

# I will be unto her a wall of fire round about.

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[ 0 : 00 ] Psalm 48, and reading from the middle of verse 8, singing to the end.

In our God's city, which his hand forever established will, we of thy lovingkindness sought, Lord, in thy temple still.

O Lord, according to thy name, through all the earth thy praise, and thy right hand, O Lord, is full of righteousness always. Because thy judgments are made known, let Zion mount rejoice.

Of Judah let the daughters all send forth a cheerful noise, a cheerful voice. Walk about Zion, and go round the high towers thereof tell.

Consider ye her palaces, and mark her bulwarks well, that ye may tell posterity. For this God doth abide, O God, forevermore.

[ 1 : 05 ] He will even unto death us guide. You can sing these verses, Psalm 48, from the middle of verse 8. In our God's city, which his hand forever established will.

Amen. In our God's city, which his hand forever established will.

We of thy lovingkindness sought, Lord, in thy temple still.

O Lord, according to thy name, through all the earth thy praise, and thy right hand, O Lord, and your great and that that Father here hints for it.

Har Searching from heaven who vi■■■■. O Lord, according to thy righteousness, Ogli, O Lord, O Lord, Franken■■■■■, has its name, Because thy judgments are made known, let Zion mount rejoice.

[ 2 : 56 ] All Judah led the daughters of, Send forth the cheerful eyes.

Walk about Zion and go round, The high doors that all the jam, Concedent ye harp our voices, And mark the bullards well, That ye may tell proserge, For this God doth abide, Our God forevermore,

He will even unto the deserts again. We can turn back to the passage read in the Old Testament Scriptures, The book of the prophet Zechariah, In chapter 2.

And we can read again, At verse 3. And behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, And another angel went out to meet him, And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, Saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited, As towns without walls, For the multitude of men and cattle therein.

For I, saith the Lord, Will be unto her A wall of fire round about, And will be the glory In the midst of her.

[ 5 : 26 ] For I, saith the Lord, Will be unto her A wall of fire round about, And will be the glory In the midst of her. Well, I'm sure you all know The background To this prophecy.

The name Zechariah Is a common name Within the Scriptures. I think one of the commentators Said that You'll find 30 mentions Of the name Zechariah In various parts of the Old Testament And the New Testament.

And it simply means One whom Jehovah remembers. Which I'm sure is Apposite, it's appropriate.

Given the circumstances That govern The prophecy that is here. The prophet himself Is described to us In the opening verses Of the prophecy As the son of Berechiah The son of Edo The prophet Saying.

And from that description It is thought that Edo Was Zechariah's grandfather.

[ 7 : 23 ] Berechiah His father Possibly Died When Zechariah Was Either a child Or a very young man And he was Raised By Edo Edo We don't really know An awful lot about him But if it is The same person You'll find mention Made of him In the book of Nehemiah That describes to us Some of the ones Who returned From the captivity Of Babylon.

He is For All purposes This evening He is Somebody Who is a Contemporary Of Haggai And The divines Again Theologians Tell us That According to The dating Of these Passages There is About six months Between Them taking Office Haggai Beginning his Ministry And then Followed By Zechariah But The Closeness Of Their Calling Is also Replicated In the Ministry That they Were Given They were To Deal With Those Who Were Returning From Captivity

And When the People of Judah Returned From Captivity We Know That Initially There was A time Of Celebration A time Of Rejoicing A time Of Energy And Excitement About Being Being Able To Return And Being Able To Re-establish The Name Of God Within The Territory That Was Once Their Possession However Reading This If you Can Bring Together The Various Accounts That We Have The Book Of Prophet Haggai Go Back Earlier To Ezra And Nehemiah You'll Find There Various

Strands Of Of Information That Tell You How Rapidly The Enthusiasm Evaporated And Possibly There Are Many Reasons For That Many Obvious Reasons I Suppose And You You Could Easily Put Yourself In Their Shoes As They Come Back They Don't Come Back As An Entity They Come Back Piecemeal They Come Back In Less Numbers Than Went Away And What They Find In Need Of Restoration Is Something That Deflates In Very Easily An Example Of That Is Found In The Book Of Ezra

When The The People Begin To Build The Temple And They You Have Two Diametrically Opposed Expressions Of Of Emotion When The Builders Laid The Foundation Of The Temple Of The Lord They Set The Priests In Their Appalach With Trumpets And The Levites The Sons Of Asaph With Symbols To Praise The Lord After The Ordinance Of David King Of Israel And They Sang Together By Cors In Praising And Giving Thanks And To The Lord Because He Is Good For His Mercy Endureth Forever Toward Israel And All The People Shouted With A Great Shout When They Praised The Lord Because

