

1. My title for this lesson is "Understanding Jesus as our king". We as devout Christians sort of get the idea that we desire Jesus to rule over our lives and in that sense He is our king. We may also get the idea that Jesus rules in heaven. We may even get the idea that one day, Jesus will rule over the earth. That view that Jesus will literally rule from the earth is a commonly held view among Evangelical Christians (including myself) and I'll make a case for that in this lesson.
 - a) With that said, let's get back to the idea of Jesus as our king. How exactly do we live with Jesus as our king? That is a subject I'll take on throughout this lesson.
 - b) The idea of Jesus as our king also the key theme of all three psalms that we will cover in this lesson. We will discover these three psalms discuss both the present and future implications of just what that means for our lives.
2. Bible scholars collectively call these three psalms the kingdom psalms. They describe life with a single king ruling over the world. On the surface, the psalms could be describing a person that rules (or did rule) over Israel. Once one studies each of these psalms carefully, one can grasp the idea that these three psalms are talking about something bigger, which is a king that rules over our hearts and a king that rules over the world.
3. I should also mention that some commentators see this lesson as the end of a "trilogy":
 - a) If you recall, two lessons back, we had three psalms that all dealt with the issue of suffering and what to do when we don't sense God's comfort in that suffering. Some commentators see those three psalms as describing the period of time right before Jesus returns as describing the "great tribulation" period of suffering.
 - b) The last lesson described Jesus as both our husband and our warrior. To put it another way, during the period of the great tribulation (or right afterwards) is when the Christian church gets married to Jesus and then He returns to be king over the earth.
 - c) That would lead to this lesson and the three psalms in this lesson, which is about life on earth with a single king that rules over the earth. My point here is that the seven psalms that make up the last two lessons plus this lesson fit the entire book of Revelation "well".
 - d) If you see that pattern through these lessons, well, consider it a prediction of how the future will play out. If you think I am off base with that analysis, just be grateful I didn't spend too much space describing that view and one can just read these three psalms about life with Jesus as our king. ☺
4. With that little speech out of my system, let's get back to the practical aspect of what it means when we as Christians say that Jesus is our king.
 - a) Jesus said that we are His disciples if we do what He commands us to do. (That is my paraphrase of John 8:31). In a sense Jesus expands on that comment and says that people will know whether or not we are His disciples if we have love for one another. That is based on John 13:35. Let me comment on that and explain how it ties to our lesson.
 - i) First of all, we need to understand that committing our lives to follow Jesus is more than a one time declaration that Jesus died for our sins. It is living a lifetime after such a declaration of accepting the idea that Jesus is our king.
 - ii) That doesn't mean we now ignore the laws of our country we ignore the needs of our family or friends. It simply means that we put Jesus first in our lives and see Him as somebody who is in charge of our lives.
 - iii) I can't resist sharing a cute little joke here. When people ask if I am a Democrat or a Republican (for my American audience), my response is to say neither: I belong to a theocracy. I live under a kingdom where Jesus is my king. Only with that in mind can I discuss what is the best political view for my country over and above the idea that Jesus is my king.

- b) So let's get back to the practical aspect here. What does it mean if we believe Jesus is our king? Yes the politically correct response is to do what Jesus says. But what does that mean and how do we do that practically?
 - i) Of course it means to study God's word and do what it says. But how do we know when we are obeying that word?
 - ii) A good clue is the second quote of Jesus I gave earlier in this lesson. That is the verse in John 13:35 which says in effect that people will know we are Christians by the love we exhibit for one another. So how do we show that love?
 - a) We show love by putting the needs of others as priority over our own needs. We look around us and see the needs of others and ask (not force, but ask) how can we be of help.
 - b) So how do we get any of our own stuff done if we are always focusing on the needs of others? God knows we have our own needs. The issue is not to ignore what we have to do, the issue is "priority".
 - c) You may think that, "OK John, that is neat. What does any of it have to do with these psalms? In a sense, everything. This lesson covers three psalms that all focus on Jesus as our present and future king. Just saying or thinking Jesus is our king is a good start, but it does not have any real meaning until we put in practice. We put that thought in practice by doing what Jesus commands us to do, which is to follow His lead and put the needs of others as a priority over our needs.
 - d) OK, with that said, let's actually start Psalm 46.
5. Psalm 46, intro: For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to *alamoth*. A song.
- a) Like the last two lessons, these songs are written by a group that calls themselves the Sons of Korah. I discussed in the past two lessons who are the Sons of Korah and I won't repeat that here other than to say the writer (or writers) are all descendants of someone named Korah and we know they were Levites, which is one of the 12 tribes of Israel that was in charge of worshipping God. As Levites, they were in charge of worship service, as well as going throughout all of Israel being the spiritual leaders of Israel.
 - b) The title also says the psalm is to the "director of music". What that title means is the Sons of Korah wrote this psalm and now they would like it to be sung at "worship service". Even the last word of this title mentions that this psalm was designed to be sung.
 - c) This title also has an untranslated word "alamoth". It appears to be a musical term that means those with a high pitched voice are to sing it. Speaking as one who does not have a high pitched voice, I'll just talk about this psalm and not attempt to sing it that way. ☺
6. Psalm 46, Verse 1: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
- a) This psalm starts off straight forward enough and reminds us that God is there to help us whenever we desire to call upon Him. That doesn't mean God will answer our prayers on our timing. It means He is always there to listen and guide us. Prayer is about getting His will done and we can always come to Him to find out what is His will for our lives.
 - b) Notice the verse says that God can be our help in times of trouble. If you are wondering how to discover God's will, start by bringing to Him one's present situation. If one is in trouble, tell God about that situation. Describe it to Him as if He doesn't know what it is. Yes, God knows all things, but reciting our problems to God is a way of reminding us that God is there and we can specify to Him how we want His help.
 - c) God does want to "take over" our troubles and He wants us to trust that He is now guiding us through those troubles based on His desires for our life at this time.
 - d) In summary, once we declare that our problems are now "His problems", I have found that I no longer have to worry about my problems. God finds a way to work them out so before I know it, those problems are no longer things I have to worry about.
 - e) Before I leave Verse 1, it is also interesting to mention that Psalm 46 happened to be the favorite psalm of Martin Luther and this verse was printed on his tombstone.

