

# RETURN TO JOY

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## Worship Returns Me to Joy - Psalm 122

By Peter Eng



### Worship Returns Me to Joy

(Psalm 122, NASB)

*A Song of Ascents, of David.*

<sup>1</sup> *I was glad when they said to me,  
“Let us go to the house of the Lord.”*

<sup>9</sup> *For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,  
I will seek your good.*

“Wake up! It’s time to go to church,” Bob calls out to his son on this bright Sunday morning as they get ready for worship in Tohickon Church in Small Town, USA. Then the hustle and bustle as the family makes its way out of the house, sometimes with a good dose of yelling at each other. But today’s tone was more urgent than angry.

“Aiyah! You still sleeping? Time to wake up already!” Mei calls out to her slumbering children as she looks at the clock to keep track of time. “Your daddy needs time to bring us to church you know!” They live in Punggol but church is far away in Thomson Road, Singapore.

There are many reluctant church goers on Sunday, and there are many who say, “Let us go to the house of the LORD (Y-HW-H).” King David was glad when they said, “Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

The temple was not yet built. When King David thought of God’s house, he was thinking of the Tent of Meeting, and the Ark of the Covenant in the tent. (For a chronology of the Tent and the Ark, see note at the end of this article.) The house of Y-HW-H was so primitive. It could not be compared to the temples of the other gods. Yet David was delighted to go to the house of God.

When the props to worship are stripped away, and there is nothing to excite our spiritual senses, the purest and truest worship happens. These people worship God in spirit and in truth. Most of the time, we need an environment to help us worship. But in times of the moving of God’s Spirit, believers worship in homes, in basements, and outdoors. There is no pipe organ, no band, and when there is persecution, some believers sing without sound, only mouthing the praises in unison.

We might expect David the King to provide spiritual leadership and he would be the one asking others to go to the house of the Lord to worship. Instead David is the recipient here. Sometimes we dare not approach others who are our superiors in the stations of life. But we see the entire sequence played out in the life of King David because someone reminded him, exhorted him, to go to the house of the Lord. Someone brought him joy by asking him to go to the house of the Lord.

We do not know how God works in the hearts of our boss, mom or dad. But if we can be agents to invite them to worship, we bless them with gladness, even those who have God in their hearts.

David was not enjoining others to worship. Instead, he humbly received the exhortation of others to worship God. He was pleased to receive spiritual blessing and leadership from another. It did not matter who, but the great king was not too proud to receive a spiritual encouragement. Whatever his frame of mind before the encouragement, he was glad for that nudging.

At times, we are called to be the “nudger,” and at times are the nudged. The same person can be both. The joy in being asked to go to the house of the Lord is of course, the joy in worship itself. The rest of the psalm describes the worship experience of David.

<sup>2</sup> *Our feet are standing  
Within your gates, O Jerusalem,*

David immediately finds himself standing within the gates of Jerusalem with those who invited him back to worship, back to joy. While others journeyed to Jerusalem, David lived there. We can become familiar with what we have and lose the sense of wonder at what God has given us. So David puts himself in the shoes of a pilgrim, looking at what God has given him with new eyes. He allows his heart to wonder in awe that he is standing within the gates of Jerusalem.

The next time you return to worship, why don't you try what David did. He looked at God's work with awe. He was not indifferent to the familiar. For when one becomes indifferent to the familiar blessing, one loses the joy of God's blessings.

<sup>3</sup> *Jerusalem, that is built  
As a city that is compact together;  
<sup>4</sup> To which the tribes go up, even the tribes of  
the LORD—  
An ordinance for Israel—  
To give thanks to the name of the LORD.*

Do you like to be in a crowd? If you are like me, it will depend on the crowd. Mom told us how during the Japanese occupation of Singapore, she was a young girl but had to join in the crowd getting rationed sweet potatoes that had already rotted. It was a brutal crowd of hungry people. This mass of desperation crushed her to the point she could not breathe and almost passed out. But by God's grace she was preserved. I cannot imagine anyone liking a crowd such as this.

On 11 November 2011, there was a prayer meeting at the cave church in Cairo, Egypt. The church was packed and the Spirit of God was moving in the hearts of the people. For ten minutes, the crowd spontaneously called out “Yeshua” (Jesus). This was a worship of great joy. The people there wanted to be there, and God blessed them with such joy. (See YouTube links at the end of the article.)

The pilgrims crowded Jerusalem, it was a holy bustle. David marveled at how the little city was crowded, so compacted with people as the different tribes gathered there together. This suggests a specific feast day and it was such a wonderful thing to see this crowd. While the tribes were many, they formed one people of God. This is a foretaste of that great throng of people worshipping God, “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” (Rev 7:9-10).

Perhaps David was also looking at the stones of the wall that fit closely together, and thought how these resembled God's people compacted together. And standing together in such a united way, the people and stones could not be breached (NLT).

The nation was in a crisis. But that crisis had passed. David knew that crisis-prompted worship must be followed by gratitude-prompted worship. It was now time to gather together to thank God. Israel's enemies had been subdued, and the hard work of fighting gave way to the joyful work of praise.

<sup>5</sup> *For there thrones were set for judgment,  
The thrones of the house of David.*

The throne given to David and his descendants were established by God in Jerusalem to implement judgment. This is true justice: spiritual and social.

Too many well-meaning and socially minded Christians are deceived into an unbiblical concept of social justice in the name of Christ. They seem to think that the equality of opportunity is not enough, there must be an equality of outcome. If there is an equality of outcome

no matter what preceded, that is the violation of justice. If a teacher averages out all the grades of the students to give an average grade to everyone, is that justice? If the hardworking and the lazy are rewarded the same, is that justice? If the criminal and the law abiding are both thrown in prison or both walk free, is that justice?

