

Israel's Place in the Plan of God  
 The Songs of Ascent, Psalms 120-134  
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### Psalms 125

#### Zion, Praise and Joy of the Whole Earth

1. They that trust in Jehovah Are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever.
2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, So Jehovah is round about his people From this time forth and for evermore.
3. For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; That the righteous put not forth their hands unto iniquity.
4. Do good, O Jehovah, unto those that are good, And to them that are upright in their hearts.
5. But as for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, Jehovah will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. Peace be upon Israel.

As we study the Songs of Ascents, Psalms 120-134, let us remember that these, a special cycle of hymns, deal with Israel's return to God and his restoration to divine favor in the end time. Each of these poems deals with some special phase of this general subject.

#### The Millennial Jerusalem

In order to interpret a psalm accurately, a person should know, if possible, the time and the place of the thing concerning which the poem is written. While these verses, quoted above, refer to the security of the believer in God and in the Messiah, it is clear that, from the development of the thought, Jerusalem as it will be in the Millennial Age is the subject of discussion and the object of the vision which was granted the psalmist.

The time here foreseen, that of the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium, is obvious from the last clause of verse 2: "From this time forth and for evermore." As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Jehovah is round about His people from this time forth—that is, from the time seen in the vision. This conclusion is strengthened by the following statement in verse 3: "For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous ..." The scepters of different kings and nations of the world have rested upon Israel ever since her dispersion from Palestine in A.D. 70 to the present time and will continue until the end of the Tribulation. When the term, "the sceptre of wickedness," is studied in the light of Psalms 94:20, it becomes evident that this expression has a definite meaning, and that it refers to the scepter of the Antichrist in the end time. In view, therefore, of these facts, it is clear that our psalmist is dealing with Israel—who will be delivered from her great oppressor of the end time at the conclusion of the Tribulation Period.

Having thus determined the city about which the poem is written and the time foreseen in the vision, we can now begin to approach the exposition of Psalm 125.

## The Security Of The Believers

The hymn begins with the statement, "They that trust in Jehovah are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth forever." Obviously the psalmist is talking about people who trust Jehovah. Since this is a Jewish hymn, and since the psalmist is talking about their capital, a person clearly sees that the nation trusting Jehovah is that of the Jews. When we read this statement in the light of various predictions by the prophets, we see that they are the ones who constitute the faithful remnant of the last days. That a remnant of the Jews will be saved is affirmed time and time again by the prophets. This promise reminds us of the one found in Isaiah: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in Jehovah for ever; for in Jehovah, even Jehovah, is an everlasting rock ... The way of the just is uprightness: thou that are upright dost direct the path of the just" (Isaiah 26:3-7). The just one of this passage is not the person who is justified by faith in Christ, but the one who is living up to all the light that he has—walking in the path of uprightness—and who is desirous of more truth in order that he might walk more perfectly before God. God is the one who is upright in the absolute sense of the term and He is directing the path of all honest truth seekers. The same type of person is in view in the following quotation:

22. Now consider this, ye that forget God, Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: 23. Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me; And to him that ordereth his way *aright* Will I show the salvation of God (Psalms 50:22,23).

Note the promise made to the just one: "And to him that ordereth his way *aright* will I show the salvation of God." This one is ordering his course aright—according to all the light that he has—and is desirous of more light. This one is not saved, for the Lord promises that He will show him the salvation of God. A notable example of such a one as the writer in Psalms 125 is discussing is Cornelius, the centurion, of whom we read in Acts, chapter 10.

In the light that shines forth from our verse, and that which comes from the other passages referred to, it is clear that the honest, conscientious, sincere, upright truth seeker of the end time, who is trusting God to give him more light and to deliver him, will be protected and finally delivered. God will see that nothing injures him until he has had an opportunity of seeing the truth and accepting the full and free salvation of the Almighty through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Returning now to the exposition of our psalm, let us note verse 3, which asserts that the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous. As suggested above, the scepter of unrighteousness can be nothing but the scepter of the Antichrist in the end time. One should study carefully Psalm 94, especially verse 20 in the light of its immediate context. The one who wields this scepter of unrighteousness is no other than the willful king of whom we read in Daniel, chapter 11:36-39. It is the man of sin, the son of perdition, concerning whom the Apostle Paul in II Thessalonians, chapter 2, speaks. A clear picture also of this willful, wicked one is seen in Revelation, chapter 13. When Israel is thus delivered from this willful king, the righteous, trusting ones will never more put forth their hands to do iniquity. This fact is stated in the last clause of verse 3.