7. Verse 2: Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.
Selah
- a) First of all, we can read this verse poetically. Remember that the psalms are poetry. That means (as it relates to these verses), that no matter what happens in this world, we don't have to fear for our lives because we are putting our situation in God's hands.
 - b) To paraphrase these verses, "Why should I worry about anything in this lifetime? No matter what happens, I know that God loves me, cares about me and wants to guide my life for His glory. I can be in a good mood no matter what the situation as I can have confidence that God has the whole situation worked out for His glory."
 - c) Notice the last word of these two verses is "Selah". That is a common untranslated term, which we should know by now simply means to stop and think about the verses.
 - d) I want to discuss these verses a little more literally. The verses don't say, God is our help and we don't have to worry about the situation at hand. Instead they say that we don't have to fear even if the "earth gives way" (i.e., an earthquake that changes the landscape) or if the mountains fall in the sea or a tidal wave destroys us).
 - i) The verses seem to be saying that no matter what the "earth" does to us, we don't have to worry because "God has our back". ☺
 - ii) So why use those analogies? Let's face it, in the history of this world, the whole earth has never given way or mountains have never fallen in the sea. My point is that some people see these verses as describing future, literal end-times events.
 - iii) My point is many commentators see these two verses as describing the end of life on this planet as we know it. These commentators view these three psalms as "kingdom" psalms, as they are describing what life is like when Jesus comes to literally rule over the world. Not all Christians hold this view, but those of us who do see it this way, believe the geography of the world will change as we know it.
 - e) OK, John, you're out in "left field again". ☺ Just remember that one can simply see these verses as poetically saying that no matter what happens, God is there watching over us. One can also read the verses more literally and see them as some future event where the world physically changes dramatically as we know it. Well, the verse did say to pause and "think about it" (*Selah*), so I did and wrote what I thought it meant.
8. Verse 4: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- a) I need at this moment to literally talk about the city of Jerusalem. For those who don't know much about the geography of that city, there are no rivers that go through or near that city. There are no natural resources like oil or minerals to make this a desirable location for a city. It is not a natural "tourist draw" other than for its religious history. I mention this because to a Jewish person, the "City of God" has to be Jerusalem, as that is where "God's presence" was centered.
 - b) So if there is no river in Jerusalem, what is this verse talking about?
 - i) One reason many of us see this psalm as describing future times, is there will come a day when there is a stream that grows into a river that comes out of Jerusalem. Ezekiel Chapter 47 describes a future day where a stream of water becomes a river and it starts miraculously from God's temple.
 - ii) Revelation Chapter 22 also speaks of a "pure river" that flows from the throne of God. Given those two references, I personally see this river here in Verse 4 also talking about a literal future river that flows from God's throne.
 - iii) For those who like to be less literal, one can simply see it as an analogy of God say, washing away our sins by coming to His temple in Jerusalem. Personally, I like to stay away from views like that because if one can then make up any possible interpretation if one wants to use analogies.

