

Established by God: Psalm 87

PSALMS OF THE SONS OF KORAH

ESTABLISHED BY GOD
PSALM 87

Be Still

And Know That I Am God

I will be exalted among the nations
I will be exalted in the earth!

Psalm 46:10

Knowing-Jesus.com

T. M. and Susie Moore

A Scriptorium Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Psalms of the Sons of Korah: Established by God

Psalm 87

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Introduction to Psalm 87

Like several other of the psalms composed by the sons of Korah (45, 46, 48, 84), this psalm has as its setting Zion, the City of God.

God calls His people to assemble in His City, and they come from far and wide, and not just from Israel. He registers them as they are conveyed into His Kingdom, and they find all their joy in focusing on Him.

This is a short psalm, but it's packed with important insights into what it means to be a citizen and ambassador in the Kingdom of our Lord.

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May the Lord bless your work in this study, that you may grow to know Him better, love Him more, and serve Him more joyfully.

T. M. and Susie Moore

1 Unchanging and Holy

Opening Prayer: Psalm 87.1, 2

His foundation is in the holy mountains.
The LORD loves the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Sing Psalm 87.1, 2

(St. Anne: *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Upon the holy mountains rest the footings of the Lord,
Who loves of Israel's flock the best the keepers of His Word.

Read Psalm 87, meditate on verse 1.

Preparation

1. How was this psalm to be used?
2. What is in the holy mountains?

Meditation

It's amazing how much you can say in just a few words.

Verse 1 is the psalmists' way of saying that God is unchangeable and holy. The word, *foundation*, comes from a verb that means to be set, firmly fixed, and established. The gods of the ancient world were fickle and unpredictable. The best a pagan worshiper could do was try to placate his changeable gods with offerings, rituals, and the slaying of an enemy or two. But there were no guarantees. The pagan gods were like the pagans who worshiped them – flighty, foolish, flimsy, and futile.

The same is true for people today who, having turned away from the knowledge of the true God, make all manner of “gods” to worship – wealth, fun, leisure, sex, highs of various kinds, power (Rom. 1.18-32). None of these can satisfy, and all of them are moving targets for today's unbelieving fun-seekers.

But God is unchanging. Unshakeable. Immovable. Grounded in holiness and established forever. Because He is holy, He is also good, true, faithful, compassionate, loving, gracious, and attentive. And because He is unchanging, He is powerful and mighty to save. Our God, the sons of Korah declare, is forever fixed and true and strong and reliable and sure.

That's worth singing about.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Because His foundation is sure, and firm; ours is also assured and solid.

“The eternal God *is your* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms...” (Deut. 33.27).

“Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13.8).

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Is. 40.8).

“...My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished” (Is. 51.6).

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Lk. 21. 33).

That is truth worth singing about!

And John Rippon, in 1787, gave us an additional way to sing:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!

He is Unchanging and Holy.

Reflection

1. Why should we be both comforted and encouraged to know that God is unchanging and sure?
2. How does knowing this enable us to give thanks in everything (1 Thess. 5.18; Rom. 8.28)?
3. How can singing about our unchanging God help us to maintain our joy throughout the day?

Christ himself is the Foundation of the church, which God has laid. Holiness is the strength and firmness of the church. Let us not be ashamed of the church of Christ in its meanest condition, nor of those that belong to it, since such glorious things are spoken of it. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Jesus Christ. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 87.1-3

Closing Prayer: Psalm 87.6, 7

Pray that God will advance His work of gathering His chosen people. Pray for a great awakening to flow from the reviving of God's people worldwide.

Sing Psalm 87.6, 7

(St. Anne: *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

The Lord will count and tally all in Jesus born again.
Then let them sing, who on Him call, "We joy in God, Amen!"

2 Glorious Things?

Opening Prayer: Psalm 87.1-3

His foundation *is* in the holy mountains.
The LORD loves the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
Glorious things are spoken of you,
O city of God!
Selah

Sing Psalm 87.1-4

(St. Anne: [*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*](#))

Upon the holy mountains rest the footings of the Lord,
Who loves of Israel's flock the best the keepers of His Word.

For glorious things are spoken of the City of our God;
the nations know His matchless love wher'er His feet have trod.

Read Psalm 87.1-3

Preparation

1. What is God's attitude toward His people, His city?
2. What kinds of things are spoken about that city?

Meditation

The eternal, unchanging, holy God loves His city, His people. The sons of Korah, gatekeepers in the City of Zion – the temple and its precincts – rejoiced in that love. So absorbed in God's love were they that they felt as if God loved them best of all (v. 2).

