

Up Israel! To the Temple Haste!

Psalm 122

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I. Family Tradition

II. Singing of Mt. Zion (Jn 4:21; Heb 8:1-5; 9:11-14, 23-10:4, 11-14, 19-25)

Psalm 122 summons all Israel to appear in Jerusalem for worship and to pray for Zion's peace and prosperity. So when we sing this psalm in the new covenant era, what are we celebrating and urging our brethren to do?



While earthly Jerusalem was the center of God's purposes in the _____ covenant, that is not the case in the new:

²¹... "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (Jn 4:21-24)

The earthly Temple in Jerusalem has ceased to be the place where people meet God. Now that Jesus, our High Priest, has come, when we gather to worship the Father in Jesus' Name by the power of the Spirit, there is Mt. Zion, there is the _____ Jerusalem.

^{8:1}Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man... ^{9:11}Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption... ^{9:23}Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with [the blood of goats and calves], but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us...

When the people of God gather to worship the Father in the name of Christ by the power of the Spirit, we enter heaven itself – that's where our High Priest leads us. So Paul writes:

^{10:19}Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and having a High Priest over the house of God [that is, because Christ has accomplished what the sacrificial system only pictured, because He has cleansed heaven itself by His blood and accomplished our forgiveness], ²²let us draw near [the heavenly Temple, God's dwelling place] with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Why shouldn't we forsake our assembling together? Because *it is when we do so, it is when we gather around the Word read and preached and embodied in the sacraments, it is when we worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, that we enter the heavenly Jerusalem, the presence of God.*

^{12:22}But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

III. Up Israel! To the temple haste!

Psalm 122 – A Song of Ascents

*O, 'twas a joyful sound to hear, our tribes devoutly say:
Up Israel! To the temple haste, and keep your festal day.*

*At Salem's courts we must appear, with our assembled powers,
in strong and beauteous order ranged; like her united towers.*

*O pray we then for Salem's peace; for they shall prosperous be,
thou holy city of our God, who bear true love to thee.*

*May peace within thy sacred walls a constant guest be found,
with plenty and prosperity thy palaces be crowned.*

*For my dear brethren's sake, and friends no less than brethren dear,
I'll pray- May peace in Salem's towers a constant guest appear.*

*But most of all I'll seek thy good, and ever wish thee well,
for Zion and the temple's sake, where God vouchsafes to dwell.*

Psalm 122 - A Song of Ascents. Of David.

¹I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD." ²Our feet have been standing Within your gates, O Jerusalem!

³Jerusalem is built As a city that is compact together, ⁴Where the tribes go up, The tribes of the LORD, To the Testimony of Israel, To give thanks to the name of the LORD. ⁵For thrones are set there for judgment, The thrones of the house of David.

⁶Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. ⁷Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces." ⁸For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, "Peace be within you." ⁹Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good.

Psalm 122 is one of the *Psalms of _____* – psalms that were sung as our fathers made their way to Jerusalem three times a year. With this song, they urged one another to rejoice in the journey and to pray for Zion's peace and prosperity. In the new covenant, every Lord's Day we make our way to Mount Zion to celebrate our festal day – to rejoice that Christ is risen from the dead and that He has conquered sin and death and hell. With this psalm, we urge one another to gather with joy and to pray for the peace and prosperity of God's Church. For when we gather, we feast on Christ, "*we have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat*" (Heb 13:10).

Thus, we summon *all* Israel to assemble *in strong and beauteous order ranged like her united towers*. The safety and strength of the earthly Jerusalem was dependent on her walls; and the safety and strength of the Heavenly Jerusalem is dependent on her people, living stones who make up our walls. With this psalm, we summon every member of the body to join us for worship lest the strength of the city be compromised.

The psalm reminds us that those who labor for the _____ of the Church, *who bear true love to her* and consider her welfare and good as more important than their own, will be blessed by God. Jesus loves His bride, the Church, and dare we think that we can despise her and receive His blessing? No! It is when our *love for her* mirrors Jesus' *love for her*, that God truly blesses us. And one of the chief ways we *bear true love to the holy city of our God* is by being _____ ourselves. So Paul commands us to walk "*worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph 4:1-3). This requires effort because when we are living in community, sin will happen; we will disappoint one another. But that very moment of disappointment is a moment of opportunity as Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in *Life Together*:
Thus the very hour of disillusionment with my brother becomes incomparably salutary, because it so thoroughly teaches me that neither of us can ever live by our own words and deeds, but only by that one Word and Deed which really binds us together – the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. When the morning mists of dreams vanish, then dawns the bright day of Christian fellowship.

IV. Conclusion