

# Going Up

Psalms 121 – 127

Going Up Introduction

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- There are two traditions regarding that name.
  1. They were sung on the fifteen steps of the temple by the Levites as they climbed.
  2. More likely, they were sung by pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for the three annual feasts.

# Going Up Introduction

- In Hebrew, the city of **Jerusalem** is always “up” from wherever else someone might be.
- Jews from other parts of the world, go “up” to **Israel**.

# Going Up    Introduction

- To this day, when a Jew immigrates to Israel, it is called *Aliyah*, or *going up* to Israel.
- Consequently, Jewish emigration from Israel to another country is called *Yerida* – *going down*.

# Going Up    Introduction

- These psalms were used in public worship.
- The thought is that we join God's people in the place designated for that purpose.

# Going Up Introduction

- As we read, we should imagine the congregation of Israel singing them together.
- We should also remember that we are a pilgrim people.
- We are in a place of exile, looking forward to a final home.

Going Up Psalm 121

# Going Up Psalm 121

- **121:1** We can imagine the pilgrims walking toward Jerusalem.
- Its location in the hills was the place where the nation met with God.

# Going Up Psalm 121

- **121:2** The Lord was never the God of Israel alone.
- He is the maker of heaven and earth.

# Going Up Psalm 121

- **121:2** Yet despite his infinite greatness, he will be our personal protector from the evil that surrounds us on all sides.
- **Commit yourself daily into his care.**

Going Up Psalm 122

# Going Up    Psalm 122

- David rejoices at the prospect of joining the congregation for worship in Jerusalem.

# Going Up Psalm 122

*David was filled with joy when he was invited to join in worship in the house of the Lord. He was not too proud to worship God with others. He probably also rejoiced that others were so eager to worship God. Believers should rejoice when they have an opportunity to praise God along with his people.*

– Zamani Kafang,  
ECWA Theological Seminary, Nigeria



# Going Up    Psalm 122

- We can learn a lesson from David by considering our attitude toward corporate worship.
- Do we rejoice in the mere idea?
- If we did, we might make it more enjoyable for others too.

# Going Up    Psalm 122

- The rest of the Psalm focuses on Jerusalem as the city where God's name would be known for all time.
- That will never change.
- We should still “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

Going Up Psalm 123

# Going Up    Psalm 123

- In this psalm, we approach God as our master.
- If we think of God as our servant, we may be dissatisfied with the way he meets our needs.
- If we think of ourselves as his servants, the relationship totally changes.

# Going Up Psalm 123

*Keep your eye on the pierced hand, child of God; watch its smallest indication; wait patiently until it give some sign. We have too long acted on our own initiative; let us wait on our exalted Lord for the indication of his will.*

*– F. B. Meyer (1847 – 1929)*



# Going Up Psalm 123

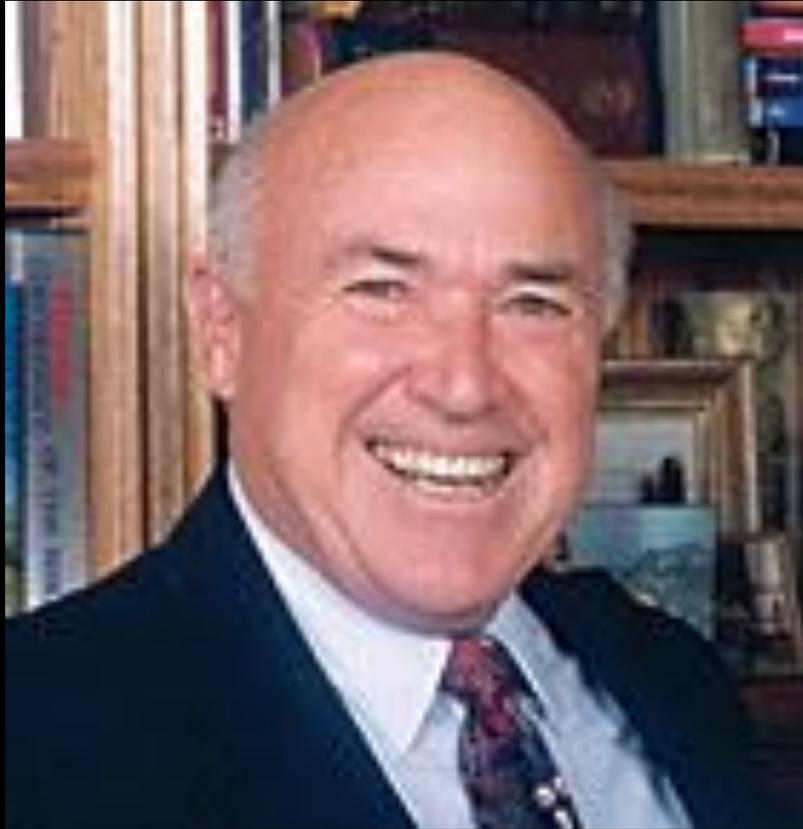
- **Philippians 1:1** (ESV) Paul and Timothy, **servants** of Christ Jesus ...
- **James 1:1** (ESV) James, a **servant** of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ ...
- **2 Peter 1:1** (ESV) Simeon Peter, a **servant** and apostle of Jesus Christ ...
- **Jude 1:1** (ESV) Jude, a **servant** of Jesus Christ and brother of James ...

