

Privileges of Living in Zion

A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah

What is the meaning behind Psalm 87?

This Song of Zion speaks prophetically of the time when Zion really will be the center of the universal kingdom of the Messiah.

- Zion is God's elect city (vss. 1-3)
- A place where even the Gentiles are gathered (vss. 4-6)
- The source of new life in God's Kingdom (vs7)

Psalm 87 is among the psalms often called "Psalms of Zion:

Psalms that describe the importance and glory of Jerusalem, the city of God.

And while the psalms of Zion encourage us to look back and remember the historic city of Jerusalem - the city where God dwelt among His people.

There is often more to these psalms than a song of praise for a formerly significant city.

Our first inclination may be to look back, but really the goal of the psalm is to encourage us to look forward. The psalmist is not only reminding us of a city that was, but of a city that is to come.

It's a reminder that God established Jerusalem and there is a sense in which His plan for the city is not yet complete. The psalmist is encouraging us to look forward to a future city where God will once again dwell with His people.

Back Story: **Jerusalem**

David captured Jerusalem and made it the capital of Israel.

Spiritually, it became the most important city on earth as the center of God's redemptive action for the human race. It was in Jerusalem that Christ was crucified and rose from the dead, and where the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the assembled followers of Jesus.

The Bible calls it the city of God. (Ps. 46:4; Heb.12:22; Rev. 3:12).

The City of God (87:1-3)

Vs. 1) AMP ON THE HOLY hills stands the city [of Jerusalem and the temple] God founded.

As the psalm begins we are reminded of the historic city of Jerusalem. A city founded by God as the place where He would dwell among His people. This city was established by God's plan and served as the center of life and faith for His people.

The city was located on the "holy mount". But God didn't choose this place because it was holy; it was holy because God chose it.

History of The City of Jerusalem

The first reference to the city of Jerusalem is probably Genesis 14:18, where Melchizedek is listed as the king of Salem (i.e., Jerusalem). When the Israelites were ready to cross over the Jordan to enter the promised land, the city then was called "the Jebusite city" (Joshua 15:8) or "Jebus" (1 Chron 11:4). Jerusalem served as the political capital of Israel during the united kingdom and later of the southern kingdom of Judah. Solomon, David's successor, built the temple to the Lord God in Jerusalem, so that the city also became the religious center for the worship of the covenant Lord.

(Vs. 2) AMP "The Lord loves the gates of Zion [through which the crowds of pilgrims enter from all nations] more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Israel)".

A city loved by God

It's clear in this psalm and throughout the Scriptures that God has a special love for Jerusalem. This city has been set apart as a special place with a special purpose. Zion is not just another city among many. It is the city that God established for Himself and for His people. He chose it and set His love on it. (Ps. 132:13-14; Deut. 7:6-8)

(Vs. 3) ***Glorious*** things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah (pause, and calmly realize what that means)!

The Meaning of Jerusalem For The Israelites

The city of Jerusalem had special meaning for God's people in the O.T. When God reviewed His law with the Israelites on the border of Canaan, He prophesied through Moses that at some point in the future He would choose a place in which to "put His name" (Deut. 12:5).

This place was to be the city of Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:13), where the temple of the living God was erected; thus it received the names of "the holy city," "the city of God," and "the city of the Lord."

In essence, therefore, Jerusalem was all that God wanted for his people. Whenever God's people were in Jerusalem They were to remember the ruling power of God, His holiness, His faithfulness, to His people, and His eternal commitment **to be their God!**

A city with a *glorious reputation*

This city is a special place, and it's not a secret.

Throughout the scriptures we read about the glory of Jerusalem.

(Ps. 46:4-5; Ps 48:1-3; 12-14)

A city with a *glorious future*

As the psalm continues it points us toward God's future plans for Jerusalem.

The scriptures teach that one-day Jesus will reign as the great king of all the earth from His throne in Jerusalem (Millennium) as well as His eternal reign in the New Jerusalem.

