

AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT AND PSALM 48

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There is an apocryphal story that is told of the 39th president of the United States. During one of his shuttle diplomacy trips to the Middle East after the Camp David Accord was signed, he visited the office of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. He noticed there were three telephones on his desk: a red one, a white one, and a blue one. The American president made an inquiry as to the different usage of these three phones. Sadat replied, "The red one is my hot line to Menachem Begin, the prime minister of Israel, in case there is a breakdown in the peace accord. The white one is my hot line to the parliament in case I have to keep some of the opposition in line, and the blue one is my hot line to God."

The American president said, "Oh, I'm a Sunday School teacher, I would love to speak with God, if I may." Sadat said, "It is a very expensive, long-distance phone call from here and I will have to bill you for it, but if you would like to talk with God, please do." The Sunday School teacher said, "That's fine, I'm a good Democrat also, so I will let the US taxpayers pay the bill!" So the president called God and talked with him for a half an hour. As the president boarded Air Force One on his departure from the Cairo airport, Sadat handed him the phone bill for \$10,000. The American president was shocked at how expensive the bill was.

When he arrived in Israel, he visited the prime ministers' office in eastern Jerusalem, only a few kilometers from the historical Temple Mount, ancient Mount Zion. He noticed on the prime minister's desk three phones: a red one, a white one, and a blue one. He acknowledged that he knew the red phone was his hot line to Anwar Sadat, but he inquired as to the use of the other two phones. Begin replied: "The white one is my hot line to the Knesset in order to keep the different political factions in line and the blue one is my hot line to God." The American president said, "I'm a Sunday School teacher. I would love to speak with God, if I may." The prime minister said he would have to bill him for the call and gave him permission to use the blue phone. The president talked with God for over an hour and thought the bill would be outrageously expensive. As soon as he hung up, Begin handed him the phone bill. The president was flabbergasted; the bill was only a dime (ten cents). Quizzically he inquired as to why it was so inexpensive. Begin looked at him and smiled: "I am surprised that you, a Sunday School teacher, don't know the answer to that question. Don't you know it's a local phone call from here?!"

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the Great King" ... "As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it forever. Selah." (Psalm 48:1-2, 8). The Hebrew word "Selah" is a musical rest note, so pause: Stop and contemplate this! ☺