Going Up Psalm 124

# Going Up Psalm 124

- David gives God credit for keeping the nation intact, when their enemies could have destroyed them.
- The people of Israel have often been on the verge of destruction since that time.

# Going Up Psalm 124



*I often think of this when I see God's people experiencing the emotional setbacks of life. We lose loved one, we experience financial reversals, marriages break up, our kids go through heavy trials. Where would we be without God? How could we ever make it?*

*– Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013)*

# Going Up    Psalm 124

- Can you think of a time when the Lord saved you out of some serious trouble?
- Remember to give God the credit that he is due, and continue to trust in him.

# Going Up Psalm 124

- **124:8** This verse echoes the encouragement from **121:2**.
- Our help is not from a transient source of uncertain strength.
- We rely on the maker of heaven and earth.

Going Up Psalm 125

# Going Up    Psalm 122

*The Jews' confidence in the stability of Mount Zion was enhanced by their knowledge that the Lord had not only created this mountain but had also chosen it as the place where his temple would be built. He had set his blessing on it, and it would endure.*

– Zamani Kafang,  
ECWA Theological Seminary, Nigeria



# Going Up Psalm 122

*Believers today can have similar confidence that God has chosen them for his blessing, and that they, too, will endure for ever.*

– Zamani Kafang,  
ECWA Theological Seminary, Nigeria



# Going Up Psalm 125

- This psalm gives us encouragement to:
  - Trust in the Lord (v.1).
  - Be counted among the righteous (v.3)
  - Be those who do good and are upright in heart (v.4)
- Then the Lord will be the source of our stability.

Going Up Psalm 126

# Going Up    Psalm 126

- This psalm was probably written after the exiles returned from the areas of Babylon and Persia.
- This happened about 538 B. C.
- We can only imagine their joy.

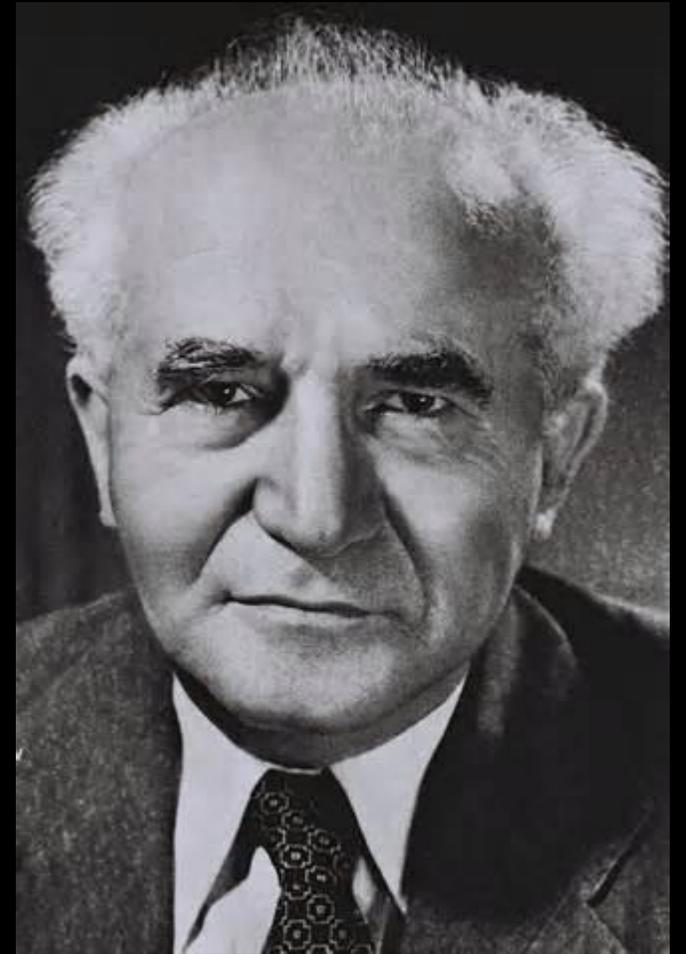
# Going Up    Psalm 126

- The joy must have been even more remarkable when the nation was reestablished in 1948.
- What God promises, he fulfills.

