

# THE PSALMS OF ASCENT

JOURNEYING WITH JESUS  
TO JERUSALEM

Part 3

## "Psalm 122 & the Cleansing of the Temple"

26 January 2025

### **Introduction: David & the Psalms of Ascent**

Five of the ascent psalms are attributed to specific authors. Four (122, 123, 131, 133) are said to be of David while one (127) is said to be of Solomon. Because these psalms often speak of the temple, some have questioned how David could have written them since the temple was not constructed during his lifetime. We should keep in mind, however, what the Scripture tells us about all that David did in preparation for the building of the temple.

- (1) *David had the Ark of the Covenant brought to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6)*
- (2) *The Lord covenanted with David that his son would rule after him and would build the temple (2 Sam. 7)*
- (3) *David made extensive preparations for the construction of the temple (1 Chron. 21-26, 28)*

"He was told that he must not build the temple, but he might prepare for it. As we have seen, he made 'extensive preparations' and went to 'great pains' and worked 'with all his resources' to achieve this only goal, the building up of the Temple Mount, drawing up plans, gathering vast quantities of gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and cedar, planning the labour of the builders and the details of the ministry to follow. Can we imagine that...the sweet singer of Israel did not write any liturgy or songs for the great day of dedication?"

—David C. Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents*

**Key Point:** Believers can experience \_\_\_\_\_ together in worship even as we anticipate eternity in God's \_\_\_\_\_ because of the priestly work of the Lord Jesus which has been accomplished on our behalf.

## Psalm 122

The ascent psalms continue with the Israelite and his companions arriving in Jerusalem and marveling at its beauty. They pray for its peace in the present while longing for the coming of the eschatological *shalom* of God.

- **The pilgrim recalls the joy of beginning his journey to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. (v. 1-2)**

Psa. 122:1-2—<sup>1</sup>I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" <sup>2</sup>Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!

⇒ \_\_\_\_\_ being in the house of the Lord filled the psalmist with gladness.

"standing within your gates"

- **The pilgrim is amazed by the city and speaks of its prominence as the nation's political and religious center. (v. 3-5)**

Psa. 122:3-5—<sup>3</sup>Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together, <sup>4</sup>to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord. <sup>5</sup>There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David.

⇒ The imagery that is used to describe the city emphasizes its \_\_\_\_\_ in the minds and hearts of the pilgrims.

"built as a city"

"bound firmly together"

⇒ As the location of the house of the Lord, Jerusalem was vital to Israel's \_\_\_\_\_ (Deut. 16:16).

⇒ As the location of David's throne, it was the vital to the \_\_\_\_\_ life of the nation.

- **The pilgrim calls for prayer for the city for the sake of God's glory and the good of His people. (v. 6-9)**

Psa. 122:6-9—<sup>6</sup>Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! "May they be secure who love you! <sup>7</sup>Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!" <sup>8</sup>For my brothers and companions' sake I will say, "Peace be within you!" <sup>9</sup>For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

⇒ Prayer should be made for the city to live up to its \_\_\_\_\_. ("Jerusalem"— "\_\_\_\_\_ of Peace")

"peace"

"security"

⇒ The pilgrim's focus is on the \_\_\_\_\_ of his people so that they might continue to worship the Lord together.

⇒ From the perspective of David, he longs for the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's covenant promises to him.

**Key Point:** It is good and right for us to \_\_\_\_\_ for peace for ourselves and our brothers we worship alongside as we seek God's glory and the good of others in the world.

## **Gospel Parallel: "The Cleansing of the Temple" — John 2:13-22**

**Background:** All four of the gospels record an account of Jesus cleansing the temple, but the synoptics differ from the account in John. This is likely the case because Jesus did this on multiple occasions (once at the \_\_\_\_\_ of His public ministry and once at the \_\_\_\_\_).

1. Jesus had gone with His disciples to Jerusalem to celebrate the \_\_\_\_\_ in obedience to the Scriptures.

2. For very practical reasons, the outer court of the temple had come to function as a \_\_\_\_\_ so that people could offer their sacrifices to the Lord. (Deut. 16:17)

⇒ The temple was to be a place of \_\_\_\_\_ so that God's peace could be experienced by those who came to worship. Instead, it had become a \_\_\_\_\_ marketplace.

