

Psalm 122

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”
A Song of degrees of David.

Psalm 122: The end of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was probably the occasion of this psalm. It contains a recollection of the pilgrimage (verses 1-2), praise for Jerusalem (verses 3-5), and a prayer for Jerusalem (verses 6-9).

Verses 1-9: See notes on (Psalms 120:1-7). David expressed his great joy over Jerusalem, which he had settled by defeating the Jebusites (compare 2 Sam. chapter 5), and bringing the tabernacle and Ark for permanent residency (compare 2 Sam. chapter 6). David’s desire/prayer was temporarily fulfilled in Solomon’s reign (compare 1 Kings 4:24-25). It is ironic that Jerusalem, which means “city of peace”, has been fought over through history more than any other city in the world. Prophetically, David’s desire will not be experienced in its fullness until the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6), comes to rule permanently (Zech. 14:9, 11), as the promised Davidic King (compare 2 Sam. 7:12-13, 16; Ezek. 37:24-28).

- I. Joy Over Worship (122:1-5);
- II. Prayer Over Jerusalem (122:6-9).

122:1 "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD."

“The house of the Lord”: A term used of the tabernacle (compare Exodus 23:19; 34:26; 2 Sam. 12:20), not the temple that would be built later by Solomon.

Are you glad, when someone says let's go to church? David of course, is the penman here. David loved the Lord. He was always excited when it was time to go to worship with his God. He was not only glad for himself, but he was glad that others wanted to go as well. This is probably speaking of the physical house of the LORD here on the earth. It would be said also, of those who have run their race and are prepared to meet their LORD at His throne in heaven. Any times I ask someone, why do you go to church? Is it a joy to go? Would you rather be doing something else? Are you going because you are obligated to go, or do you go because you want to go? In David's case here, he was excited about just the thought of going. It was with great anticipation that he went. He knew the Presence of God was there over the mercy seat. Oh to be just in the near vicinity of the LORD. I can truthfully say, that it is with joy I think upon the possibility of going to church. I am likewise anticipating the day when I can go home to be with Him and never have to leave again. When I think of Anna that was in the temple day and night, praying and fasting, I think of a woman who truly loved God. She just stayed, because she did not want to leave that Presence of God. Think on these things.

Psalm 122:2 "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

“Stand within thy gates”: Sometime after the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant had arrived in the city of David (2 Sam. chapter 6). David’s joy is that the Ark has found its proper location.

The word stand, here, means a stationary fact. This means they are not leaving, but standing. The joy of the first verse has run on over in this. It is such a joy just to stand within the gate. Those who have travelled to Israel can vouch for the joy of just standing in the gate. There is a heavenly Jerusalem that this can be looking forward to as well.

Psalm 122:3 "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:"

“Compact together”: The Jerusalem of David’s day (Zion), was smaller than the enlargement by Solomon.

Probably when David penned this, the city was not what we see there today. Possibly he was speaking of it prophetically. It is very compact with a wall completely around it. The city, many times in the Bible, is speaking of the church. We know that the church also, is compact. It is a close-knit group (family).

Psalm 122:4 "Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD."

“The testimony of Israel”: Refers to God’s command to go up to Jerusalem 3 times annually (see note on Psalms 120:1-7).

Now we see an important reason for going up to the temple. This is still one of the reasons for going to church. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good. There were twelve tribes of Israel, but the thing that kept them together was their God. The temple in Jerusalem would be their gathering place of worship. The families of the tribes would come at least three times a year to the temple to worship.

Psalm 122:5 "For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David."

In Jerusalem as the Targum. Here were courts of judicature, and thrones for the judges to sit upon, to execute judgment and justice to the people.

"The thrones of the house of David": The Targum is, "thrones in the house of the sanctuary, for the kings of the house of David;" who might sit there, as the Jews say, when others might not. In the church of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, every saint is a king, as well as a priest. And all have thrones and seats there. Have a power of judging, not only lesser matters pertaining to this life, but such as regard the spiritual peace and welfare of the church and interest of Christ. Having laws and rules given them to go by, in the admission and exclusion of members, and respecting their conduct to each other, and to their Lord and head. And in the New Jerusalem there will be thrones set, not only for the twelve apostles of Christ, and for the martyrs of Jesus, but for all the saints. There will be the thrones of God and of the Lamb, and every overcomer shall sit down on the same. This honor all the saints will have (Matt. 19:28).

The throne of judgement was in Jerusalem. David was the leader of all 12 tribes at this time. Each tribe had a leader, but matters of great importance were judged by David in Jerusalem.

Verses 6-9: A most appropriate prayer for a city whose name means peace and is the residency of the God of peace (Isa. 9:6; Rom. 15:33; Heb. 13:20). Compare prayers for the peace of Israel (Psalms 125:5; 128:6), and other psalms which exalt Jerusalem (Psalms 128, 132, 147). History would prove that bad times had to come (Psalms 79, 137), before the best of times (Rev. chapters 21 and 22).

Psalm 122:6 "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."

In whose prosperity both your civil and your religious privileges are deeply concerned. They shall prosper; or, let them prosper. The future being taken imperatively, as is very frequent. The Lord grant them prosperity and all happiness.

