

God is With Us - Psalm 68

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[0 : 0 0] Tell your Bibles if you would and turn with me to Psalm chapter 68, the 68th Psalm in your Bible. It's an exciting Psalm. It's a Psalm almost like it was made for the beginning of 2021.

Now, before I preach it, I just want to talk to you about it a little bit. And I want you to just take your Bible and follow along. We'll show you some wonderful things. I really battled about, well, not to preach this in three or four messages, and so it may end up being a lot.

But watch this. If you have your Bible open, Psalm 68, go with me if you would, to verse 1. Let God arise. Look at that. Now, I don't know if you know what's going on there, but let me take you back in time.

Let you understand what's happening. You see, the way it worked for the Jewish people, and this was Israel, and this is the Old Testament, and they had come out of Egypt.

He had rescued them from slavery. He brought them across the Red Sea. He had gotten them to the wilderness, and they were on their way to the Promised Land. But when God took them out of Egypt, he did something extremely special.

[1 : 1 0] He put this big pillar of fire and a cloud, and it was like his presence for them. It was like God came down, and they could literally see there he is.

You could wake up in the morning and look out there and say, still here. Still here. He hadn't gone anywhere. And what happened was, later on, they'll build the ark.

That'll be in the book of Exodus and Leviticus. They'll build the ark, and the sacrificial system will be set up. But the nation of Israel had a rule. Don't move unless God moves.

That's a good rule. Amen? Amen? It's not for us. We don't have that pillar of cloud or that pillar of fire, but we do have all of that and more through the promises of the Word of God.

And you're stepping out into a new year if you just kind of think like a Jewish person in the Old Testament, and he gives you a picture so you kind of understand it. The point was, are you ready?

[2 : 1 3] It was the presence of God. Have you got your Bible open? I'm going to show you. We'll just jump around a little bit here. Skip down, if you would, to verse 7. And in verse 7, I want you to know, you went before.

You went before. Now, you know what that is. That's that pillar of cloud or fire, and he went before. So, when they'd wake up in the morning, now, wait a minute, look at him and listen to me.

Moses usually would warn them, got to go tell Moses, going to be moving the people tomorrow. And Moses would get up and say, hey, we'll be moving tomorrow. But they didn't have to wonder if Moses was right or not, because when they got up, the cloud got up and started out.

And when the cloud started out, they was like, better get her in gear, buddy. God's marching on. And so they went marching on, and God went before them. Still got your Bible open, if you would. Look down into the last part of that same verse.

Thou didst march through the wilderness. He marched through the wilderness. God was leading them in their everyday life. God was leading them.

- [3 : 21] I'll give you a hint. If you get the New Testament, you'll find out he'll never leave us nor forsake us. If you get the New Testament, you'll find out that he'll lead us and guide us. And so this is nothing new.
- We just got a picture in the Old Testament of what God will do in the New Testament. So in your life, you're stepping out into 2021. And you need to know this.
- God will go before us. God will take care of us. God will be there. And God will do a work in our lives. I want you to go down to verse 8.
- Because I'm talking to you just briefly about the presence. Verse 8. So here's what the psalmist is saying.
- He's saying, boy, when God's with you, he can do anything. He can lead you and guide you and protect you. He can move mountains if they need to be moved.
- [4 : 31] You might have heard about that in the New Testament. Jesus said, pray and ask me. And right here, God's like, hey, I've been moving mountains for a long time. Not a big deal to me. I created the world in six days.
- Go down to verse 17. I just love this. I want you to know as you step out into 2021, you go back to work tomorrow, I suppose. The Lord's among you.
- Look, if you would, in verse 17. The chariots of God are 20,000, even thousands of angels. And the Lord is among them. Underline.
- The Lord is among them, as in Sinai and the holy place. It's just another way of saying, don't worry, Israel. Israel, God's with you.
- Don't worry, Israel. God is with you. And let me just tell you, for you, don't worry. God is with us. He's with us as a church.
- [5 : 25] He's with you as a family. And he's with you as an individual. If you're born again and you know Jesus Christ is your savior, all the promises of the word of God are yours. God is just waiting on you to believe him and trust him.
- And he's going to step out into 2021 with you. He's going to lead you and guide you and protect you. I'll get around to this in a minute, maybe. Because I don't know if I'm going to get there or not.
- Go back to verse 1. Now, this is a, are you ready? This is a millennial psalm. That means it's about the time when Jesus will come back and set up his kingdom.
- And it's, there's, I'll, I'll, if we get to it today or another time, I'll prove it to you. But I want you to catch on to something. You are not too smart.
- And you are not as capable as you think you are. But you serve this God who is awesome. You serve this God who is beyond imagination and power and ability.
- [6 : 29] And so it says, let God arise. Let his enemies be scattered. A lot of things think on that there. Let his enemies be scattered. This isn't about you trying to get even with your neighbor who mowed part of your grass and cut one of your tulips.
- It's not about that. It's let the enemies of God be scattered. Let God stand up and let God do stuff that's great. Watch them flee at the presence of God in verse 2.
- There is no enemy. Nothing going to happen is going to hinder the work of God. God is with his people. If you get that, say amen. That's a whole message. I've tried to preach it, but it's a whole message that we could get.
- I want you to go, if you would, to the next thing. I want you to go to verse 4. I was really going to do some weird stuff this morning. Sometimes I get to praying and studying and thinking about church and I want to do weird stuff. And we don't have, we're not as fluid maybe as I'd like us to be.