[ 12 : 05 ] The Foundation Of The House Of The Lord Was Laid You Can Understand Why That Was The Case It's A Great Thing That They Had Undertaken And To See The Foundation Laid But Then You Have This Statement But Many Of The Priests And Levites And Chief Of The Fathers Who Were Ancient Men That Had Seen The First House When The Foundations Of This House Was Laid Before Their Eyes Wept With A Loud Voice And Many Shouted Allowed For Joy So That The People Could Not Descern The Noise Of The Shout Of Joy From The Noise Of The Weeping Of The People For The People Shouted With A Loud Shout And The Noise Was Heard Far Of And It

Seems A bit Strange Does It Not That On One Hand You Have This Great Celebration And Then On The Other Hand There Are Those Who Are Deflated By What They See And I Think There's There's A lesson There Which We Need To Remind Ourselves Of That It Is Quite Proper For To Expect The Lord To Do Great Things And To Anticipate That He Will Still Do Great Things But We Must Also Be Aware That When He Works Whatever His Work Is It May Not Necessarily Compare To What We Have Seen Before Or What We Have Heard Of Before And

That Should Not Make Us Think That It Is Not God's Work Sometimes In The Experience Of God's People When They Come To Know The Lord Their Own Experiences Is What Matters Most And They Remember How It Was For Them And They Use That As A Measuring Stick To Compare Their Experience With The Experience Of Others But That Is That Is Not What Matters Where Did Their Experience Take Them Is What Matters There Are Some Who Are Able To Speak About Dramatic Conversions And Phenomena That Are Unusual And That Others Have Little Understanding Of Whereas Some Heard

This Still Small Voice And Came To Put Their Trust In Christ In A Less Dramatic Way In A Less Observable Way But The End Product Was The Same So That Can Happen At Individual Lands We Need To Be Aware Of Of It And To Be Forewarned Against Thinking That Because These Other Lesser Experiences Are Insignificant In Comparison With The Damascus Road Encounter Of Paul Nevertheless If God Is In It That's What Matter But You Can Understand Why They Were So Affected By By What They Saw And It Did Affect

Them It Evaporated Their Seel For Example It Spoiled Them With Regards To The Work That They Were Doing Some Of The Words That Are Descriptive Of The Spiritual Condition Tell Us That Some Say They Were Depressed Spiritually Some Say They Were Distressed Spiritually Some Say That That Itself Led Them Into Being A Pathetic That They Thought Well What's The Point What We're Doing Today Can't Compare To What Was Done Before And God Was In That So How Can We Think That God Is In What We Do And What Was The Outcome Of That Well The Outcome For Them Was Tragic Because For 20 Years

[17:07] They Did Nothing For 20 Years They Stopped Doing Anything They Began And They Stopped And That Itself Is Something That That Was Tragic For Them Because God Condemned Them For It God Judged Them For It And Part Of The Ministry Of Haggai And Part Of The Ministry Of Zechariah Was To Deal With These People And Interpret The Providences In Which God Was Speaking To Them And Telling Them That It Wasn't For Them To Judge How God Should Work But For Them To Do The Work That God Had Given Them To Do And That's The Background To What We Have Before Us Here That The Same God Who Was Responsible For Building

The Temple Originally The Same God Who Who Permitted In Fact Ordained Their Being Brought Into Bondage Because Of Their Declension Is The Same God Who Has Never Brought Them Back And To Insist That They Begin To Rebuild The Broken Walls And To Re-establish The Worship That Has Been Neglected So He Through The Prophet Reminds Them Of Who He Is Reminds Them Of Who They Are And Reminds Them Of The Promises Formerly Made That Are Being Repeated To Them Of His Intentions For Them And That's Something That We Have To Guard Against As Well Because While We May Think That The Current Spiritual

Declension That Marks Us Out As A Nation And The Apathy That Is Clearly Evident Even Within The Experience Of God's People We Have To Remind Ourselves That God Is Working God Is Speaking To Us Through His Word God Is Encouraging Us He Is Rebuking Us He Is Correcting Us He Is Challenging Us As A People To Respond To Him In His Word And To Be Obedient To The Truth That He Has Revealed To Us So What Do We Have In This Passage We Have A Prophecy Of A City Without Walls Now The The The Context The Mid-year Context We

See That The Prophet Comes With Several Visions One After The Other I Think There's Seven Or Eight Visions And This Is The Third One And It's Not An Easy Vision To Interpret Because Of The Way That It Is Set Out For Us Behold I Lifted Up My Eyes Again And Looked And Behold A Man With A Measuring Line In His Hand And Is It The Prophet That Looks And Sees The Man And The Man We are Told Is Asked The Question Whether Goes Thou And He Responds I'm Going To Measure Jerusalem To See What Is The Bread Thereof And What Is The Lent Thereof And Then The Man Is Described As An Angel The Angel That

