

Psalm 87

Read Psalm 87

Verse 1: Most translations mention the city that our LORD founded on the holy mountain. However, neither a city or mountain is truly the object of this Psalm. All of GOD's creation is to and for and proceeds from His glory. Not to minimize the city He has founded nor the holy mountain, but that which is made known in this Psalm are the attributes of the LORD GOD. So, that which is paramount in this Psalm is His grace, His sovereign choosing, His mercy, and His providence in His creation. The earth and all of the planets, the air we breathe, the sunshine, the soil, the animals, our bodies He has given us – in short, everything seen and unseen is for the purpose of His glory. He has created everything and sustains His creation by the power of His Word and this is His provision to sustain man so that one marvelous attribute can be displayed, His glorious grace. Everything in His creation has the specific order and purpose of showing forth His glory. GOD set apart a specific place in His creation for the purpose of erecting His city.

[Psalm 132:13-15 NASB] 13 For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. 14 "This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it. 15 "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her needy with bread. Here is the difference. He created all the mountains, all the cities, all the earth and all that is in the earth, but this place He desired, He chose to be His. This is His peculiar sanctuary. This is where the LORD GOD established His worship. This is the city He has founded. (Isaiah 14:32)

Verse 2: Just as declared in verse 2 of this Psalm, we were plainly presented with the LORD's holiness and sovereignty in His choosing or ordaining – in setting forth His purpose in Psalm 78, particularly the following verses: **[Psalm 78:60, 67-68 NASB] 60 So that He abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh, The tent which He had pitched among men, ... 67 He also rejected the tent of Joseph, And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, 68 But chose the**

tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved. The place in and of itself is not special. It is by GOD's choosing that makes Zion peculiar and distinguishes it apart from other places – because He set his love upon it. The cause of this place being preferred above others is the choice of GOD – that it pleased Him and He loves the gates. All of the LORD GOD's provision, whether it puts us in great difficulty or great joy, is not simply for us. His provision is not that we have a comfortable life, nor is it simply for our enjoyment. (This is one of the falsehoods attached to the Gospel that has come from progressively moving away from sound doctrine, particularly the doctrine of the Glorious and Sovereign GOD.) His provision is to sustain men that His Name be magnified. Man is to reflect His glory. That is why it is such a terrible sin for man to not bow the knee to the LORD GOD. Man's dilemma is not that man is so bad, but that GOD is so good. (Draw a contrast between the moral man and one we would consider evil - Romans 14:23 ...whatever is not from faith is sin.)

Verse 3: The glory of Zion or Jerusalem has only one girding and cause for the glory that is asserted in verse 3, and that is because the LORD GOD declared it His; the city of GOD. Remember that Book 3 of the Psalms is mostly laments, which the last few Psalms have been mostly praises. In the closing Psalms of Book 3, Psalm 88 and 89; there is agony once again expressed. There is a lament of the heaviest sort expressed in Psalm 89. Remember one of the lessons the Psalms teach us, particularly in Book 3, is dealing honestly with the LORD GOD. We see the broken saint express his brokenness and his plea before the Throne of Grace. The pattern seen in these Psalms in which the saint's heart is heavy is a beginning with complaint and prayer, then ending with joy and praise. We will see the opposite in Psalm 89 – a beginning with joy and praise ending with complaint of the heaviest kind. Psalm 89 begins with a recounting of GOD's past favor and then lament is expressed. The saint is overcome by what he sees; that it seems that the LORD has spurned His covenant and cast off His people. It seems to the saint that the LORD GOD does not remember His people and that they are given to ruin. If we see verse 3 of this Psalm in light of the troubled hearts of GOD's people, we see this as a great comfort. It is often that we need to be reminded, especially when we are troubled that we need to remember that GOD is faithful and good. As we will see, the issue in Psalm 89 is not a

lack of GOD's mercy and faithfulness, but a weary and heavy saint given to see only the present circumstances. GOD mercifully reminds His people throughout His Word of His provision for His people and it is never lacking. The design of this verse and verses like this one is to strengthen and encourage – to give GOD's people hope; not in changing circumstances, but in Him. Whatever our LORD designs for His people is the very best - the very best for His glory and our good. It is passages such as this one that provides encouragement and hope so that despair will not overcome the elect of GOD against seemingly insurmountable circumstances.