But I was almost going to say during the reading, stop. I've got some special songs we're going to sing. Because in this psalm, all through it, it's like, all right, if you heard that, stand up and sing.

[7 : 35] Look if you would at verse 4. Sing unto God. Sing praises to his name. You got that marked in your Bible? Hey, if you've got a God that's going to go before you this year, you ought to shout hallelujah.

Could I hear a hallelujah? You should be like, glory to God. 2021 ain't that big, but God is that big. And we're going into 2021 with God leading and guiding us.

Then it says in verse 4, extol him. You don't know what that means, do you? Come on. You're like, what in the world is that? It just means magnify him. You can't make him bigger than he is, but you could act like he's bigger than you've been acting like he was.

You know, you kind of got this idea of him being a small God. And if you're reading this psalm, you're like, he ain't that small. He makes mountains move. Not that small. He moves before them. Can you imagine, can you imagine, you know, when they came out of Egypt, the armies of Egypt came to attack them.

And God had been leading them. And when they got to the Red Sea and there was nowhere to go, you know what he did? He just got up and went on the other side and sat down in between them and their enemy.

[8 : 47] Because let God arise and let the enemies be scattered. And then when God was ready, he let them go through the Red Sea. And when they got through the Red Sea, they were like, we can still whoop them. And God's like, well, come on.

And they ran in the middle of the Red Sea. And that congealed salad that was a Red Sea melted back down and drowned all of them. And God showed that God is powerful and God's in charge and God's going to do it.

So sing. If I was in charge right now, we'd just sing right now. If I knew how to sing. You remember that preacher, that singing preacher we had here just a while back, who broke out in song at the end of his message?

If I could do that, I would right now. But you'd be real sad if I did. Skip down, if you would, down to verse 26. Here's another one. Bless ye God in the congregation, even the Lord from the fountain of Israel.

Just stand up and give a word of testimony and say, whoa, God is big. God is great. I'll be able to trust God this year.

[9 : 48] When do you do that? Right here amongst us. He said, y'all do that in the congregation. That was Israel. So when all God's people were together, they'd have a testimony time. People would just stand up and say, just like, say how big God is.

Just like to brag on God a little bit right now. That's what the psalmist is telling them to do. If you see that, say amen. Now don't say amen because next time we have a testimony time, I expect you to bless the Lord.

Skip down, if you would, to verse 32. Skip down to verse 32, if you would. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth. Sing praises unto the Lord.

Now we're supposed to be singing again, but this is an unusual saying here. It's not just Israel. Look at that. It says in my Bible, kingdoms of the earth. In other words, this is more than just Israel.

God wants the whole world to sing praises. Can I get an amen right there? God wanted Gentiles. That's most of us in this room. I think we have one Jewish person here today. The rest of us are kingdoms of this earth.

[10 : 53] And he wanted the message given to all of us and to all of them. Now, if you would, I want you to skip down. Here's another message that I would preach if I had been doing it.