Talked With Me Went Forth And Then Another Angel Went Out To Meet Him And Said Unto Run Speak To This Young Man Saying Jerusalem Shall Be Inhabited As Towns Without Walls For The Multitude Of Men And Cattle Therein That's Not Straight Forward But What You Need To Govern Your Thinking With Is To Remind Yourself It Is A Vision Given To The Prophet And Through The Vision He Is Able To Speak God's Word To The People And It Is God's Word Through The Vision That Needs To Be Focused Upon The The Elements That The Construction Is Made Up Of Is Not What's Of The Ultimate Import But

[ 22:13 ] There Are Various Opinions And You Know Some People Say That There Are Two Angels And That One Angel Is Sent To Interpret The Message That The First Angel Comes With And The Dialogue That Is Entered Into Is Simply To Reveal The Truth Of God That Is Communicated Through The Angels And If It Is Communicating The Purposes Of God Then That Is What We Need To Discover But We Are Given A Description Of A City Without Walls And That Is Something That Is Difficult For Us To Envisage Because Naturally Speaking A City Has Boundaries Defined Boundaries If You Want To Understand What A City Is You Understand That It Is A Larger

Conglomeration Of Peoples And They Are Gathered Together And Usually Although It Is Not Specified Here It Is A Place That Is Fortified Some Cities Are Designated Or Recognized As Fortified Cities In Other Words They Have Boundaries Around Them That Are Physical And That Are Designed To Keep In The South But A City By Its Very Nature Is Something That Gathers The Peoples Together And There Are Defined Boundaries And There Usually Are Walls And Jerusalem Clearly Had Walls To Keep Not Just Enemies Out But Predators And Wild Animals But The Description

That We Are Given Here Is A Description Of A City That Doesn't Have These Boundaries It Goes Beyond What Is Defined Some Of The Commentators Say Well What's Important To The Believer Is The Temple That They Are Building And That's What's At The Heart Of The Message That The Prophet Is Coming With But The Temple Is Not Mentioned But If It Is A Temple That's Important And It Is Not Mentioned Even Without Mentioning It You Know That At The Heart Of The City Is The Temple And The Temple Itself That's Being Reconstructed Is Exposed If The Walls Of The City Are Not There And It Means That It's Just Opening Yourself Out To It

Being Destroyed Yet Again But We Need To Bring To Bear Upon Our Thoughts The Background And What Is In The Background Is That This Is A Remnant That Have Returned The Word Remnant Tells You That It Is An Insignificant Number In Comparison With The Group That Were Brought Into Bondage And The Remnant Is Just A Small Group Of People And Because Of Their Smallness And Because Of The Relative Smallness Of The Work That Is Being Done They Are Open To Being Disheartened And What Is More Disheartening Is That The The Work That Is Being Done Is

Exposed But God Speaks To Them In Their Confusion God Speaks To Them In Their Weakness And Tells Them That The Work That He Is Doing He Is Building The City And It Is A City Without Walls In The Sense That It Is Going To Go Beyond Any Fixed Boundary That Is Why The Measuring Line In The Hand Of This Man Is A Futile Exercise Because How Can You Measure The Immeasurable And That Is What God Means To Understand That Is What He Means People To Understand What He Is Building Cannot Be Contained What He Is Building Is Not Meant To Be Identified In A Way That You Could

[ 27:15 ] With A Measuring Line And Is That Not A Question That Features Repeatedly In The Experience Of The Church Of Christ It's All Important If God Is Working Surely The Work That He Is Doing Is To Be Seen And And If It's A Worth Work Then That Work Will Be In Evidence For Its Magnitude For Its Greatness But If He Is Not That Work Then You Won't Be Able To See It But God Is Saying What I Am Doing You Can't Measure You Can't You Can't See Where This Work Is Going To End Professor John L.

Mackay In His Own Comments He And This Is A Problem That We Have With Many Prophecies How Are These Prophecies Meant To Be Understood Is It A Contemporary Prophecy Contemporary Contemporaneous With Haggai And With Zechariah Meant To Be Fulfilled In The Short Hell So That The People Who Are Down Hearted Distressed And Apathetic Are Going To Be Mobilized And Strengthened To Work And See The Evidence Of The Work And The Fruit Of That Work Instantly All How And

In Boy be seen in the immediate some say the fulfillment of this prophecy has to be understood as being fulfilled in the coming of the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ that's when it really is to be understood that the Lord Jesus is going to come and John L. MacKay says Jerusalem was the Old Testament embodiment of the people of God the fulfillment of the promises that are declared concerning them are to be seen as being fulfilled in a more glorious way because the New Testament church is not confined within the boundaries of one nation but he adds to that if we consider the future glory of the church as described in Revelation 7 and there the church is not just the New Testament church as it develops after the birth and death of the Lord Jesus Christ as after the outpouring of the Spirit as the church begins to include the Gentile nations but it needs to go beyond that to the eschatological realization of that when the whole of the church is gathered in if you go and read Revelation 7 and you'll find there that the Lord Jesus Christ is seen as at the heart of his church and that church is a church that that is universal in its identity this I beheld and lo a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the Lamb clothed with white robes and palms in their hands and cried with a loud voice saying salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb and so on that goes beyond the current generation it goes into the realized eschatology where the fullness of God's glory is declared when the church in its whole wholeness is brought in from the four corners of the earth it speaks as we need to understand that you know this is not a prophecy unique to Zechariah this is not a declaration that Zechariah alone speaks about because all of the prophets in a measure spoke about what was anticipated here as a result of God's work that they needed to to have their eye on greater glory than they anticipated and if anything this was one of the flaws with the

