## The Mountain of God’s Abode

Returning to Psalm 68, let’s again recall that it is **a song about salvation** gained in a military battle. We have now seen that somehow, the Lord Jesus is understood as fighting

a battle and leading a host of captives in his train which become gifts to his church. As we continue making our way out from the middle of the song, we come to [its geography](#). This is [vv. 15-17](#) and [22-23](#).

This is where we run into Bashan, the demonic territory of the ancient world. “[O mountain of God, mountain of Bashan](#)” ([Ps 68:15](#)). It calls Bashan the mountain of God. As there is no Mt. Bashan, which mountain? The “[many-peaked mountain](#)” ([15](#)). This idea fits the Hermon massif perfectly, and it now symbolizes everything about this part of the world. This is the only place in the Bible that says anything remotely like God dwelling on this mountain. We see God’s mountain as Sinai or Zion (and other mountains), but Bashan? In fact, Mt. Hermon was thought to be the place where El met in council with the divine assembly,<sup>xxxix</sup> so the idea of this as the mountain of God is circulating around in the minds of the ancient peoples. But not quite like this Psalm is thinking. What do I mean?

Look at how the idea shifts. “[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?](#)” ([16](#)). Things begin to get a little more difficult in

terms of understanding here. First, which mountain does God desire for his abode? I thought it just said that Bashan was God's mountain? Now that mountain is full of hatred over another mountain? Not quite.

There are all sorts of possibilities with translation, and this is part of the reason the Psalm can be so challenging. All of them end up at the same theological place. God is dwelling supreme on top of his great mountain as Lord of all. The only question is, which mountain does the Psalm say he is choosing to dwell upon? One possibility is **Sinai**: “The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary” (17). This could be translated, “Who created Sinai as his sanctuary” (Dahood). But it seems better to me that the Psalm is remembering the past as a means of helping us understand an even greater future. God isn't going back to Sinai. He came there once, in great power.

At Sinai we read, “The LORD came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand” (Deut 33:2). The Psalm is clearly referring back to this, which is talking about God's

powerful coming in the days of Moses with ten thousands of holy angels to his people in the desert. Earlier, the song sings of it too. “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” (Ps 68:7-8). Sinai was God’s sanctuary, *for a time*. But then he made another mountain his abode.

This was Mt. Zion. Again, while not mentioned by name, it is in mind in this Psalm. God took the people out of the wilderness and eventually brought them into the Promised Land. From here, he established the place for his Name: Jerusalem. He had Solomon build a temple there. The very life of Israel was here (“Israel’s fountain”). Singers and dancers and liturgical procession went here for a thousand years. These are all found in the Psalm (vv. 24-26, 29, etc.). It is because of what Jesus would later do here that the rest of the song can come to pass. But I don’t think Zion is the mountain God desires for his abode in Psalm 68.

Rather, again, I think it is Mt. Hermon. Mt. Hermon is not hating another mountain. It is preparing for a war on *this* mountain. Yahweh is taking back his territory from evil

fallen heavenly beings. What the Psalm is saying is powerful in this regard. Vs. 16's, "Looking with hatred" (the NAS has "envy" and this translation should be ruled out)<sup>xxxii</sup> can be understood by going back to the Deborah song again and thinking about the meaning of the word "looking with hatred." A parallel word means "to watch or wait" with the idea of stealth and ambush. Watchers!

This is certainly a kind of hatred—it is hatred that comes out in war, not envy. For example, "In Judg 9:25 we read that the men of Shechem ambushed men on the mountain tops. Similarly, here the high mountain is described as taking part in the ambush."<sup>xxxiii</sup> In Deborah's song, this is the role that the heavens and stars play. "From heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera" (Jdg 5:20). They ambushed Sisera. But in Psalm 68, they are waiting in ambush for the LORD so that he might not make Hermon his dwelling! It is theirs and they want to keep it.

## The Rider of the Clouds

If the supernatural history of Bashan and Hermon are not enough to convince you, let's look at yet another aspect

of this song. It begins, “God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate him shall flee before him!” (Ps 68:1). He drives them away like smoke and makes them melt like wax (2). His enemies include ALL his enemies, not just human enemies. The lake of fire was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). The last enemy to be destroyed is Death (1Co 15:26). And so on.

