



Psalm 68 - Praise and Thanksgiving

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm. A Song.

Introduction

This is a hymn by which God's people celebrate his continued care and protection for Israel, remembering how God led them through the wilderness into their inheritance, and daily bears his people up (v.19). The celebration does not stop with Israel, however: it recognises that defeating Gentile kingdoms 'who delight in war' is for the sake of all the Gentiles coming to worship the true God.

It is possible that David composed this psalm to commemorate the moving of the ark into the tabernacle (2 Samuel 6:12-15): v.1 echoes Numbers 10:35 (Moses' words when the ark set out); v.16 mentions the mountain of God's abode; vv.24-25 describe God's procession; and v.17 and v.35 speak of the sanctuary. In any event the overall theme of the psalm is God's residence in Zion and his care for his people.

Most commentators believe this psalm is connected with the coming of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem (2 Samuel Chapter 6) celebrating not only that event, but also the faithfulness of God to give Israel victory over her enemies, secure enough to bring the ark into Jerusalem.

T H Horne described how this psalm was assigned to Pentecost in the Anglican liturgy, no doubt because it describes gifts given upon ascension and is quoted in Ephesians Chapter 4. "This beautiful, sublime, and comprehensive, but very difficult Psalm, is one of those which the church has appointed to be used on Whitsunday."

The composition of this psalm makes it a challenge for commentators, both from the Hebrew and in translation. Adam Clarke wrote, "I know not how to undertake a comment on this Psalm: it is the most difficult in the whole Psalter."

Psalm 68:1-3 - Gladness When God Arises

Verse 1 adapts the words of Numbers 10:35b <<*Arise, O Lord, let your enemies be scattered, and your foes flee before you*>>, thus recalling the movement of the ark in the wilderness; from the perspective of the psalm, the ark was headed to its destination on Zion. For the ark to take up residence in Zion is for God to be among his people where they now live, as confirmed by v.17 <<*the Lord came from Sinai into the holy place*>>; the ark is a portable Sinai, where God made himself present with his people. This brings the happy promise that the wicked, those who reject God's covenant, shall perish before God, while the righteous, those who embrace the covenant, shall be glad because God is carrying out his purpose of reversing the effects of sin in the world.

- 1 Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered;
let those who hate him flee before him.
- 2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away;
as wax melts before the fire,
let the wicked perish before God.
- 3 But let the righteous be joyful;
let them exult before God;
let them be jubilant with joy.

Psalm 68:1-3

Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered. Using the phrasing of Numbers 10:35, David proclaimed the triumph of God over all his enemies. When God goes forth no opponent can stand against him: <<*And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; he flashed forth lightning, and routed them*>> (Psalm 18:14). They are all scattered. Since Moses said those words when the Ark of the Covenant led Israel from Mount Sinai, David knew it was appropriate to say the same words as the ark came to Jerusalem, its intended resting place. As David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem he made a dramatic historical connection.

Numbers Chapter 10 describes the departure of Israel from Mount Sinai, towards the Promised Land. As they marched the Ark of the Covenant led the way. The idea was simple, both with Moses in the Exodus and David with Israel in the land. It expressed the confidence and the need of God's people: "God, go before us and take care of our enemies. It's too dangerous ahead without you." This spirit of confident dependence is appropriate for every believer.

This is also a fitting prayer by which to remember the glory and strength of the resurrected Jesus. When Jesus rose up, all his enemies scattered. None dared

oppose him. If Christians are set in Jesus, the enemies of Christ scatter before them also because all their victory is found in Jesus' resurrected glory.

As smoke is driven away, so drive them away. God's enemies have no ability to stand against him, shown by the images of vanishing smoke and melting wax: <<*But the wicked perish, and the enemies of the Lord are like the glory of the pastures; they vanish – like smoke they vanish away*>> (Psalm 37:20). He prayed that the wicked would perish just as easily. Ephesians 6:10-18 is the great NT passage on spiritual conflict and how God equips the believer for success in that conflict. A repeated theme in that passage is the idea of standing against spiritual attack and opposition. What David described here with vanishing smoke and melting wax is the exact opposite of standing in the sense Ephesians Chapter 6 meant it.

But let the righteous be joyful. What is disaster and calamity for the wicked is gladness and extra rejoicing for the righteous. Christians cannot help but be glad in God's victory.

