

Psa. 127:0 A Song of degrees for Solomon.

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

Deut. 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.

Psa. 127:1 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.

“build” = Webster: 1. ... to form by uniting materials into a regular structure... 2. To raise or place on a foundation... 3. To increase and strengthen; to increase the power and stability of; to settle, or establish, and preserve....

I often look up words in the original and then again in Webster’s to see if I can get some extra insight as to what the Lord is saying in a particular passage. When I first read this verse, it was obvious that a house is built by people who either love the Lord or who don’t, but the question that presented itself was, “How does the Lord build the house?” I thought the excerpts from Webster’s gave some interesting insight. I think the house being referenced is more than just the physical structure; it’s the home as the dwelling place of a family. Only in the Lord can two people be united into one. Their home is only going to be as strong as the united whole. A strong home must be built on a strong foundation. That was the whole point of the teaching of Jesus regarding building a house on sand or rock.

Matt. 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Matt. 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Matt. 7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

Matt. 7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

When a home is built on a foundation of faith and obedience to God, it is built on a strong foundation. A home that is built by people who desire to serve the Lord will be strengthened in the course of time; it will not deteriorate. It will be able to weather the storms of life with stability. If God is not at the center of a home, it will not likely be able to weather the storms of life and will end up like the foolish man’s home that was built on the sand.

The next illustration the psalmist uses concerns security and protection. The purpose of a watchman is to be alert and to warn the city of approaching danger so that they are not vulnerable to a surprise attack from the enemy. Human watchmen are not dependable, nor do they possess any power to protect. On the other hand, the Lord, YHWH, the self-existent, eternal God, is capable of not

only sounding a warning, but of empowering for victory when the enemy attacks.

Psa. 127:2 *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

Reading several translations for this verse was helpful. I especially liked the reading from the Complete Jewish Bible.

In vain do you get up early and put off going to bed, working hard to earn a living; for he provides for his beloved, even when they sleep. I think in context with the previous verse, the psalmist is saying that the reward of hard work is most fruitful when done as unto the Lord. Our faith is to be in Him for all things. We, as His children, are only subject to the actions of men and natural disasters as He deems necessary to the growing of our faith and/or demonstration of His glory.

Psa. 127:3 *Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*

Psa. 127:4 *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*

Psa. 127:5 *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

Naturally, when thinking of a home and God's blessings, thoughts would turn to children, especially in an agricultural society such as Israel's. Verse 3, read in context with the first two verses, indicate that children are a blessing/gift from God to those who have built their home founded in faith and obedience to Him. Verses 4 and 5 seem to make reference to the benefit of having loyal support and strength in numbers when negotiating with the enemy. In the larger context, these children that were given as a heritage/reward from the LORD would represent His faithfulness and power to defend His own.