



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 132

Metropolitan Youssef



Introduction

- This Psalm is another in the series of fifteen Psalms titled *A Song of Ascents*
- Psalm 132 is the longest of the Psalms of Ascent
- It has no author associated with it in the title; therefore, the author is not known, nor can the occasion on which it was written be certainly ascertained
- Some believe David was the author and he wrote it when he brought the ark from Baale Judah to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite, and then to Zion, 2 Samuel 6:1
- Or, when he had expressed to Nathan the prophet, his strong desire to build a house for God, 2 Samuel 7:1



Introduction

- Or, after he had numbered the people and when he and the elders of Israel were in distress on that account, *“the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”* (1 Chronicles 21:18)
- Others believe it was written after the exile and refers to the building of the second temple, and placing the ark of the covenant in it
- And some think this Psalm was written by Solomon, since verses 8-10, are much the same with which he concluded his prayer at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chronicles 6:41



Introduction

- The coming of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem is referred to in Psalm 132:6-9; Psalm 24 and Psalm 68 also this event is described more fully in 1 Chronicles 15-16
- The Psalm has a lot to do with the ark, which was a symbol of God's presence and rule among the people
- In many respects this Psalm resembles Psalms 89, but while the historical background of Psalms 89 is evidently the Exile, without any hope in the immediate present, Psalms 132 presents a spirit of hopefulness which presumes the Restoration and the re-establishment of the Temple worship



Introduction

- Psalm 132 is a Psalm that recalls the faithfulness of God
- In the first half of the Psalm, we hear the people of God asking God to remember His servant David
- In the second half of the Psalm, we get the assurance that God will in fact fulfill all that He has promised
- In Jesus Christ, God's promises to David has been fulfilled
- The Psalm is then a truly Messianic Psalm
- It looks forward to that fulfilment of the promises to David which was realized in Jesus Christ
- He is the new temple, the dwelling place of God with His people



Introduction

- He is the anointed King who will sit on the throne forever
- Messianic hopes was most natural for the pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for the feasts and recalling all the memories connected with the “city of David”
- Psalm 132 is referred to twice in the New Testament
- St. Stephen refers to Psalm 132:5 in Acts 7:46, and St. Peter alludes to Psalm 132:11 in Acts 2:30
- This Psalm is one of the Psalms of the hour of ‘Compline’, in which the believer remember that he is the house of God and pray the Lord dwells in his heart



Introduction

Psalm Outline

- A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5
- David's Promise to God 132:6-9
- The Promises Made to David 132:10-12
- God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15
- God's Promise to His Servants 132:16-18

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- The Psalm begins with a plea for God to remember His servant and fulfill His promises
- The psalmist pleads David's services, *all his afflictions*, in establishing the worship of God in Jerusalem as a reason why the Lord should remember the promises made to him
- David certainly experienced a lot of hardships on his way to the throne
- However, the hardships here more likely refer to David getting the ark to Jerusalem and gathering all the materials for the temple

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- The *affliction* may be also the distress that David felt at the thought that, while he dwelt in a house of cedar, the ark of God “*only dwells inside tent curtains.*” (2 Samuel 7:2)
- With David the covenant was made, and therefore his name is pleaded on behalf of his descendants
- *Lord, remember,* Call to remembrance his zeal, his labor, his trials in order that there might be a permanent place for God’s worship
- *Remember,* This is a word full of meaning
- The Lord remembered Noah, and softened the flood

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- He remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of Sodom
- He remembered Rachel, and Hannah, and gave them children
- He remembered His mercy to the house of Israel and delivered His people
- God will never forget what His people suffer for His sake
- Christians can take comfort that God does remember all the *afflictions* endured unto His glory
- The plea is urged with God that He would bless the family of David for the sake of their ancestors; how much stronger is our supplications in prayer that God would deal well with us for Jesus Christ's sake

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- If the psalmist here is considered Solomon, it may be a request that the Lord would remember the promise He had made to David, that his son should build a house for him, which he desired he might be enabled to do
- That He would remember the covenant of royalty He had made with him, that he should not lack a son to sit upon his throne; and particularly that He would remember the promise of the Messiah, that should be of his seed
- Solomon was a wise man, yet does not plead any merit of his own: "I am not worthy, for whom You should do this; but, *Lord, remember David*, with whom You made the covenant"

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- As Moses prayed, *“Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’”* (Exodus 32:13)
- This verse may be also applied to Christ, the Son of David, and to all His afflictions
- And so is a petition that God would remember the covenant of grace; the promise of His coming into the world; His offering and sacrifice; remember them and their offerings for His sake, Psalm 20:3