Psalm 68:4-6 - Exhortation to Sing to God

The faithful are to sing to God because he has shown himself kind, especially to helpless people such as the desolate, prisoners, the poor, orphans and widows: <<*who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing*>> (Deuteronomy 10:18), <<*The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin*>> (Psalm 146:9), and: <<*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world*>> (James 1:27). The rebellious, i.e. those against God's gracious covenant, however, he exiles to a parched land, for they may not dwell among his people.

- 4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name;
lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds –
his name is the Lord –
be exultant before him.
- 5 Father of orphans and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.
- 6 God gives the desolate a home to live in;
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,
but the rebellious live in a parched land.

Psalm 68:4-6

Sing to God, sing praises to his name. There is an aspect of this that is the simple repetition and parallelism of Hebrew poetry: <<*For this I will extol you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing praises to your name*>> (2 Samuel 22:50). Yet there is a slightly more developed thought in the phrase sing praises to his name, having the idea of praising God with knowledge of his character, and knowing him personally.

Lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds – his name is the Lord – be exultant before him. David gave two specific reasons to rejoice in God. He rides on the clouds, in victory and triumph over all the earth: <<*There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, majestic through the skies*>> (Deuteronomy 33:26). Also, he has revealed himself to humanity in the name *Yahweh*, showing his love and loyalty to his people.

Father of orphans and protector of widows. God's greatness is not only defined by military-like triumphs. It is also seen in his compassionate concern and care for the weak and needy. The name *Yahweh* is connected to God as the Becoming One: <<*But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you"'*>> (Exodus 3:13-14), the God who becomes what his people need. The fatherless need a father; *Yahweh* is there. The widows need a defender; God is there.

God gives the desolate a home to live in. God sees those who live without a close family connection and cares to provide them with families: <<*He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord!*>> (Psalm 113:9). They may be without husband or wife, without father or mother, or without brother or sister nearby; God cares and has family connections among his people for the desolate. Since this is God's will for the desolate, they should look for and cultivate such relationships. This is a key aspect of church.

He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious live in a parched land. God can help even those who in their poverty have been subjected to some kind of bondage or servitude: <<*who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free*>> (Psalm 146:7), and: <<*The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners*>> (Isaiah 61:1); God can bring them into spiritual and moral prosperity. This is not a promised blessing for the rebellious.

Psalm 68:7-10 - God's March from Sinai

These verses recall the way God led his people through the wilderness (v.7), from Sinai to his inheritance, Canaan, now the land of Israel, where God's flock, his people found a dwelling. Not only did God give Israel a place to live, he made it fruitful: <<**Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad**>>. Verse 8 echoes Judges 5:4-5, which also describes God's progress to the land with his people.

- 7 O God, when you went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness, Selah
- 8 the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
- 9 Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad;
you restored your heritage when it languished;
- 10 your flock found a dwelling in it;
in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

Psalm 68:7-10

O God, when you went out before your people. Having introduced the idea in the first line of the psalm, David continued his thoughts on God's presence with and care for Israel through the wilderness on the way to Canaan: <<**The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night**>> (Exodus 13:21). You went out before your people emphasises the idea that God was with Israel; he did not abandon them despite the many ways they provoked him: <<**But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness, and put God to the test in the desert**>> (Psalm 106:14).

Selah, used 71 times in the Book of Psalms and three times in Habakkuk, has never been fully understood because the Hebrew root word is undefined. Many take it to be an instruction related to either the music, such as an interlude, or the cadence of the song, e.g. stop and reflect.

The earth quaked. As God was with Israel in the wilderness they were protected. His might was on their side. No other nation could defeat them when they walked with God.

The heavens poured down rain at the presence of God. As God was with Israel in the wilderness they were provided for. They would never suffer hunger or thirst as they walked in God's presence. As part of that provision God sent them a plentiful

rain in a needy time. This care for them was a way God confirmed the special place Israel had in his heart and plan. They were his inheritance, his heritage.

There is an allusion here to the Song of Deborah: <<Lord, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens poured, the clouds indeed poured water>> (Judges 5:4).