The effect of God's love for His people is that "glorious things" are spoken of them (v. 3). The first Christians, as they became the Body of Jesus Christ, had "favor with all the people" of Jerusalem (Acts 2.47). God had promised through Moses that, when His people reciprocated His love by obeying His Law, the nations would marvel at their incomparable wisdom (Deut. 4.5-8).

The love of God received, embraced, internalized, delighted in, and issuing in transformation, makes of His people a city to be admired – the beauty and joy of the whole earth (Ps. 48.1-3)!

But when that's not happening, as it seems not to be happening in our day, it does not mean that God has stopped loving His people. Rather, it means His people are taking His love for granted, rather than embracing it and walking in grateful obedience.

If we're tired of the world looking askance at us, murmuring against us, ignoring us, mocking us, and threatening our freedoms, call on the Lord to renew and revive us in His love. Delight in that love, like the sons of Korah, and let God use you to spread His love to others.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The sons of Korah knew that they were loved by God. And they rejoiced in that love. They knew that God was looking favorably upon them, because they knew that they were being obedient to His Laws.

The gatekeepers knew that the gates they kept were loved! By God.

Do we know that today? Truly know that we are loved? And are we as confident that we are pleasing to the LORD? Are we keeping His Laws, and living by faith? (Gal. 3.11-14)

One way to gauge our standing with God, and the community at large, is by checking the aroma we exude. Do we leave behind us the aroma of lavender, bacon, and baking bread? Or is it more akin to garbage? “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me...” (Ps. 23.6) Is that the glorious smell that we leave behind?

Paul explains it this way: “Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life” (2 Cor. 2.14-16).

Are we actively participating in the Church becoming the joy of the whole earth? (Ps. 48.2)

Since we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and have the aroma of the Spirit, we must behave as His representatives, so that only Glorious Things are spoken of Christ and His Church.

If fresh fruit has a lovely aroma, then even more so does the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5.22, 23). And through this, God will use us to “spread His love to others”.

“And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Eph. 5.2).

Reflection

1. Why do you think it is that “glorious things” are not much spoken of the Church today?
2. What does it mean for you to be the aroma of Christ?
3. If we know and are certain that God loves and treasures us, we should freely love others in His Name. Explain.

The glorious things spoken of Zion by the Spirit, were all typical of Christ, and his work and offices; of the gospel church, its privileges and members; of heaven, its glory and perfect happiness. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 87.3

Closing Prayer: Psalm 87.6, 7

Pray for the Church’s work of evangelism. Pray that your church and churches everywhere would be faithful in reaching out to their lost neighbors with the Good News of Jesus and His love.

Sing Psalm 87.6, 7

(St. Anne: *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

The Lord will count and tally all in Jesus born again.

Then let them sing, who on Him call, “We joy in God, Amen!”

3 Nations and Peoples

Opening Prayer: Psalm 87.6, 7

The LORD will record,
When He registers the peoples:
“This one was born there.”

Selah

Both the singers and the players on instruments say,
“All my springs are in you.”

Sing Psalm 87.6, 7

(St. Anne: [Our God, Our Help in Ages Past](#))

The Lord will count and tally all in Jesus born again.
Then let them sing, who on Him call, “We joy in God, Amen!”

Read Psalm 87.4

Preparation

1. Which nations are mentioned here?
2. What historically had been their relationship to Israel?

Meditation

The phrase, “I will make mention”, is neither strong enough nor sufficiently pointed to capture the meaning of the Hebrew word, *ezchir*, עֲזָכִיר. This word, from the root which means “to remember” or better, “to attend”, is frequently used of God with respect to His covenant (cf. Ex. 2.24). God “remembers” His covenant, that is, He “attends continuously to it” so that it will not fail to accomplish all that He has promised.

Here God is promising to “attend to” nations that historically were the enemies of Israel. They, too, would be incorporated by His grace into the promise and privileges of those God loves. The “there” mentioned at the end of this verse seems to refer to Zion, the City of God (vv. 2, 3). Though peoples from these nations are foreign-born, yet by grace they shall be born again in the city whose gates the Lord loves most of all.

Here the sons of Korah tap into Psalm 72, which David wrote to bless his son Solomon, but which looks beyond Solomon to David’s greater Son and His eternal Kingdom. In the last days – the time in which we live (Acts 2.14-17), the Spirit-filled people of God will live and declare the Good News of Jesus throughout the world; and nations and peoples will stream up to the mountain of the Lord’s house to learn about Him (Mic. 4.1-8).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“I will make mention...I will attend to...I will remember” (Ps. 87.4).