The song then commands everyone to “Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is Yahweh; exult before him” (Ps 68:4). This can also be translated as “Sing, o gods, o his heavens, pave the highway for the Rider of the Clouds” (Dahood). It is possible that God is commanding the gods to praise him for what he is about to do, though this is not essential. Either translation is fine. But this idea of riding through the clouds, which is also in vs. 33 (linking the two parts of the psalm together), is *critical* to understand. “To him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice” (on the mighty voice, see Psalm 29).

If you were an ancient Jew reading these verses to a Canaanite, they would instantly erupt in anger. To them,

the cloud-rider is Baal, the supreme son of El the high God. Baal is the cloud-rider, the storm God. His parallel in Greece is Zeus. And he is the OT equivalent of Satan (Beelzebub).<sup>xxxiv</sup> The point is, he and he alone rides the clouds. This “cloud-rider” language is more supernatural language that connects us back to the gates of hell and Hermon.

But in the Bible, the only one who rides the clouds is Yahweh. Psalm 68 is a song about Yahweh who gives “rain in abundance” (9). Yahweh controls the seasons and the weather and the rain, not Baal. This is why Jesus is able to calm the storms! For as we have seen in Paul’s interpretation, “Paul’s words identify Jesus with Yahweh.”<sup>xxxv</sup> Jesus is the God of the whole of Psalm 68, not just one verse.

Jesus is Cloud-Rider Yahweh. He is not the Father (the Father does not ride the clouds. He sits enthroned above them). The Son rides the clouds as they are a kind of chariot that he uses to go back and forth between heaven and earth. This is seen most clearly in Daniel 7. “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days (i.e. the Father) took his seat ... and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days

and was presented before him” (Dan 7:9, 13). As he was presented, he was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him (14).

And this is exactly what is going on in Psalm 68. Who is to praise Yahweh? Everyone! “*But the righteous shall be glad and exult*” (Ps 68:3). Everyone will praise. But not everyone will be glad about it. That belongs to those who are saved. That’s the central theme of the Psalm again. And what kind of people are they?

Yahweh is the “*Father of the fatherless and protector of widows.*” This is “*God in his holy habitation*” (5). A parallel to this is Psalm 82. In that song, the gods of the divine council (which meets on the cosmic mountain) are being judged (Ps 82:1). Why? They show partiality to the wicked (2). They do not give justice to the fatherless or maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute (3). They do not rescue the weak and the needy (4). And because of it, all the foundations of the earth are shaken (5). So what happens in that song? The same thing that happens in Daniel 7 and Psalm 68. “*Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations*” (Ps 82:8). This is exactly what we see

promised in the great Messianic Psalm 2: “The LORD (Yahweh) said to me (Adonai), ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage” (Ps 2:7-8). What is promised in Psalm 2 is prophesied in Psalm 68 and 82 and Daniel 7 and is fulfilled in Jesus Christ who becomes Psalm 89’s covenant witness in the clouds (Ps 89:37).<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Caiaphas had our Lord swear under oath on that fateful (rather predestined) night, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God” (Matt 26:63). Peter’s words now return! Everyone wants to know. Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven” (64). Jesus is the cloud-rider of Psalm 68. Jesus is Yahweh. And what does he do?

Because...

- **Psalm 68:7-9**: He was the one who lead Moses through the desert, going before the people in a pillar of fire, descending upon Sinai and the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, defeating

their enemies as the commander of the armies of the Lord.  
And...

- **Psalm 68:24-28**: He brought his people into the Promised Land where they became princes and throngs and a mighty host worshiping him in his sanctuary.

And because he became a man who...