Judaism of the Old Testament they limited God's work to their own belief system whereas God was saying the gospel was going to expand beyond that but he tells them as well not only is this a city without walls God was going to be a wall of fire round above it and God is speaking using metaphors that they can understand because they are familiar with who he is although they have forgotten it they may have gone into bondage they may have gone into Babylon and they may have embraced much of the doctrines of idolatrous practices there but that doesn't mean that they had not been taught about the ways of God and what

God had done in the history of his people and one of the things that they would know about him was that he took his people out of Egypt and that he led them into the wilderness and he led them through the wilderness and his presence as we shall see amongst them was recognisable as the wall of fire that directed them at night and the pillar of fire of smoke that directed them during the day he it was not just a guidance system to them although that was part of it it was also a protection to them because when their enemies intruded into their near presence God came between them and hid them from sight they could not see the enemy could not see them because God came between them and then we read this in

[ 34 : 58 ] Exodus 14 and Exodus 13 the role of God was their preserver he was somebody who was a wall of fire around them and when he is saying this to his people he is reminding them of who he is and what they mean to him later on in this chapter he says to them that his people are looked upon as the apple of his eye is that not encouraging to God's people who feel threatened and vulnerable and alone feel victimized but that is the promise that God gives to them there are many who have universally applied this as being a church without walls meaning that everybody belongs to it a wrong form of universal application because they say Christ died for all but if you go to that passage in revelations you'll find that the church in revelation that are enjoying the presence of

Christ and the glory of God in his presence there are those who are excluded from it there are those who are not permitted to go in and to experience that God insists upon it chapter 20 we read in revelations there whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire it's not everybody who gets into the near presence of God those who lie and those who are fornicators and those who are in the grip of any kind of vice but God we are told finally is the glory in the midst he is the glory in the midst of her and again that takes you back surely to the experience of the old church the experience of God's people where God made his presence known where God introduced himself to them by presenting himself in the

Shekinah glory for example some of the older commentators say that this is one of the things that was lacking when those who were away in Babylon returned even when the temple was being rebuilt what belonged to the glory of the temple was the presence of the Lord known to them exposed to them but this was lacking this was missing because the sins of their fathers had caused God to hide his face from them and his presence to them according to Calvin partially and most gloriously fulfilled is the coming of the God man but fully realized truly in the new

Jerusalem the real happiness is Calvin of Jerusalem within and without will be in no alone and in my favor within you are in the midst of and I will be for her glory in me alone God's glory within and without and that is what the church are promised realized in full in the new Jerusalem I believe that you know there are some promises that may be partially fulfilled in the experience of the Old Testament church even partially fulfilled in the New Testament experience of the church but there are things that are still to be fully realized they are promised and their promises are yea and amen in Christ and yet in their fullness they are still to be experienced well may God help us to appreciate how sensitive he is to the vulnerabilities of his people especially when they are exposed to thoughts that make them think that what once was would be no more the glories that once were so much in evidence will never be recovered but it was

God who brought these glories in the first instance it was God who was responsible for taking them away because they were guilty of abuses and guilty of declensions but the same God who brought them into their experience is well able to bring them back again to experience the like or greater still and he will yet no doubt and that's what we believe when the God bless these thoughts let us pray Lord of God forgive our doubtfulness our lack of belief our succumbing to the disbelief of a generation that have no experience of God and no experience of the glory of

[ 41 : 55 ] God or no desire for that experience of God Lord spare us succumbing to these sinful inclinations and falling prey to the lethargy of spirit that would keep us from pressing upon the grace that is yours to unveil your face once again and pour your spirit out upon us not because of our deserving but because of your mercy in Christ hear our petitions and forgive our sins in Jesus Amen we'll conclude singing from Psalm 68 in Gaelic the last two verses of the Psalm Psalm 68 the last two verses to read the last verse of Israel who come to the last people will be wherein will whisper war

Israel and see the end Jesus underage his religiously within Israel.

in Iloghana that Cherish Dias and Ed von Second Honour to betray his son, regret him, Shoe he was them.

Second Honour to betray his■, That melody provided him with only winding down.

■■■■■ Thank you.

[ 45 : 38 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.