

A Song of Praise

Songs For The Road - 8

This last song in the songs of ascent provides good insight into why Israel took the annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem so seriously. Why did they travel so far? Why did they leave their fields? Why did they close their shops? Why did they sacrifice so much? Well, it seems that Israel believed that when she came to Jerusalem and spent a week praising God--somehow, in that process, she received an even greater blessing.

As noted earlier, these songs provide a metaphor of one's own faith journey--a journey that begins in repentance, and will conclude one day in perpetual praise of God. The entire Psalter reflects this same movement toward praise. Each section within the Book of Psalms ends with a doxology where God is praised (the conclusion of Psalms 41, 72, 89, 106); the fifth and last section ending in a rapid succession of five "Hallelujah" psalms (146-150).

LOOKING BACK:

We've all heard the expression, "Save the best for last."

Nothing can be more disappointing than a grand finale that isn't. *Have you ever experienced a disappointing "grand" finale? Explain.*

LOOKING DEEP:

Read Psalm 134

1. Psalm 134 is an antiphonal song--the people would first sing (vss 1-2) to the priests who ministered night and day in the temple. The priests would then sing in response to the people (vs 3). *What was each group attempting to communicate to the other? Would such a practice have any value today? Explain.*
2. *Why does this psalm provide such an appropriate conclusion to the song of ascents?*
3. *Wherever God is, there is praise. Praise is God's "element" (notice Psalm 22:3). What implications do you draw from this awareness?*
4. *"The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." What songs, activities, etc. helps you in preparing your heart and mind for worship?*
5. *The psalmist says that perpetual praise in the temple results in a blessing from the Lord (vs 3). In what ways have you been blessed as a result of such worship?*

*PRAYER REQUESTS
AND REFLECTIONS*