3. Jesus's actions sought to restore the \_\_\_\_\_ for God that was intended to fill the whole of the temple complex.

John 2:16— *And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."*

*"A marketplace. Zech 14:20-21, in context, is clearly a picture of the messianic kingdom. The Hebrew word translated "Canaanite" may also be translated "merchant" or "trader." Read in this light, Zech 14:21 states that there will be no merchant in the house of the Lord in that day (the day of the Lord, at the establishment of the messianic kingdom). And what would Jesus' words (and actions) in cleansing the temple have suggested to the observers? That Jesus was fulfilling messianic expectations would have been obvious—especially to the disciples, who had just seen the miracle at Cana with all its messianic implications."* — Thomas Constable

⇒ The priests had failed to \_\_\_\_\_ and keep the holiness of the temple (Num. 3:5-9) and had allowed it become a common market.

⇒ It has become more like a \_\_\_\_\_ temple than the dwelling place of the God of Peace.

4. Jesus' response to those who demanded a sign from Him was to predict that His \_\_\_\_\_ would demonstrate His authority as Messiah.

**Key Point:** The peace that we long for both now and forever is made possible only through the \_\_\_\_\_ work of the Lord Jesus.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

1. The Lord Jesus has broken down the \_\_\_\_\_ that separated us from God and given us full access into His presence!

Eph. 2:14—<sup>14</sup> *For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.*

2. Christ cleanses us and sets us apart as a priesthood, thereby making our \_\_\_\_\_ of worship acceptable to God.

1 Pet. 2:5— *you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

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## Psalm 122

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- **The pilgrim recalls the joy of beginning his journey to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. (v. 1-2)**

Psa. 122:1-2—<sup>1</sup>I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" <sup>2</sup>Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!

⇒ **Anticipation** being in the house of the Lord filled the psalmist with gladness.

*"standing within your gates"*

- **The pilgrim is amazed by the city and speaks of its prominence as the nation's political and religious center. (v. 3-5)**

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⇒ The imagery that is used to describe the city emphasizes its **uniqueness** in the minds and hearts of the pilgrims.

*"built as a city"*

*"bound firmly together"*

⇒ As the location of the house of the Lord, Jerusalem was vital to Israel's **worship** (Deut. 16:16).

⇒ As the location of David's throne, it was the vital to the **civic** life of the nation.

- **The pilgrim calls for prayer for the city for the sake of God's glory and the good of His people. (v. 6-9)**

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⇒ Prayer should be made for the city to live up to its **name**. ("Jerusalem"— "**City** of Peace")

*"peace"*

*"security"*

⇒ The pilgrim's focus is on the security of his people so that they might continue to worship the Lord together.

⇒ From the perspective of David, he longs for the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to him.

**Key Point:** It is good and right for us to pray for peace for ourselves and our brothers we worship alongside as we seek God's glory and the good of others in the world.

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1. **Jesus had gone with His disciples to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover in obedience to the Scriptures.**

2. **For very practical reasons, the outer court of the temple had come to function as a market so that people could offer their sacrifices to the Lord. (Deut. 16:17)**

⇒ The temple was to be a place of order so that God's peace could be experienced by those who came to worship. Instead, it had become a chaotic marketplace.

3. **Jesus's actions sought to restore the reverence for God that was intended to fill the whole of the temple complex.**

John 2:16— *And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."*

"A marketplace. Zech 14:20-21, in context, is clearly a picture of the messianic kingdom. The Hebrew word translated "Canaanite" may also be translated "merchant" or "trader." Read in this light, Zech 14:21 states that there will be no merchant in the house of the Lord in that day (the day of the Lord, at the establishment of the messianic kingdom). And what would Jesus' words (and actions) in cleansing the temple have suggested to the observers? That Jesus was fulfilling messianic expectations would have been obvious—especially to the disciples, who had just seen the miracle at Cana with all its messianic implications." — Thomas Constable

⇒ The priests had failed to guard and keep the holiness of the temple (Num. 3:5-9) and had allowed it become a common market.

⇒ It has become more like a pagan temple than the dwelling place of the God of Peace.

4. **Jesus' response to those who demanded a sign from Him was to predict that His resurrection would demonstrate His authority as Messiah.**

**Key Point:** The peace that we long for both now and forever is made possible only through the priestly work of the Lord Jesus.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

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