Longing for that city

Throughout the New Testament we are told that the people of God are and should be looking toward the city of God that is to come. **As those who are in Christ we are already in some sense citizens of this city** and we look forward to the time when we enter that city and live together in the presence of God.

(Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:10;13:14; 12:22)

The Meaning of Jerusalem For The Christian Church

The city of Jerusalem was also important for the Christian church.

- ❖ Jerusalem was the birthplace of Christianity.
- ❖ It was there that Jesus Christ was crucified and rose from the dead
- ❖ It was likewise in Jerusalem that the exalted Christ poured out the Holy Spirit on His disciples at Pentecost (Acts)
- ❖ From that city the gospel message of Jesus Christ spread “unto the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8)
- ❖ The church in Jerusalem was the mother church of all churches and the home church of the apostles (Acts 1:12-26)

The people of the city of God (87:4-6)

- As we look back at the city of Jerusalem in the Old Testament the citizens of that city were people of the nation of Israel; God’s chosen people living in His holy city.
- But in (vss. 4-6) of the psalm we see that the psalmist is pointing toward a *new era*.
- A time when all people from all nations will be identified as being “born in Zion.

What the psalmist is foretelling and what the New Testament makes clear is that God’s plan of salvation exceeds beyond the nation of Israel.

- God’s plan is to save people from every tribe, tongue and nation.
- People from all nations will be identified as those who have Zion as their spiritual birthplace (Isa. 2:2-3; Zech. 2:10-11).

Vs. 4 (ESV) Among those who know me I mention Rahab and Babylon; Behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Cush - “This one was born there”, they say.

Vs.4 (TPT) For the Lord says, “Here are the nations who will acknowledge me as God: Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and the Mediterranean People, even distant Ethiopia. They will all boast, “I was born in Zion!”

Vs.5 And of Zion it shall be said, “This one and that one were born in her”; for the Most High himself will establish her.

The far off have been brought near in Christ

[Remember] that you were at that time separated (living apart) from Christ [excluded from all part in Him], utterly estranged and outlawed from the rights of Israel as a nation, and strangers with no share in the sacred compacts of the [Messianic] promise [with no knowledge of or right in God's agreements, His covenants]. And you had no hope (no promise); you were in the world without God. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were [so] far away, through (by, in) the blood of Christ have been brought near. For He is [Himself] our peace (our bond of unity and harmony). He has made us both [Jew and Gentile] one [body], and has broken down (destroyed, abolished) the hostile dividing wall between us, Ephesians AMPC 2:12-14

The Book of Registry

Vs.6 (ESV) The LORD records as he registers the peoples, “This one was born there”

Throughout the scriptures there are references to God’s list of those who will be saved. Sometimes called the Book of Life, here the picture is of a census. The Lord records those who He registers as being born in Zion.

Revelation 3:5 NLT All who are victorious shall be clothed in white. I WILL NEVER ERASE their names from the “Book of Life”, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine.

Rev.3:5 AMP Thus shall he who conquers (is victorious) be clad in white garments, and I will not erase or blot out his name from the Book of Life: I will acknowledge him [as mine] and I will confess his name openly before My Father and before His angels.

Rev. 3:5 MSG Conquerors will march in the victory parade, their names indelible in the “Book of Life”. I’ll lead them up and present them by name to my Father and his angels.

The Joy of The City of God

Vs. 7 Singers and dancers alike say, “All (my springs) are in you.”

= (My springs) Physical thirst stands for spiritual (42:1-2), which can only be satisfied in Jerusalem, God’s chosen place.

= As the psalm concludes it ends with singing and dancing. As the people of God think about God's city and their citizenship in the city they are filled with joy and sanctification.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.

Revelation 21:1-3

= The imagery of spring is a picture of life and refreshment.

After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!" They sang, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength belong to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Revelation 7:9-10, 12 NLT

=The hope of life in this city (in the presence of God) gives life and peace and joy.

Reference and resources:

Warren Wiersbe, Psalms 1-89

Southernhillslife.org

The Reformation Study Bible

TPT Bible

The Full Life Study Bible

NIV Zondervan Study Bible