Rahab (Egypt) and Babylon. Most of what is written in the Scriptures about these two places has a negative connotation. But the point here is that people who please the LORD, who know Him, can be found anywhere. Or, sadly, they are missing from the places you would most expect to find them. Happily, God can sort through all the highways and byways of life – continents, countries, towns, villages, jungles, deserts, and big and small cities – to find His special people. Those who trust, love, and obey Him.

God remembers and attends to all His people regardless of nation or background.

We are all the same in His loving eyes.

“I will call them *My people*, who were not *My people*, and her beloved, who was not beloved” (Rom. 9.25).

“I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be *My people*” (2Cor. 6.16).

“But you...who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy” (I Pet. 2.9, 10).

God makes mention of Rahab and Babylon and us, because of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

“You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals;
for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God *by* Your blood
out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation...” (Rev. 5.9).

Remembered. Attended to. Mentioned. Loved.

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!” (1 Jn. 3.1)

Those who know and love Him – we, grateful inhabitants of Egypt and Babylon.

Reflection

1. Read Romans 5.8-10. How does this relate to our passage for today?
2. What has Jesus done to turn us from enemies of God to children of God and citizens of His city?
3. How does it encourage you in your walk with and work for the Lord to know that He always remembers and attends to His covenant?

... *the verse anticipates a time when foreigners would know and worship the living God. Among those who came to Zion to worship the Lord were people from Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia.* Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV *Study Bible Note on Psalm 87.4*

Closing Prayer: Psalm 87.3, 4

Pray for the nations and peoples of the world, that God would prepare their hearts and minds to hear and receive the Good News of Jesus.

Sing Psalm 87.3, 4

(St. Anne: [*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*](#))

For glorious things are spoken of the City of our God;
The nations know His matchless love wher'er His feet have trod.

4 Born to Permanence

Opening Prayer: Psalm 87.5

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

Sing Psalm 87.4, 5

(St. Anne: [Our God, Our Help in Ages Past](#))

From south and north, from east and west they come, called by His grace;
Thus Zion stands, full strong and blessed, before the Savior’s face.

Read Psalm 87.1-5

Preparation

1. How do the psalmists refer to God in verse 5?
2. What does God do for Zion?

Meditation

The psalmists refer to God as “the Most High”, and not without reason. Since God dwells in Zion, Zion itself is lifted up, chief among all other cities of the earth (Mic. 4.1-8), a city set on a hill whose light reaches to all the dark places of the world (Matt. 5.13-16; 1 Jn. 2.8).

All those who have come to that high and holy city have been drawn by the Most High Himself (Jn. 12.32) and set and established there by the Most High Himself (Col. 1.13, 14). They are born to permanence. They have not come to a physical mountain, one that can crumble and fall and be no more. They have come to the holy mountain of God, from all parts of the earth, and are now citizens and ambassadors in that great and glorious city (Heb. 12.18-24; 2 Cor. 5.20; Jn. 20.21).

They who are citizens of Zion are recognizable as such: “This *one* and that *one* were born in her...” We who have come, by grace through faith (Eph. 2.8, 9), to that high and holy city declare our citizenship by doing those works of obedient love which are the hallmark of all who dwell there (Eph. 2.10; Tit. 2.14). And when we have done them, we give glory and honor to Him Who has established us as His people and indwells us by His Spirit (Phil. 2.13).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Established as His people, in His city, we bear the characteristics of having been born there.

Physically and culturally, it is more than obvious that we hail from The City of God.

The way we look, what we wear, the foods we eat, the way we speak, all declare our place of rebirth.

It is who we are.

It is our “heavenly country” lived in here and now, and longed for there and then. It is the place where God is not ashamed to be called our God because He has prepared this city for us (Heb. 12.16; Jn. 14.1-4).

Here is what we think about: whatever things are true, noble, just, true, lovely, and of good report. We also only dwell on things that are virtuous and praiseworthy (Phil. 4.8).

This is what we wear: the armor of God. It consists of having our waist girded with truth; putting on the breastplate of righteousness; putting on shoes that carry us into the work of sharing the gospel of peace; donning the helmet of salvation; carrying the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of

God). After dressing, we begin praying. Always (Eph. 6.13-18).

Having filled our mind with thoughts of Him, and dressed to glorify Him and protect ourselves, we are now set to behave as His ambassadors. We are full of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5.22, 23).