- **Psalm 68:4-6, 10**: Is the one who comes to the fatherless (John 14:18) and the widows (Mark 12:42-43; Luke 7:12-13); who provides for the needy (Matt 6:2-3; Luke 12:33; Acts 4:34); he set the prisoners free (Luke 4:18); and he judges the rebellious making them live in a parched land (Luke 12:43-45).
- **Psalm 68:11**: Is the one that women sing about as they announce the good news of this Gospel (Luke 2:36-37).
- **Psalm 68:13**: Is the one upon whom the Holy Spirit like a dove descended protecting and empowering him (see Deut 32:10-11 for his same work over Israel).
- **Psalm 68:29**: Is the one kings came bearing gifts to (Matt 2:11).

- **Psalm 68:30**: Is the one who rebukes the satanic leviathan (cf. Ps 74:14; Isa 51:9) and demonic bulls of Bashan (Matt 4:10; Mark 8:33; 9:25; Luke 9:42).
- **Psalm 68:31**: Is the one wiser than Solomon to whom the Queen of Sheba stretched out her hands to God (1Kgs 10:9; Matt 12:42).

Therefore,

- **Psalm 68:12, 14**: He is El Shaddai (God of the Mountain) who defeated the star-king gods, scattering them to let the snow fall on Zalmon.
- **Psalm 68:21**: He is God who strikes the heads of his enemies.
- **Psalm 68:18**: He is Yahweh who ascended on high, leading a host of captives in his train.

And when did he do this? At during those days he was dead. The Apostle says, “**He ascended,**” what does it mean but that he has also descended into the lower regions of the earth” (**Eph 4:10** NAS).<sup>xxxvii</sup> This is where he proclaimed victory to the OT saints and defeat to his satanic enemies as we saw in Psalm 24,<sup>xxxviii</sup> ironically at the very moment they

thought they had won. And now, the Lord Jesus holds the keys to Death and Hades (**Rev 1:18**).

Where did he get those keys? Some saw it this way, “I saw the key-holders and the guards of the gates of hell standing, as large as serpents, with their faces like lamps that have been extinguished, and their eyes aflame, and their teeth naked down to their breasts” (**2En 42:1**). A terrifying idea. But Jesus has conquered sin, Satan, and Sheol the Grave. He rose from the dead. The captives are being set free. “The Lord said, ‘I will bring them back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea’” (**Ps 68:22**). “That you may strike your feet in their blood, that the tongues of your dogs may have their portion from the foe” (**23**). Power over the enemy.

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the

spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

(Luke 10:17-20)

Thus, Christ has given the keys of the kingdom to his church (Matt 16:19).<sup>xxxix</sup> This is just as our Lord told Peter there on Mt. Hermon, that all who hear the Gospel and believe in Christ might be saved by “the God of our salvation who daily bears us up” (Psalm 68:19). Jesus has taken the evil turf that was stolen so long ago by entities that seek your utter ruin. And there’s nothing they can do about it now except rage. For the Lord Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of Lords, supreme over the greatest cosmic mountain of them all, a place of so much evil. And now from his mountain and through his Word, he is making all creation sing his praises.

This is a message that will set you free from their horrible tyranny, forever. Therefore, “O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, Selah ... 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!” (Psa 68:32, 34-35).  
Amen.

<sup>i</sup> See the interesting article by **George Fleming**, “Sir Charles Warren and the Curse of Jack,” in *Jack the Ripper: The Terrible Legacy*, ed. Sue Parry (Stroud: The History Press, 2013).

<sup>ii</sup> Thanks to my friend **Derek Gilbert** for that one.

<sup>iii</sup> “Qasr Antar,” Rachaya Caza (2015), at <https://rashaya.org/qasr-antar/>, last accessed July 4, 2017. 2,814 “feet” is what this Lebanese tourist website says, but this translates into the exact height of Mt. Hermon (9,232 ft.) if it is supposed to be “meters.” Warren said he found the temple at the summit of Mt. Hermon. See **Charles Warren**, “Summit of Hermon,” *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement* 5 (1870): 210–15 [210–44]. At [https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/pefqs/1869-71\\_210.pdf](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/pefqs/1869-71_210.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Warren implies this when he says, “...on the southern peak there is a hole scooped out of the apex, the foot is surrounded by an oval of hewn stones, and at its south end is a Sacellum, or temple, nearly destroyed: the latter appears to be of more recent date than the stone oval, and the mouldings on its cornice appear to be Roman.” This was extremely common to do in the ancient world, as it demonstrated conquest of the foreign gods.” Page 212.