9. Verse 5: God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.
 - a) The verse says, "God is within her". So who is the "her"? Looking at the last verse, it must be the stream of water, as that is the only other thing being described in that verse.
 - b) So what does it mean that God is in this stream and river of water as mention in Verse 4?
 - i) If a "stream of pure water" will one day flow out of God's temple, it must have some purpose. This verse is saying that this water source will never fail to flow. One has to remember that Israel is a desert climate and there is always a fear of long, dry conditions. This verse seems to be saying that because God is "in" this river, it will always be flowing, even at the break of a new day or new season.
 - c) OK John, so there will be water coming out of some future temple in Jerusalem. That is neat. Besides the fact that in the eternal future, I won't have to worry about a good source of water, how does this "stream of water" help me now?
 - i) I believe the idea is that God will always be there, present as well as future, to provide for our needs. Just as He promises to provide water in our future, so we can count on Him to provide for us now of our present needs. Sometimes we don't get what we need simply because we fail to ask God for those needs.
 - ii) That in effect, is how Verse 1 ties to the other verses we have read so far. If we can count on God to come through for us in the "eternal future", so should we also count on God to come through for us in the present time of our lives.
10. Verse 6: Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
 - a) Just when you thought this study can't get any stranger, the end of this verse says that the earth melts. If one reads this verse literally, it must be talking about some future time when the nations of the world are complaining about the fall of their lands and God "raise His voice" so that the earth melts.
 - i) First, know that there are at least three other direct biblical references to the fact that one day the world as we know it will end. These references are in Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22, 2nd Peter 3:10-13 and Revelation 21:1. In fact Peter's description of the end of the world is remarkably similar to this verse here in the psalms.
 - ii) Think of it this way: The world as we know it had a beginning. Therefore, it is logical that the world as we know it, will have an ending. That is what is being described in this verse as well as the other references I just mentioned.
 - b) OK John, I get the idea that we should worship God if for no other reason that one day He is going to end the world as we know it and create a new one from which Jesus will rule over that new world. How does that affect my current situation?
 - i) For one reason, think how small our problems are in comparison to this world ending. No matter what we are dealing with, all of this world will come to an end. No matter how big or how small are our problems, God desires to get involved in our lives and bring those issues to Him to deal with.
11. Verse 7: The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*
 - a) If you think this lesson has too much about distant future things and not enough about the present, I want you to notice Verse 7. It is saying the God of Jacob (i.e., the God if Israel, as Jacob is another name for Israel) is with us now and not just the future.
 - b) There is another "Selah" at the end of this verse: Again, "Selah" means to stop and contemplate what the verse is saying. The idea is that the God who started and will end this world is also the one who cares about us and wants to protect us. That is why God is compared to a fortress. A fort is a place to offer protection from the outside world.
 - c) Last thing: Why use the name "Jacob" here to describe the nation of Israel? Jacob as a title represents believers of God in the "flesh". In other words, the title "Jacob" represents us with all of our faults, sins and shortcomings still seeking God. "Israel" represents us as God sees us in our future, perfectly forgiven state of being. The word Jacob is used here to say in effect that God helps us despite our sins and our shortcomings before Him.

12. Verse 8: Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth.
 - a) Let us suppose that the destruction of the world does not happen for say, 500 years after our lifetime. How can we "come and see" the desolation of the world? Think of the people living when this psalm was written. Even if the destruction happens tomorrow, how will they see the desolations he (God) has brought on the world?
 - i) The answer is that even though we will die one day, we will never see death. We will pass from "life to life" and be able to watch these events. (See John 8:51.) That is what God is inviting all people to do: Follow Him, trust in Him and we can watch all of this destruction from the "safety of God's balcony". ☺
 - ii) Even if we can't wait that long, we can think about the rise and fall of all the great kingdoms of this world. Realize that God has brought destruction to civilizations that didn't trust in a single God that rules over the world.
13. Verse 9: He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."
 - a) Think over the last 2,000 years how Christianity has survived. There have been kings and emperors who have done their utmost to wipe out Christianity from their region. What has happened? They fall and belief in Jesus has continued. Even in the last 100 years, it is amazing to watch the growth of Christianity in places like China and Russia that have worked hard in the recent past to eliminate that belief in Jesus as the Son of God.
 - b) So given that history, what are we to do about it? God just asks us to stop, contemplate how He still rules despite the fall of kingdoms and trust that He is "eternal" and will continue even after whatever government we trust in earth, will fail.
14. Verse 11: The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*
 - a) This psalm ends on the reminder that God is with us and wants to protect us (fortress). That means He cares about us as individuals as well as collectively. If God is the king of our world both in the present and future tense, what He asks of us is that we honor Him as our leader. That is the purpose of this psalm, and why it jumps back and forth between talking about the present and future tense of the world as we know it.
 - b) In short, we can trust God to deal with our needs of the moment, as we realize that the same God that is in charge of the world, and knows when it will end. God cares for us as individuals and wants to use our lives to make a difference for Him.
 - c) I was trying to think of an example of someone whose life ended young and suddenly for God. I remember a fairly famous (in America) story that happened over a decade ago where a young girl was shot and killed just for standing up and saying she was a believer in Jesus. Yes the shooter was put away, but that is a separate story. What that girl who died didn't know is that her story inspired many people to want to take a stand for Jesus. My point is when we are willing to be used by God we never know how and when God can and does use us to make a difference for Him. In that sense, God is our protector no matter how long or how short is our time here on earth.
15. Psalm 47, introduction: For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.
 - a) The title of this psalm is much simpler the last few as it just mentions the authors as the Sons of Korah.
 - b) The difference between this psalm and the last one is the last one was designed to be for the Israelites, while this one (#47) is for the nations of the world. That doesn't mean we have to be a Jew to appreciate the last psalm. It means that the last psalm was designed for those who put their trust in God, while this psalm is designed for those who realize that the God of Israel is also the same God who rules over all the earth.

