**“ARISE O LORD TO YOUR RESTING PLACE”**

**PSALM 132**

**Pastor Keith E. Gephart**

INTRODUCTION

Clearly this psalm depicts the event of the ark’s transport to Jerusalem at the hands of David. Kidner remarks, “When the ark covered the short distance from Kiriath-jearim to the newly captured Jerusalem, it was the climax of a journey of centuries, begun at far-off Sinai” (p. 448). This psalm is the only one to expressly mention the “ark,” but other psalms appear to deal with this theme from different approaches: Psalm 24 notes the majesty of the “King of glory” and Psalm 68 marvels at Yahweh’s march to the city and of His choice of small and insignificant Zion (see the study of those psalms). This psalm focuses on the importance of David in this act. The concern of the psalm is for the proper place of and blessing upon both the priesthood and the kingdom. The place of this psalm following 131 is appropriate, especially as Ps. 131 reflects the statement of David’s humility which he expressed to his wife Michal in II Sam. 6:22 at the time of his return to Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant. (cf. Del. p. 278).

This psalm could very possibly be written by one of David’s sons—possibly even Solomon himself (see verses 1 and 10 with the mention of David and then the new “anointed” one); but it is also possible that the people speak on his behalf. The likelihood of Solomon’s involvement in writing, or at least his being the person spoken of, becomes even more likely when we note the direct quotation in vv. 8-9 and part of v. 10 from the conclusion of Solomon’s prayer given at the dedication of the newly constructed temple found in II Chr. 6:41-42 [**READ**]. Under Solomon the ark completed its journey to its permanent resting place which David had initiated. The tradition that this psalm was composed at the time of the temple’s dedication is likely correct.

In later liturgical usage after the exile, this psalm was regarded as having Messianic implications, and such statements as the perpetual succession of the Davidic throne (v. 12), the permanent place of Zion as Yahweh’s “habitation” (v. 14), and the continual springing forth of “the horn of David” as well as the defeat of Israel’s enemies (vv. 17-18) give merit to the claim of Messianic application of Psalm 132.

The psalm notes David’s devotion to Yahweh and his fervent desire to build a dwelling place (temple) for Yahweh (vv. 1-5), how he brought back the Ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (vv. 6-7; see II Sam. 6 & I Chr. 13-16), and God followed such efforts by establishing a covenant with him to the effect that Yahweh would guarantee that the seed of David would sit on his throne permanently, and that individual kings would be guaranteed succession rights providing that they remain faithful to Yahweh’s covenant and keep the divine testimonies (vv. 10-12; see this covenant in II Sam. 7:4-16). Then follows the review of the divine choice of Zion as the divine “resting place forever” (vv. 13-14), from which Yahweh would guarantee the land’s material prosperity, spiritual well-being, permanent kingly power, and deliverance from powerful enemies (vv. 15-18).

The psalm has two equal halves: 1-9 and 10-18. Each half begins with a petition: Remember David’s “affliction” and devotion (v. 1), and now for David’s sake do not “turn away the face of Your anointed” (the current ruler, v. 10). The four stanzas, and especially the two that begin with the petitions (1, 10), all have the same basic structure: Each petition is followed by reference to an oath—that of David to Yahweh (v. 2), and Yahweh’s to David (v. 11); Each stanza (omitting the two primary petitions) begins with a statement that is then followed by a three line quotation. A two verse summary conclusion ends the psalm (vv. 17-18). The first five verses clearly show that David’s primary motive for bringing the ark to Jerusalem was not political—“a crowning touch to his prestige and that of his new capital” (K. 449). David instead manifests zeal for the honor of Yahweh’s name and glory. He is vividly conscious of the heritage of his people as reflected in his use of the title “the Mighty One of Jacob”—an expression last used by Jacob when he predicted the destiny of the 12 tribes to descend from his sons (Gen. 49:24). David would see this issue to its culmination whatever the cost (v. 1) and with all due haste (vv. 2-5).