We go down to verse 11. It's a missionary verse. And you know I want to see those anywhere. I'm reading the Bible. But look at verse 11. The Lord gave the word. Great was the company of those that published it.

That word publish there, I mean, you probably think that means a printing press. But the word publish is proclaim, announce. You see, you can print a book, but that isn't a published book.

A published book is somebody's yelling about the book. Somebody's talking about the book. And just because you do an in-house printing of a book doesn't mean it's published. For it to be published, you need a publishing house.

You need a PR firm to make a big deal about the book. That's how you sell books. You need a publishing firm. Well, God said, I gave the word.

[11 : 53] I got a bunch of them out there announcing the word. See, that's the missionaries and the preachers and the Sunday school teachers and the evangelists. That's everybody sitting up and saying, God gave his word.

Let's tell the world what God did. I want to really, there's a good chance, who knows if this is true or not. There was this lady named Deborah. And Deborah has this guy come to her and he says to her, I would like us to go and fight.

But I'm not going if you don't go, lady. And she was a prophetess. And she said, well, you don't want me to go. Because if I go with you, you ain't getting any honor. The woman's going to get the honor. And he said, I'm scared.

I need a skirt. So let's go. And so she went. And then Deborah writes a song. And everybody sings the song. And it was a great group of people publishing the song.

And the fact is, when the bad guy was running, he got to this lady's tent. And when he got to this lady's tent, he walks in the tent. And she said, oh, come down, my Lord. He said, could I just get a glass of water and place the rest of him in it?

[13 : 01] She said, for sure. Come on in. And she got him in. And she got the best dishes she had in the house. And she filled it up with nice warm milk. I don't know who's going to drink that.

But anyway. And she filled up with nice warm milk and got him down and gave him milk to drink. And then let him lay down and take a nap. And while he was asleep, she took a nail and drove it through his temples. And went out and said, go tell Deborah I got him.

Amen. Now, that's a pretty wild story, ain't it? But you see, what happened was God wanted the world to know what God was doing. Now, have you ever thought about this?

We have the great word of God right in our hands. We have the Bible in our hands. We have the truth of salvation. Did you know that anybody anywhere can be saved? Did you know that God loves everybody?

God doesn't want anyone to go to hell. The Bible says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Bible said there's not a person alive on the planet who hasn't sinned against an almighty God.

[13 : 57] The Bible says for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's none righteous, no, not one. Everybody's sinned. And those sins have a consequence.

And the consequence is eternal death. Everybody who dies on the planet doesn't quit existing. They just change locations.

Human beings have forever life. And some of them have forever life in a place called death, which is a horrible death. It's hell and the lake of fire.

They're going to live forever in eternal, everlasting, forever suffering because they didn't know about Jesus. But he gave the word and great was the company that published it.

Other people died that have trusted Jesus Christ. There's nothing good about them. God doesn't save anybody because they go to church. Doesn't doesn't save anybody because they got wet in a baptistry or sprinkled on in a church or or christened as a baby.

[14 : 56] God saves a person who comes to him and says, you know, I realize I have sinned against the holy God. I realize that I failed a holy God. I realize that I am not good enough.

I realize there's no way I'll ever get things right on my own. I need help. And that person then turns to Jesus and trust him. The Bible says the wages, the payment for sin is death.

That death is the second death in Revelation chapter 20. That death is eternal death, forever death. But then he says, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus died so that everybody everywhere could be saved. The whole world ought to know that. If you don't know it today, the message is to you and you can accept Jesus and be for sure you go to heaven.

If you die, you could know for sure you could leave here with the load lifted, the burden gone, the guilt gone. You could go knowing that your sins are forgiven. They're wiped away forever.

[15 : 55] And you are saved by what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary. But I'll tell you that there are today literally millions of people, two out of every three on the planet have never heard this message.

They do not know. One third of the world, one out of every three people in the world at least claims to be Christian. Two out of three don't claim to be Christian.

You see a church on every corner and everybody with a Bible and you turn on the TV, the radio and everywhere you go, there's something about Jesus and the Bible and Christianity. But the majority of the world, that's not true.

The verse says, the Lord gave the word and I believe he did. How many of you believe he did? Then it says, and great was the company of those that announced it, that proclaimed it, that published it, that made the word known.

