

Dwelling Place of God

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[0 : 00] Psalm 132, a song of ascents. In Ephathah, we found it in the fields of Jer.

Let us go to his dwelling place. Let us worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy for the sake of your servant David. Do not turn away the face of your anointed one.

The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back. One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne. If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne.

For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for his dwelling place. This is my resting place forever. Here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions.

[1 : 26] I will satisfy her poor with bread. Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. There I will make a horn to sprout for David. I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.

His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine. This is God's holy and authoritative word. This psalm is about how we should seek the presence of God and the reign of Christ the King over our lives.

In the first half of the psalm, verses 1 to 10, we see Israel's prayer that God would reign in their midst. And in the second half, verses 11 to 18, we see God's answer.

His promise that he would reign in their midst. So let's first look at Israel's prayer in verses 1 to 10.

The psalmist begins by asking God to remember his servant David in verses 1 to 5.

Remember, O Lord, in David's favor all the hardships he endured. How he swore to the Lord and vowed to the mighty one of Jacob, I will not enter my house or get into my bed. I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the mighty one of Jacob.

[2 : 38] This is an allusion to 2 Samuel chapter 7, verses 1 to 3, where King David expresses to Nathan the prophet his desire to build a temple for God.

And there he says, you know, see now I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent. And apparently, according to Psalm 132, David had sworn not to enter his own house until he had found a place for the Lord.

A dwelling place for the mighty one of Jacob. The mighty one of Jacob is a title for God that is sometimes associated with the ark of the covenant because the ark was known.

Ark was kind of the physical representation of God's presence. It represented God's footstool. And so it was sometimes referred to by God's name. And so later in verse 8, it refers to the ark of your might.

That's a parallel to this mighty one of Jacob. And this is kind of, this is why actually David's one of my favorite characters in the Bible. He had an intensely personal relationship with God.

[3 : 45] He loved the Lord. He was a man after God's own heart, though not without his failings.

And when a pestilence was raging throughout the nation because of David's own sins, because he took a census, which showed that he was relying on the number of his army rather than in the power of the Lord, when God judged the nation with the pestilence.

And when David saw the angel of the Lord kind of executing God's judgment on the, and when he saw the angel of the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, you guys probably, some of you probably remember the story.

He goes there to build an altar to the Lord and to worship him there and to plead on behalf of his people. And so he offers to buy the place, the threshing floor from Araunah.

Araunah, of course, is, you know, in the presence of the king, says, Hey, you could take it for free. You know, I give it to you, you know, as a gift to the Lord. But David insists, No, but I will buy it from you for a price.

I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord, my God, that cost me nothing. Like that was kind of David's heart. He was eager to make costly sacrifices to God because he wanted to demonstrate his love for God, his commitment to God.

[5 : 02] And David could not, according to this psalm, rest his eyes in the comfort of his palace, knowing that the ark of God remained in a tent.

He saw the incongruity of it, the wrongness of that picture, that he should dwell in the comfort of his own home when the ark of God sat without one.

And so he vowed to correct it. And even though God tells David that he wanted his son Solomon eventually to build a temple, God nevertheless commanded David for this desire, for having this desire to want to house the ark of the Lord.

And so the psalmist, having recalled the favor that David enjoyed from God, now asks the Lord, out of his steadfast love and faithfulness to David, to return to his dwelling place in Jerusalem.

In verses 6 to 10, he says, Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah. We found it in the fields of Jair. Let us go to his dwelling place. Let us worship at his footstool.

[6 : 05] Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy. For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one.

And verse 6 is kind of recounting the journey of the ark of the covenant.

It's uncertain what Ephrathah refers to, because it could refer to a couple different things, but it may refer to Shiloh, which in 1 Samuel 1, verses 1 to 3, is associated with the Ephrathites.

Shiloh was a city within the territory of the tribe of Ephraim, where the ark of the covenant resided after the conquest of Canaan in Joshua 18. So that's where the ark was first found.

So verse 6 then would mean, you know, we heard that it was in Ephrathah. We had heard of it in Ephrathah. And then, however, because of Israel's unfaithfulness, the ark was lost, captured by the Philistines.

[7 : 14] But then God brought judgment on the Philistines on account of the ark, and so the Philistines returned it. And then when they returned it, it was taken to Kiriath-Jerim in 1 Samuel 6, 21.

That's another name for the fields of Jair, meaning town or land of forests. And it's from there that David brings up the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem.

So verse 6 is kind of recounting the journey of the ark, God's presence from Shiloh to Kiriath-Jerim and finally to Jerusalem. And anticipating its arrival to Jerusalem, the psalmist says in verse 7, let us go to his dwelling place.

