

Are You in the Valley This Christmas?
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Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. Psalm 84:5-6

Christmas can be a difficult time of the year. Maybe the year has not turned out the way you imagined. You are feeling like life has sucked you in. There have been too many friends lost, too many funerals to attend. It is a year you have been washed up with disappointments, job uncertainty, or loss. It has blown you over with damaged relationships. This is the valley of Baka, the valley of sorrows.

In this psalm the focus is on Yahweh's presence in the temple in Jerusalem. The psalmist stresses the joyful experience of the worshipers being in the House of God. He describes how Yahweh cares for His people by providing a place at the temple. Those who took advantage of Yahweh's offer would be blessed in their worship. During this pilgrimage to Zion, with each passing day the pilgrims should have grown wearier until finally their strength was depleted. But that is not the case says the psalmist - just the opposite was the case. The closer the pilgrims got to the city of Jerusalem, the stronger they became. Their love for worship was so great that the mere anticipation of it had an energizing effect upon them.

This Christmas may we find strength as we anticipate the coming of Jesus, first as a babe in a manger, but also as He returns victorious as King on the last day.