Let's be sure we keep doing all we can do. It's a new year. Have you been given to missions? Are you given so that you can help get the gospel out? Are you involved in praying for being yoked up with a missionary?

[16 : 59] Are you doing your part to get the gospel to the world? And I'd like to take you down to one more thing and then I'll preach. That's a good sign. I'm saying amen.

Have you figured out why I thought I might need more than one? Go down if you would to verse 19. This is a crazy verse. A crazy verse. Blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with benefits.

Even the God of our salvation. Right in the margin, God meets our needs. Look at that. God meets our needs.

You're going into 2021 and the Bible in Psalm 68 basically says, And God goes before you. And God goes before you.

And we have a God who in this chapter protects his people. We have a God in this chapter who gives his presence. We have a God in this chapter who gives his provision.

[18 : 02] And here's his provision. And it says here, God daily loads us with benefits. Now let's talk about the word daily. Some of us in this room are a little bit scared because we don't like daily benefits.

We want lifetime benefits. And so we're like, hey God, I don't like having to wonder if I'm going to be okay tomorrow. Come on, tell the truth.

Shake your head. Admit it. Say, you're right. You're right. Say, oh me. Say what you're doing. I want to know, is my retirement going to be okay?

I want to know, is the United States of America going to be all right in four more years? I want to know, is everything going to be soft? But in the Bible, God's a daily God. And the only time God ever really worries about or pays attention with his people is right now.

Bible says in Matthew 6, 34. Sufficient. Sufficient. Sufficient. Take no thought for tomorrow. For tomorrow will take thought for itself. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.

[19 : 11] You got enough trouble for today. Why are you borrowing from tomorrow? Say amen. You got enough trouble for today. Why are you borrowing from tomorrow? Do you know how often, see now these Jewish people and people that read the Bible, and I know you do, that when they saw daily, they were like, yeah, we're used to that.

See, when they got into the wilderness, when maybe this Psalm is kind of being written about, he let the manna fall. They woke up every morning and stepped outside their tent, and their daily food was laying on the ground in front of them.

Is that wild or not? You're like, I don't know if I believe that. Well, that's your problem. The Bible says it. It's true. You don't have to worry about it. And he told them, he said, now y'all just go pick up enough to eat today.

Don't try to hoard anymore for tomorrow. He said, you get what you need. And sometimes people went outside the tent, picked up a little too little. There was a little less of what they really needed.

But he saw to it, it was enough. And they made it. And then some people went out there, and they were Americans, I'm sure. American Jewish people. You know what I mean. Because you may make fun of Jewish people being worried about money, but who in the world is more worried about it than us?

[20 : 21] Say amen. I said us. Huh? And they went out, and they gathered enough food for a week or two, you know. They just picked up a whole bunch of it and said, look, if it's good for today, it'll be good for tomorrow.

And it bred worms and stunk. And so the next thing you know, they didn't have a refrigerator. And their manna was wormy manna. They had to throw it out.

Because God was teaching them a lesson. I'll give you what you need today. You know what Jesus taught his disciples to pray? Give us this day our weekly bread, our monthly bread, our yearly bread.

No, he said give us this day our daily bread. Now then, it's really funny to me if you're reading the verse. Praise God.

Bless God. Hallelujah to God. God, you're a wonderful God. Because you daily load us with benefits. But I want to, I'll come back to that in just a second.

[21 : 26] I want you to notice this. The God of our salvation. You see, the truth of the matter is, what's really important in our relationship with God isn't how much food I've got to eat, but what's going to happen to me when I die.

I heard today, one of our church members lost, I don't have the text open, but a niece, I think it was. She died, 52 years old.

I heard recently of a pastor and some other people in the church dying. People die all the time. Can I give you all a newsflash? We're all going to die.

If the rapture doesn't happen, we're all going to die. Now, what happens when you die? It's amazing how religious people get when they're dying or their loved ones dying.

But you see, he gives us all these benefits. Who is it that does that? The God of our rescue. The God of our salvation. The God who meets our real needs.

[22 : 28] And your real needs aren't whether or not you're going to eat. Your real needs are, do you have a relationship established with God? Do you?