16. Verse 1: Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. ² How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!
- a) One can see in the opening two verses that the tone of this psalm is about the God who rules over the entire earth. OK John, I already believe God rules over all of the earth. Explain to me what is so special in these opening verses?
 - i) The idea here is to show gratitude to God for saving us. Let's face it, the only reason we do desire God is because He put that desire in us. As I like to say, from our perspective, we made the decision to choose God and choose to worship and obey Him. From God's all knowing perspective, He was aware that we were going to choose to follow Him and put that desire to worship Him in our hearts. (Some people see it differently, but that is how I reconcile that classic debate.)
 - b) These verses do not mean we have to quit our lives to express our joy to God. It just means we stop every now and then to express our gratitude to God for who He is and the fact He rules over the earth. OK, why do that?
 - i) For starters, it gets our minds off of our problems and back onto the reality that there is a God, He cares for us and not only does He rule over the great kings of the world, but rules over our hearts as well.
 - ii) The concept of joy as used here is about being happy for whatever blessings God has given us in our lives. I find that no matter how high or low I am at any moment, I can, if I choose, always come up a some reason to be grateful to God.
 - iii) As my wife taught me when I am feeling down, stop and tell God what I am grateful for at the present moment. Doing that helps me to appreciate my relationship with God more, and to put it simply, gets me in a better mood.
 - iv) That is what these verses are trying to do: Get us in a "happy mood" so we can better appreciate not only what God has done for us, but to get us to appreciate all the blessings God has given us in our lives.
17. Verse 3: He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.
- a) I have to admit, Verse 3, confuses me a little. How did or does God subdue nations under us? I don't remember ever ruling over nations. ☺ Another way to look at the "us" is to ask, who is the "us" and it could be the Nation of Israel?
 - b) Either way, one has to see this verse as "future tense". God has never subdued all the nations of the world either under Israel or under "us" as believers. We as believers in God win in the end, for the lack of a better way to describe it. We Christians do become the bride of Christ as described two psalms back. That means we share in God's glory as He will be victorious over the nations. There is coming a day when Jesus the Messiah will rule over the world as we know it. We Christians as His bride, get to watch the whole thing (I believe) from the safety and comfort of heaven and get to watch those who refuse to turn to God be subdued before Him.
 - c) Wait a minute, you might say. What about those people who lived, say 1,000 or 3,000 years ago? How does God "subdue them under us" if they lived so long ago?
 - i) The short answer is that everyone who has or will ever live, will live forever. Some choose to live in the presence of God and the rest choose to live away from the presence of God. That is what hell is about, the choice of not wanting God's free gift of eternal life and complete forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
 - ii) The one's who don't choose Jesus will somehow be subdued under Him. Do I fully understand how that works? No, but I do see it as the only fair way for God to judge the world, and somehow we get a front row seat to watch it.
 - iii) Those who trust in God, will also somehow see the day when Jesus rules over the world the same way we do. As I like to say, God created all things, and that means He created time. When we die, we will live forever outside of time as we know it. That is how we can as believers watch end time events from heaven.