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- In the Septuagint version, *his afflictions*, is "his humility"
- St. John Chrysostom believes that the secret of the meekness of the prophet David, shown by his behavior and dealings with those who did him wrong, was in two things
- The first is that he feared God, and the word of God was always before his eyes, and the cause of his faithfulness
- The second thing was that, together with his longing to build the temple; he cared for the renewal of the spiritual life
- With a spirit of meekness and humility, he bound between the outer temple, and that of the inner soul

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- In relating it to Christ, *His humility* is in His incarnation, in His care and service to His disciples, in seeking not His own glory, but His Father's, and in His sufferings and death, which was prophesied of Him, Zechariah 9:9
- *How he swore to the Lord*, There is no exact account of David's having made such a vow
- However, the heart behind it was recorded in 2 Samuel 7:2, where David tells Nathan the prophet that he had determined to build a temple to the Lord, *because "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."* (2 Samuel 7:2)

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- On that very night God ordered Nathan to tell David that it was not His wish that he should build the temple, but that he should leave it to his son to build it; and he repeated the same to David, (2 Samuel 7:4-17)
- If David, then, bound himself by oath to build the temple, why did not he build it? Why did not he even make the attempt?
- He was forbidden by God; and besides, the words of the oath mean no more here than the expression of David's great desire to build the temple
- Or, perhaps such a vow was actually made by David, though not elsewhere recorded

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- According to St. Augustine to swear is to promise firmly
- *the Mighty One of Jacob*, The God whom Jacob worshipped, and who had manifested Himself so clearly to him as a God of might or power
- *Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house*, The oath, then, may be thus explained
- The new house David built for himself after he came to the throne, made of cedar, 2 Samuel 5:11
- The oath is not that he should never enter into it till he had found a dwelling for God, but that he should not go into it with pleasure till that was done

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- He should have no peace nor satisfaction of mind till this was accomplished
- He swears never to forget the obligation of building God's house
- He swears he will never go into *the chamber of my house* without thinking on the bed, the site of the temple, where the Ark of the Lord may rest in dignity
- *I will not give sleep to my eyes Or slumber to my eyelids*, he swears that he will not sleep or rest, without waking to consider on the necessity of building up a temple to the Lord, which oath and vow he most faithfully fulfilled

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- St. John Chrysostom says, “He did not say: ‘until I build the temple’, but said: until I find a place, a dwelling place for the Lord’ ... Observe his enthusiasm: he not only said he would not enter the house or go to bed, but would not even feel free to enjoy those things arising from the necessity of nature he found a place and a dwelling for the God of Jacob ... he did not intend simply to build, note, but in a place most appropriate and especially suited to the Temple, for which there was need of searching in his soul he was thus alert.”
- David did not *build* that *place for the Lord*, but he did *find* it

A Longing to Build a House for the Lord 132:1-5



- In 1 Chronicles 16:43, it is clear that he did not bless, and did not inhabit his own house, until he had brought the ark to Zion, where the temple was afterwards built
- *the Mighty One of Jacob*, Jacob also made a vow about building a house for the Lord
- Jacob was on the run from his brother Esau, he slept outside with his head on a stone and while he was asleep he had a dream about God and a stairway or ladder to heaven, (Genesis 28:16-17)
- Next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it
- He called that place “Bethel” which means “the house of God.”



David's Promise to God 132:6-9

- *Ephrathah*, is another name for Bethlehem, the town where Jesus Christ would eventually be born
- *the fields of the woods*, refers to Kiriath Jearim where the ark remained for twenty years during the days of Samuel, (1 Samuel 7:1-2)
- Those were probably the words of the prophet David and his godly friends who heard of the Ark of the Covenant when they were in *Ephrathah* or Bethlehem, found it in Kiriath Jearim (1 Samuel 7:1; 2 Samuel 6:3-4), and from there they took it up to Zion



David's Promise to God 132:6-9

- According to St. Augustine, the word *Ephrathah* means a mirror
- He says, "We heard of Him in the prophecies of the prophets as though in a mirror, but we found Him in the fields of the wood; namely in the Gentiles, who forsook the idol worship and believed in Him. The prophets presented the Lord Jesus Christ as though in a mirror, Whereas faith dwelt in the hearts of the Gentiles."
- *Let us go into His tabernacle*, Seeing the ark is now fixed in a certain place, they can go to it more generally and constantly and *worship at His footstool*