Do you know for a fact you're going to go to heaven when you die? Are you sure that your sins have been forgiven? Are you sure that the relationship between you and God is right and what it ought to be?

You can be saved today. I challenge you to do that. Now that it says he daily loads us with benefits. And you're going to read and check.

And you're going to find that some people are going to say, well, he's not loading us with benefits. He's carrying our load. I really don't care which one you want to say. He meets our needs. Could I get an amen there?

He meets our needs. I just love the word load. I love that word. I mean, I know I'm a country boy. But you know what a load is?

[23 : 23] But you load somebody down, it's kind of hard to carry a load. Amen. He didn't say, come here, here's a little piece of bread and I go on home. He said, come here. I'll just dump it on you. A whole bunch of it.

I will load you with benefits. You have a God who loves you and is serving you and is doing great things for you because you're his. He goes before you.

You're stepping out into the year 2021. And you can mark this down. God goes before you if you're born again. Huh? You can mark this down.

If God goes before you, you can have a joyful year. Our joy is not determined by who the president is or isn't. Our joy isn't determined by how the economy goes or doesn't go.

Our joy is determined by the fact that we know God and the Holy Spirit of God lives in us. And because he lives in us, he does all these things in us. Now, last thing I'll show you real quick.

[24 : 23] I'm done for today. I'll either preach this again next week or I'll skip it. I want you to go to verse 4. Psalm 68, 4.

Sing unto God. Sing praises to his name. Extol him that rides upon the heavens by his name. J-A-H. J-A.

Elijah. Hallelujah. It's a, that's a, that's a short word for Jehovah, for God. Rejoice before him.

Let me tell you why you rejoice before him. If you had any idea who he was, he'd just make you really happy. Do you know who cares about the downtrodden and uncared for people on the planet?

Jehovah, God of the Bible. Look if you would in verse 5. He's a father of the fatherless.

[25 : 23] He said, you lost your dad, you don't have to lose me. I'll be there for you. I'll do a work in your life. God cares about orphans.

Now, you got to understand, in our day and time, being an orphan's bad. They're not that bad. I mean, our country would kind of take care of an orphan.

They'd be shipped from, from maybe from one bad situation in a home and foster care or the government doing junk. But at least somebody cares. But in Jewish days, if you didn't have a daddy, you didn't have an uncle, you know, somebody would take you in.

You'd starve to death. You'd be left alone. You'd be alone. And God said, I don't walk away. I don't walk away. I don't leave you by yourself.

Do you understand what God does? I think in terms of adoption, we've seen that happen several times in our church. I've seen it happen. I have four adopted grandkids that are actually been through the process of adoption.

[26 : 30] And you know what God does? He looks at me and says, no one else cares about you, but I do. What a God. How do you turn away from that kind of love of a God?

It was another heart. By the way, all through your Bible, God's like, you better be careful how you treat widows and orphans. Don't mess with them. They're helpless. They don't have anybody but me.

And I don't mind hurting you if you hurt them. That's pretty good stuff. Amen. Do you know what a widow was? Alone. A widow has no hope.

If you've ever read the book of Ruth, Ruth comes back and she says, just change my name to bitterness. Her mother-in-law says, change my name to bitterness because life is horrible and I've been mistreated and life is terrible.

She was a widow and her two daughters-in-law were widows. But by the end of the story, they find out there's somebody who cares about them, who will redeem them. And that Ruth becomes a part of the biological lines for Jesus to be born.

[27 : 40] God cares about widows. God cares about helpless people. In verse 6, God cares about lonely people. Look at verse 6.

God sets a solitary in families. God looks down and says, I say, you don't have anybody, so I'll give you some people.

I'll give you a church. I'll give you a nation. I'll give you a tribe. I'll give you somebody to care about you. I'll give you somebody to help you. I think about us going to the mission field.

And I think about how my kids gave up the privilege of knowing their grandparents. And I think about how God gave my kids grandparents in Mexico and grandparents in Peru and aunts and uncles.

I think about my son David being the spoiled little brat of all the Peruvian families. Church would be over. David was two years old. David was two years old.

[28 : 35] Church would be over. And all five of us are loading the car. And David's missing. I'd say to Betty, where's David? And she said, I don't know. I can't find him. He's two. And I'd get out of the car.