18. Verse 4: He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. *Selah*
- Speaking of seeing eternity from heaven, I present Verse 4. This verse says in effect that those who trust in the same God as "Jacob" (yes "that" Jacob from the book of Genesis) get the inheritance that God has chosen for us. What that means in effect is we don't have much say in what happens to us in heaven, but God does and in that sense, He chooses our inheritance for us.
 - Wait a minute you might say: Isn't how we act now going to affect our status in heaven? The bible does hint of that every now and then. That is not the point here. The point is God decides whatever rewards or benefits we do get in heaven. Therefore we have to accept and trust in the fact that He (God) chooses our eternal inheritance.
 - At the end of this verse, we have another "Selah". So why does God want us to pause and think about this thought here? I believe that God wants us to stop and think about the fact that not only do we trust in Him for our salvation, but we are also trusting in Him for whatever happens to us after we are saved.
19. Verse 5: God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.
- I've read this verse a bunch of times in preparation for this lesson. What I kept thinking about was: If the verse said God "ascended" (as in up to heaven), when did He first come down from heaven? Since this was written hundreds of years prior to Jesus first coming, it could be talking about something in the Old Testament or it is predictive of something in the New Testament:
 - It could be talking about when God first appeared to say Abraham or Moses. In that sense, God descended to earth and then ascended back to heaven.
 - The problem with those Old Testament appearances is when did God receive "shouts of joy" and the "sound of trumpets" when He went back to heaven? How do we know He received shouts of joy at that time? That is another reason why I see this as something in the eternal future as opposed to something past tense.
 - If this psalm is describing a future day when Jesus rules over the world, I suspect there will be shouts of joy and the sounding of trumpets by believers when He comes to "straighten out the world as we know it."
 - This is a good place to do discuss what Jesus does in His Second Coming. Yes He is coming to conquer the world as we know it and somehow change the world as we know it. Most Evangelical Christians (including myself) hold the view that Jesus will rule the world from Jerusalem one day. My question for the moment is "why"?
 - In many ways, this comes back to the story of Adam and Eve. When they chose to sin, this world became corrupted by sin. A reason for the "Second Coming" is so we can live in a world that is not corrupt by sin. That is what the "new earth" is all about. People at that time will still have free choice, but no "corruption" exists.
 - Yes there will be some people who still refuse to do God's will at that time, and that is why Jesus will rule with "force" for a lack of a better word. At the same time, those who have and will chose God, will find it easier to live as Satan and his followers will not be around during this "millennial" period.
 - Getting back to the verse, so when do we "shout for joy" at Jesus ascends back into heaven again, and why are we cheering this event? ☺
 - If I have my end time theology correct, Jesus does conquer the world at His Second Coming. We then celebrate that fact with Jesus back in heaven. Then He comes and rules the world at that time.
 - So did the people who read this psalm back when it was written get all of this? Of course not. However, I do believe the Jews of that day understood the concept of a Messiah coming to "right the wrongs" of this world and in that sense, understood the idea of that Messiah returning to heaven in triumph.

20. Verse 6: Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.
- a) Verse six repeats four times for us to sing praises to God and to "our King". That could be all about God the Father, or it could be the idea of singing praises to God the Father and to our King, who we call Jesus. The idea for now is in effect, "Why should we act miserably and worry about our problems? We should be praising God for the ultimate victories that we get the pleasure of seeing and being a part of."
 - i) I am convinced that God wants us to be happy. Don't get me wrong, when we are in pain, God understands that we have to deal with that pain. The point is that we need to have the eternal perspective in order to appreciate our lives.
 - ii) Let me explain this praise another way: An atheist would have to admit that no matter what good is done on earth, eventually this world would come to an end and whatever good is done, will over the very long run, be a waste of time. However, if there is a God who controls the world and in the end rules over the world, we can have happiness as we get to share in that ultimate victory. That fact should get us to sing praises to God now, as we are certain of His ultimate victory.
 - b) This leads us to Verse 7. We need to sing praise to God because He does rule over the earth and one day He will rule from the earth. Personally, I see this more of a praise to God the Son, as He is the one who will rule over the earth. When we are praising God the Son we are also praising God the Father as they are "one".
21. Verse 8: God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.
- a) This "happy talk" continues here in Verse 8. ☺ This verse reminds us that God rules over all the earth. Again, I see this as future tense, when God will literally rule over the world and everyone will know it. At the same time this verse is also present tense in the sense that God rules whether the leaders of nations are willing to admit that fact or not.
 - b) Let me put it another way: The bible has a 100% track record in being accurate to date. Given that fact, we should also trust in the future predictions made in the bible that they too, will come true, God's way and on His timing.
22. Verse 9: The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.
- a) This verse says the "nobles of the nation assemble". I can't recall anytime in human history where the leaders of the world assembled just as the "believers of God" assemble. In other words, this verse is saying the leaders of the world will get together for the purpose of praising God. So what and "when" is this verse talking about?
 - i) My personal view of this is that when all people get resurrected, we all come to a place outside of time where we know it. I suspect that those who get sent to hell forever, will know that God rules over this world. Will they get to actually see this event? Possibly.
 - ii) Paul does say that every knee will bow one day to Jesus. (See Romans 14:11 or Philippians 2:10). In both cases Paul is quoting Isaiah 45:23 and Paul is applying that verse to "God the Son" as well as "God the Father".
 - iii) I suspect this psalm verse is describing the same event that Paul is describing. It is where everyone who has ever lived acknowledges not only that God the Father rules the world, but that God the Son will physically rule over this world.
 - iv) I heard a good quote the other day that is a good summary of all the psalms. The Psalms are a praise book to God, but the psalms are also full of "theology" about who God is and what He wants us to know about this life as well as the next life. That definitely describes this lesson and we are getting a lot of future "theology" within these psalms.
 - b) OK, let's quickly cover one more psalm, as the topic is similar to the last two.

