

# APPROACHING THE HEAVENLY ZION

## *Lessons from the Psalms of Ascent*

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The collection of 15 Songs of Ascent comprise a hymnal within the hymnal [Psalms 120-134]. This set of poems aided the Jewish pilgrims as they journeyed from their homes to Zion to worship the Lord, with His people, in the Temple for the three pilgrimage feasts (cf. Deut 16:16). For the New Testament people of God, we do not embark on a pilgrimage from our homeland to the Temple to worship God. But we do, however, live as strangers and aliens in this world as we journey from this world to the heavenly Zion. As the Israelites of old meditated on Scripture, sung biblical truths, and anticipated the assembling with the redeemed, so believers today can learn how to approach the heavenly Zion as we trek through life. **In this essay, I will provide six reminders as to how we must approach the heavenly zion.**

## 1. REMEMBRANCE.

The Songs of Ascent served to remind the pilgrims of the greatness of God and of the necessity of trusting Him in and through hard seasons of life. Remembering God carries the Christian through life. Without simple reminders we as God's people often forget essential truths. As the pilgrims of old remembered God, so must we as we journey on.

## 2. ANTICIPATION.

One theme that pervades the Songs of Ascent is the pilgrim's longing for Zion. O how those who journey through valleys and through the wildernesses anticipate with longing the Temple precincts to worship God with His people. How much more must God's people today anticipate the future reunion with all God's people in the heavenly Zion.

## 3. ENDURANCE.

One hallmark that characterizes every child of God is none other than endurance. All who live godly lives suffer persecution and, yet, they endure and persevere and continue on the journey without giving up. Pilgrims of old endured hardship, hostility, enemies, and struggles and yet endured till they reached Jerusalem. God's people today must endure through many tribulations to enter the kingdom of God.

## 4. HOMESICKNESS.

The worshipers of Israel who trekked many long days felt the homesickness for Zion. O the longing for, and the passion to reach, and the anticipation of residing in the Temple. This world, with all of its struggles and with all of the enemies within it, is not a believer's home. God's presence is. Let the church long for the ultimate dwelling of God!

## 5. COMMUNITY.

The worshipers who would meditate on the Songs of Ascent would leave their homelands and their unbelieving friends and families to journey to Zion to be with those who love *Shalom* and to be with the God of *Shalom*. Let all believers today crave the community of the redeemed. Let not a day pass without praying for the local church and for longing to fellowship with them. Christians must involve themselves in community regularly, faithfully, and happily.

## 6. GLADNESS.

Nothing so gladdens the heart of God's elect than to be with God, with His people, corporately worshiping Him! The travelers who left home and headed for Jerusalem had hearts full of gladness and joy as they longed to worship God with the community. Let believers travel with gladness and joy as they praise God anticipating the heavenly Zion!