

Psalms 126:0 ¶ A Song of degrees.

Three times each year the men of Israel were to come to the temple and present themselves before the Lord.

Deuteronomy 16:16 "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty...."

The fifteen Psalms that are called the songs of *degrees* (elevation, journey to a higher place, go up) were to be sung as they ascended the temple mount.

Jewish Study Bible: "This psalm is recited before grace after meals on Sabbath and festivals."

Psa. 126:1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Zion = Jerusalem

The first thing that came to mind when I read this verse was, "It's too good to be true." That is how the people of Jerusalem felt when God rescued them from their captors.

I loved this comment from Spurgeon: "The Lord who alone turns our captivity does nothing by halves: those whom he saves from hell he brings to heaven. He turns exile into ecstasy, and banishment into bliss."

Psa. 126:2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

Psa. 126:3 The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.

The people rejoiced in their freedom with laughter and singing. The heathen nations around them knew that it was the the mighty hand of the LORD that had rescued them. More important, the people of Jerusalem knew that it was the LORD that had rescued them and gave them reason to rejoice.

Psa. 126:4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

This verse is a prayer for the LORD to restore them to a state of blessing, to a land flowing with the blessings of the LORD as the streams that flow in the south of Israel. Commentators note that the streams in the south were often dry and were dependent on the rainfall from the faraway mountains. They wanted God to rain blessings down

on them that would fill them up as the rain in the mountains did the streams in the south.

Psa. 126:5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Psa. 126:6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

How often I have heard these verses quoted! When one continues to serve the LORD even during the hard times, he/she can be assured of a time of rejoicing in reward for that service. The psalmist compares it to planting seeds with a heavy heart that will produce a great harvest in the end.

Beautiful application from Spurgeon: "When a man's heart is so stirred that he weeps over the sins of others, he is elect to usefulness. Winners of souls are first weepers for souls. As there is no birth without travail, so is there no spiritual harvest without painful tillage."