23. Psalm 48, title: A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.
 - a) All that is said in the title is that this is a song (to be sung) and it was written by the Sons of Korah. I won't elaborate any more on who the Sons of Korah were.
 - b) What will become obvious as we read this psalm is that this is another psalm that describes future events where the Messiah, i.e., Jesus, "the king" will rule over the earth.
 - c) While the last psalm focused on God ruling from the perspective of the whole world, this one focuses on specific things that happen when God actually rules over world.
24. Verse 1: Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.
 - a) This verse starts off, in effect, where the last one "ended", which is about praising God.
 - b) The focus of this verse is on where we should praise God. Although the city of Jerusalem is not mentioned by name in this verse, to a Jewish person living at the time of the "Sons of Korah", the expression translated "city of our God" would refer to Jerusalem.
 - c) The point here is that God is worthy to be praised and we should remember that there is coming a day where He will rule the world from Jerusalem. Coming up later in another psalm, there is a verse that tells us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. (Psalm 122:6.) Why do that? Because it is from that place where God will one day rule from.
 - d) I keep thinking of a famous joke between President Ronald Reagan and the prime minister of Israel at that time, Menachem Begin. When they were meeting one time in Washington, Reagan told Begin, "Don't forget to pray about a specific situation." Begin responded, "I'll pray from Jerusalem. It's a local phone call there." ☺
 - i) I don't know if that story is true, but I do believe in a sense, prayer from Jerusalem is a "local call", in that I believe Jesus will rule the world one day from Jerusalem.
 - ii) Does this mean that we as Christians should pray toward Jerusalem? Of course not. It simply means we should acknowledge that city as the location where God will rule and reign one day.
 - e) Why does the verse mention "his holy mountain"? Yes Jerusalem is up in the mountains, but one gets the impression that "His holy mountain" is something special. It could be something "geological" in the future where Jesus will reign from a high geological point.
 - i) I don't know for sure, but somehow, when I think of praying to God, I do think of looking up as if God is looking down upon us. I'll leave it at that, and we'll wait for more information as to the specifics of this.
25. Verse 2: It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.
 - a) Speaking of the mountain where God reigns, we get more description about it in Verse 2. The term "Mount Zion" has always been a nickname for Jerusalem as that city is located on that mountain.
 - b) If you want another reason to believe that these psalms primarily focus on the future, as opposed to the present, consider the phrase "the joy of the whole earth".
 - i) At this time, nor any time in history, has Jerusalem and the God of the Jews ever been the joy of the whole (note that word "whole") earth. Yes there are billions of Christians who do look to God, but that does not mean all the nations of this world do look to Jerusalem as the future home of Jesus.
 - ii) That is another reason why I see these last three psalms as primarily focusing on future events, and not something in the past or present.
 - c) OK John, if this is all "future theology", why should I care about it now?
 - i) What we need to remember is the same God who is going to rule the world in the future is the same God that rules over our hearts today and wants to guide our lives now in order to make a difference for Him, today, and forever.

26. Verse 3: God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress.
- a) Who is the "she" in this verse? We know it is not God, as the word "he" is used to describe God himself. In languages other than English, it is common to use male or female pronouns to describe inanimate objects. In this case, the "home" of God on earth, Jerusalem is described as a she. This does not mean that the city of Jerusalem or the throne of the God is somehow "female". It just means the female pronoun is used to describe this future throne area.
 - b) So is this verse saying that God "will be" in Jerusalem or "is" in Jerusalem?
 - i) The answer is both. It is kind of strange to consider the concept that the God who created the universe says that a particular piece of real estate is "His". Yet, that is true of the land of Israel and Jerusalem in particular. Because it was the center of the worship of God at one time, and will one day be that center again one day, the city of Jerusalem is honored as the eternal home where God reigns from on earth.
 - ii) Like I said earlier that does not mean we have to pray toward Jerusalem. It just means we have to acknowledge that location as where God will rule from one day.
27. Verse 4: When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together, ⁵ they saw her and were astounded; they fled in terror. ⁶ Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labor.
- a) There have been times in ancient history where various kings have worked to conquer Jerusalem. Even today, most Palestinians want the end of Jewish rule over Jerusalem. There will also come a future day when Jesus starts ruling from Jerusalem where kings (leaders of countries) will join forces to try to conquer it.
 - b) With that said, what is unique about this verse is the reference to "fled in terror". Again, while there are many historical accounts of attacking Jerusalem and there is a desire by non-Jewish people to take over that city, there has never been a time as described in these three verses, where the rulers of the world fled away in terror before attacking that city. That is another reason why many see this psalm as describing a future event when God does rule from there.
 - c) An underlying point of these verses is that many leaders of the world don't want Jesus to rule over them from Jerusalem. These leaders will someday organize an attack, but somehow when they get there, they will be in fear of pain like a woman in labor.
 - d) It is amazing to consider today that the city of Jerusalem has no natural resources and no significant bodies of water, yet it is the main focus of the world and "what to do about it."
 - e) I remember Pastor David Hocking once commenting about a speech made at the United Nations. That speech had someone asking out loud in effect, "Can we stop focusing on Jerusalem for once? It seems that Jerusalem is all we ever talk about around here."
 - i) The prophet Zechariah predicted that Jerusalem will be a "terror" to all nations. (See Zechariah 14:2.) That is what is implied here in the psalms and that is what is the focus of the world at the present time.
28. Verse 7: You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind.
- a) As I read this verse, I have to admit the word Tarshish puzzled me. I studied a bunch of references to that word. As best experts can tell, "Tarshish" was some far western port from the geographical perspective of the nation of Israel. Some argue Tarshish was in Spain, and others argue England. Wherever it was, apparently at the time when this psalm was written, "Tarshish" was known as a land of sailing ships.
 - i) The only other major reference to Tarshish is in the book of Jonah (4:2), where the ship he sails on was setting sail for Tarshish, wherever that was.
 - b) Although this specific reference to Tarshish was lost over time, the idea is that God will destroy any and all attempts to overthrow His rule over the world. That description of the destruction of the nations is similar to a ship being destroyed by a really bad wind.

