

Israel's Place in the Plan of God
 The Songs of Ascent, Psalms 120—134
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Psalm 127

God Must Be The Builder And The Watcher

1. Except Jehovah build the house, They labor in vain that build it;
 Except Jehovah keep the city, The watchmen waketh but in vain.
2. It is vain for you to rise up early, To take rest late,
 To eat the bread of toil; For so he giveth unto his beloved sleep.
3. Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah; And the fruit of the womb is his reward.
4. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, So are the children of youth.
5. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: They shall not be put to shame, When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

This is a short psalm and does not give itself very well to analysis, it being a single literary unit which deals with building. Should I take some text in the Bible as expressive of the thought contained in this psalm, I would turn to Proverbs 10:22: "The blessing of Jehovah, it maketh rich; and he addeth no sorrow therewith."

A home, the family group, is the unit of society. When God created man (He made him both male and female), He said that a man should leave his father and mother and should cleave to his wife, and they should be one flesh. Moreover, He exhorted them to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth with people. This was the original plan of God Almighty.

Paradise, The First Home

In the second chapter of Genesis we read of Paradise, the place which God prepared for man and in which He placed him. Sin had not affected humanity. Everything was provided that was calculated to make man happy and contented. There was no occasion of sorrow or sadness. Everything was joy and delight. God constantly visited this primeval couple in their marvelous abode in Paradise—until man, by his disobedience, lost everything.

Then he was driven out of Paradise—away from the tree of life. From that day until this, man has been plagued with all the curses of the devil, with disease and sickness, disappointment, sorrow and sadness. The road that he has trodden through the centuries is besprinkled with blood, sweat, and tears. He will continue in this way until our Lord returns and banishes Satan, lifts the curse, and establishes a reign of righteousness from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Building A Real Home

The first verse contains a momentous utterance that any building that a person may erect is absolutely in vain unless God does the building. In what way does God do the building? The answer is simple. Those building must follow the instructions implicitly—both the letter and the spirit—which God gives. When God is thus taken into partnership in the building of the home, He providentially overrules and works out the problems. Thus in a real sense God does build the home whenever He is allowed to do so.

The first step in home-building is the choice by a young man or a young lady of his or her life companion. Sentiment, emotion, and feelings should not be the dominating factors which determine an engagement and culminate in marriage. Prayer, believing prayer, to God for His guidance in selecting the proper companion for the child of God, is the first step toward building the right kind of home. Good looks, that is, physical features, dainty little graces, gallantry and special manners and winsome ways, should never be the determining factors in drawing a couple together for marriage.

Young people should be grounded in the Word and should pray most earnestly for God to lead in their lives that they might be led to select the proper companion.

Many young people feel that, having married, they must make their fortune. Thus they rise up early, and work and toil until late in order to accumulate wealth so that they can have a nice home and comfortable surroundings and have money for old age. The statement of verse 2 of our psalm shows the futility of working and toiling in order to accumulate or amass a fortune. God's blessings must be upon what a man does; otherwise what he does is all in vain.

Verse 3 should be before the hearts and minds of all Christian couples. "Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah; and the fruit of the womb is his reward." At the present time, however, this Biblical ideal has been cast underfoot. There are many childless marriages. It certainly is not God's number one plan for any of His children.

The blessing of a normal Christian family is set forth in verses 4 and 5. Happy, yes, *blessed* is the couple whose "quiver is full of them."

Modern man has departed from the divine ideal, as all who consider this problem know. When, however, the Lord Jesus returns to this earth, takes the governments of the world in His hands, lifts the curse, establishes His reign of righteousness, then young men and women will build their homes according to the divine pattern, and joyful innocent children will grace and bless their homes. The population of the world will increase by leaps and bounds, for there will be no more "Infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days ..." (Isaiah 65:20).

Other Houses

As we study Psalm 127 and recognize that the principle theme of this psalm is the building of a real home in the literal sense of the term, we recognize that the idea of building is used with reference to other things. For instance, the general principle set forth in verse 1 of this psalm applies to the building of a literal, physical house. Whenever any of God's people attempt to build a home—no matter how insignificant and humble it may be—every detail of the building should be made a matter of prayer.

Whatever we do in word and in deed, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks unto God the Father through Him. If God is not leading and guiding in the building of such a home, it will be a failure.

The thought of building a house includes the building of a dynasty. In the house of Israel, God established the Davidic house or dynasty. He chose a young man, clean and pure in heart and life, to be the head of this dynasty. He was a keeper of sheep. God called him forth from that humble walk in life to be the shepherd of His people, Israel. He built his house according to the will of God—until one day Satan slipped up on the blind side of him, as it were, and led him into sin. Harboring that sin in his life and refusing to confess it, he continued for months. The hand of the Lord was heavily laid upon him and finally he broke down, confessed, and repented bitterly; but he always reaped what he sowed.

There sprang forth from the dynasty of David, great David's Greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will yet mount the throne of David in Jerusalem and establish His reign of righteousness over the world. For this time, we earnestly look forward.

The thought of building also suggests the building of a temple. Solomon built a Temple in Jerusalem in which God dwelt, and in which He was worshiped. This was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, then rebuilt by Zerubbabel on a smaller scale. In the latter part of the first century before Christ, Herod the Great, King of the Commonwealth of Israel, tore Zerubbabel's Temple down piecemeal and built it on a more magnificent scale, but it was destroyed by Titus in the year A.D. 70.

According to the prophetic word the Jews, in the conclusion of this age, will rebuild their temple, but God will not accept it nor their worship, which they will inaugurate. A prophecy of this fact is set forth in Isaiah 66:1-4. But that temple will be destroyed, as we see in Psalm 74.

But the house of Israel—the Jewish nation—will be built in the land of their fathers. God is the one who is going to do the building. He is providentially working now in Israel and in the world as never before in bringing about the consummation of this age and restoring the Jews to their land. Of course that which is being done now is not the final and complete restoration of Israel; but this is part of a process and of a development which will culminate in Israel's being restored to the land of the fathers.

Let us always bear in mind that "except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except Jehovah keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Only that which is done by the order of and in accordance with the will of God will last.