Let us worship at his footstool. And apart from a few word variations, the verses 8 to 10 are identical to 2 Chronicles 6, verses 40 to 42.

That's where Solomon is praying at the dedication of the newly built temple. So it's very possible that this psalm was composed for the occasion of dedication of the temple.

[8 : 21] And it's kind of, the psalm is talking about the kind of transference of the ark. And so he's praying, now arise, O Lord God, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.

You know, let your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation. Let your saints rejoice in your goodness. O Lord God, do not turn away the face of your anointed one. Remember your steadfast love for David, your servant.

So it's praying that God would show favor to his people by dwelling among them. And then that's the people's prayer. And then in the second half of the psalm, we see God's answer, his promise that he will reign in their midst.

And there's a lot of parallels between verses 1 to 10 and 11 to 17. And these parallels emphasize the connection between the people's prayer and God's answer.

So verse 2 recalled how David swore to the Lord to build a temple for him. And then verses 11 to 12, recall how the Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back, that he would have set someone from his line on the throne.

[9 : 35] If your sons keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne. So similarly in verse 7, the psalmist says, let us go to his dwelling

place.

And then in verse 8, arise the Lord and go to your resting place. That's paralleled by verses 13 and 14, where the Lord himself says he has chosen Zion, his dwelling place.

And he says that this is my resting place forever. Here I will dwell. Verse 9 prays for the priests to be clothed with righteousness and the saints to shout for joy.

And then in verse 16, God promises her priests, I will clothed with salvation and her saints will shout for joy. And then verse 10 finally asks God not to turn away his face from David, his anointed one.

And then in verse 17, God answers, there I will make a horn to sprout for David. I prepared a lamp for my anointed. So sprouting horn is a metaphor for strength and power.

[10:37] And lamp represents David's kind of and his lines reign, dynastic reign that will never be put out. And so these extensive parallels between the first half and second half of the song teach us that God is a promise keeper.

He answers the prayers of his people. He will keep all of his promises. The trouble is, even though God promised to put someone on the throne out of David's line forever in 2 Samuel 7, Israel failed to keep their end of the covenant.

Because if you look again at verse 12, it says clearly, if your sons keep my covenant and my testimony is that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne.

But Israel and their kings did not keep the covenant. And the royal succession of David came to an unceremonious end with Zedekiah, who was the last king to reign in Judah before they were all exiled to Babylon.

And the promise, however, stands, the promise of God to have someone from David's line reign forever. And so that promise is fulfilled ultimately in the coming of Christ, Christ the king, the messianic king.

[11:49] And that's why he's described in Matthew 1 carefully as a descendant of David. He's the one who ascends the eternal heavenly throne by dying on the cross, being raised from the dead, and ascending to heaven.

And it's by pledging our allegiance to Jesus as our king that we are grafted into Israel and the promise of Psalm 132 becomes ours to cherish forever.

And the Jewish people understood this, the fulfillment of this in the New Testament. This psalm is quoted in Acts 7, verses 44 to 50, in Stephen's speech just before his martyrdom.

But he recalls there that even though Solomon built a house for God, that God himself says, Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord? What is the place of my rest? The temple was not the ultimate place of God's rest. Jerusalem was not the ultimate place of God's dwelling.

[12:57] That's fulfilled in Jesus, the new temple. And in him, it's fulfilled in us, the body of Christ, the temple of God. That's why 1 Corinthians 3 describes us as God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in us.

So then there's a couple ways that I think we could still hold on to this psalm and seek the dwelling place of God. If Christ is the fulfillment of this psalm, one, we ought to pledge allegiance to him and follow him, knowing that it's only in him that we can be citizens of his kingdom.

And then secondly, if we are the temple of God, then it is true, as it says in Matthew 18, 20, that when we are gathered in Christ's name, that God is among us.

So then in the same way that these people, the Israelites, just because for them, think about it, right? The ark was the physical manifestation of God's spiritual presence.

So they longed for that. When the ark was gone, they felt his absence. They felt the lack of the assurance of God's presence among them. When they were cut off from the temple, cut off from Jerusalem, when they're in exile, they felt his absence, that God's not among them.

[14:22] And so for us, we should long for the presence of God. One, we should recognize the privilege that we are the dwelling place of God, that the spirit of God himself dwells in us so that we can experience this reality at all times, even without a physical temple.

But then two, this is especially true when we are gathered in his name as the people of God, because they are specially, God's presence is made known. He's manifest in a more powerful and palpable way.

And so we should long for that. We should long to be together with God's people, the body of Christ, the family of God, the dwelling place of God. And so have the assurance of his presence

among us.

And so this makes me really yearn for the gathering of the church again. And let's pray for that together and pray for, and to pray that we would not lose sight of that privilege and not to take it for granted.