And I'd say, hey, to the Peruvian. I'd say, where's David? And somebody said, I think Ana Maria took him down to the corner to buy him ice cream. Could they at least ask us?

We drive down there. He's got ice cream all the way down here. His face is filthy. And she said, Pastor, he just wanted some ice cream today. I said, next week, at least tell us you're going.

She said, okay. We couldn't buy him next week either. One day we came home from language school. We still couldn't talk. We walked in the door.

And David wasn't there. And we had this lady supposed to be taking care of David. She spoke Spanish. We spoke English. And the two did not meet in the middle. And so we're sitting there going, where's David?

[29 : 33] She, where is David? I'm about ready to punch her. And then I heard her say Alberto. And I said, I think she said, did she just say Albert's name?

But he said, I think that's what she said. Who knows? We drive over there. And David's all dressed in a soccer uniform and little soccer shoes. He's one there. Soccer shoes and soccer shorts.

And I walk up to the store. And Alberto leans across and says, and hands me the kid. I'm like, change his diaper next time you're going to steal the kid. He sets a solitary in families.

It's amazing. David had come home to us in Peru. And he'd say, Mama Eliana said, Grandmother Eliana said this to me. And great-grandmama so-and-so said this to me.

God takes care of us. God takes care of us. Look, if you would. It's time to quit. But look, if you would. He brings out those that are bound with chains.

[30 : 36] There are people that are bound in addictions. And sin has got them beaten. And got them whipped. But God frees captives.

And gives them freedom. And gives them life. And gives them joy. But I'll end with this. But if you choose to rebel, you can stay in the dry land.

Look at the verse. It's right behind me. If you choose not to trust God, stay in the desert. Stay where there's not a God that takes care of fatherless. Stay where there's not a God that takes care of widows.

Stay where there's not a God who takes care of the lonely. Stay where there's not a God that takes care of captives. Stay in the rebellious people. Deal with what you rebel about.

And some of us in our pride just won't accept Jesus as our Savior. Can we just be honest? You're like, I don't think I need to pray. I'm from Alpharetta after all. I got money. God up in heaven said, we ain't talking about your money.

[31 : 38] I'm a good person. God, I don't worry about you being a good person. God wants you to know you sinned and you need him. You turn from your goodness and you turn to him so he can save you. Would you trust Jesus today?

Christian, would you start watching for the pillar of cloud and fire and let him go before? Stop running your own life. Stop working your own agenda.

Stop doing your own thing. Let God lead the way. Father in heaven, I love you. I thank you for the chance to talk to your people today. And I just pray that you do a work that will bring great honor and great glory to your name.

God, I pray you'd save some. There's some in here that I'm not sure they know you. And I just want them to know that and have the assurance of their salvation. There's Christians that are worried and scared and need you.

And Holy Spirit, I just ask you to move in our lives and work. And I'll give you praise. With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. If you're a Christian, you know you're saved.

[32 : 39] You might ought to come and say, Lord, I haven't been watching you like I should. But I'm going to keep my eyes on you all this year. And watch for what you're doing. And let you lead the way and let you go before.

Why don't you get out of your seat and come tell him that. Some of you have been doing your own plans and making your own way. And you're not looking at God enough. And you know that. I call on you to do it.

Some of us have failed at publishing his word and not telling people enough about Jesus. Some of us aren't grateful for the ways that he meets our needs. And we ought to come and just say, thank you for being such a good God.

And working in my life. Some of us ought to realize we need him to go before us. And there's some of you that might not know for sure you go to heaven if you were to die.

If you were to die right now, you're not sure your sins are forgiven. You're not sure you're on your way to heaven. But you can be. And you can know Jesus as your Savior. And I want to invite you to do that.

[33 : 35] If you'd raise your hand, I'll help you. If you're not sure you're saved, I'll get somebody to talk to you in private. We won't embarrass you. We just want to help you. Would there be anybody that say, I'm not sure I'm saved? I just want somebody to help me.

Anybody? Just raise your hand. Father God in heaven, I ask you to work and move our lives. I pray your name would be glorified. And I pray that today we would make decisions that will make this year a very special year for you.

And I'll give you praise for it all. Amen.