

Psalm 128: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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Date: 23 December 2020

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[0 : 0 0] Psalm 128, A Song of Ascents Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands.

You shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house. Your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.

The Lord bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel.

Psalm 128 takes up many of the themes of Psalm 127. Like Psalm 127, it is a song of ascents, sung by pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem for the pilgrim feasts of unleavened bread, Pentecost or tabernacles.

It is another wisdom psalm. Its first four verses are a beatitude statement, and the concluding too like a priestly blessing. Its focus upon the man as husband and father should be considered in relation to the fact that attendance at the pilgrim feasts was a duty for males in a way that it was not for women.

[1 : 1 1] From the fear of the Lord and the observance of his ways flows the good life, the enjoyment of the fruit of your labours and general well-being. The blessing of the Lord is expressed in the imagery of the vine and olive shoots, suggesting growth, strength, fruitfulness, and enjoyment of harvest.

Vines and olive trees were sources of bounty and blessing, associated with the rest, enjoyed through wine and anointing. These are more eschatological fruits, fruits associated with Sabbath.

The house and its table are here described like the intimate setting for a vine and olive grove, being a place for growth and the spreading out of life. It should be borne in mind that the household seen here is rather different from the typical modern household.

It is a site of production, life, and governance, which lies at the heart of its society and spreads outwards in the realm of its dominion through the industry, wisdom, and fruitfulness of its members.

Psalm 128 concludes with words of blessing, which, as in Psalm 127, trace the blessings described in its earlier verses back to their true source.

[2 : 1 9] It also connects the blessing of the individual Israelite with the prosperity of Jerusalem, within which it participates, to which it contributes, and from which it grows. A question to consider.

What are some ways in which we can practice recognising the form of our blessings and, like Psalms 127 and 128, show wisdom in tracing them back to their true source?