

Psalm 23 - Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever

For God's people of old spending time in the temple was a highly valued activity. King David expresses it well in Psalm 122:1 when he says, *"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'"* The tribe of Levi was not given any land like the other tribes of Jacob. Their blessing was to serve full-time in the temple. In Luke 2 at presentation of Jesus it is said of the prophetess Anna that "she never left the temple" (v. 37)

Worship here on earth is a very special gift from God. It is said that when we are in worship we are as close to heaven as we can get here on earth. That is so because Christ is present with His gifts of Word and His body and blood. This is one of the most special blessings that we have in this life. BUT, this phrase of the psalm speaks of living with God here on earth but also in heaven forever. That means we will never leave His presence, not even for a moment.

As believers we can be confident that we will reach our heavenly and everlasting home. All of the scenes in this psalm were common in royal courts of the ancient Near East. But, in this psalm the palace is heaven, and the feasting and celebrating represent the joys of eternal life. In heaven we will feast in safety forever because we will be secure from Satan and all our enemies. No one will be able to deprive us of the joys of eternal life, which can never be interrupted or lost.

Our response can be like that of psalmist when he states: ⁹ *Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,* ¹⁰ *because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.* ¹¹ *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand forevermore."* (Psalm 16:9-11)

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank You for such a great assurance as you give us in this psalm. Help us to more and more appreciate and value our time in your presence as we worship regularly. Help us to hang onto the knowledge that as we pass through difficult times you are there with us knowing that we have an eternity with you waiting for us.