A beautiful picture of Jerusalem of the Millennium is also set forth in Psalm 48. Again we see that it will be the perfection of beauty, as depicted in Psalm 50:1,2. Another glorious, thrilling picture of Jerusalem as it will be, appears in Isaiah 33:17-22.

## A Prayer And A Prophecy

Psalm 125 is formed after the same general pattern of a number of the psalms. In the first three verses we see a vision of Jerusalem as it will be in the Millennium and the security of those who trust in the Lord. In the last two verses there appear a prayer and a prophecy that this vision will materialize.

There are two petitions in this prayer. The first one is found in verse 4: "Do good, O Jehovah, to those that are good, and to them that are upright in their hearts." Those who are good and are upright in their hearts are doubtless the trusting ones who are mentioned in verse 1. They are the people walking in the light that they have and are eager for a clearer understanding of the will of God. If the reader wishes to get a more detailed picture of these people, he should read Psalm 15 and Psalm 24:1-6. The inspired writer knew that God's heart yearns to pour out the riches of His blessings upon all men. It is His desire that none should perish, but that all should come unto repentance (II Peter 3:9; I Tim. 2:4). The psalmist is thus praying for God's richest blessings to come upon all the true-hearted. This is not a selfish petition. There are those who elect to pit their wills against God and who refuse to accept the salvation offered them in Christ. It would be inconsistent for the psalmist to pray for such; but he can (in the spirit of the New Testament, as well as in that of the Old) pray God's choicest blessings upon the honest truth seekers.

The psalm concludes with this petition: "Peace be upon Israel." Of course this petition must be viewed in the light of the entire psalm; namely, that by the term, Israel, he means those who are genuine Israelites, those who have the blood and spirit of Abraham, as our Lord emphasized in John, chapter 8.

Israel was elected to a certain position among the nations, namely, to be the channel of world blessing. The psalmist realized this fact and prayed for God to bless His ancient people in order that they may in turn pass on the blessing to all mankind.

The prophecy of this psalm is found in the following words: "But as for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, Jehovah will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." God has never forced anyone's will, neither will He coerce anyone. He uses all moral suasion and power to influence men to accept the truth and to do that which is right, and that which will bring blessing to them for both time and eternity. But whenever anyone turns aside unto his own crooked ways and chooses his own abominations, God must deal with him accordingly. This fact is abundantly shown in Isaiah 66:3,4:

3 Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations; 4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not.

In the words of our psalmist, those who turn aside to their crooked, evil ways will be dealt with then as He will with all the workers of iniquity. Sin and wrongdoing never pays. But to turn to God with all of the heart and to trust the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation yields enormous dividends both in this life and in the one to come.

The security of these trusting ones is compared with the security and durability of Mount Zion that cannot be moved, but abideth forever. Jerusalem, or Mount Zion as it is here called, will be cleansed, purged, purified, and recreated the joy of the whole earth and will stand throughout the Millennial Age—just as long as this present, material order remains in existence. Nothing can destroy it. Thus the security of those trusting God is compared to the stability and durability of Mount Zion.

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Jehovah will be round about His people from "this time" (the time here foreseen) forth and forever. Jerusalem is located in the mountainous section of Judea. The mountains in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem are round about the city on all sides except the north. Here the land gradually rises to the heights of the mountains farther north of the city. But for all practical purposes the one who knows the location of Jerusalem recognizes the fact that this statement is literally true. As, therefore, the mountains are round about Jerusalem, the Lord promises to be round about those trusting in Him forever. They will be secure from attacks of every kind—those coming from the enemies of the Jews, who will be gathered in Palestine against Jerusalem, from physical dangers, and from disease. Thus they will be protected. Eventually they will see the truth, accept the Messiah, and rejoice in His blessings, during the Millennial Age—and throughout all eternity.

This promise reminds one of the security of the believer in Christ, of the present era. That the believer is secure is affirmed by the following verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). Here we are told that the one who believes Christ, has eternal life now and does not come into judgment, for he has passed out of death into life. These words are to be taken at their face value. If a person ever receives Christ and is given eternal life, he is regenerated and saved—saved both for time and eternity [so long as he continues to believe].