

Through Baca to Jerusalem – Psalms 84.

Think about the writer of this Psalm as you read it. He is travelling from somewhere in Israel to Jerusalem to visit the Tabernacle of God. Remember, the Tabernacle was where the presence of God was. In the first few verses he expresses how he loves, and almost cannot wait, to experience God. He is passionate about getting into God's presence.

Then the Psalm tells about the trials he must go through on the way to Jerusalem and God's presence. He must go through Baca, a place of weeping. However his tears help others.

While we can view this trip to Jerusalem, Zion, as something that is current, we must look at it as our journey through this life to New Jerusalem, when we see the Lord face to face. We must keep eternity in our hearts.

Psalms 84 (AMP)

1 HOW LOVELY are Your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

This man is hungry for the one to one presence of God. While we get a glimpse of that here, however our important journey is into Eternity.

2 My soul yearns, yes, even pines and is homesick for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out and sing for joy to the living God.

The court was a fenced in yard or village. I believe it can be compared to our fellowship in our churches today as we collectively experience the presence of God. It also speaks of the wonderful fellowship we will have with our loved ones in Heaven.

3 Yes, the sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young—even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

The psalmist admires these birds that were able to build their nests in the temple courtyards, near the altars of God.

4 Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) are those who dwell in Your house and Your presence; they will be singing Your praises all the day long. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

Blessed to dwell in His house. Compare to John 15. Abide

John 15:4-8

“4 “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

6 “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

8 “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

5 Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

The highway to Zion is the path this man is on - to Jerusalem, to the Tabernacle. When are weak He is strong. When we can do nothing that is when God can act. We can only rely on His strength not ours.

As we walk through life we are always on the highway to Jerusalem – New Jerusalem – Heaven. Keep your mind on heavenly matters, while going through the tribulations in this life. We must seek His tabernacle, His presence now in this life in order to make it in good standing.

6 Passing through the *Valley of Weeping (Baca)*, they make it a place of springs; the early rain also fills [the pools] with blessings [for others].

Valley of Baca in the Bible Expand. "valley of weeping," "or balsam trees", generally some one of the valleys through which pilgrims had to pass on their way to the sanctuary of Jehovah on Zion; or it may be figuratively "a valley of weeping."

While we are heading for His tabernacle – towards New Jerusalem, we go through Baca and our tears create a blessing for those that come behind us.

This man had most likely just passed through the Valley of Baca. During his trip he was more than willing to go through the weeping experiences of life just to reach God’s presence. But also he was happy that his weeping experiences helped others who came on behind him.

When we journey through this life there will be weeping if we really follow the Lord. However as this Psalm states, our weeping fills the pools with water for those that come behind us so that they will also make it.

This Valley of Baca was a dry place, however our tears make it pools of “water” for the others that pass after us.

Psalms 126:6

“6 He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves *with him*.”

How could our walking through the Valley of Baca in our lives actually work out for the good of others?

The Blood Covenant changes all things!

Hebrews 13:20, 21

“20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Romans 8:28

“28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.”

Continuing in Psalm 84

7 They go from strength to strength [increasing in victorious power]; each of them appears before God in Zion.

Strength to strength means to me persevering in our trials as we walk through Baca to Zion, the presence of God.

Now the psalmist goes back to praying while he is walking nearer to Zion.

8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

9 Behold our shield [the king as Your agent], O God, and look upon the face of Your anointed!

10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand [anywhere else]; I would rather be a doorkeeper and stand at the threshold in the house of my God than to dwell [at ease] in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield; the Lord bestows [present] grace and favor and [future] glory (honor, splendor, and heavenly bliss)! No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

12 O Lord of hosts, blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the man who trusts in You [leaning and believing on You, committing all and confidently looking to You, and that without fear or misgiving]!

Commentaries on Psalm 84

(MacArthur Study Bible Notes (ESV)) s. 84:1–12 This psalm, like other psalms of ascent (Ps. 120–134), expresses the joy of a pilgrim traveling up to Jerusalem, then up into the temple to celebrate one of the feasts. The pilgrim focuses his attention especially on the thought of being in the very presence of the Lord God. The NT believer-priest, in an even greater way, can come into the presence of the Lord (cf. Heb. 4:16 10:19–22).

The Expectation of Worshiping God (84:1–4) The Expedition to Worship God (84:5–7) The Elation at Worshiping God (84:8–12)

Ps. 84:1 lovely is your dwelling place. The temple worship center was “lovely” because

it enabled the OT saint to come into the presence of God (cf. Ps. 27 42:1–2 61:4 63:1–2). Lord of hosts! “Hosts” represent God’s angelic armies, thus God’s omnipotence over all powers in heaven and on earth (cf. 84:3 8 12).

