

Appendix L

The Songs of Degrees

Psalms 120-134

Songs of Degrees (120-134)

1. Total of 15 of them
2. 5 are ascribed to individuals (*4 David, 1 Solomon*)
3. 10 are anonymous
4. Who wrote these “Song of Degrees” and what is their intended purpose?

Hezekiah

1. One of Judah’s godliest kings (*2 King 18:5-6*)
2. Restored temple worship (*2 Chronicles 29:25, 27, 30*)
3. King of Assyria conquering the Northern tribes comes to the city walls of Jerusalem through the prophet Isaiah Hezekiah seeks deliverance from the LORD (*2 Kings 19:14-19*)
4. The LORD through Isaiah hears the plea of Hezekiah and answers the prayers of Hezekiah (*2 Kings 19:20, 32-35*)
5. However prior to this miraculous deliverance Hezekiah falls sick even unto death (*2 Kings 20:1*)
6. Hezekiah prays to the LORD and before Isaiah can even leave the middle court God answers Hezekiah’s prayer (*2 Kings 20:2-7*)
7. Hezekiah is given 15 more years to live (*2 Kings 20:6*)
8. Hezekiah asks Isaiah for a sign from God that he will be healed (*2 Kings 20:8*)
9. Hezekiah chooses for the sun dial of Ahab to go back 10 degrees (*2 Kings 20:9-11*)
10. Hezekiah upon being healed sees the miraculous deliverance of the city by the angel of the LORD.

11. Hezekiah upon being healed states: "Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD." (See *Isaiah 38:20*)

Answer to the Song of Degrees (120-134)

1. 15 Songs of Degree representing 15 years of life extended to Hezekiah
2. 10 of the Songs of Degrees representing the 10 degrees the sun dial moved backwards. The sign given to Hezekiah.
3. 10 of the Songs of Degrees are anonymous, thus written by Hezekiah
4. Hezekiah restored temple worship (2 Chronicles 29:25, 27, 30)
5. Hezekiah wrote Psalms (*Isaiah 38:20 "my songs"*)
6. An interesting note ... Hezekiah's interest and involvement in maintaining, copying and compiling the scriptures:
 - a. Each king had the responsibility of writing out by hand a copy of the Law (Deut. 17:18).
 - b. Hezekiah had a guild of men for the purpose of copying proverbs (Proverbs 25:1). Thus, it would seem that these men would not confine themselves to just proverbs but other books as well, Psalms being one of them.
 - c. John Franklin Genung in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states, "in Hezekiah's age, Israel reached its golden age of literary prime with Hezekiah himself as the royal patron of piety and letters".
 - d. At the end of many books of the Hebrew scriptures three capital letters (majuscules) are found. These are continually copied though their meaning and purpose are still an enigma. These three capital letters in Hebrew are Heth, Zayin, Qoph in English they are H, Z, and K. These letters are the first three letters in the Hebrew name Hezekiah and would stand for his abbreviation much like we would use today. The late Dr. James Thirtle suggests that nothing is more reasonable that when the men of Hezekiah completed their work of transcribing the different books, Hezekiah himself would have affixed his initials at the bottom of the page confirming their work with royal guidance.