David's Promise to God 132:6-9

- *His footstool*, The ark is called so in 1 Chronicles 28:2 Lamentations 2:1
- Because God is often said to sit between the Cherubim, so the Ark beneath them is His footstool
- *Arise, O Lord, to Your resting place*, Moses said these words whenever the ark was to be removed from one place to another, Numbers 10:35
- And are also the words of Solomon's prayer at the Dedication of the Temple (2 Chronicles 6:41-42)
- After many years of wandering in the wilderness and then being moved around from place to place, the ark finally found its permanent resting place at the temple in Jerusalem



David's Promise to God 132:6-9

- And as the pilgrims traveled to Jerusalem to worship the Lord for the feasts, they would remember how the ark followed that same path so many years before them
- They remembered and understood David's great heart for God's house and used it to inspire them as they said, *Let us go into His tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool.*"
- *the ark* is sometimes called the strength of the Lord; because by it He showed His great strength in destroying the enemies of His people, the Philistines and others; Psalm 78:61
- *Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness*, When they sang of the goodness and glory of God's temple, they also remembered the position of His *priests*



David's Promise to God 132:6-9

- It was fitting for them to be known for *righteousness* in life, and this would make God's *saints shout for joy*
- May those who minister in the sanctuary be worthy servants of a righteous God, fit representatives of a righteous nation (Isaiah 26:2)
- The white priestly garments were intended to be symbolical of purity of character (Revelation 19:8)
- *Your saints*, Your beloved, or Your godly ones, all who truly worship and honor God
- May Your people worship there with great rejoicing



David's Promise to God 132:6-9

- According to St. John Chrysostom, the psalmist's mind was preoccupied, not with building the house of the Lord, and providing it with befitting precious vessels, etc., as much as it was preoccupied with the purity of the hearts of the priests and the people
- The priests are clothed with righteousness, and the people praise with the spirit of shouts and exultation, coming out of the depths of their hearts
- When God's servants are not *clothed with righteousness*, it can cause God's people to lose some of their *joy*



David's Promise to God 132:6-9

- St. Augustine says, "The required garment is deep in the heart and not on the body from outside. As we learn from the words: 'Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness'. About which the apostle Paul says: 'If indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked' (2 Corinthians 5: 3). That was how the man who was unprepared with the proper wedding garment, was exposed by the Lord of the banquet, tried, chained, and cast away. And he is one of many."

The Promises Made to David

132:10-12



- Verse 10 is also a part of Solomon's prayer of dedication for the temple
- God promised that He would not forsake the sons of David (2 Samuel 7:14-16)
- When the psalmist prayed this, he prayed for the fulfillment of a promise God had already made
- Some believe that it was Solomon who sought from God to listen to his prayer, and not to turn away his face; through the intercession of his father David, beloved by God
- To turn away the face of the suppliant means, to refuse his prayer, to dismiss him in humiliation

The Promises Made to David

132:10-12



- The psalmist asked that the favor of God would never be taken from His *Anointed*
- There is a sense in which every king of David's line was God's anointed, but this looks to the ultimate *Anointed One* – the Messiah Himself, Jesus Christ
- This is ultimately a prayer for blessing on God's Messiah, the *Anointed Son of David*
- The answer to the prayer of verse 1 is given now in verse 11 by recalling the promise to David which God has firmly and sincerely pledged Himself to fulfil

The Promises Made to David

132:10-12



- God would never *turn from* such an oath
- God will never change His mind, regret His oath; make it void, or not fulfil it; for He is unchangeable in His perfections, purposes, and promises; whatever He says and swears to He will certainly do
- David have sworn to the Lord, that he would build a temple to His glory, and the Lord swore, in return, that He would establish the sovereign power in David's family for all eternity; for God will rewards not only our actions, but even our words and our thoughts

The Promises Made to David

132:10-12



- *I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body*, He will make his son his successor on the throne; words that should be literally applied to Christ, and not to Solomon
- Though it is true that the Lord chose Solomon, above all the sons of David, to be his successor in the kingdom, and did place him upon his throne before his death
- It is clear from the testimony of the Apostle Peter, Acts 2:30, by which it appears not only that this promise and oath relate to the Messiah; but that David knew they did, and so understood them; and which have been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth

The Promises Made to David

132:10-12



- St. Peter says, Acts 2:30-31, *“Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.”*
- In this passage St. Peter explains an expression in Psalm 30, by another in Psalm 131, and this is also alluded to by the Angel in greeting the Virgin, when he said, *“And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever.”* (Luke 1:32-33)