Psalm 68:11-14 - Victory over Gentile Kings

This section describes what happens when the Almighty scatters Gentile kings on behalf of his people. Even when the able-bodied of Israel were not all faithful to fight in the wars (v.13), for some men would even lie among the sheepfolds instead of endure the hardships of battle: <<Why did you tarry among the sheepfolds, to hear the piping for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart>> (Judges 5:16), the Lord brought about great victories so that the women at home divided the spoil that their men have brought back with them. The women who announce the news are probably groups like those in Exodus 15:20-21 and 1 Samuel 18:6-7, who declare from village to village the exciting news of the victory of Israel's army.

- 11 The Lord gives the command;
great is the company of those who bore the tidings:
- 12 'The kings of the armies, they flee, they flee!'
The women at home divide the spoil,
- 13 though they stay among the sheepfolds —
the wings of a dove covered with silver,
its pinions with green gold.
- 14 When the Almighty scattered kings there,
snow fell on Zalmon.

Psalm 68:11-14

Great is the company of those who bore the tidings. The text speaks of a great company of women proclaimers of the good news of God's victory. It is significant that God chose women to be the first messengers of the good news of the victory of Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10 and Luke 24:1-10). The NT says that women should not be in positions of doctrinal authority (1 Timothy 2:9-14), but they certainly can and should proclaim the good news of God's victory in Jesus Christ.

'The kings of the armies, they flee, they flee!' The women at home divide the spoil. This was the word of victory that God gave, the word of triumph proclaimed

by a great company of people. The message was that God won a great victory over mighty enemy kings and his people, even his weak people, benefit even though they did not directly fight, i.e. the women at home divide the spoil. This is the message of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. God won a great victory through the person and work of Jesus Christ and his people gain everything through that victory in a battle they did not directly fight. This is the message that Christians as a great company are to proclaim.

The wings of a dove covered with silver. The people of God come from humble circumstances, i.e. they stay among the sheepfolds, but they share in God's great victory over their enemies and are graced with great blessings and gifts. The wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with green gold is a fanciful image of enjoying wealth and beauty under God's care.

Zalmon. Judges 9:48 mentions a mountain with this name, but it is not certain that this is the intended reference. Some believe that Zalmon is another name for Mount Ebal in central Israel, which many would consider more of a high hill than an actual mountain. The meaning of this line is not entirely clear, and has been the source of much speculation. It is likely a reference to a mountain in view of the snow, although the higher hills experience snow during parts of the winter.

Psalm 68:15-18 - The Mountain of God's Abode

The ark's destination is the sanctuary on Mount Zion, the mountain of God. The previous section ended by referring to a mountain, and now this section compares God's mountain to the larger mountain of Bashan, which lies to the north of Jerusalem. Observe how the Lord dwells in the place where his ark does; God is especially present by way of his ark: <<*Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites: the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan*>> (Joshua 3:10-11). Sinai is now in the sanctuary. The ark is a portable Sinai, conveying God's presence to his people.

- 15 O mighty mountain, mountain of Bashan;
O many-peaked mountain, mountain of Bashan!
- 16 Why do you look with envy, O many-peaked mountain,
at the mount that God desired for his abode,
where the Lord will reside for ever?
- 17 With mighty chariotry, twice ten thousand,
thousands upon thousands,
the Lord came from Sinai into the holy place.

18 You ascended the high mount,
leading captives in your train
and receiving gifts from people,
even from those who rebel against the Lord God's abiding there.

Psalm 68:15-18

O mighty mountain, mountain of Bashan. Bashan was further north in Israel, in the region of what today is called the Golan Heights. Bashan was an impressive mountain, even a mountain of God and part of Israel's heritage. Yet it and the other mountains seem to fume with envy when they see how God has favoured Zion.

At the mount that God desired for his abode. God chose Jerusalem even though there were higher and more spectacular mountains. Yet as he often chooses the weak to confound the strong and the foolish to mystify the wise, he chose Zion over Bashan.

With mighty chariotry, twice ten thousand. By God's command: *<<Even so, he must not acquire many horses for himself, or return the people to Egypt in order to acquire more horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You must never return that way again'>>* (Deuteronomy 17:16) ancient Israel never had many chariots. They were still protected because God fought for Israel and he had power greater than thousands upon thousands of chariots.