1. THE VOW AND AFFLICTION OF DAVID—THE CHOSEN ONE OF GOD (1-5)
2. Yahweh remembers David’s Affliction (1)
3. The psalmist knows of David’s solicitous concern for the bringing up the ark & building of the temple: indeed, David had built the temple in his heart before Solomon’s built it with his hands.
4. “Affliction” likely speaks of what is summed up by the statement in vv. 2-5—that is, all of the strenuous effort, painful labor, and even lack of sleep involved in David’s pursuit of a place for the ark, and for a permanent home in a temple dedicated to Yahweh. The author speaks of his tireless efforts to make provision for all of this; David’s himself in I Chr. 22:14 uses “In my affliction (the related noun) I have prepared for the house of the LORD.” David went to great effort in first building a tabernacle for the ark, then bringing up the ark, and finally making preparations for the temple’s permanent home by gathering all of the materials, constructing a design for it, and providing personnel and structure for the service and worship in the new temple; his efforts were “on a scale of unexampled magnificence” (P. p. 412).
5. It is also possible that David’s “affliction” in this endeavor included his “shock and distress at the death of Uzzah.” Some of David’s exuberant joy at the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem may have been due to his “relief at finding himself accepted again” (II Sam. 6:6ff; K. 449).
6. David “swears an oath” and makes a vow to Yahweh (vv. 2-5).
7. His “house” and his “sleep” are not important.
8. A “place” and “dwelling place” for **“The Mighty One of Jacob”** is what matters (Gen. 49:24).
9. THE MARCH TO JERUSALEM AND THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE (vv. 6-9)
10. The Rescue of the Ark and the March to Jerusalem (6-7)

Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem and giving it a proper dwelling place was indeed very important; at first David placed it in a tent (II Sam. 6:17), but his son Solomon finished the process begun by David (vv. 1-5) of building a permanent structure for it. Verse 10 shows that the next generation and following ruler is now in place as they echo the excitement and worship given at the time of bringing up the ark by David; it is even possible that some kind of reenactment ceremony is involved in the words of vv. 6-9. In fact the words of vv. 8-9 are included in the end of the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of his temple in I Chr. 6:41-42. Solomon used the words in his prayer, and they became part of this psalm—possibly even written by Solomon. So, the words of vv. 6-7 or words very similar to them, may well have been spoken by David and his worshippers who brought up the Ark to Jerusalem, but these words also reflect what is spoken by Solomon and the worshippers of his day when the Temple is being dedicated. In fact, there were surely many of those who brought up the Ark with David who were still living when Solomon rededicated the temple; they would remember these words and the various ceremonies.