<sup>v</sup> Warren, *ibid.*

<sup>vi</sup> **George W. E. Nickelsburg**, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 247.

<sup>vii</sup> Picture in Professor **Clermont-Ganneau**, M.I., “24. Mount Hermon and its God in an inedited Greek Inscription” [Italics original], *Palestine Exploration Fund: Quarterly Statement* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1903), 137 [135–40]. Translate the stone a little differently, “By the order of the god most great and holy, those who take the oath—hence!” (p. 138). (Note: They had to break the stone in two in order to carry by animal back to Lebanon).

<sup>viii</sup> Allusions to 1 Enoch in the NT include Matt 22:13; 25:31; 26:24; Col 2:3; 1Th 5:3; 1Ti 1:17; Heb 4:13; 12:23; James 3:6; 1 Peter 1:12; 3:19; 2 Pet 3:4; Jude 6, 13, 16; Rev 8:8; 15:3; 19:20; 20:3; and many, many more. See **Michael Heiser**, *Reversing Hermon* (Crane, MO: Defender Pub, 2017), 204–21; also **Steve Delamarter**, *A Scripture Index to Charlesworth’s The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

<sup>ix</sup> Jude 14–15 = 1 Enoch 1:9.

<sup>x</sup> **Barnabas** 16:5–6 (“Scripture”); **Justin Martyr** (inspired but maybe not “scripture”); **Irenaeus** (Holy Spirit inspired), **Tertullian** (“Scripture”), **Origen** (back and forth). See the discussion in Heiser, *Reversing Hermon*, 183–92. The words of **Augustine**, who did not see all of 1 Enoch as Scripture (it is probable that the book had already been lost by his day, for he seems unaware as to the exact portions of Enoch that Jude is quoting), are fascinating in this regard, “We cannot deny that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, left some divine writings, for this is asserted by the

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Apostle Jude in his canonical epistle. But it is not without reason that these writings have no place in that canon of Scripture which was preserved in the temple of the Hebrew people by the diligence of successive priests; for their antiquity brought them under suspicion, and it was impossible to ascertain whether these were his genuine writings, and they were not brought forward as genuine by the persons who were found to have carefully preserved the canonical books by a successive transmission” (Augustine, *City of God* 15.23.4).

<sup>xi</sup> The coordinates of Hermon may play into their choosing of this. It sits as the only spot on earth where a 33<sup>o</sup> latitude and 33<sup>o</sup> longitude (taking Paris as the Prime Meridian) intersect on earth. The Late David Flynn offers detailed analysis of its importance, and while I’m skeptical of his views of a Mars connection, there is no question that whatever the reason Hermon was chosen, the whole thing is incredibly, deeply, and profoundly strange. See **David Flynn**, “2012 Year of Resurrection,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21peeqr-Ejw> and other like lectures he gave on the subject.

<sup>xii</sup> **Going Deeper:** The **Babylonians**, some 750 miles from Hermon as the crow flies and several hundred more if you travel the Fertile Crescent, knew Hermon as the home of the Anunnaki (their name for the Watchers of Enoch). This is found in the oldest surviving piece of ancient literature that we have on earth, the Gilgamesh Epic (See Gilgamesh Epic C: Old Babylonian fragment, *ANET*, 504-05. Discussion in **J. Day**, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* [Cambridge University Press, 1985], 117 and **E. Lipinski**, “El’s Abode. Mythological Traditions Related to Mount Hermon,” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 2 [1971], 15-41.

The **Canaanites** called the entire area Bathan (the equivalent of the Hebrew Bashan). Bathan means “serpent,” and the Canaanites viewed this entire area with deep suspicion as the place of the serpent. (See Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 200 n. 16. Curiously, I have discovered on Google Earth what Dr. Burton told me thinks has the potential to be a serpent mound just .10 of a mile north of the oldest structure in Israel—in ancient Bashan—a place called Gilgal Refaim or the Wheel of the Giants. Finally, while Baal was said to dwell far to the north on the Syrian mountain called Zaphon, Judges 3:3 refers to Hermon as Baal-Hermon. Heiser discusses Hermon in reference to *baal zebul ‘ars* (which becomes Beelzebul). Baal is the OT equivalent of Satan himself and this title means the Lord of the Underworld. See **Heiser**, *Reversing Hermon*, 94-96. We will look at the **Greeks** and **Romans** in the sermon itself.