As Eliza Doolittle sang in *My Fair Lady*, “Wouldn’t it be lovely?”

Reflection

1. What does it mean for you to be a citizen in the city of the Most High God?
2. How should your being a citizen and ambassador of that city affect the people in your Personal Mission Field?
3. What can you do to prepare each day to fulfill the calling of your ambassadorship?

Zion would become the place where more and more people from other nations would come to worship the living God. This is prophetic of the coming of the gospel of Jesus, the spread of that gospel, and the culmination of the gospel in the rule of the Savior King (Is. 2:1–4). Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Note on Psalm 87.5

Closing Prayer: Psalm 87.6, 7

Pray that today many will be born again into the city of the Lord by hearing and obeying the Good News of Jesus.

Sing Psalm 87.6, 7

(St. Anne: [*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*](#))

The Lord will count and tally all in Jesus born again.

Then let them sing, who on Him call, “We joy in God, Amen!”

5 The Register of Citizens

Opening Prayer: Psalm 87.6

The LORD will record,
When He registers the peoples:
“This *one* was born there.”
Selah

Sing Psalm 87.6, 7

(St. Anne: [Our God, Our Help in Ages Past](#))

The Lord will count and tally all in Jesus born again;
Then let them sing, who on Him call, “We joy in God, Amen!”

Read Psalm 87.1-6

Preparation

1. What do the psalmists see the LORD doing in verse 6?
2. What does this indicate?

Meditation

Here is one of at least three references to God having written in a book the names of those who have been born again into His City. The image is delightfully beautiful: God going about among His people, writing their names down and affirming that each one written belongs there.

In the larger view, it seems God had previously written all the names down into His Book of Life (cf. Ps. 139.15, 16; Rev. 6.1-7, 13.8, 20.15). Now, the Book of Life in hand, He is checking to make sure all His citizen/ambassadors are safely in His dwelling place.

God Himself decrees the salvation of His people, accomplishes their salvation through Jesus Christ, applies it to them by His Spirit, keeps them in it by His strong grace, and ultimately delivers them to Himself in the City which Jesus is even now constructing for us (Jn. 14.1-3). Here He is checking to make sure that every last sheep arrives safely into the fold.

One final thought: The Hebrew word translated *selah* comes from a verb which means “to lift up.” Inserted here and elsewhere, it’s like a call to the congregation: “Lift up your voice! Say hallelujah!”

Your name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Say hallelujah!

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jesus goes before us into all situations; even in the registering and recording of persons.

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered...Joseph...with Mary...who was with Child. And she brought forth her firstborn Son...JESUS.” (Lk. 2.1-21). There He is. Getting registered with His earthly mom and dad. The beginning of His going before us into all of life and death. And life.

Then Jesus tells us how to view this citizenship in Luke 10.20. He informed His disciples that they would be given power through the Holy Spirit, but that that was not what should bring them joy, “rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven”. Being able to live in His property with Him, not any earthly gift, should be what we strive and long for.

John writes of the beautiful and majestic City of God that is to come, and about those who are registered and recorded to enter there. He tells us, “And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life” (Rev. 21.24-27). What a place!

God, the Righteous Judge, the Creator of everything, records and registers us to live there (Ps. 87.6).

And He attends to and remembers us. From the beginning, now, and forever.

We are the registered, recorded, and cared for citizens of God’s city.

“You number my wanderings;
put my tears into Your bottle;
are they not in Your book?” (Ps. 56.8)

Who has a God like ours?

We are a people most blessed!

Reflection

1. How should it encourage us to believe that our names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life?
2. How would you advise a new believer to make his “calling and election” sure – to nail down the fact that his name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life (2 Pet. 1.5-11)?
3. Why is this Book called the Book of Life? Of what does that Life consist? When does it begin? How should you experience it?

God, it is true, wrote the names of his children in the Book of Life before the creation of the world; but he enrolls them in the catalogue of his saints, only when, having regenerated them by the Spirit of adoption, he impresses his own mark upon them.
John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 87.6*

Closing Prayer: Psalm 87.3-5

Pray for the Church’s work of evangelism. Pray for the people in your Personal Mission Field, and for all those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Sing Psalm 87.3-5

(St. Anne: [*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*](#))

For glorious things are spoken of the City of our God;
the nations know His matchless love wher’er His feet have trod.

From south and north, from east and west they come, called by His grace;
thus Zion stands, full strong and blessed, before the Savior’s face.

6 Only in You

Opening Prayer: Psalm 87.7

Both the singers and the players on instruments say,
“All my springs *are* in you.”

