

Psalm 48: Jerusalem



Psalm 48 (47) (Mode 2. 5...31 / 4.....32)

- a psalm of praise and thanks to God for the beauty and power of Jerusalem ['Zion'], the city chosen by God to bring about God's justice on the earth.

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise
in the city of our God.

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in the city of our God.

[yapeh - see Jaffa (Joppa)]

God's holy mountain rises in beauty,
the crowning joy of all the earth.

Mount Zaphon is located near the mouth of the Orontes River in Northern Syria. It was the sacred mountain of the storm god Baal-Hadad in ancient Canaanite mythology, the Canaanite equivalent of Mount Olympus for the Greeks.

Mount Zion, true pole of the earth,
city of the great King.

God, in the midst of its citadels
Is its sure defence.

Mount Zion, joy of all the earth

‘Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth?’(Lamentations 2:15).

‘I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age’(Isaiah 60:15).

‘Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight’(Isaiah 65:18).

‘Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her’(Isaiah 66:10).

‘Their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes and their heart’s affection’(Ezekiel 24:25).

God, in the midst of its citadels, is its sure defence.

‘YHWH is a stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble’(Psalm 9:9).

‘YHWH is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my
God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the
horn of my salvation, my stronghold’(Psalm 18:2).

‘God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress;
I shall never be shaken’(Psalm 62:2, 6).

‘YHWH has become my stronghold,
and my God the rock of my refuge’(Psalm 94:22).

‘My rock and my fortress, my stronghold and my
deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge’(Psalm 144:2).

Look, the kings are assembling,
they advance together.

As soon as they see it, they are astounded;
they panic, and take to flight.

Trembling takes hold of them,
like the pangs of a woman in labour,
as when the east wind causes shipwreck
to a merchant fleet.

Ships of Tarshish

- Maritime powers in the Aegean (Genesis 10:4)
- Tartessus (Spain)

As we have heard, so we have seen:
this is the city of the Lord of hosts,
the city of our God,
who has established it for ever.

In your temple, O God,
we ponder your love.

Your praise, O God, like your reputation,
reaches to the ends of the earth.

Your right hand is filled with justice.
May Mount Zion be glad.
At the sight of your judgments
may the towns of Judah rejoice.

Walk through Zion, walk all around it,
count its towers, admire its ramparts,
take note of its citadels,
that you may tell the next generation:
'This is God, our eternal God,
who is for ever our guide.'

Jerusalem: symbol of the Church

‘Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish’(Ephesians 5:25-27).

‘On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it’(Matthew 16:18).

Jerusalem: symbol of the Church

‘I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband’(Revelation 21:2).

‘I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb’(Revelation 21:22).