

**June 10**

**Scriptures:** Read Psalms 125-129

**Key Verse:** “Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways.” (Psalm 128:1)

### **Overview**

Jerusalem is on a hill surrounded by many other hills which serve to help in its fortification. In Psalm 125 we see a graphic picture of our Lord standing firm and strong, like a mountain range, surrounding His people with continuous, stable protection that gives peace (cf. Isa. 54:10; Phil.4:7). Those who put their trust in Him, He will cause to stand firm and strong forever. He especially protects Mount Zion since He has laid claim to it as His own (cf. Heb. 12:22; Joel 3;17,18). Such beautiful imagery expresses the fact that our eternal, undying souls will always be surrounded by the Lord, even in the heavenlies. While we remain in our earthly bodies, however, we can expect trials and tribulations, but “the scepter of wickedness shall not rest”. It shall not remain on us forever. The Lord will not send trials our way that we cannot overcome, “lest the righteous cannot bear it and fall into sin” (125:3; 1 Cor. 10:13). In contrast, those who in times of turmoil were weak and succumbed to temptation, so that they turned away to walk (continuously) along the crooked paths, would not remain. They would be led away, like a suffering captive. Indeed those who live in sin, are like prisoners condemned to death.

Psalm 126 refers to the joyous return to Zion of the remnant from the Exile in Babylon. When the answer to their prayers came, it seemed too good to be true, like a dream come true. This is the reaction that the decree of Cyrus must have brought to the exiles (Ezra 1:1-4). All the Gentiles could see clearly that it was their God who had done this great thing for them. As a result, the Lord received the glory not from only His people, but even from the heathen. Those who returned prayed that even more of their people would pour back to Zion, in the manner of the dry river beds of the south, in the Negev of Israel that suddenly overflow with rushing water during the short rainy season. These are the faithful ones who wept with a burden for lost souls in the distant harvest fields. They will not return empty handed, without fruit for their labour. There will be a harvest of lost souls brought to the Lord while in distant harvest fields.

Psalm 127 clearly emphasizes the futility and folly of human effort without help from God. In every area of our life, personal, social, or civil, we need to depend upon the Lord to succeed according to divine standards. Even the building of a home for one's family is in vain if the Lord's blessing is not upon it. It must be built upon the Rock (Matt. 7:24,25; Prov. 24:3). In one's work, it is vain to wake up early to only worry and work hard until the point of exhaustion, and then return home to only worry some more and be envious of what others have. Those who trust in God to provide all their needs, however, do not need to worry, and God gives them a peaceful sleep which results from their peace of mind (cf. Mark 4:26, 27; Prov. 10:22). They have a much healthier and rewarding life. They are rewarded by God with children who are a great source of joy and who will become a source of strength to their aged parents. These children will bring them honour, for they will be well respected at the gate (the place where civil affairs were conducted).

Psalm 128 continues with the same thoughts that ended Psalm 127. It teaches that the basis of a truly happy and successful home is the fear of the Lord. Those who obey, love and reverence the Lord, following the principles for living laid down in the Holy Bible, will be blessed by the Lord with provisions. For the ancients, the greatest blessing was to have many children (Deut. 28:1-4). They ensured that the parents would be well cared for all their days, and that the family name would be carried on and increase. Godly families are the foundation of a healthy and prosperous society.

In Psalm 129, the writer recalls the past afflictions of Israel since the early stages of the nation's existence. In so doing, he is given confidence to realize that God did not allow the enemies to prevail. For a time the "plowers" did their job of persecution and tearing up the ground, but God turned it for good, for where there were deep furrows, God gave them growth, like a good crop. In contrast to the flourishing of God's people (Zion, the Church of Jesus Christ), the wicked who hate the righteous are likened to the grass that grows on the roofs of Middle Eastern houses; they may take root and begin to grow, but they are weak because they are planted in bad ground and soon they wither and die (cf. Matt. 13:3-9).

## **Prayer**

Thank You, dear Lord, for the growth You produce in our lives. Though Your planting and pruning may seem harsh to us, we know You mean it for our good. When we walk in Your ways, we cannot help but be blessed! May we also be a blessing to others.