<sup>xiii</sup> See **Nickelsburg**, 177. The other wordplay in 1En 6:6 is with the words “descend” and “Jared.”

<sup>xiv</sup> **Kelley Coblenz Bautch**, *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17-19: “No One Has Seen What I Have Seen”* (Leiden: Brill, 2003): 62.

<sup>xv</sup> Cf. **Justin Martyr**, *2 Apology* 5; **Origen**, *Against Celsus* 4.92; **Eusebius**, *Preparation for the Gospel* 5.4; **Athenagoras**, *A Plea to Christians* 24; **Testament of Solomon** 2:1, 5; 5:1, 3, 17:1; **Philo**, *On Giants* 6; **1 Enoch 15:8-16:1**. See **Archie T. Wright**, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1-4 in Early Jewish Literature*, A Dissertation at Durham University (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

<sup>xvi</sup> See **Doug Van Dorn**, “The Great Psalm of Messiah” on Psalm 22.

<sup>xvii</sup> His name may be a conflation of this other angel, so that they are the same person, meaning that Azazel was the leader! See **Paul D. Hanson**, “Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6-11,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96.2 (June 1977): 195-233;

Leo Jung, “Fallen Angels in Jewish, Christian, and Mohamedan Literature: A Study in Comparative Folk-Lore,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 16.2 (October 1925): 183- 84; Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels, Including Fallen Angels* (New York: The Free Press, 1967): 265. All cited in Judd H. Burton, *Interview with the Giant: Ethnohistorical Notes on the Nephilim* (Burton Beyond Publicans, 2009), 234 n. 4.

<sup>xviii</sup> See Burton, ch. 3 esp. 19-23.

<sup>xix</sup> Mitchell Dahood S.J., *Psalms II: 51-100: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, vol. 17, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 133.

<sup>xx</sup> Frank S. Thielman, “Ephesians,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson eds., (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 820. Citing also Albright 1950–1951: 7; Weiser 1962: 481; Kraus 1989: 47.

<sup>xxi</sup> Entire papers have been devoted to trying to figure out its geography. For example Israel Knohl, “Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12.15 (2012): 1-21. [http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article\\_177.pdf](http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_177.pdf)

<sup>xxii</sup> Many scholars have made this connection. See Israel Knohl, “Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12.15 (2012): especially 13-15 [1-21]. [http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article\\_177.pdf](http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_177.pdf)

<sup>xxiii</sup> Knohl, 12.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Three separate attempts to see a chiasm all lead to vs. 19 being the turning point, even though those attempts do not break down exactly the same way. Alden sees it this way:

PSALM 68

1-2	A	God scatters the enemy
3	B	The righteous praise God
4	C	“Sing to God, the rider on the clouds/deserts”
5-6	D	In the sanctuary God brings prisoners
7-10	E	God’s people
11	F	Women publish
12	G	Kings flee
13	H	“Wings of a dove”
14-15	I	God scatters to Bashan
16-17	J	God’s mountainous army
18	K	God delivers captives
19	L	Benediction
20	K	God gives escape from death
21	J	God crushes enemies
22	I	God gathers from Bashan
23	H	“Tongue of a dog”
24	G	“My king”
25	F	Damsels play
26-28	E	Four tribes
29-30	D	Kings bring present to God in the temple
31-33	C	“Sing to God in the heavens, to the rider”
34	B	“Ascribe strength to God”
35	A	God strengthens his people

See Robert Alden, “Chiastic Psalms (II): A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 51-100, *JETS* 19.3 (1976): 195-96 [191-200]. *ALittlePerspective* blog sees a chiasm ending in vs. 19, but sees nothing after this. *BiblicalChiasmExchange* has:

