

This psalm by David celebrates the opportunity to travel to Jerusalem in order to worship the LORD at the tabernacle/temple. We see David's enthusiasm for the LORD and that he has organized the city to have a focus on glorifying the LORD. Jerusalem is also described as the city from which Israel is governed, ending with a prayer for the welfare and prosperity of this city which the LORD has chosen for Himself.

A Song of degrees of David.

This psalm, written by David, is one of 15 psalms that are titled as a song of "degrees." Four of them are written by David, one by Solomon, and the remaining 10 are anonymous. The Hebrew word translated "degrees" means "steps" or "ascents" and carries the idea of ascending a step at a time. Commentators disagree on the reason that these psalms are called psalms/songs "of degrees" (or "ascents" as some Bible translations have it), but these psalms seem to have the idea of ascending to worship, either ascending the steps of the temple (which was not yet built in David's time) or as pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem. The intent of this psalm does seem to be on preparing the heart to worship the LORD.

1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

David speaks of the joy that it brought him to be invited to go to the house of the LORD. The Hebrew word translated "glad" means "to rejoice" and is in the perfect tense, indicating a completed action. The invitation did not merely begin to make David rejoice, leaving him wanting more. Instead, it fully caused him to rejoice, indicating his love for the LORD and the joy of being able to go worship at the tabernacle. We've seen in other psalms and OT scriptures the enthusiasm that David had for being in the presence of the LORD.

2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

David understood that Jerusalem, future location of the temple, would be the center of worship for the LORD (**2 Chr. 6:6** "*But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel*"). There were three feasts throughout the year that the Mosaic Law required the men of Israel to attend by gathering before the LORD. Since the Ark of the Covenant represented the presence of the LORD, the men of Israel were to gather where the ark was, which, at this time, was Jerusalem. As these pilgrims arrived at the gates of Jerusalem, they would pause and rejoice that they were coming to the presence of the LORD.

3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: 4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact [to be joined or united] together" – Under David's leadership, the atmosphere of Jerusalem, particularly during these three feasts, was focused on the worship of the LORD. During these feasts the entire city was united in the purpose of worshiping and exalting the LORD.

"Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel" – Jerusalem was the place "whither the tribes go up" to worship the LORD during the feasts. They would go there because the "testimony of Israel" was there. The "testimony" referred to the Law written on two stone tablets by the hand of God and given to Moses (**Ex. 32:15** "*And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written*"). These tablets were placed in the Ark of the Covenant (sometimes called the "Ark of the Testimony"), which David had brought to Jerusalem.

"to give thanks unto the name of the LORD" – A significant portion of the worship of the LORD was the giving of thanks for His provision and blessings.

5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

The Hebrew word translated "set" can mean "to be established" or "to remain." The Hebrew word for "judgment" means "to decide a case." In addition to Jerusalem being the center of worship of the LORD for Israel, it was also the center of the government of Israel. The LORD established thrones to judge (govern) Israel, and these belonged to David and his descendants. The LORD has made a promise to David that his descendants would rule over Israel forever, and this promise will be eternally fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the "Son of David."

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

"Pray for the peace [safety; welfare; prosperity] of Jerusalem" – The name "Jerusalem" means "possession of peace," which is a fitting name for the city from which the Prince of peace will reign. Those who love God will also love Jerusalem and will want to see it prosper and enjoy a peace that will contribute to its welfare.

"they shall prosper that love thee" – David begins leading us in the prayer for the peace of Jerusalem. This prayer continues through to the end of the psalm (vs. 6b-9). Those who love Jerusalem and seek its welfare will, in turn, be blessed by God. God promised to bless those who blessed Abraham and his descendants (**Gen. 12:3** "*And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*").

7 Peace be within thy walls, *and* prosperity within thy palaces.

David does not pray merely for an external peace (lack of conflict with other nations) but for an internal peace that is rooted inside the walls of Jerusalem. This peace should begin inside the palaces of the king and other leaders of the nation. This peace is not merely a lack of conflict, but also one of welfare and prosperity. The peace of a nation begins within its leadership and when the leadership is at peace, then the nation as a whole can enjoy peace and prosperity.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace *be* within thee.

David specifies one of the motivations he has for praying for “thee” (Jerusalem). David knows that peace within Jerusalem benefits everyone in Israel, so for the sake of his fellow countrymen and friends he prays for the peace of Jerusalem.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

Another motivation for David’s prayer is the safety and welfare of the tabernacle/temple. He does not want to see God’s house harmed, neglected or disrespected. Therefore he seeks and prays for the good of Jerusalem so that the worship of the LORD at the tabernacle/temple would continue without restraint or distraction.