Verse 4: As done in previous Psalms, so this Psalm uses “Rahab” to speak of Egypt. Other nations are called out – Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia – to speak of those whom the Lord Jesus Christ refer to as “other sheep”. We are given one of the glorious aspects of the Gospel – those who were at one time enemies and complete strangers to the mercy of GOD will be counted among those who know Him. [Romans 5:8 NASB] **8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** This mercy of GOD runs throughout all of the Scriptures, not just the New Testament. Listen to the prophet Isaiah - [Isaiah 19:22-25 NASB] **22 The LORD will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the LORD, and He will respond to them and will heal them. 23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. 24 In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, 25 whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."** The fulfillment of that which was spoken by Isaiah is given in the Gospel of John - [John 10:16 NASB] **16 "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.** This is a glorious distinction of the Church, that those who held her in contempt and are from every part of the earth will by the Person and Work of Christ, by His mercy and His glorious grace, be citizens of His Kingdom.

Verse 5: Here we see those “other sheep” spoken of in verse 4 - though once strangers by birth are counted among GOD’s people as though they were descended from Abraham. This verse speaks of all who belong to the LORD GOD – all those who believe. [Isaiah 28:16 NASB] **16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.** There is no higher honor for people than this – that it is said of them to be born in her (Zion). GOD’s great mercy is shown by the word “born” being used to express the fact that the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and the like (Gentiles) shall be the flock of GOD’s people. Although Zion is not the place of the believer’s natural birth, we are adopted and grafted into His Kingdom and made His people – a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for GOD’s own possession, so that we may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We are given here the miracle of the Person and Work of Christ applied to His people - to have once not been a people, but now made the people of GOD; being a people with the absence of His mercy, and now having received mercy. (see 1 Peter 2:4-12) Being born in Zion is what Christ Jesus explained to Nicodemus when he came to Jesus by night – that man must be born again to enter the Kingdom of GOD. (see John chapter 3).

The latter part of this verse gives us the stability and enduring character of Zion. GOD has made from one man every nation and has determined our appointed times and the boundaries of our habitation. He determines and establishes the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms, and He has established an Eternal Kingdom – [Daniel 7:13-14 NASB] **13 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.**

Verse 6: GOD distinguishes His people as belonging to Zion in that we are counted when He registers the people. The citizens of Zion belong to the LORD GOD by His effectual calling.

There is given here a great hope of one day soon being able to behold the Lamb of GOD for all eternity and to have said of us by the LORD "this one was born there". There is much said in the Scriptures of our LORD knowing us and having recorder our names in the book of life. In the Gospel of John chapter 10, we are told that Jesus knows His sheep and He calls us by name. May your joy in the LORD grow as we hear these promises from His eternal Word:

[Psalm 69:28 NASB] 28 May they be blotted out of the book of life And may they not be recorded with the righteous.

In the letter to the Church at Sardis - **[Revelation 3:5 NASB] 5 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.**

[Revelation 20:11-15 NASB] 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

[Luke 10:20 NASB] 20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

Verse 7: Here we are given the delight and joy that belongs to the believer. **[John 7:38 NASB] 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" We see that where GOD is among His people, His Church, there must be joy. Our joy is not found in Zion as a place, but it is to be found in the LORD. The believer's**

comfort, strength, joy, and life are found only in Him. From that will flow the rejoicing of His people.

Closing: The LORD GOD's establishing Zion was not to glorify a people, but the birthplace of His worship – the place from which the Gospel of Jesus Christ would flow into all the world. It was established to, from, and for His glory. The LORD has by His mercy called each soul here today, and this is but a glimpse of what eternity will be. The LORD's Day prepares us for the worshipping of our LORD in eternity. I ask if you have this delight this day and do you carry within your soul the hope of being in His presence and worshipping Him forever? I want each of you to know that I am not saying anything this morning that the Holy Spirit has not first dealt with me. Praise GOD if you have this delight and may He grow each of us in that. If not, I call on you to repent and to run to Him for mercy.

Amen