The Promises Made to David

132:10-12



- The oath and the promise in reference to his only son Christ, of whose kingdom there will be no end, was given and made unconditionally and is absolute; but not so to others—it was on condition
- David got a special covenant that his reign shall endure in his time and that of his sons, but it was a conditional covenant; namely, if his sons will keep the covenant and the testimonies that God will teach them
- David expressed this idea much more clearly to Solomon, when he said, *“If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.”* (1 Chronicles 28:9)

The Promises Made to David

132:10-12



- And God Himself, speaking of Solomon, a short time before, says, *“Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.”* (1 Chronicles 28:7)
- The condition promise was not fulfilled because they did not *keep* God’s *covenant*
- Solomon, his immediate successor, fell into idolatry in the latter part of his life
- Rehoboam, his son, insulted the advice of the old men, founded upon the laws of God, and ten tribes revolted from him
- Several succeeding kings of Judah, of the house of David, were very wicked rulers



God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15

- In addition to His promises to David, God had made promises regarding Zion (Jerusalem)
- He had chosen Zion as the place where He would dwell
- These verses tell us that God has chosen Zion, the people of God, for His ultimate dwelling place
- There is a great difference between hearing that the ark of the covenant was moved from one place to another; and hearing that, *the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place*
- He, the Creator of heaven and earth, has chosen it



God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15

- Zion here is not just the physical city of Jerusalem on Mount Zion, but in the whole scope of Scripture it refers also to the New Jerusalem and the heavenly Zion
- The city of Jerusalem was soon to be laid in ruins and the temple itself to be burned
- So, what is Zion but a symbol of, *"the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."* (1 Timothy 3:15)
- Zion is a type of the New Covenant Church, which is called *Mount Zion* (Hebrews 12:22)



God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15

- God dwelt with His people symbolically through the ark in the temple
- He dwelt with His people physically through the incarnation of Jesus Christ
- He dwells with His people spiritually today through the Holy Spirit and the church
- He will dwell with His people ultimately in the new Jerusalem
- *This is My resting place forever*, Once the ark of the covenant came into Jerusalem, there was to be no more traveling for the tabernacle



God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15

- The tabernacle, the temple, the altar, and the ark would never rest in another place than Jerusalem
- The people had asked God to come to His resting place; God says that He will sit enthroned there *forever* and ever
- But this *being forever* shows that not Mount Zion literally, nor the temple, are meant; but the church and people of God, in whom He rests and rejoices
- They are the objects of His delight, and with whom He abides forever
- Through Christ, God's presence is now not only manifested in the ark or within any temple



God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15

- But also, the people of the Lord have become His temple
- Upon Jesus Christ's death, the curtain that sealed the Holy of Holies was torn in two
- God desired to dwell in it, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."* (John 14:23)
- The promises for Zion extended to the people of God
- God promised to have a special material blessing on Jerusalem and Israel, especially as part of the blessings for obedience connected to the Sinai Covenant (Deuteronomy 7:13, 28:8-12)



God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15

- But God has promised to provide for His people physically and spiritually, now and forever
- *I will abundantly bless her provision*, Literally, this seems to point to the blessing of abundance of food
- *I will satisfy her poor with bread*, Zion's poor shall not want, for God has obliged all the sons of Zion to be charitable to the poor, according to their ability, and the church must take care that they be not *neglected*, Acts 6:1
- Spiritually, means the provision that is made for the soul; a promise of plenty spiritual sustenance
- God "*blessed us with every spiritual blessing*" (Ephesians 1:3)



God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15

- God *will abundantly bless her provision* for the nourishment of the new man and satisfy the poor in spirit with the bread of life
- Christ's *flesh is food indeed*, and His *blood drink deed*, (John 6:55), the whole provision is spiritual
- This abundance, as applied to the Church, means an abundance of spiritual food, of the food of the word of God and of the sacraments, an abundance of which is enjoyed by the children of the Church, especially by those who are poor in spirit
- According to St. Augustine *her poor* are those who are humble in heart because there are those who are rich but humble and there are those who are poor but proud

God's Promise to Zion 132:13-15



- He says, “God’s poor one is therefore poor in spirit, not in his pursue. Sometimes a man goes forth having a full house, rich lands, many estates, much gold and silver; he knows that he must not trust in these, he humbles himself before God, he does good with them; thus his heart is raised unto God, so that he is aware that not only do riches themselves profit him nothing, but that they even obstruct his feet, but He rule them, and aid them: and he is counted among the poor who are satisfied with bread.”
- The poor are blessed because the kingdom of God is theirs