1. “It” refers to the Ark of the Covenant mentioned in v. 8, anticipated in v. 5, and now given a dwelling place.
2. “Ephrathah” is another name for Bethlehem (cf. Mic. 5:2—Messiah’s birthplace; Gen. 35:19—Rachel’s burial place. This is David’s hometown; he and his followers had heard of the Ark but had not yet seen or found it.
3. “Field of the wood/forest” in Hebrew is “the fields of Jaar” (‘woods”), a shortened form for Kiriath-jearim, the place where the ark was taken after its capture by the Philistines, and then its return to Israel; it remained there for 20 years until David went to get it. First he made an aborted attempt when Uzzah reached out and touched the ark and was killed; then 3 months later David did it the right way and with great joy. The meaning is not “we heard that it was in one place” (that is Ephrathah), but “we actually found it in another place” (Kiriath-jearim; P. p. 413). Nor is the idea “we heard that it was in Ephrathah, and we actually found it there in Kiriath-jearim—the two places are identical. Rather, they heard of it (*when they were*) in Ephrathah, but actually found it in Kiriath-jearim.
4. “**Dwelling place**”—see also v. 5; the tent built for the ark by David; “**footstool”** since Yahweh sits above the ark as King on His throne. The Ark on earth is His “footstool,” since He reigns in Heaven. The verb “worship” has the literal meaning of “prostrate oneself before, to fall down upon one’s face in front of someone in complete submission, and in this and many other places, humble worship.
5. The Ark and priesthood are set in place in Jerusalem (8-9)
6. Yahweh arises to His “resting place.”
* The words spoken here of the settling of the ark in its proper place, first in the tent placed by David in II Sam. 6:17 and alluded to by “tabernacles” in v. 7, and then in Solomon’s temple (II Chr. 5:2-5; 6:10-11) **reflect the original words spoken once the temple furniture had been constructed at Mount Sinai by Moses and Israel prepared to set out each time on the next step of their journey**: “Rise up, O LORD! And let Your enemies be scattered….” (Num. 10:35); when the camp came to rest again the statement was, “Return, O LORD, to the myriad thousands of Israel” (10:36).
* The purpose in the wilderness wanderings was “*to seek out a resting place for them*”—Israel. Here, the **ultimate “resting place” had been found, not only for them, but even indeed for Yahweh Himself** and **His Ark of the Covenant**.
* In verse 14 Yahweh notes that “**this is My resting place forever**; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.” Thus, in vv. 7-8 the psalmist blends the words used when the ark was originally brought up to Zion by David (v. 7) with the expressions used when Solomon brought the ark to its final resting place on Moriah (P. pp. 414-415).
* David had used the expression “house of rest/resting place” *for the temple which he had desired to build for Yahweh but had been forbidden to do so* (I Chr. 28:2); now that goal had been obtained under Solomon as reflected in vv. 8 and 14.
* The ark only here and in the II Chr. 6:41-42 passage is called “the ark of Your strength—all who misused it paid the consequences: the Philistines, the men of Beth-shemesh, Uzzah. The God of Israel was indeed powerful!
1. His priests are clothed with “righteousness”; see the parallel in v. 16 & II Chr.6:41—“salvation.” Their entire ministry was intended to lead to salvation/righteousness, and their persons and lives to manifest such.
2. His “godly ones”—literally those who are objects of, and manifestations of Yahweh’s **loyal-love**—will “shout for joy”—as did David and those who brought the ark to Jerusalem, and as do these in Solomon’s day at the dedication of the temple.
* These include the priests, but also the godly members of the nation.
* In v. 16 the idea is repeated with additional emphasis—“singing for joy they sing for joy.”
1. THE CURRENT “ANOINTED” KING PLEADS ON DAVID’S BEHALF FOR CONTINUED FAVOR (10-12).
2. Do not turn my face away—answer my requests made to you, and do so for my father David’s sake (10).
3. I am Your “anointed” as David was your anointed. Help me also Lord.
4. II Chr. 6:42 once again uses the same expression “do not turn away the face of Your anointed,” and concludes with “remember *Your* lovingkindness [loyal-love] to Your servant David”—thus using the expression “Your servant David.” Even though this psalm does not specifically ask Yahweh to remember His loyal love, this psalm does open with a plea for Yahweh to “remember” all of David’s affliction, and then in v. 11 to follow Yahweh’s loyal-love is described in action without using the term: “The LORD has sworn to David a truth from which He will not turn back.”
5. Yahweh’s oath to David—II Sam. 7:8-17 (11-12).
* Not called an “oath” there, but clearly is a solemn affirmation, the same as an oath.
* This solemn affirmation is a solid “truth”—firm and faithful, guaranteed.
* The statement here surely reflects David’s response in II Sam. 7:28-29, given after Yahweh’s oath to him, wherein he uses this same noun: “Now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and your words are **truth**, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant. Now therefore, may it please You to bless the house of Your servant that it may continue forever before You. For You, O Lord GOD, have spoken; and with Your blessing may the house of Your servant be blessed forever.”
1. Yahweh will “not turn back” (11).
2. He will take “fruit” of David’s body to set upon David’s throne; Solomon fulfills that promise.
3. David’s sons (v. 12) must “keep” Yahweh’s covenant and obey the words to which He has testified—His testimonies. Although Yahweh’s covenant with David was certain of fulfillment and therefore unconditional, yet the fulfillment for each individual descendant was conditioned for receiving personal blessing and prosperity. The endlessness of the Davidic throne is still guaranteed even though some individual rulers will not sit on it. Ultimately, Messiah will be its final occupant. Since the focus here is on the Temple just constructed, the following verses depart from focus on the lineage of David to the effects upon Zion, but still returning in vv. 17-18 to the king’s descendants.
4. Yahweh himself promises to “teach” the sons.
5. YAHWEH’S CHOICE OF ZION AND GUARANTEED FUTURE BLESSINGS ON IT (13-18)
6. The chosen city (13-14)
7. He has “desired” Zion—both in v. 13 & v. 14.
8. He has “chosen” it for His “habitation” and for His “resting place” **forever**; compare the sons of David sitting on David’s throne **forever** in v. 12. Here He states “I will dwell.”
9. The ark had been at Shiloh for a long time—but that place had been abandoned. For a time Bethel was its location (Jud. 20:27), then at Mizpah (Jud. 21:5). Following its capture by the Philistines and eventual return, it was located at Kiriath-jearim for 20 years (I Sam. 7:2) and then for 3 months in the house of Obed-Edom (II Sam. 6:10-12). After being place in the tent which David prepared for it in Jerusalem (I Sam. 6:17), the ark now has finally found a permanent home in the temple.
10. The covenant extends beyond merely earthly kings to a Messianic King who will one day reign in Zion on David’s throne, and will reign forever (cf. Mic. 4:1-4; Is. 2:1-5; Rev. 20:1-5—Millennial Jerusalem; and Rev. 21—the New Jerusalem).
11. Blessed “Provisions” and People—especially the “needy” (15).
12. The verb is emphatic—“Blessing I will bless”, or “I will **surely** bless,” or “I will **abundantly** bless.”
13. “Provision” is of physical needs, as “bread” confirms; even “needy” ones are fully “satisfied.”
14. Blessing upon People (16)
15. Priests—“clothed with” **salvation**—cf. **righteousness** in v. 9.
16. Godly ones/people of **loyal-love** “sing aloud for joy”—emphatic: “Singing for joy they will sing.”
17. Blessing upon Rulers—future “anointed” ones, the sons/seed of David (17, 18b).
18. “The horn of David “springs forth/sprout.” Much **strength** as the horn of a ram. Cf. others uses of “horn” for the strength of rulers, as in Dan. 7, Rev. 17, etc.
19. The anointed ruler has “a lamp”—blessing, light, prosperity, continuance of Davidic dynasty.
20. His **crown** will “shine/flourish”; general use of this term is “**blossom**”—cf. v. 17.
21. Curse upon the wicked and enemies of the King and the City—they will “be clothed with shame” instead of “righteousness & salvation” like Israel’s priests (18).