When Jesus comes to restore his kingdom, when he takes his place on the throne and those who are faithful reign with him, we will enjoy a justice the world today does not even know how to describe. But it is not the false "social justice" label that some Christians apply to the socialist ideal of equal outcome.

True justice will come from the house of David. And it will be Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah), who will bring this justice to pass.

If you are a victim of injustice, you would love the establishment of God's Kingdom with Jesus as king. He will implement true justice; he will reward the just and judge the wicked.

<sup>6</sup> *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:*

*"May they prosper who love you.*

<sup>7</sup> *"May peace be within your walls,  
And prosperity within your palaces."*

<sup>8</sup> *For the sake of my brothers and my friends,  
I will now say, "May peace be within you."*

Christians think of prayer narrowly. We think of a worship service with prayer as a minor component in the worship, and a prayer meeting where we just list items and pray.

In the west Asia, a prayer meeting is like what we call a worship service, and prayer is a large component of the meeting (as you might see in Korean Churches today).

Praying for the peace of Jerusalem extends beyond individual prayer for Jerusalem. It is a call to prayer-worship for the peace of Jerusalem. Prayer-worship is powerful. It is not a weekly ritual. It is a re-centering of the heart to God and God's people.

It is always right to pray for peace. For Jerusalem, for any city that is currently in turmoil, and for the city in which we live. But there is something special about praying for Jerusalem. There is a blessing! "May they

prosper who love you." This refers to those who pray for the peace of Jerusalem. When we love Jerusalem and pray for its peace, there is a blessing of prosperity for us. This blessing for prosperity is a real one, but it is not about money. It may include financial well-being, but it is about abundance in life.

The psalmist prompts us how to pray for Jerusalem. We are to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and for her prosperity.

The name Jerusalem (from "Salem") means peace. But it is a city that has suffered much conflict and continues to suffer conflict even though it is called by the name peace.

There is no doubt David was talking about the real city of Jerusalem. But David was also speaking as a prophet. David looked forward to a house of God that was not yet built (only a tent was there), and to a city that was at peace, but not secure in her peace. We do likewise. We pray for the peace of the Jerusalem to come and the house of God to come.

What is that?

Paul tells us there are two Jerusalems: one on earth, the geographic Jerusalem, and one in heaven. The geographic Jerusalem is like the product of Hagar the slave girl, but the heavenly Jerusalem is the product of Sarah the free woman. Geographic Jerusalem represents slavery under the law, but heavenly Jerusalem represents freedom in Christ. "Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother" (Galatians 4:25-26).

Concerning geographic Jerusalem and the physical temple building, Jesus said, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down" (Mark 13:2). And this was fulfilled in AD 70, and to this day, the only stones that remain to testify to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is the "Wailing Wall."

Even though Jerusalem and the temple stood when Paul wrote to the Galatians, Paul called on the Galatians to look to the heavenly Jerusalem. We should do likewise. We must not be caught up with the hype

about how geographic Jerusalem portents the coming of Christ and forget that Jesus himself, with his apostles, points to the heavenly Jerusalem.

The Apostles also paint an image of the temple for us. The Apostle Paul says we are the temple of God, and joined together, we are growing into a holy temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:21-22.) The Apostle Peter says, “And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4-5). And the Apostle John says, “I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Revelation 21:22).

We pray for the peace of spiritual Jerusalem. Spiritual Jerusalem is the place where all believers of all time come in prayer-worship. We ask God to give us the wisdom and the humility to resolve our quarrels and know that God wants to bless all of us who are within the walls of Jerusalem. Let peace be within our walls. Let prosperity be within the palaces—the place where The Anointed One rules with justice. The peace for the city is peace for the palace. The prosperity for the palace is prosperity for the city.

For the sake of our spiritual brothers and friends who are all citizens of God’s kingdom, we pray for the fulfillment of peace for the heavenly Jerusalem. There Yeshua HaMashiach will rule with true justice and bring true peace. There our souls will find rest.



### The Prayer-Worship Crowd

- Prayer-Worship of Egyptian Christians in the cave Coptic Church, Cairo, Egypt (11-11-11): [CLICK](#)
- Prayer Worship crowd extends to the outside of the church: [CLICK](#)

### Messianic Praise for Yeshua HaMachiach (Jesus the Messiah)

- Messianic praise: [CLICK](#)

- All the Songs of Ascent in Hebrew (Psalm 120-134) [Just to get a feel of it in Hebrew, probably not something you will enjoy unless you are studying Hebrew]: [CLICK](#)

### The Movement of the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle) and the Ark of the Covenant

When the Hebrews conquered the Promised Land, the Tent of Meeting, with the Ark of the Covenant was located in Shiloh.

The Philistines attacked Shiloh in 1088 BC and captured the Ark of the Covenant. It first went to Philistine territory until it was returned, and David brought it to Jerusalem. (Journey of the Ark: Shiloh → Ebenezer → Ashdod → Ekron → Beth-Shemesh → Kiriath-Jearim → House of Obed-Edom → Jerusalem.)

When the Philistines attacked Shiloh, the Tent of Meeting was moved to Nob (for 76 years), then to Gibeon (for 59 years). David erected a new Tent of Meeting in Jerusalem around 955 BC. The original Tent of Meeting made during the time of Moses became extinct in 953 BC from Gibeon. (Journey of the Tent: Shiloh → Nob → Gibeon → Jerusalem.) King David restored the worship of the LORD (Y-HW-H) with Tent and Ark together around 993 BC.



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**Rev. Peter Eng** is an ordained minister from the Reformed Tradition, but he is truly global in perspective. He served the Lord in various capacities starting from his teenage years in the 70s. His undergrad studies were done in Singapore, his grad studies in the USA, and post-grad studies in the United Kingdom, with additional post-grad research in Germany.