Sing Psalm 87.6, 7

(St. Anne: [*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*](#))

The Lord will count and tally all in Jesus born again;
Then let them sing, who on Him call, “We joy in God, Amen!”

Read Psalm 87, meditate on verse 7

Preparation

1. What goes before the Lord when He comes in revival?
2. Where do the revived people walk?

Meditation

The word translated “springs” can mean either “spring of water” or “looking”, as with the eye. The root for “eye” and “spring” are the same word in Hebrew. It’s possible the sons of Korah were being deliberately vague here, if not, in fact, trying to hold two meanings together in one word.

We remember (from the superscription) that this psalm was written as a song. It was meant to be sung, accompanied by various instruments. The people who heard it sung did not have printed music before them. They had to listen carefully. Some would have heard (as Calvin explains), “All my looking is upon You!” This understanding anticipates what Paul wrote, when he instructed us to set our minds on Christ, seated in glory (Col. 3.1-3).

Others would have heard (Henry, Radmacher), “All my springs are in You!” Thus they would have declared that all their vitality, life, and happiness are from dwelling with the Lord (cf. Pss. 1, 46.4; Jn. 7.37-39).

But what if the sons of Korah wanted us to hear both meanings? Perhaps at the same time, perhaps at different times, according to where our hearts and minds were on any occasion? As we learned and sang this song ourselves, or as we prayed it, we might interpret this last line of the psalm, “Lord, I only have eyes for You, for You are the Source of all my life and joy!”

And that would just about get it. In God’s Presence, meditating on His beauty (Ps. 27.4), is fullness of joy; at His right hand, where we have been seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2.6), are holy pleasures forevermore.

Look up. Live large. It’s all Jesus.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“All my springs are in You” (Ps. 87.7).

All of our lives depend upon the Living Water of Jesus.
We will as surely die of thirst without Him, as we will without drinking water.

Upon the earthly arrival of Jesus, foretold by the prophet Isaiah, things of healing and life began to happen:
“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the dumb sing.
For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert.
The parched ground shall become a pool,
and the thirsty land springs of water..." (Is. 35.5-7).

"Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters..." (Is. 55.1).

Jesus said of Himself:

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you,
'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked of Him, and
He would have given you living water" (Jn. 4.10).

Then Jesus describes how the Holy Spirit will affect this life through those of us who believe:

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said,
out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (Jn. 7.37, 38).

"But this He spoke concerning the Spirit whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was
not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn.7. 39).

In the same amazing way that Jesus is the Light of the world (Jn. 8. 12), but He tells us that we, too, are the
light of the world (Matt. 5. 14), He is the Water of Life (Jn. 4.10), but we have been given the opportunity
to have rivers of water flowing from us. (Jn. 7.38)

We have been given a lot, but a lot is required of us (Lk. 12.48).

All our life is filled with Jesus.
Our very sustenance and survival are in Him.
And our cup overflows with His goodness (Ps. 23.5).

Will the overflow flood to others?

Reflection

1. How does Jesus refresh your soul? When your soul is refreshed, what does this make you want to do?
2. Why is "living water" a good way of thinking about our lives in Christ?
3. What can you do so that more of your "looking" looks to Jesus?

*Zion's songs shall be sung with joy and triumph. The springs of the joy of a carnal worldliness are in wealth and pleasure; but of
a gracious soul, in the word of God and prayer. All grace and consolation are derived from Christ, through his ordinances, to the
souls of believers. Matthew Henry (1662-1714, Commentary on the Psalm 87.7*

Closing Prayer: Psalm 87.3-5

Set your mind on Jesus, exalted in glory. See Him, with the eye of your heart (Eph. 1.15ff), radiant in beauty,
welcoming your gaze and your praise. Call on Him to be Living Water in you today.

Sing Psalm 87.3-5

(St. Anne: [*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*](#))

For glorious things are spoken of the City of our God;
the nations know His matchless love wher'er His feet have trod.

Established by God: Psalm 87

From south and north, from east and west they come, called by His grace;
thus Zion stands, full strong and blessed, before the Savior's face.

7 Here and to Come

Opening Prayer: Psalm 87.1-4

His foundation *is* in the holy mountains.
The LORD loves the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
Glorious things are spoken of you,
O city of God!

Selah

“I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me;
Behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia:
“This *one* was born there.’”

Sing Psalm 87.1-4

(St. Anne: [*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*](#))

Upon the holy mountains rest the footings of the Lord,
Who loves of Israel's flock the best the keepers of His Word.