CONCLUSION

OT Scripture speaks of Messiah as “the Branch” (Is. 4:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15—the Branch “springs forth”; Zech. 3:8; 6:12—this “Branch branches/sprouts out.” The fifteenth Jewish Berachah, the daily Jewish prayer that has 18 benedictions, speaks of Yahweh making “the branch of David Thy servant to shoot forth speedily, and let his horn rise high by virtue of Thy salvation” (Del. p. 284). Clearly, this psalmist has Messiah in view with the words spoken here. See Lk. 1:69 where Zacharias evidently alludes to the words of this psalm when speaking of Jesus as the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy; he refers to Him as “the horn of salvation” for Israel, and one who brings “salvation from our enemies” (cf. 132:18). Zecharias changed the prayer into a praiseful one, joyfully anticipating the fulfilment that is at hand in Jesus.

Surprisingly, the noun “crown” is only used for that worn by a king seven times in the OT; see Ps. 89:39 and II K. 11:12. This same noun speaks in a few places of the “crown” or miter worn by the high priest (Ex. 29:6; 39:30; Lev. 8:9), and thus shows that the king also was to be “holy” in his service for Yahweh, as also evidenced by a few references using this noun for “consecration” (see Lev. 21:12—the “consecration of the anointing oil of his God”; Num. 6:7 of the Nazirite whose “separation to God is on his head” and numerous verses as 6:4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 18, 21). The true glory of the king was not his political power, but rather his “consecration” and holiness to Yahweh.

This psalm, which began with “hardships and grim determination, ends with the glory which is their proper aim and outcome; the victory and radiance of the promised King” (K. 452).