29. Verse 8: As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her secure forever. *Selah*
- a) The first things that popped in my head as I studied this verse is about some of the actual history of Jerusalem. This psalm verse was written centuries before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem as described by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. My point is this verse is saying that God will make her (the city of Jerusalem) secure forever.
 - i) One of the reasons the Israelites did not believe Jeremiah and Ezekiel when they both predicted the coming destruction of Israel was because here in Psalm 48, the verse says that God will make her (Jerusalem) secure forever.
 - ii) Because of this verse, many of the Jews of that time never believed God would destroy Jerusalem. Yet that is what happened when the Babylonians destroyed Israel (around 587 BC) and the Romans destroyed the city again in 70AD.
 - b) So John, if Jerusalem was destroyed twice since this verse was written, how does this verse accurately say that God makes "her" secure forever?
 - i) The answer is that one cannot read this verse as present tense, but only as future tense. The Israelites occupying the land has, and always will be conditional of their collective obedience to God. He promised the Israelites would have that land and that promise has nothing to do with their belief in Jesus as the Messiah.
 - ii) We Evangelical Christians generally hold the view that there is going to come a day when the Jewish nation will one day turn to Jesus. That does not mean every last Jewish person, but a large percentage of Jews will accept Jesus one day. If my view is correct, when Jesus returns to rule from Jerusalem, then God the Father will make that city secure forever. That is what this verse is teaching us.
 - iii) That reminds me of another classical religious Jewish joke. When the Messiah comes, the Jewish leaders will ask, "So, is this your first visit or your second?" ☺
30. Verse 9: Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.
- a) OK John, so one day Jesus will rule from Jerusalem. Here in Verse 9 it is describing the temple that stood in Jerusalem at the time of this writing and it mentions those Jews who worshipped God at that time. With that said, how does this affect my life here and now?
 - i) What we are to learn from the fall of Jerusalem (more than once), among other things is that God demands obedience. If we are trusting in God's promises for our lives, then that demands obedience to His will. To put it another way, we may not lose our salvation if we are still trusting in Jesus. However, if we turn from Him, God can and will do things to get our attention and draw us back to Him.
 - a) Just as God had to go to "desperate measures" and drive the Israelites out of the land for a time, so God can and will go to "desperate measures" when we are not willing to do His will for our lives.
 - ii) So does that mean we have to obey all the Old Testament laws? No, it means we stick close to God and seek Him regularly for guidance for our lives. It means we spend time with other Christians and spend time in His word. In summary, it means we care about pleasing Him with our lives.
31. Verse 10: Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness. ¹¹ Mount Zion rejoices, the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments. ¹² Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, ¹³ consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation.
- a) As I have been preaching all through this lesson, I see this as "future" and not "present". Verse 10 says that praise to Him reaches the end of the earth.
 - b) I'm sure when this verse was written, the Israelites could not have imagined people from around the world worshipping the God of the bible. The Israelites understand that God controlled the world and in that sense, praise to Him reached the world, but it wasn't until word of Jesus spread around the world that this verse started to come literally true.

