

Adult Sunday School Lesson  
April 25, 2010

Northern Lights Baptist Church  
Pastor Gregg Clark

### **=Story Behind the Psalm=**

Psalm 125-129

**NOTE:** *These lessons are designed simply as a guideline. As a Sunday School teacher part of your job is to study the lesson and develop it for the pupils in your class according to their age and spiritual development.*

**Scripture:** Psalms 125-129

**AUTHORS:** Mainly David and Solomon

### **The Story Behind the Psalms**

These are called "Psalms of ascension." They were basically travel Psalms. They were used specifically for the three annual feasts. As the Jews would march to Jerusalem for the feast, they would sing these Psalms of ascension. From anywhere in the promised land, it was always "up" to Jerusalem, for Jerusalem was the highest point in the land. So as the people would ascend to Jerusalem, they would sing these songs one after another.

When they arrived at Jerusalem, they would go to the temple. These Psalms were sung on the steps of the temple. Psalm 120 would be sung on the first step, Psalm 121 on the second step, etc. until each Psalm had been sung (there were 15 steps ascending to the temple). Since these were sung going up the steps, they were called "Psalms of ascension." As they are read it should be kept in mind that these were travelers going to the holy city for a feast. Read carefully Psalm 128 and imagine a great group of pilgrims journeying for a time of worship in the beloved city.

### **The Way They Were Used by God's People**

Not only were they used for trips to the feasts and to Jerusalem, these were Psalms used for any journey. What a tremendous thing it would be for a Christian family to claim Psalm 128 as they leave on vacation or for a Christian businessman to claim its promises as he leaves for a business trip! In these days of advanced travel, these Psalms should be used over and over again as we journey to and fro.

### **LESSON:**

Each of these Psalms has a main subject the Jews would sing about. These are all subjects worthy of lifting our voices unto God and ought to be regular themes of the heart.

- 1. Psalm 125-** This psalm most likely refers to the opposition which Sanballat the Horonite, Geshem the Arabian, and Tobiah the Ammonite, gave to the Jews while employed in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and restoring the temple (Nehemiah 4-6).

- a. Those who trust in God will be like mount Zion. Mount Zion is the hill upon which Jerusalem was built (and the temple). The building of it could not be stopped. This place was protected by God. So are those who trust in the LORD.
  - b. Enemies may come and fight against us, but the “rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous”.
  - c. God will do good to the good and upright in heart (verse 4).
- 2. Psalm 126-** This psalm might have been composed by Haggai and Zechariah, or by Ezra; it is beautiful, and highly descriptive of the circumstances which it represents. This psalm is concerning the release of the Jews from captivity in Babylon.
- a. Israel was in captivity because of their sin. The captivity was punishment from God.
  - b. When this punishment was over they were filled with laughter and joy. They were so happy it was like a dream; they could hardly believe it was over.
  - c. During the past 70 years they sowed in tears, now they were reaping with joy.
  - d. They wept and returned to the Word of God which yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness.
- 3. Psalm 127-** This psalm is addressing the building of the temple.
- a. Yes, the people had to do the work, but without the blessing of God it would have been useless. We need to get interested enough to put forth the effort in most any endeavor, however, without God’s help it is pointless and will not be blessed. This is true when it comes to building a ministry or a family if God does not do the work it will never be established.
- 4. Psalm 128-** This Psalm may have been spoken of Zerubbabel, prince of Judah, who was earnestly engaged in building the temple of the Lord. It seems to be a continuation of the preceding Psalm, or rather the second part of it. The man who is stated to have a numerous offspring, in the preceding Psalm, is here represented as sitting at table with his large family. A person in the mean while coming in, sees his happy state, speaks of his comforts, and predicts to him and his all possible future good. And why? Because the man and his family "fear God, and walk in his ways."
- a. True happiness comes from God and keeping his commandments and walking in His ways. I have often said it is impossible to live according to the Word of God and be unhappy.
- 5. Psalm 129-** This Psalm was written after the captivity; and contains a reference to the many tribulations which the Jews passed through from their youth, i.e., the earliest part of their history, their bondage in Egypt.
- a. The Jews had been through abundant tribulations; some because of their wrong and some because of persecution. At any rate, God showed mercy and delivered them (verse 4-5).

**Memory Verse:** *Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. Psalm 127:1*