

This psalm seems to be Messianic in nature, looking forward to the Millennial kingdom of the Messiah when He will rule from the temple in Mount Zion. The psalmist celebrates the fact that the LORD is fully capable of defending the city of Jerusalem, the center of the Messiah's kingdom, and rejoices because of the protection that the LORD provides for His people.

A Song *and* Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1 Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, *in* the mountain of his holiness.

“A Song *and* Psalm for the sons of Korah” – The word “song” implies that this psalm is intended to be sung. Specifying that this psalm is both a song and a psalm suggests that psalms might have been intended to be read aloud, perhaps with musical accompaniment, unless otherwise noted. This is another psalm that seems to be intended for the sons of Korah, who apparently were responsible for the music at temple worship services.

“Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, *in* the mountain of his holiness” – Praise is focused on the LORD and His greatness. The psalmist emphasizes a geographic location where this praise should be focused. He specifies “the city of our God” (Jerusalem), and then focuses on the mountain within the city where the temple resided.

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. 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

“Beautiful for situation [*elevation; height*], the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion” – The reference to Mount Zion is primarily referring to the mountain where the temple resides, but also apparently includes the city of Jerusalem where it is located, called “the city of the great King.” The psalmist begins describing mount Zion by speaking of its beauty because of its elevation as well as being the focus of joy for the whole earth because the LORD is there. The temple was on the northern side of the temple mount. This great King can be none other than Jesus Christ.

“God is known in her palaces [*citadel; fortress*] for a refuge [*stronghold*]” – “Her palaces” refers to the fortresses in Jerusalem. Those who occupy these fortresses recognize and trust that God is their true place of refuge and safety.

4 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. 5 They saw *it*, *and* so they marvelled; they were troubled, *and* hasted away. 6 Fear took hold upon them there, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.

“For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together” – The psalmist refers to past times when kings have come against Jerusalem (singly or as a coalition of kings) to conquer the city, but the LORD stood against them so that they had to leave in defeat.

“They saw *it*, *and* so they marvelled [*to be astounded or amazed*]; they were troubled [*disturbed; terrified*], *and* hasted away” – These kings were surprised and amazed by the oftentimes miraculous defense that the LORD made of Jerusalem. They saw that the LORD was defending Jerusalem and so they quickly retreated in fear and shame.

“Fear took hold upon them there, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail” – Their efforts to conquer Jerusalem only resulted in their own fear and harm. They experienced pain like a woman giving birth. The longer they tried to defeat Jerusalem, the more pain they experienced because it was the LORD Who was protecting Jerusalem. This will be especially true during the Millennial reign of Christ. **Rev. 20:7-9** “*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*”

7 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.

Commentators believe that “the ships of Tarshish” refers to some of the best ships made to sail in the Mediterranean Sea in the time of the psalmist. They would be built to survive the severe storms of the Mediterranean. The idea seems to be that the LORD can destroy the best ships that these kings can use to bring their armies against Jerusalem. The east wind would be blowing them away from Jerusalem, indicating the control that the LORD has over the weather and the fact that these kings have no chance of success against Jerusalem.

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 for ever. Selah.

“As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God” – They had heard the promises that the LORD would protect Jerusalem and the record of Him keeping those promises in the past. They had also been eyewitnesses of the LORD's protection of Jerusalem, “the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God.”

“God will establish it for ever. Selah” – God will continue to protect His city forever. Although God allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed more than once in its history due to the sin of the people, it has always been rebuilt. When Christ takes His earthly throne in Jerusalem during His millennial kingdom, the city will be under His protection. Then when the New Jerusalem comes down (Rev. 21:2-4, 27), it will be established as a city of eternal peace forever.

9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

When they go to the temple to worship the LORD, they are reminded of His “lovingkindness” (Hebrew: “goodness; kindness; faithfulness”). They think of how the LORD has shown lovingkindness in the past and His promises to continue to show it in the future. As they think about this, it prompts them to worship and praise the LORD that much more.

10 According to thy name, O God, so *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness. 11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

“According to thy name, O God, so *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth” – This could be rephrased as “Just as your name reaches the ends of the earth, so also does your praise.” God’s name and influence encompasses the entire earth and in the same way His praise can be heard throughout the whole earth. This will certainly be true during the millennial kingdom when people from the ends of the earth will come to Jerusalem to worship Christ.

“thy right hand is full of righteousness” – The right hand is an OT expression referring to someone’s strongest or dominant hand (since most people are right handed). It is will His strongest hand that the LORD exerts His righteousness. He does not do wickedness or evil with His right hand (or His left). Christ will enforce righteousness in His millennial kingdom.

“Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments [to decide a case; justice]” – The city of Jerusalem, as well as the surrounding regions and cities in Judah, will rejoice because of the judgments of the LORD. Since judgments are when the LORD renders justice to the righteous and the wicked, the people of Jerusalem and Judah rejoice in the LORD’s judgments because they will be vindicated and rescued from their enemies. Christ’s millennial kingdom will certainly be a time of justice for the righteous.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. 13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell *it* to the generation following.

“Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell [to count] the towers thereof” – The psalmist is inviting us to walk around the city of Jerusalem and take note of how many towers there are on the wall. He is wanting us to see the defenses the LORD has provided for the city.

“Mark [set your mind to] ye well her bulwarks [entrenchment; rampart; defensive structure], consider her palaces [fortress]” – As you are walking around the city of Jerusalem, the psalmist is wanting us to recognize all the defenses that the city has.

“that ye may tell *it* to the generation following” – We are to recognize the defenses so that we can tell our descendants about them so that they will learn to trust in God. Then they can see how good the LORD has been to Jerusalem to have given the city such security.

14 For this God *is* our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death.

“For this God *is* our God for ever and ever” – The psalmist reminds us of the ultimate source of Jerusalem’s security and defenses: The LORD God. He will be the God of Judah forever and it is in Him that we trust for our ultimate defense.

“he will be our guide [one who leads] *even* unto death” – We will follow the leadership of God until the day we die.