- c) I wanted to include verses 10 through 13 at one read because I want you to notice a pattern about these verses:
 - i) Verse 10 focuses on the whole earth giving praise to God.
 - ii) Verse 11 mentions Mount Zion, which is where Jerusalem is located.
 - iii) Verse 11 then mentions the "villages of Judah", which is the area of Israel at that time that surrounds Jerusalem.
 - iv) Verse 12-13 then jumps back to Jerusalem and focuses on the city, not the temple. These two verses tell us to look at the walls and "parts" of Jerusalem and urges those living there at that time to tell the next generation of God's "greatness".
 - d) Your point is? We as Christians are to believe in the God of the Jews that does rule over the earth forever. Our responsibility is not to keep that information to ourselves but to pass it on to the next generation. Yes we are to love God and sing praises to Him for His goodness, but we also need to pass on that knowledge of Him to the next generation.
 - i) OK, why mention that fact here? The history of Israel in the Old Testament is full of up and down periods of time where the Israelites would collectively turn to God and then, another leader would come along who would turn to idols. The point as it applies to us (collectively), is that if we fail to pass on knowledge about God to the next generation, that generation will turn from God and harm society.
32. Verse 14: For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.
- a) The psalm ends with the reminder that God is our God (i.e., personalize that relationship) and will rule over us forever and ever. It refers to "today" for those who acknowledge His existence and turn to Him with our lives. Evangelical Christian bible scholars mostly believe refers to a future day when God will rule over the entire earth from Jerusalem.
33. Let me sum up these psalms with some key points:
- a) First of all, this lesson ends a "trilogy" of lessons: Two lessons ago, the lesson was all about suffering and not knowing why we are suffering. It can be tied to the "Great Tribulation" right before Jesus returns. The last lesson was about a marriage between Jesus and believers. This lesson then focuses on life "after that marriage" where God the Son rules from the earth.
 - b) The important thing is to remember that God does want to rule over our hearts today and be in charge of every aspect of our lives. He wants to guide us and make a difference for Him in our lifetime. Part of our eternal reward is we will rule with God one day when He does rule the world from Jerusalem.
 - c) I stated a few lessons back that the second book of the psalms seems to tie with the concept of "redemption". If all of this discussion about God ruling permanently from Jerusalem and us ruling with Him is not about "redemption", I don't know what is.
 - i) My point is God does not redeem us just so we can kick back in heaven one day. God has an eternal purpose for mankind and us. That purpose involves an eternal marriage to God the Son, and ruling with Him over the earth. (See 2nd Tim. 2:12.)
 - d) As I said in the beginning of the lesson, these three psalms are called the kingdom psalms by bible scholars as they all reflect on the concept of God ruling over the world. What is important for us to remember is that God calls on us to be a good witness for Him and make a difference for Him in preparation for Him ruling over our lives and eventually, the lives of the entire world. On that happy note, let me end in prayer:
34. Father, help us to remember that You will rule over the world one day. Help us to use our lives to make a difference for You. Guide us and help us to be focused on that guidance. We don't know what our lives will be like today or tomorrow, but You do. Help us to trust in You knowing that You are in control of this world and want to work through us to make a difference or You in this world. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

Amendment to the lesson: Discussion of William Shakespeare and Psalm 46

I couldn't finish this lesson without including an interesting bit of trivia regarding the King James Version of the bible and William Shakespeare. When the King James Bible came out in 1611, Shakespeare (who did not contribute to this bible translation) was alive and famous as the writer of many plays. With that said, here is Psalm 46 as it was written in the King James Version of the bible.

- ¹ God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
² Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
³ *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.
Selah
⁴ *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High.
⁵ God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.
⁶ The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.
⁷ The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge.
Selah
⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.
⁹ He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.
¹⁰ Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.
¹¹ The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge.
Selah

Here is what is interesting: When this bible came out, it was Shakespeare's 46th birthday. If you count 46 words beginning with the "God" in Verse 1, the 46th word is shake. If you count 46 words (backwards) beginning with the "refuge" in Verse 11, the 46th word is spear.

My point is, in honor of Shakespeare's 46th birthday, the authors of the King James Bible snuck in the words "shake and spear" in honor of William Shakespeare. I am positive this was done on purpose to honor the famous Englishman who was living at that time.

Understand that this translation fits the original Hebrew language. The words were not put in just to make it work. One can take the original Hebrew and correctly translate it as shown above.

Here is why I mentioned this bit of trivia: Imagine if the authors of one of the modern translations snuck in the name of an American President or even say, Billy Graham. Some bible scholars would be calling for the heads of those authors if this insert was done today. Yet those same people who believe that the King James Version of the bible is only version of the bible that should be used, they either don't know or refuse to acknowledge that Shakespeare's name was placed in Psalm 46 in honor of his 46th birthday. This insert is not commenting on the Christian status of Shakespeare as a person, it was just a neat little trick that was done to honor the greatest English writer of that era.

There is not much one can do with this bit of trivia, but it is interesting to contemplate for those people (I'm not one of them) who argue the King James Version is the perfect (or the "only") translation. I do believe the King James Version is an excellent translation using the 17th Century English language. However, I am not one of those who believe the King James is the only English bible one should read.

(Source for this page: The book: "King James Only Controversy, The: Can You Trust Modern Translations?" - by James R. White.)