

Season in the Psalms: Psalm 122 Going up to Zion

A song of ascents. Of David.

- ¹ I rejoiced with those who said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord."
² Our feet are standing
in your gates, Jerusalem.
- ³ Jerusalem is built like a city
that is closely compacted together.
⁴ That is where the tribes go up—
the tribes of the Lord—
to praise the name of the Lord
according to the statute given to Israel.
⁵ There stand the thrones for judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.
- ⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May those who love you be secure.
⁷ May there be peace within your walls
and security within your citadels."
⁸ For the sake of my family and friends,
I will say, "Peace be within you."
⁹ For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your prosperity.

Introducing the Psalm

Psalm 122 is part of the collection of Psalms from 120-134 known as "*A song of ascents*". These Psalms would have been sung by pilgrims heading to Jerusalem, either in returning from exile and certainly in going for the great festivals like the Passover.

The idea of 'ascent' is connected *both* to the reality that Jerusalem was built on relatively high ground, *and* to the significance of Jerusalem as the place where God was present and where God's king ruled over God's people.

In this Psalm, the trials (Ps120) and hazards (Ps121) are passed; now there is the joy of the worshipper as he catches sight of the Lord's House to meet for true worship.

Verses 1-2 The Joy of Arrival

1. It may be hard for us to imagine the experience of a pilgrim arriving in Jerusalem for worship! But what about Jerusalem, its temple, its sacrificial system and its worship would stir the hearts of God's people?
2. Jesus is how we meet with our God. He is the true temple. How do we find wonder and delight in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Verses 3-5 A City of Security and Unity

3. How does v3 and 5 give a picture of security? Why might a king who rules with justice be a reason for praise?
4. What strikes you about the unity captured in verse 4? How does true worship create unity among different peoples?

This picture never reached fulfilment in the OT. Insecurity and disunity were constant problems. In Jesus' day he lamented over a city that would not unite around Him as God's promised King. The picture of Psalm 122:1-5 will only reach fulfilment when Jesus builds his church and then returns to dwell with his church. That is why the Psalm ends with a call to pray.

Verses 6-9 A Prayer for Peace

5. Verses 6-7 are a prayer. What is the prayer request? Why is it important that Christians today pray for the church?
6. Verses 8-9 are spoken as longing. What was the longing of the OT believer? How does it translate to the Christian and the church?

Bringing it together

Jesus is the fulfilment of the joy recorded in Psalm 122. As the one greater than the temple, the great High Priest, the perfect sacrifice for sins and the great King in David's line, he alone is the source of joy and longing for the Christian.

Jerusalem translates in our day *in part* to the local church as the place where God meets with his people. Ultimately it anticipates *the New Jerusalem* when Christ returns and God and his people dwell together forever, filling the new creation with God's glory.

Praying for one another and the local and global church