Ephesians 4:8-11 uses this verse to describe how the exalted Christ, who ascended after he descended in the incarnation, distributed gifts to his people, i.e. assigned to each of the members different ways of serving the body. That Paul can apply this to Christ shows that he considered Jesus divine. The quotation in Ephesians 4:8 does not quite match the Septuagint, which follows the Hebrew text; Paul says that *<<he gave gifts to his people>>* rather than receiving gifts among men. The difference is only superficial, however: the verb 'receive', Hebrew *laqakh*, can have the idea of 'receive in order to give,' or 'to fetch,' e.g. Genesis 18:4-5, where it is 'bring'. Further, after a conquest, the spoils were distributed among the leader's men. Thus the psalm focuses on the conqueror who acquired the spoils from the defeated, while Paul's adaptation of the truth of the psalm focuses on how that conqueror distributed the spoils to his own.

Psalm 68:19-23 - God Protects His People from His (and Their) Enemies

This section celebrates how God daily bears Israel and is salvation for his people. The particular kind of salvation here is protection from enemies, which means military victories over them.

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

20 Our God is a God of salvation,
and to God, the Lord, belongs escape from death.

21 But God will shatter the heads of his enemies,
the hairy crown of those who walk in their guilty ways.

22 The Lord said,
'I will bring them back from Bashan,
I will bring them back from the depths of the sea,

23 so that you may bathe your feet in blood,
so that the tongues of your dogs may have their share from the
foe.'

Psalm 68:19-23

Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up. It is undeniably true that God daily gives benefits to his people. Yet many think the sense of this verse is more accurately translated, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden'.

Our God is a God of salvation, and to God, the Lord, belongs escape from death. This psalm speaks much of the ark coming to Jerusalem, but that only happened after David defeated Israel's surrounding enemies. David thought of how God rescued him in those conflicts. In doing so he used the somewhat uncommon but wonderful phrasing of *Yahweh Adonai* or God, the Lord.

But God will shatter the heads of his enemies. In describing God's victory, David used an image from Genesis 3:15 where God promised that the Messiah would strike a fatal head wound against Satan. The victory would be total, with God's people walking as winners over the field of battle, i.e. so that you may bathe your feet in blood.

The tongues of your dogs. As they scavenge among the corpses and lick up the blood, as confirmed by 1 Kings 21:19 and 22:38, and they even lick the festering sores of the living: <<*There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores*>> (Luke 16:19-21).

Psalm 68:24-27 - The Procession

These verses describe a procession of Israelites, which consists of singers, followed by virgins playing tambourines, with the musicians last, as they enter into the sanctuary in a worship setting. Included in the procession are princes from the various tribes, with Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun and Naphtali probably representing the whole of Israel. Verse 26 is apparently a summary of their song. At this time, David ruled over a united kingdom. The mention of these tribes confirms that the psalm dates from before the kingdom was divided after the death of Solomon, when Benjamin and Judah became the southern kingdom, while Zebulun and Naphtali became part of the northern kingdom.

- 24 Your solemn processions are seen, O God,
the processions of my God, my King, into the sanctuary –
- 25 the singers in front, the musicians last,
between them girls playing tambourines:
- 26 ‘Bless God in the great congregation,
the Lord, O you who are of Israel’s fountain!’
- 27 There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead,
the princes of Judah in a body,
the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

Psalm 68:24-27

The processions of my God, my King, into the sanctuary. After the great triumph over their enemies, David and Israel could bring the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. This was not David’s parade, but your solemn processions, O God. Honour rightfully went to the Lord.

The singers in front, the musicians last, between them girls playing tambourines. Joyful music was an appropriate way to celebrate the historic arrival of the ark into the city of David and God. There would be similar scenes when King Solomon had the ark brought into the newly constructed temple: *<<all the levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kindred, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with one hundred and twenty priests who were trumpeters, it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord, ‘For he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever’, the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister*

because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God>>
(2 Chronicles 5:12-14).

There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead. In the procession of the ark, the small tribe of Benjamin had a prominent role. This showed wonderful grace on David's part because his predecessor King Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin and many kings of David's day would refuse to give them any honour at all.