Ps. 84:2 longs . . . faints . . . sing for. The psalmist is consumed with his happy, but intense desire to worship God in the temple.

Ps. 84:4 Blessed. This word is used three times (vv. 4 5 12) to describe the happiness of those who, like the Sons of Korah, “lodged around the house of God” (1 Chron. 9:27).

Ps. 84:6 Valley of Baca. “Baca” can be translated as “weeping” or “balsam tree.” The valley was an arid place on the way to Jerusalem. they make it a place of springs. The pilgrims traveling to a festival of worship at Jerusalem turn an arid valley into a place of joy.

(MacArthur Study Bible Notes (ESV)) Ps. 84:7 from strength to strength. Anticipation of joyous worship of God in Jerusalem overcame the pilgrims’ natural weariness in their difficult journey. Zion. See note on Ps. 87:2.

Ps. 84:9 Behold our shield. A metaphor for the king, who also would have participated in a festival at the temple (cf. 47:9; Hos. 4:18). the face of your anointed. The king is regularly described as God’s “anointed” (Ps. 2:2 18:50 20:6 28:8 89:38 51). The psalmist thus prays that God would look upon the king with favor, blessing his reign with prosperity.

Ps. 84:10 doorkeeper. One day standing at the door of the temple, or just being near even if not inside, was better than a thousand days fellowshiping with the wicked.

Ps. 84:11 sun and shield. This pictures God’s overall provision and protection.

Some Devotions

God's Shining Face

Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. [Psalm 31:16](#)

Have you ever watched a child who loves her father but the father's face is continually directed away from that child - not "shining" upon her? Have you been in that place yourself? Did you experience your father's or mother's turning away from you in anger and *withdrawal* - when their faces did not shine but instead scowled at you or ignored you? Communication was cut off.

You were agonized by it until you learned to harden your heart against it. In a similar way a certain communication is absolutely necessary to our having the kind of confidence and peace appropriate to a child of God. Without real communication from God, our view of the world is impersonal, however glorious we may find God's creation. There is all the difference in the world between having a general view that this is our Father's world (or even that God has arranged for our eternal redemption) and having confidence, based in experience, that the Father's face is turned toward us, shining upon us, and that the Father is speaking to us individually.

PRAY: Pray [Psalm 31:16](#). First, offer the two requests. Second, thank God for answering them. Finally, thank God for being a personal, communicative God.

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Some of the plunder taken in battle they dedicated for the repair of the temple of the LORD. (1 Chronicles 26:27)

Great physical force is stored in the depths of the earth, in places such as coal mines. Coal was produced by the tremendous heat that burned the ancient forests. In the same way, spiritual force is stored in the depths of our being and is brought about by the very pain we cannot understand.

Someday we will see that "the plunder taken in battle" from our trials was simply preparing us to become like Great-heart in Pilgrim's Progress, so we too could lead our fellow pilgrims triumphantly through trials to the city of the King. But may we never forget that the source of learning to help others must be the experience of victorious suffering. Whining and complaining about our pain never does anyone any good.

Paul never carried the gloom of a cemetery around with him, but a chorus of victorious praise. The more difficult his trial, the more he trusted and rejoiced, shouting from the very altar of sacrifice. He said, "Even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you" (Phil

2:17). Lord, help me today to draw strength from everything that comes to me! from Days of Heaven upon Earth

He placed me in a little cage,
Away from gardens fair;
But I must sing the sweetest songs
Because He placed me there.
Not beat my wings against the cage
If it's my Maker's will,
But raise my voice to heaven's gate
And sing the louder still!

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The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. ([Mark 9:26](#))

Evil never surrenders its grasp without a tremendous fight. We never arrive at any spiritual inheritance through the enjoyment of a picnic but always through the fierce conflicts of the battlefield. And it is the same in the deep recesses of the soul. Every human capacity that wins its spiritual freedom does so at the cost of blood. Satan is not put to flight by our courteous request. He completely blocks our way, and our progress must be recorded in blood and tears. We need to remember this, or else we will be held responsible for the arrogance of misinterpretation. When we are born again, it is not into a soft and protected nursery but into the open countryside, where we actually draw our strength from the distress of the storm. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God" ([Acts 14:22](#)). *John Henry Jowett*

Faith of our Fathers! living still, In spite of dungeon, fire and sword: Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy Whene'er we hear that glorious word. Faith of our Fathers! Holy Faith! We will be true to Thee till death! Our fathers, chained in prisons dark, Were still in heart of conscience free; How sweet would be their children's fate, If they, like them, could die for Thee!

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