

**UP – Psalms of Ascent  
The City of Peace  
Psalm 122 and 126**

Have you noticed how often Jerusalem is in the news these days? It is a city that is CENTER STAGE in the world. That is NO ACCIDENT! This city is CENTRAL to many PROPHECIES that are YET to be fulfilled on this earth. It is also a city that is destined to experience MANY MORE TROUBLES before the END finally comes. **Ironically, the name JERUSALEM means, THE CITY OF PEACE!** It is a place that represents BOTH the TRAGEDY of our current BROKEN WORLD and the PEACE that WILL ONE DAY come in a RESTORED WORLD.

\*Jerusalem's current state is one of Prophetic wonder!

-She should NOT actually even exist! **[My olive tree from 1948.]**

-Her very existence is PROOF of God's faithfulness to his Word.

But, this city is more than just a religious and political center over in the small nation of Israel. It is a city that figures into God's ETERNAL PLAN for heaven. We will all DWELL in a city in heaven that is literally a RE-CREATED JERUSALEM! Imagine that! But there is MORE! You see, Jerusalem is not JUST a troubled PHYSICAL Jewish city over in the Middle East, nor is it JUST our LITERAL future DWELLING PLACE in heaven. **New Jerusalem is the symbolic NAME for the Kingdom of God and his CHURCH – Those that have been REDEEMED by and that FOLLOW Jesus Christ! Revelation 21:1-2, 9-11 NLT**

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband . . . 9 Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come with me! **I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.**" 10 So he took me in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, **and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem,** descending out of heaven from God. 11 It shone with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious stone--like jasper as clear as crystal.

**The Spiritual REALITIES of the City of Peace:**

Jerusalem is also called MT. ZION; the place where God has chosen for HIS NAME to DWELL! When Jesus came to us, he established a NEW COVENANT with us that was totally different from the one given on Mt. Sinai. This new covenant was based upon his FINISHED WORK on the cross, and it is our current reality. Jerusalem – the City of Peace – is a SYMBOL of that NEW KINGDOM.

Revelation says that one day the New Jerusalem will come down from heaven like a bride adorned for her husband. But in a COVENANT sense, the New Jerusalem began to exist when the Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost. Now, we are actually spiritually dwelling in the New Jerusalem - His Church! **Hebrews 12:22-23 NLT**

22 No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. 23 You have come to the Assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. 24 You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

\*Your eternal life has ALREADY begun in God's PRESENT KINGDOM! "You have come to Mount Zion . . . the heavenly Jerusalem!"

- God dwells within you now.
- You are surrounded by a HOST of Angels
- You are a PART of the CHURCH of the Firstborn
- Your name is written in heaven.
- You live without fear in the presence of the JUDGE who has declared you INNOCENT!
- The Perfect MEDIATOR that made our NEW covenant REPRESENTS you today.
- You are in the presence of God under the SPRINKLED BLOOD of Jesus.
  - \*His blood is BETTER than Abel's blood that cries for VENGEANCE.
  - \*His blood cries out for MERCY as it is applied to the Mercy Seat in heaven!

The Psalms of Ascent have to do with a PILGRIMAGE that leads to Jerusalem. See if YOUR excitement about being in the church is similar to the JOY and EXCITEMENT that they felt about being in the City of Peace. **READ PSALM 122:1-5 NIV**

### **PRACTICAL JOYS IN THE CITY OF PEACE:**

#### **Being in God's PRESENCE with God's PEOPLE . . .**

"I was GLAD when they said 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

- Are YOU glad to go to the HOUSE of the Lord? **Psalms 84:1-7, 10 NIV**

1 How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty! 2 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. 3 Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young-- a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King and my God. 4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. 5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. 6 As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. 7 They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. . . . 10 Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

\*God's presence is everywhere, but there are some places DEDICATED to his presence! [His MANIFEST presence]

-GOING requires EFFORT and MOVEMENT.

\*This must be a PRIORITY in our lives!

-How can you KNOW? Desires, Schedules, Fruit, Rejecting distractions

\*"Our feet are STANDING within your GATES, oh JERUSALEM!"

-There is a sense of AWE that they are actually there! [Being back in the USA]

-There is a sense of SECURITY that they are in a PROTECTED place!

\*Gates are places of LEGITIMATE ENTRY [Jesus is our GATE!]

\*Gates exist in connection with protective WALLS!

\*"There stand the thrones for judgment . . ."

-This speaks of the GOD-ORDAINED place of AUTHORITY.

\*The Church declares and upholds God's moral and spiritual boundaries.

\*These thrones are not to be despised or ignored, but honored and cherished.

"I was glad when THEY said, 'Let US go to the house of the Lord.'"

\*Who are the THEY in your life?

-Do you shy away from them or move close in to them?

-Do you REJOICE IN or RESENT their invitations?

\*The best way to INVITE someone is COME WITH, not just GO.

\*Isn't it AMAZING to have people you love loving God along WITH you?

"ALL of the tribes go up at the command of God . . ."

-This is a reminder that the Kingdom is made up of MANY TRIBES.

\*Jerusalem represents a UNIFIED COMING TOGETHER of different peoples.

-You will NEVER escape the TENSION and BEAUTY of DIVERSE COMMUNITY!

**Being in God's presence with God's people, experiencing the WONDER of WORSHIP together!**

\*"All of the tribes go up at the command of God to GIVE THANKS!

-This experience brings us together for ONE purpose: WORSHIP.

-Are you READY TO WORSHIP when you get together with God's people?

\*Giving thanks is an EXPRESSION of the HEART – an offering of WORDS.

\*Giving thanks is an ACT of GRATITUDE – an offering of WORTH.

\*Another of the Psalms of Ascent picture this wonder as well! The Israelites joy in being RESTORED to the land and being back in Jerusalem is similar to our experience of SALVATION. **Psalm 126:1-3 NLT**

1 When the LORD brought back his exiles to Jerusalem, it was like a dream! 2 We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, "What amazing things the LORD has done for them." 3 Yes, the LORD has done amazing things for us! **What joy!**

- How often have you simply LAUGHED and SUNG with joy at your redemption?
- How many times have you heard OTHER people praise God for what he has done in YOUR life?
- Do you REGULARLY PROCLAIM the goodness of God in your life?

**PEACE is the Central THEME of the City of Peace! Psalm 122:6-9 NIV**

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.

\*We are to PRAY for PEACE in the City of Peace, God's Kingdom of the Redeemed!

- This is about our INTERCESSION for others as members of the Body of Christ.
  - \*Their prosperity is our BLESSING!
  - \*Their turmoil is our SORROW.

\*We are to LOVE her and SEEK PEACE within her walls!

- This is about our ATTITUDE and BEHAVIOR in the Church of God!
  - \*For the sake of our brothers and sisters.
  - \*For the sake of the GLORY of God.
- This is a COMMAND to be PEOPLE of PEACE in the City of Peace!
  - \*Are you PROMOTING peace in the church, or PREVENTING it?
  - \*Are you seeking your OWN prosperity, or the prosperity of the Kingdom?

God has planned amazing things for us in the future, and he is allowing us to experience them at some rich level even in our present. But some of you are MISSING OUT on what God has given to you because you are living like a SLAVE even though you have been REDEEMED and are a CITIZEN of Heaven already! Stop living like a slave!

- \*CELEBRATE your freedom!
- \*LEARN all you can about what is CURRENTLY YOURS to enjoy!
- \*INVITE OTHERS to experience this with you!

Let's pray.