God's Promise to His Servants

132:16-18



- Once again God takes the promises David made to him back in verses 1-9, and God expands on them and makes them even better
- The priests from verse 9 are not just clothed with righteousness; now he declared a promise from God that He would also clothe them with *salvation*
- It was desired that the priests might be *clothed with righteousness*; it is here promised that God will *clothe them with salvation*
- Not only save them, but make them instrumental for the salvation of His people

God's Promise to His Servants

132:16-18



- They shall both save themselves and those that hear them, *“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”* (1 Timothy 4:16)
- God will prosper those who minister faithfully
- Some commentators interpret it as of the ministers of the Gospel clothed with the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, openly proclaiming it
- Salvation being made public and manifest by them as a garment
- The psalmist in verse 9, asks, *let Your saints shout for joy*, and God responds and confirms, *her saints shall shout aloud for joy*

God's Promise to His Servants

132:16-18



- St. Augustine says, “For what reason shall they rejoice and sing? Because they have been clothed with salvation: not in themselves. For they have become light, but in the Lord; for they were darkness before.”
- The horn metaphorically means the power and the dignity of the king
- But, in a literal sense, *the horn of David* means the kingdom of the Messiah, that was to have its rise in Zion, and to be spread from there throughout the entire world
- All commentators understand it of the Messiah, who was called Lord's Anointed, and the horn of salvation, 1 Samuel 2:10

God's Promise to His Servants

132:16-18



- Zacharias announced it when he said, Luke 1:69, *"And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David."*
- Jeremias prophesied, *"Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth."* (Jeremiah 23:5)
- Horns are interpreted kings in Daniel 7:24; and is fitly applied to Christ, raised up of the seed of David
- *There I will make the horn of David grow*, this means, I have established the eternal kingdom of the Messiah
- The lamp is a symbol for light and Christ is the Light of the world

God's Promise to His Servants

132:16-18



- St. Jerome and St. Augustine understand *prepare a lamp*, of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, who was a burning and shining light, but was not 'that light'
- St. Augustine says, "the lamp alludes to St. John Baptist; for, as the Messiah was to come without any show, spectacle, or servants, it was likely that the carnal Jews, who expected quite a different Messiah, would hardly receive him had not John preceded him, who, by his singular sanctity and self-denial, 'like a light shining in a dark place,' brought the eyes of all upon him."
- Jesus Christ Himself seems to allude to this verse when he said of St. John, "*He was the burning and shining lamp.*" (John 5:35)

God's Promise to His Servants

132:16-18



- *His enemies I will clothe with shame*, There is contrast here between the people of God and the enemies of God
- God will clothe His people with righteousness, but He will clothe His enemies *with shame*
- Any and all who oppose Jesus Christ will end in *shame*, but the Anointed One's *crown shall flourish*
- His reign will prosper and last forever
- Psalm 132 tells us there are two types of clothing people will receive on judgment day
- God will clothe His people with salvation and His enemies with shame

God's Promise to His Servants

132:16-18



- St. Augustine says, “Upon whom *His crown shall flourish*? Upon My Anointed. For when He says, ‘My anointed,’ it is the voice of the Father”
- Jesus Christ is crowned with glory and honor, as He now is at the right hand of God, He reigns, and will reign, till all His enemies become His footstool; His throne is forever and ever, and His kingdom is an everlasting one
- In some other translations it came as “*Upon Himself, My holiness will flourish*”
- Psalm 132 is a beautiful Psalm filled with God's promises

God's Promise to His Servants

132:16-18



- And it teaches us one very simple truth
- Jesus is the One through whom all the promises of God will be fulfilled
- The Psalm gives the assurance that God will do all that He has said
- St. John Chrysostom says, “the promises of God on their own do not provide us with good things unless we too do what is ours to do, nor should we lose heart and be weary in attending to them.”



Discussion

- What is the state of Israel's worship assumed as the psalmist wrote this Psalm?
- Why was the ark so significant to Israel?
- What are the two signs that the Spirit of God is within the assembly of His people?
- Does the Lord need a "Temple"? Why would the Lord be willing to have a "house" with Israel? Explain your thoughts.



Discussion

- What connections to Jesus are in this Psalm?
- How does God's promise to David resonate with the concept of God's faithfulness?
- What can we gather about the nature of God's promises from His covenant with David?
- How do you see the covenant with David fulfilled in Jesus Christ?



Discussion

- How does the role of Zion in this Psalm reflect on the importance of the Church today?
- The Psalm talks about the "horn of David" – what does that mean, and how does it connect to the New Testament?
- How might you respond to hardships in your life in light of God's covenant and promises?