For glorious things are spoken of the City of our God;
the nations know His matchless love wher'er His feet have trod.

Read Psalm 87; meditate on verses 5 and 6.

Preparation

1. What is the LORD's disposition toward His holy City?
2. How do the inhabitants of His City respond to Him?

Meditation

Psalms 47 and 87 have much in common. They both focus on God and His work on behalf of His people. Each describes the gathering or assembling of God's people to Him, and each includes nations beyond Israel. In each psalm the people rejoice to be assembled to God as His people. The major difference is that Psalm 47 seems to have a heavenly setting while the setting for Psalm 87 is earthly.

The two psalms together remind us that the realization of God's Kingdom and the full ingathering of His people is a “now-but-not-yet” proposition. Already saints are gathered to the Lord, worshiping Him in heaven. At the same time, new believers are being gathered to God as He calls the roll of those written in the Lamb's Book of Life and conveys them into His Kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ (Col. 1.13, 14).

We can draw some important lessons and conclusions from these two psalms. First, God's grace will not fail to gather into His holy City all those for whom Jesus died and rose again. As we believe in Him, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God and planted on the eternal foundations of His holiness (Eph. 1.13, 14; Ps. 87.1). Nothing can dislodge us from our new home in the dwelling place of God. This is what we have been created for, both in this life and in the life to come.

Next, as citizens of Zion, our focus and orientation in life change. We cease being so full of love for ourselves and begin to know true, increasing, and joyful love for God, Who has created, redeemed, saved, and incorporated us into His City (Ps. 87.7).

Finally, we realize that not all the names of those written in the Lamb's Book of Life have been registered. More people from every nation and culture have yet to believe in Jesus and begin the journey of everlasting

life to eternal glory (Ps. 84). Our duty, as citizens and ambassadors of Zion, is to follow Jesus in seeking the lost (Lk. 19.11), to declare the Good News of Jesus and His Kingdom, and to call them to join us in repentance and faith in Him.

And when all our springs of joy are in Him, and He is the focus of all we do, talking to others about Him will flow like living water to refresh and renew.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“And the Most High Himself shall establish her...” (Ps. 87.5).

The sons of Korah go to great lengths to assure us of Who exactly is establishing us.

They didn’t say God or the LORD; they didn’t even say the Most High.

But they took pains to tell us that it is the Most High Himself.

And this Most High Himself establishes, records, and registers those who are His.

How very incredible that is. How encouraged and enthralled we should be.

Because nowadays it is hard to get a live person to answer the phone without having to press 1, then wait, maybe get disconnected, then press another number, just in case that might work, all the while plaintively saying, “representative please”. And these are just people. But amazingly, there is none of that with God. He is always there. The Most High Himself. Ready to establish, answer, and help us.

“But the Lord” (the Most High Himself) “is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one” (2 Thess. 3.3). “But may the God of all grace,” (the Most High Himself) “who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you” (1 Pet. 5.10).

We must never forget that God, the Most High Himself, “is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).

And because we understand that we have been established, recorded, and registered, we respond with thanks and appreciation, “To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen” (Jude 25).

Rejoicing. Established by the Most High Himself.

Reflection

1. God has established you with Himself as a citizen of Zion. How should you respond to this?
2. As citizens, we who believe in Jesus are also ambassadors of that great City. What does this require of us?
3. How should Christians encourage one another in their citizenship in God’s holy City?

The church of Christ is more glorious and excellent than the nations of the earth. In the records of heaven, the meanest of those who are born again stand registered. When God renders to every man according to his works, he shall observe who enjoyed the privileges of his sanctuary. To them much was given, and of them much will be required. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 87.4-7

Closing Prayer: Psalm 87.4-7

Jesus is building His Church and advancing His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Pray that He will use you today for the cause of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14.17, 18).

Established by God: Psalm 87

Sing Psalm 87.4-7

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From south and north, from east and west they come, called by His grace;
thus Zion stands, full strong and blessed, before the Savior's face.

The Lord will count and tally all in Jesus born again;
then let them sing, who on Him call, "We joy in God, Amen!"

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What kind of City does God intend Zion – His people – to be?
2. What would be some examples of the “glorious things” that should be spoken of God’s City?
3. Why is it important that we understand the full register of those written in the Lamb’s Book of Life has not yet been called? What does this mean for us?
4. Why do we need to know that people from many different nations – even the very enemies of God – are being born again into His City?
5. What’s the most important lesson you have learned from our study of Psalm 87? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.