# Going Up    Psalm 126

*The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books ...*

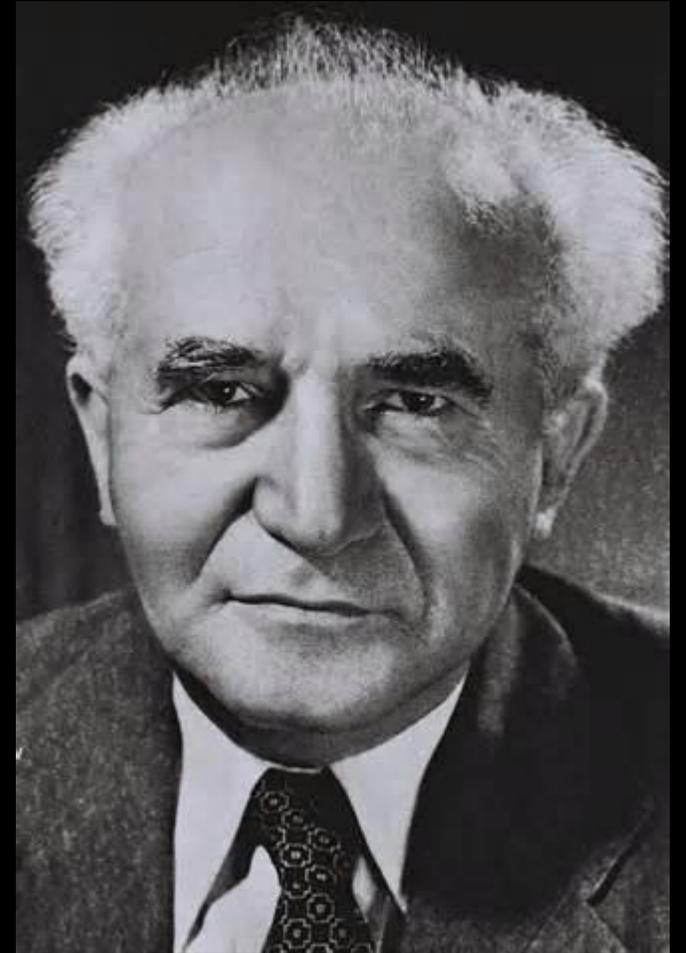
*– David Ben-Gurion, in The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel*



# Going Up    Psalm 126

*Placing our trust in the Almighty, we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the provisional Council of State, on the soil of the Homeland, in the city of Tel-Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the 5th day of Iyar, 5708 (14th May, 1948).*

*– David Ben-Gurion, in The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel*



# Going Up    Psalm 126

- **126:4-6**    When God fulfills a promise in this fallen world, there can be a constant struggle to keep it valid.
- Thus, it is only right to pray for God to fulfill what he is already fulfilling.
- It keeps us tracking with him as he fulfills his plans.

Going Up Psalm 127

# Going Up    Psalm 127

- When the people returned from captivity, they needed three things more than anything else.

# Going Up    Psalm 127

- When the people returned from captivity, they needed three things more than anything else.
  1. Builders – to rebuild
  2. Watchmen – to keep their cities safe
  3. Children – to repopulate the land.

# Going Up    Psalm 127

- This psalm reminds us that the Lord works through us in all of our efforts to serve him.
- The work of the builder and the watchman can be done as service to God.

Going Up

## Psalm 127



*It is not untypical of God's gifts that first they are liabilities, or at least responsibilities, before they become obvious assets. The greater their promise, the more likely that these sons will be a handful before they are a quiverful.*

*– Derek Kidner (1913 – 2008)*

*Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge*

# Going Up    Psalm 127

- Our children can be our greatest blessings.
- How joyful it is to see them grow up and begin to serve the Lord out of their own hearts.

Going Up    Conclusions

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Themes in **Psalms 121 – 127**:

1. They are intended for the congregation on pilgrimage.
2. The Lord can and should be trusted.
3. The Lord is the source of our stability.
4. He is our protector.
5. He is the ultimate source of our success.

# Going Up    Conclusions

- We live between the “already” and “not yet” of Christ’s two comings.
- We need to take this life very seriously.
- At the same time we need to remember that we are in transition.

# Going Up    Conclusions

- We haven't arrived just yet.
- We are a pilgrim people.
- We are in a place of exile, looking forward to a final home.
- We should look at our lives as a journey that is going up.
- When we get there, the worship time will be amazing.

# Going Up    Conclusions

- A final verse from each Psalm before we leave.
  - Psalm 121:2
  - Psalm 122:1
  - Psalm 123:2
  - Psalm 124:8
  - Psalm 125:1
  - Psalm 126:5
  - Psalm 127:1