"They shall prosper that love thee": That love Jerusalem, the church of God. That love Christ, her King; the saints, her citizens; her laws and ordinances. And the word of the Lord that goes out of her, and is ministered in her. Which is shown by an attendance with her on them, and by their prayers for her prosperity and welfare. And such prosper in their outward affairs, as Obed-edom and his family were blessed for the sake of the Ark he took in and took care of. And in their spiritual affairs their souls prosper, as Gaius's did. And as such do who are favored with the discoveries of the love of God, with an application of pardoning grace and mercy, and have a spiritual appetite for the word; when their graces are in lively exercise. Their corruptions are subdued, spiritual light and zeal for truth are increased, inward strength is renewed, communion with God is enjoyed, and they are fruitful in every good work.

Jerusalem was taken from the word Salem, which means peace. The city of peace has known very little peace. Perhaps, its name is for the peace it will know when Jesus reigns on the earth. We should all pray for Jerusalem, the city of our Great God. This city is called the city of God. We should all love this city. I believe this is also speaking in a prophetic way about the church. Those who love it are blessed.

Psalm 122:7 "Peace be within thy walls, [and] prosperity within thy palaces."

The word "say" might be supplied; for this, with the following, seem to be petitions the psalmist puts into the mouths of those he desires to pray for Jerusalem's peace. And he directs them to pray in this manner, to take with them such words as these, and pray to the Lord. Jerusalem was a walled city, and so is the church of God. God himself is a wall of fire around her. Salvation by Christ is as walls and bulwarks to her; the power and providence of God protect her. Within these walls the people of God have a place and a name. All the inhabitants of Zion in common are included in this petition, and peace is wished for them all. Let their condition and circumstances be what they may, be they high or low, rich or poor, stronger or weaker believers, children, young men, or fathers. Some render it, "in thine army", as the Targum, and other Jewish writers; in the church's militia, all saints being soldiers and in a warfare state. And here success to their arms against sin, Satan, and the world, is wished for.

"And prosperity within thy palaces": As there were palaces in Jerusalem for the king, the nobles, and great men in the land. So there are in the church of God, where he is known, for a refuge. Even the meanest places in it are preferable to the palaces of the greatest monarchs (see Psalm 48:3). And here indeed all the saints are kings, and have their palaces. But particularly there are some who are set in the first place in the church, and over others in the Lord. Who are their guides and governors, and are in office relation to the church as pastors and deacons now, as there were priests and Levites before. And the prosperity of these is to be prayed for, the good of the whole church being involved therein.

This is a prayer for peace within the walls. Again, this can be speaking of the walls of physical Jerusalem, or it could be speaking of the walls of the church.

Psalm 122:8 "For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace [be] within thee."

Who were regenerated by the spirit of God. Adopted into his family, and children of the same father. Stood in the same relation to Christ the firstborn, and members of the same church; and so brethren. Partners in the same blessings and promises of the covenant. Partakers of the same grace. Joined together in religious worship. Shared in the same joys and griefs. Travelers together to the same heavenly country, and entitled to the same glory and happiness. So David, though a king, reckoned his meanest subjects as such, who were spiritual men. And for their sakes, through the goodwill, love, and affection he bore to them, he would set praying souls an example, and by it enforce his own exhortation, as follows.

"I will now say, peace be within thee": Now and always put up this petition, and not put it off to longer time. That peace and prosperity may always attend the church of God, as well as the city of Jerusalem, literally considered, and the inhabitants of it.

This Psalm started with someone asking David to go the house of the Lord. His brethren and companions, here, are the same as those mentioned (in the 1st verse). This is saying, that all believers would benefit by the peace of Jerusalem. This is not a private place for just David to worship. It is a place for all who love God to worship.

Psalm 122:9 "Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good."

Not because of his own palace, nor because of his own house and family. Nor because of his own personal interest; though all were concerned in the peace of Jerusalem. But chiefly because of the sanctuary of the Lord, as the Targum. Because of the worship and service of God in it; because of his great love and zeal for the house and church of the living God, which ate him up (Psalm 69:9).

"I will seek thy good": The good of Jerusalem and the good of the church of God. Do all the good he could to it both with his purse and prayers, and by stirring up others to do the same (see Psalm 51:18).

David was not allowed to build the temple in Jerusalem, because he was a warrior. We said in a previous lesson, that David was a man of peace who had been forced into war. David wanted the temple in Jerusalem built so badly, that he gave a fortune in gold and silver for the building. We see in the verse above, that David made peace around him, so the house of the Lord could be built in peaceful times.

Psalm 122 Questions

1. Are you glad when someone says, let's go to church?
2. Why do you go to church?
3. Would you rather be doing something else?
4. What was David's attitude about going to meet with God?
5. What was Anna's reason for living in the temple?
6. What does the word, stand, mean in verse 2?
7. _____ is builded as a city that is compact together.
8. Many times in the Bible, the city is speaking of what?
9. What is an important reason to go up to the temple?
10. What kept the 12 tribes together?
11. How often did they come to Jerusalem to the temple to worship?
12. Matters of great importance were judged by whom?
13. Pray for the peace of _____.
14. What does Salem mean?
15. Verse 8 says, for my _____ and _____ sake.
16. Who would benefit by the peace of Jerusalem?
17. Why did he seek good?