

Psalm 122

In a world full of war, turmoil and distress of nations, it is a great privilege to be able to take time out, as it were, to focus upon the peace of a future kingdom. When Messiah comes to take up his seat upon the Throne of David (Lu. 1:32), he shall restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6), and peace shall be the work of righteousness (Isa. 32:17). At present, the turmoil of the nations is like a troubled sea, casting out mire and dirt (Isa. 57:20) and raging with great force. But then, there will be a sea of glass (Rev. 4:6, 15:2), clear as crystal, with no ripple of violence to be found.

This glorious vision of the future is presented to us in our Old Testament reading from Psalm 122. This Psalm depicts Jerusalem as a centre of excellence in the earth, and as a city of peace. Hence the exhortation is to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Psa. 122:6). For our short meditation upon Divine Principles today, we shall consider this Psalm, with the view to obtaining comfort and encouragement, knowing that those times shall soon be upon us.

The Psalm begins by expressing the writer's joy in being able to attend the House of Yahweh:

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of Yahweh" (verse 1).

The spirit is that of the watchmen who look out for the City of Peace:

"There shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto Yahweh our God." (Jer. 31:6).

This chapter describes the return of Israel to Zion:

"Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth ... they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble" (Jer. 31:8-9 read whole chapter).

Initially, the people of Israel will be in great anguish and distress, as a consequence of the actions of their enemies against them. But Yahweh will replace their tears of sorrow with songs of joy:

"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow" (Jer. 31:13).

But the Scriptures reveal that it will not only be Israel who will go to Zion: the nations will do so also. Whereas immediately prior to the coming of the Lord, all nations shall be gathered to Jerusalem to battle (Zech. 14:2), when Messiah is enthroned in Jerusalem, the nations will flow there for worship:

"... many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh to Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

The centre of worship at that place, is said to be "the house of the God of Jacob", later described by the same prophet as "an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56:7). They will attend there to learn of the righteousness of Israel's God, and to worship before him in submission to His Messiah. Zechariah saw a similar vision:

“Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek Yahweh of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before Yahweh” (Zech. 8:22).

And to be present in that day was the desire of the Psalmist:

“... surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of Yahweh for ever” (Psa. 23:6).

This Psalm is of particular significance, as it was written before the House of Yahweh had been constructed. This did not happen until the days of Solomon, yet David saw himself there, dwelling in that house “for ever” – which on two counts implies his being made immortal.

“Our feet shall stand within thy gates” (vs 2).

Being able to enter into the gates will be the cause of much joy and rejoicing. Then it will be said:

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For Yahweh is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” (Psa. 100:4-5).

First of all, Messiah shall possess the gates of his enemies (Gen.22:17), and having delivered Israel from the hand of he that is stronger than they (Jer. 31:11), he shall himself enter into the gates of Jerusalem:

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and **the King of glory shall come in**. Who is this King of glory? Yahweh strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle” (Psa. 24:7-8).

Ezekiel also saw the King of Glory enter in from the way of the east:

“... and **the glory of Yahweh came into the house** by the way of the gate whose prospect is towards the east. So the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court, and behold, **the glory of Yahweh filled the house** ... and he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile ...” (Eze. 43:4-7).

When Messiah is so enthroned in the Temple to come, Jerusalem will be the city of the great king of glory (Mat. 5:35), and that city shall be joined together, “as a city that is compact together” (Psa. 122:3). The current divisions between the Jews and Arabs will not be a feature in the city of Peace: Jerusalem shall be wholly united.

“Whither the tribes go up ... for there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David” (Psa. 122:4-5).

When Messiah comes to reign from the restored Davidic seat of power, he will not do so alone. He gave the promise that “to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21). The throne will be of multiple occupanancy, and it is this aspect which is described in the next chapter of Revelation:

“and **round about the throne were four and twenty seats**, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment: and they had on their heads crowns of gold” (Rev. 4:4).

This is the day “when Yahweh of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24:23). These are the thrones of the house of David, with each elder heading up and order of praise and administration – after the pattern of David’s reign of old “(1 Chron. 24-25). These are the thrones that Daniel saw being positioned (Dan. 7:9), thrones of judgment when the nations shall be judged.

It is interesting to consider the words of Messiah in this context. Matthew chapter 19 describes how Peter asked the Master:

“... Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” (Mat. 19:27).

To which Messiah replied:

“ ... Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel ...” (Mat. 19:28).

These thrones, we suggest, include those described in Psalm 122. Various saints will be given varying degrees of glory and responsibility (Cp. Mat. 25:14-30), but the Apostles who followed Messiah (excluding Judas the traitor), shall have an elevated status as judges in Israel. Again, Isaiah saw these Divine Judges:

“... I will restore your judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city” (Isa. 1:26).

In this vision of glory which we are considering in Psalm 122 then, we find the exalted status of those who will rule and judge with Messiah, with the 12 tribes going up to their respective judge to have their causes heard.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee ...” (verse 6).

Here is the invitation for those who love Jerusalem and all that she signifies, to pray for her peace. The name “Jerusalem” literally means “city of peace”, and although her present situation is anything but, it is the prayer of the faithful that she will become such soon.

This spirit is encapsulated in the words of Isaiah:

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold thy peace day nor night: ye that make mention of Yahweh, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isa. 62:6-7).

The question arises: who are these watchmen who cry out for the peace of Jerusalem? Surely it is the faithful who have embraced the Hope of Israel, and who earnestly desire her restoration! We are, we believe, living in the days immediately prior to the coming of Messiah to restore the fortunes of Israel, and we therefore are part of those who watch for, and eagerly pray for Jerusalem to be made a praise

in the earth. The constant refrain in all of our prayers should be for that Kingdom to be established, and we will give Yahweh no rest until that day comes!

Zechariah provides a wonderful snapshot of Jerusalem at peace:

“... Thus saith Yahweh of hosts; there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.” (Zech. 8:4-5)

What a contrast this is to the world around us! It is not safe for the elderly to be in the streets, for fear of being mugged. It is not safe for children to play freely and unsupervised, for fear of being abused, or abducted. But in Jerusalem these conditions shall no longer prevail, with Israel eventually and at last becoming a place of peace and safety – which is something the nations can never bring about. And as the empire of the great King shall extend across the globe, we might suppose that this situation will be replicated throughout the earth, as the nations will learn the Righteousness of Israel’s God.

“Because of the house of Yahweh our God I will seek thy good” (Psa. 122:9).

Here is the *why*, the *because*. The reason for seeking the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem. It is “because of the house of Yahweh” – the fact of the House being the very centre and source of holiness in the world.

John chapter 2 recounts the way in which Messiah cast out those who bought and sold, with the moneychangers out of the house – and also the reason why:

“... he drove them all out of the temple ... and said unto those that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thing house hath eaten me up ...” (Jno. 2:17).

That which motivated the Master to cast the uncleanness out of Israel’s leprous house, was a “zeal” that consumed him. We long for his return to purge his spiritual house (Mal. 3:1), and to bring righteousness and peace to a troubled earth. We must then pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for those who love her shall prosper.

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