Psalm 68:28-31 - The Gentiles Will Come to the True God

The defeat of the Gentile enemies, here described as fierce wild animals, an image of those who lust after tribute and who delight in war (v.30) is a good thing, both because their designs are greedy and bloody, and because as a result they and others will come to worship the true God (v.29 and v.31). The oracle of Isaiah 2:1-5 foretells the Gentiles coming to worship at God's temple in the last days; the NT explains that this is taking place in the time after Christ's resurrection.

- 28 Summon your might, O God;
 show your strength, O God, as you have done for us before.
- 29 Because of your temple at Jerusalem
 kings bear gifts to you.
- 30 Rebuke the wild animals that live among the reeds,
 the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples.
 Trample under foot those who lust after tribute;
 scatter the peoples who delight in war.
- 31 Let bronze be brought from Egypt;
 let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out its hands to God.

Psalm 68:28-31

Show your strength, O God, as you have done for us before. David was grateful for the wonderful victory but also knew that many challenges were still ahead. He prayed that God would pour strength into the victory of the past, using it as a foundation for what he would do in the future.

Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings bear gifts to you. David was confident that in the end, God and his covenant people would survive and thrive despite their enemies among the nations. In the end others would come in tribute to Israel, not the other way around. These are Gentile kings: <<*All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall be acceptable on my altar, and I will glorify my glorious house*>> (Isaiah 60:7), <<*and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all*

nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the Lord of hosts>> (Haggai 2:7), and: <<Those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the Lord; and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God>> (Zechariah 6:15).

Rebuke the wild animals that live among the reeds. Since reeds were often associated with the Nile River, David prayed that God would keep them safe against the Egyptians and Ethiopians. He asked God to do that until they, like all the nations, come in submitted tribute to Jerusalem, i.e. trample under foot those who lust after tribute; let bronze be brought from Egypt; let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out its hands to God. The expectation that people from Egypt and Ethiopia, also referred to as Cush or Nubia, the region south of Egypt, will come to know God is confirmed by: *<<Thus says the Lord: The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Ethiopia, and the Sabeans, tall of stature, shall come over to you and be yours, they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, saying, ‘God is with you alone, and there is no other; there is no god besides him’>> (Isaiah 45:14).* God’s presence in his temple at Jerusalem will draw Gentiles to the light: *<<Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a distant land because of your name – for they shall hear of your great name, your mighty hand, and your outstretched arm – when a foreigner comes and prays towards this house, then hear in heaven your dwelling-place, and do according to all that the foreigner calls to you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and so that they may know that your name has been invoked on this house that I have built>> (1 Kings 8:41-43).*

Psalm 68:32-35 - Closing Call to Praise

After all the recollections in the psalm, the call goes out to all the Gentile kingdoms of the earth, urging them to sing to God now rather than wait for the messianic era? Their praise should ascribe power to God and recognise that his majesty is over Israel. That is, they should recognise Israel’s unique role as God’s own people, among whom God has set his sanctuary and to whom he gives power and strength. As Israelites sing this, they should be overwhelmed with gratitude at the astonishing privilege of being God’s vehicle of blessing to the world. Today, believers from all nations can sing this with gratitude that God was faithful to his promises to bring the light to the world; they too can share in grateful awe at their privilege of being God’s vehicle for bringing the world further blessing.

³² Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;
sing praises to the Lord, Selah

³³ O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens;

listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.

34 Ascribe power to God,
whose majesty is over Israel;
and whose power is in the skies.

35 Awesome is God in his sanctuary,
the God of Israel;
he gives power and strength to his people.

Blessed be God!

Psalm 68:32-35

Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth. Knowing the ultimate victory of God, David invited the nations to worship him now. It was far better for them to do it now out of a willing, surrendered heart than to do it later as conquered enemies of God.

Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel. The nations would only benefit from recognising and surrendering to God's strength and noting his rule over Israel.

Awesome is God in his sanctuary. David thought of the land of Israel as God's holy place, belonging to him in a special way. Yet David had the sophistication to understand that God was greater than any holy place, whether it be land, a mountain, or a temple.

He gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God! The God who is actively involved in the life and victory of his people is worthy of praise: <<*Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me*>> (Psalm 66:20), and: <<*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God*>> (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). Whatever victory they may have won and inspiration they received from this psalm, their victories did not last. The lasting victory still waits for the Messiah's great kingdom that is present now but not yet!