

# PSALM 122

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 122

### *A Song of degrees of David.*

This is the first of the songs of degrees that bears the name of David: and Kimchi thinks they only were written by him which have his name to them; though he, Abendana, and others, are of opinion that this psalm was composed with a view to the captives in Babylon; who are here represented, and are represented as rejoicing at their going up to Jerusalem, to the solemn feasts there. The inscription in the Syriac version is, “a “psalm” of David, one of the psalms of ascent, when Cyrus commanded the captivity to go up; spiritually, a promise of good things.” It seems to be designed for the use of the Israelites, and to be sung by them when they went up to the feasts, three times a year. Some say<sup>f1749</sup> they sung this by the way, when they carried the firstfruits to Jerusalem.

**Ver. 1.** *I was glad when they said unto me*, etc.] Or, “I rejoiced in”, or “because of, those that said unto me”<sup>f1750</sup>; or, “in what was said unto me”. For it may regard not only the time when he had this pleasure of mind, but the persons who gave it, as well as the ground and reason of the things said unto him, as follows:

*let us go into the house of the Lord*; the house of the sanctuary, as the Targum; the tabernacle, the place of divine worship, typical of the church of God; which is an house of his building, beautifying, and repairing, and where he dwells: it has all the essentiality of a house; its materials are lively stones; its foundation Christ; its pillars ministers of the word; the beams of it stable believers; its windows the ordinances; and the door into it faith in Christ, and a profession of it. Now it is both the duty and privilege of believers to go into it; here they find spiritual pleasure, enjoy abundance of peace and comfort, and have their spiritual strength renewed, as well as it is to their honour and glory: and it becomes them to stir up one another to go thither; some are slothful and backward; some are lukewarm and indifferent; some are worldly and carnally minded; and others are conceited of their knowledge, and think themselves wiser than their teachers, and

therefore need to be excited to their duty; and truly gracious souls are glad when they are stirred up to it, both on their own account, and on the account of others, and because of the glory of God.

**Ver. 2.** *Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.*] Which is to be understood not merely literally of the city of Jerusalem, and of continuance in the possession of it, it being lately taken out of the hands of the Jebusites; but spiritually of the church of God, which is often called by this name; the gates of which are the same as the gates of Zion, and the gates of wisdom, the word and ordinances; attendance on which is signified by “standing”: and which also denotes continuance therein: and happy are those that are within these gates, and have a comfortable assurance of their abiding there; and still more happy will they be who will be admitted within the gates of the New Jerusalem, which are said to be twelve, and every, one of them of one pearl; and through which none shall enter into the city but pure and holy persons, (~~621~~ Revelation 21:2,12,21,25,27 22:14).

**Ver. 3.** *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.*] In David’s time the upper and lower city were joined together, the streets regularly built, the houses contiguous, not straggling about, here and there one<sup>f1751</sup>. So the church of God, like that, is built in a good situation, on a rock and hill, where it is firm and visible; like a city full of inhabitants, governed by wholesome laws, under proper officers; a free city, which enjoys many privileges and immunities; a well fortified one, having salvation for walls and bulwarks about it; a royal city, the city of the great King, the city of our God, the name of which is “Jehovahshammah”, the Lord is there: and this is “compact together” when its citizens are united in affection to one another; agree in their religious sentiments; join in social worships, and live in subjection to one Head and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews often speak, and so some of their commentators on this passage, of a Jerusalem above and below, and of the one being made like unto the other: so the Targum,

“Jerusalem is built in the firmament as a city, as Jerusalem on earth;”

(see ~~4025~~ Galatians 4:26).

**Ver. 4.** *Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,* etc.] The twelve tribes of Israel; the males of them went up three times a year to Jerusalem to worship, at the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; and was

typical of the church of Christ, where the worship of God is carried on, his word preached, and ordinances administered; and whither saints go and attend for their own profit and the glory of God; this is the city of our solemnities, (<sup>2330</sup>Isaiah 33:20 56:7);

*unto the testimony of Israel*; the ark of the testimony a symbol of the divine Presence. The law is called a testimony, because it testified the will of God to be done; this was put into an ark, which had its name from thence, and was typical of Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; and over the ark was the divine Presence: hither the tribes came to worship God, and to consult him;

“who (the Targum here says) testifies to Israel, that his divine Majesty dwells among them, when they go to confess unto the name of the Lord.”

The Gospel is called the testimony of Christ; and it is what testifies concerning his person, office, and grace, unto the Israel of God; and who go up to the house of God in order to hear it;

*to give thanks unto the name of the Lord*; for all his mercies and blessings, both temporal and spiritual; and which should be acknowledged, not only in a private manner, but publicly in the house of God; (see <sup>2340</sup>Psalm 100:4 111:1).

**Ver. 5.** *For there are set thrones of judgment*, etc.] 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 honour will have all the saints, (<sup>4098</sup>Matthew 19:28 <sup>4104</sup>Revelation 20:4 22:3 3:21).

**Ver. 6.** *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, etc.] This is said to the persons that solicited the psalmist to go into the house of the Lord; to the truly godly among the tribes that went thither to worship; to his brethren and companions, for whose sake he wished well to Zion; to praying souls, who should not be singular and selfish; not only pray for themselves, but for others; for all saints, and for the church of God in general; for Jerusalem, not merely literally considered; though as that was the metropolis of the nation, and many of them the psalmist addresses were inhabitants of it, it became them to seek and pray for the peace of it, their own peace being concerned in it; (see <sup>2907</sup>Jeremiah 29:7); but for the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem, the church of God, and for the peace of it; that Christ, the Man, the Peace, the Peacemaker, who then was not come, might come; that the members of it might enjoy spiritual peace in their son is, and might have peace one with another, and be at peace with their enemies; and enjoy the abundance of peace and prosperity, which will be in the latter day; and will lie in freedom from persecution, in a destruction of antichrist and all the the enemies of the church; in the purity of Gospel truths and ordinances, and the spread of them; in numerous conversions of Jews and Gentiles; in the unity of the Lord's people in sentiment, worship, and affection; and in a large increase of spiritual light and holiness: all which should be earnestly prayed for by the well-wishers of the cause of Christ; (see <sup>2316</sup>Isaiah 62:6,7). There may be an allusion to the name of Jerusalem, which signifies "they shall see peace"; and it should be prayed for that they might. The argument enforcing this duty exhorted to follows:

*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 Obededom 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 favoured with the discoveries of the love of God, with an application of pardoning grace and mercy; 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.

**Ver. 7.** *Peace be within thy walls*, etc.] 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 <sup>198B</sup> Psalm 48:3 84:10), 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.

**Ver. 8.** *For my brethren and companions' sakes*, etc.] 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; travellers 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.

**Ver. 9.** *Because of the house of the Lord our God*, etc.] 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, (~~439D~~ Psalm 69:9);

*I will seek thy good*; the good of Jerusalem, 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 ~~451B~~ Psalm 51:18).