

## **Great is the Lord!**

**Sermon Text:** Psalm 48

**Study Texts:** Ephesians 2:17-22

**Sermon Recap:** The main idea of this week's sermon is: The people of God praise the LORD for who He is, for what He has done, and for what He will do. Take time before your growth group to review the key points you noted from today's sermon.

**Sermon Connection:** Psalm 48 celebrates the power of God. Specifically, the power of God as it is displayed in the protection and keeping of His people. In the Psalm, written originally for the people of Israel concerning the physical city of Jerusalem, the reader is invited to look upon the physical protection of the city of Jerusalem. And having considered its defenses, the Psalmist reminds the reader that the ultimate defense of the City of God (a reference to God's people) is found in God Himself. The physical defenses are reminders of God's ultimate power. In like manner, the New Testament Church is invited into the same activity of reflecting God as our eternal protection; He is our great defender and He will not be overthrown. Ephesians 2:17-22 invites the Church to reflect on Her place in the City of God by means of the gospel, our greatest defense and our great salvation.

### **Lesson Plan**

**Lesson Goal:** to see that God saves His people and keeps His people through the power of the gospel

**The Context:** Ephesians is a wonderful letter that Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus. In the letter, he addresses a number of issues that build on the foundation of God's gospel salvation (chp. 1). Specifically, in chapter 2, he shows that no man achieves salvation for himself. It is, rather, a gift of God that comes through faith. In the section in which we will study, Paul is explaining how the gospel creates divine unity and steadfastness for the people of God.

### **Life in the Gospel**

- In v. 17, Paul speaks of peace. Who is the “*he*” in this verse and what is Paul explaining? See also Eph. 2:13-16.
- How does this peace help to develop the idea of God as our protection? See also Ps. 48:14.
- How do we see Paul explaining the Trinity’s work in salvation in v. 18?
- How does this Trinitarian understanding of salvation help us to understand God’s protection over His people? See also Col. 3:3-4.
- In v. 19, Paul develops the idea that Christians share full citizenship in the people of God. They belong to the eternal City of God. Why is this important to grasp?
- Verses 20 speaks of the solid and sturdy nature of the people of God. What imagery does Paul use, and what does his reference to the prophets and apostles mean?
  - How does this further explain being within God’s protection? See also 1 Tim. 3:15b.
- Verse 21 speaks of the centrality of Jesus Christ to the gospel of salvation and to the eternal City of God. What is Paul saying here with regard to Jesus and to the Church?
- How does the message of v. 22 parallel the hope of Psalm 48:12-14?
- What is Paul explaining for the Church in v. 22?

### **The Big Picture - Life in the City of God**

The writer of Psalm 48 wanted the people of Jerusalem to love their city, to look upon its defenses and walls, and to feel safe within its borders. But, in a greater way, the Psalmist wanted to help the people see that beyond any protection the walls could provide, God dwelled in the midst of the city, and for that reason, they dwelled securely. In the same, yet greater way, Paul helps us to see that God dwells in the midst of His people by the power of the Holy Spirit. And it is not the sturdiness of physical protection or the far-reaching nature of any laws that offer us hope; it is the power of the gospel of God. God dwells with His people.

### **Application Questions**

- How am I trusting in God every day? Is my first response to danger to turn to God?
- How does my life display an abiding, steady trust in God?
- In what ways am I leading my family to know and trust in God’s presence?
- How can my life serve as a witness of God’s goodness in my neighborhood?