

Nomads and Pilgrims

The Songs of Ascent

Introduction

From the earliest age, my parents took me to church. Every Sunday, regardless of how I was feeling, what the weather was like, or what kind of mood they were in, we went to church.

I didn't exactly enjoy going. There were parts of it that I didn't mind: seeing my friends, singing the hymns, drawing in the bulletin. But for the most part I found it boring. In my church they actually turned the lights down during the sermon, which I thought was great, because it helped me sleep.

It wasn't until much later that I began to see going to church as an opportunity to develop my relationship with God. Even today, it can be difficult to remember that the worship is for an encounter with God, and not for my own enjoyment or entertainment.

Psalm 122 tells the true story of worship. Here David's paints a picture of corporate worship that reminds us there is genuinely something to look forward to when God's people come together to worship Him, and that as we praise God together, it will have lasting effects on our community. ~ A.G.

Study Notes

Question 3

• Eugene Peterson notes, "The King James Version translates this sentence 'Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.' Earlier, Coverdale had translated the latter phrase as 'that is at unity with itself.' The city itself was a kind of architectural metaphor...."

Worship

Psalm 122

Observe & Interpret

1. Even though church membership has been declining in America, going to church is still one of the most popular weekend activities in the land. In your opinion, what are some of the reasons people decide to go to worship?
2. *Read Psalm 122.* In the first two verses, David express anticipation at just the thought of going to the Temple to worship God. Why do you think he is so excited?
3. How does the architectural description of Jerusalem in verses 2 and 3 relate to the experience of corporate worship?

Study Notes

Question 6

• According to Eugene Peterson, "*Shalom*, peace, is one of the richest words in the Bible.... It gathers all aspects of wholeness that result from God's will being completed in us. It is the work of God that when complete, releases streams of living water in us and pulsates with eternal life."

4. Verse 4 describes David's anticipation of joining up with the entire nation of Israel to worship God. What are the benefits for a community to have a common time and place of worship?
5. In Christian worship, we usually praise God for His love and grace. In vv 4-5, David sees God's "statutes" and "judgments" as cause for worship. Why do you think these characteristics of God motivate David to worship?
6. The second half of the Psalm is a call for peace in the city and among the people of Jerusalem. Why is the desire for peace a natural outcome of true worship?

Apply

7. In worship, our attitude is important. When you come to church, what are the things that distract you from entering into worship? What kinds of things can you do to get your heart ready for worship before you come ?