A. RIDING UPON THE HEAVENS (1-6 **exceedingly rejoice. Sing, sing praises \ extol him that rideth upon the heavens rejoice God in his holy habitation.**

B. SAVING HIS PEOPLE – CONQUEST OF THE ENEMY (7-14) **was moved at the presence of God, \ Kings \ kings**

C.15-17 **Bashan; Bashan. , in the holy place.**

D.18 **thou hast led captivity captive (ref to Judges 5:12) :**

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E.19 *the God of our salvation. Selah.*

E'.20 *our God is the God of salvation;*

D'.21 **God shall wound the head of his enemies and the hairy scalp (ref to Judges 5:26).**

C'.22 **Bashan, \ in the sanctuary.**

B'. SAVING OF HIS PEOPLE – CONQUEST OF THE ENEMY (25-31) **kings \ scatter thou the people that delight in war.**

A'. RIDING UPON THE HEAVENS (32-35) 32 **Sing \ sing praises \ To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, \ out of thy holy places.**

<sup>xxv</sup> Thielman, 819-20.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Biblicalchiasmexchange has it. So does Thielman (p. 820).

<sup>xxvii</sup> See Douglas Van Dorn, *Giants: Sons of the Gods*, 196; Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 1 (London: Blackie & Son, 1851), 260. One scholar writes, “(v22) hairy skull. There is some biblical evidence that warriors left their hair uncut, perhaps in dedication (compare the Nazirite vow): Jud 5v2; Deut 32v42. Eaton, p172, sees here a subtle allusion to the demonic character of the enemy (Hebrew s’ir, satyr, demon, Isa 34v14; 13v21; 2Chr 11v15; cf s’r, bristle with horror).” Mark Anthony Vincent, “From Sinai to Jerusalem: A Study of the Hebrew Text of Psalm 68,” Durham theses, Durham University (2001), 32 n. 97. (See J. H. Eaton, *Psalms*, Torch Bible Commentaries (London: SCM, 1967).

<sup>xxviii</sup> See Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, First Edition. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 292–294.

<sup>xxix</sup> Lepenski, cited in Mark Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 1*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum Vol LV (New York: Brill, 1994), 228-29.

<sup>xxx</sup> See Burton, “APPENDIX A: STORMING THE GATES OF HELL: JESUS’ GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND RELIGIOUS RATIONALE FOR SELECTING CAESAREA PHILIPPI/BANIAS AS THE VENUE FOR HIS MESSAIANIC REVELATION,” 78-87. One of Heiser’s notes here is good too. Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 200 n. 16.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Edward Lipinski, “El’s Abode: Mythological Traditions Related to Mount hermon and to the Mountains of Armenia,” *Orientalia Lovaniensa Peridica* 2 (1971):13-69.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Knohl, 13.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> See Doug Van Dorn, “Satan, Zeus, Baal, and the Prince of Rome,”

<http://www.dougvandorn.com/Satan%20Zeus%20and%20Baal.pdf>

<sup>xxxv</sup> Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, ibid.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> “Sky” can be translated as “clouds.” See Michael Heiser, “The ‘Witness in the Clouds’: Psalm 89 and the Divine Council,” <http://www.michaelsheiser.com/cloudwitness.pdf>, last accessed July 7, 2017.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> The ESV has “the lower regions, the earth,” meaning that he descended to become a man, which is possible. Also possible is that Paul has in mind the descent to hell where he fought the last battle over death itself and was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. See Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 293-94.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> See, Doug Van Dorn, “Lift Up Your Heads, O Gates!: Who Is This King of Glory,” a sermon on Psalm 24.

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<http://www.rbnc.com/Psalm%2024%20Who%20is%20this%20King%20of%20Glory%20big%20font.pdf>

<sup>xxxix</sup> “Loosing” and “binding” language just here is also fascinating, though we don’t have time to discuss it. Christ has bound the devil so that he might loose his captives, freeing them from the tyranny of Satan, of their sin, and of Death itself. He does this through his church by the power of the Gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit as Christ is proclaimed and faith is granted to the glory of God as the Scripture teaches.