

God's Relation to Jerusalem

Study Outline – Grace Bible Chapel

Psalm 87:1-7

Sunday – September 10th, 2017

CONTEXT of Psalm 87: - The title makes this a song of special emphasis. The emphasis is on worship and joy. The Korahite's are of the posterity of the notorious rebel (num. 16:1-50) whose descendants were none-the-less shown great grace. They existed in David's time as an influential family of musicians and guardian's of the Temple. This family was passed on either by title or actual descendants as those in charge of worship music during the history of the kings of Israel.

The nature of this Psalm is one of love for Zion (the poetic name for Jerusalem). God has a special relationship to Jerusalem. Not only has it played a significant role in the past, but it plays a significant role in His future plans. Often embedded in the poetic nature of Psalms are both literal and spiritual meanings. The general manner of hermeneutic is to take the Scripture literal unless the substance forces to do otherwise. Jerusalem was taken by God from the Jebusite's and given to Israel following their entry into the promised land. God had determined this as seen even in the travel of Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mt. Moriah (the location of the later to come Temple), and a picture of the sacrifice of Christ. It is here God chose to work through a covenant people and reside in their midst. Additionally, it is here that the promised coming kingdom of Christ will have its headquarters ruling the earth. It is no wonder then that love is expressed for Zion (Jerusalem) in such graphic terms. There is much to learn from God's special relationship to this place.

Introduction: Read

- Have you wondered why there is so much anti-Semitism? Especially when you consider tiny Israel – otherwise insignificant. Jews have been pushed out of many nations – all of this is unexplainable – humanly.
- Many of the Psalms give us portrait of something the Lord conveys that is deep & doctrinal, but also painted like a picture. There are many pictures like this – a great example is Proverbs 25:11. This Psalm conveys what is special to God, even loved by God, yet also conveys a reality of the future of Jerusalem.
- Are there certain people, places, things especially important to God. We know He chose Israel among all the nations of the earth (Deut. 7:6-7).
- In dealing with the essential issue of being a lover of God, I want to begin with a striking passage (1 Cor. 16:22; 14; 1 Jhn 4:8), that with that is the matter of loving what God loves - this is a significant mark of a Christian.
 - (1 John 4:20) – love God hates his brother – liar – we must love who and I believe with that what God loves.
 - This Psalm, like all others, is a transparent from the heart message. This one expresses affection for the true and living God in the form of loving what God loves - Israel, & with special attention to Jerusalem.
- **Point:** I had the privilege of going to Jerusalem a few years ago, & the wonder of emotion to be in the place where so much occurred & will occur – a place set apart of God.
 - The place was more than fascinating to me – I felt at home after so many years – all my life reading of it – the Bible being the center of my families life, and that land in that sense is like my backyard.
 - Why is it important? Because it is important to God. Just as He chose Israel to be the people from which He would bring the Savior, He chose this land to be the place that would function as the center of the earth.
- I. **Selected of God (87:1-3)**
 - **Vs. 1** – “foundation is in the holy mountains” –“ foundation” – is a word having to do with beginning of something, & the base of something constructed.
 - Located in the hill country of Judea, but not just the hill country.
 - The “holy mountains” – set apart mountains – are an obvious reference to “Zion” (Vs. 2 – 3) – “Zion” & “City of God.”

- “Zion” – is the name of one of the mountains (hills) in Jerusalem, but is often used poetically of all the hills – a reference to the entire city. It is the hill where the old city was located, and the place of David’s palace.
 - Moriah, Herzi, Scopus, Olives, Zion – some add 2 additional from older times – Mt. of Corruption or Offense, & Ophel Mt.
 - These are really hills – Mt. Moriah is 2428 ft above sea level, but consider that it is only 17 miles from the dead sea – the lowest place on earth, the dead sea being 1412 ft below sea level so the difference is almost 4000 ft.
 - Keep also in mind the Temple (Herod’s) at the time of Christ was 172 ft above (on top of Moriah) or near the height of a 17 story building.
 - This was a glorious spectacle. The place God chose to be represented on earth.

Point: the idea of “foundation” means the place at the center of the formation of God’s work on the earth, & with emphasis on the ultimate conclusion of His work on the earth.

- **Vs. 2** – “loves the gates of Zion” (Jerusalem) – “gates” were the place of entry & also of judgments & business – therefore it is often used as a metaphor for the whole city – its business, people, character – the entry point being special to enter.
 - Here we are told that God has selected this place on the earth as an object of special divine love.
 - Ezk. 5:5 – center of the nations. It is really in the center of the world.
 - Ps. 122:6 “pray for peace of Jerusalem.”
 - In our context here he gives three reasons for Jerusalem’s place before God.
 - First, it is the special object of divine love – here & Ps. 78:68-69.

Then moving into Vs. 3 – we see two more reasons.

- **Vs. 3** – These are amazing revelations – considering who God is, but let us consider that God the Son became a man – a real man who therefore is physical & must reside physically.
 - It is the “city of God” – not only because it was here the only true God had a manifestation of Himself in the holy Temple, but also because it is here, as we shall see, that Christ will literally reign in the future.
 - So -it is the special subject of history & prophecy “glorious things...you”
 - “City of God” – Ps. 46:4 – this is a reference to the city being the capital of Christ’s coming kingdom (Is. 2:2-3) - Ps. 48:8 – “will establish her forever.”

Point: In history it was only Israel who had the true God, Jehovah, and in the future the world will stream to her when Christ is established on the throne of the earth from Jerusalem (Is. 66:10-12; 18; 20-22). God has great plans for Jerusalem.

II. Substantial influence (87:4)

- **Vs. 4** – (Is. 49:6) Israel was to serve God as “a light to the nations.”
 - Rahab – is another name for Egypt (Ps. 89:10) – Egypt was often used as a symbol of pride.
 - Babylon – is the personification of all human effort. Both were enemies of Israel.

Point: He picks out two of the worst pagan cultures to state: “among those who know Me” – obviously that has never been the case, and just the opposite when we look at “Babylon the Great” in Rev. 17-18. What is this then doing? It is foretelling a future time when what we think of as the worst nations / cultures will know God. This is undoubtedly Christ’s coming kingdom of which we just read.

- “Behold, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia” – “Philistia” (Gaza strip) – the Palestinian Muslim’s who have been firing rockets into Israel, paying terrorist.
 - Tyre – located in modern day Lebanon (North of Israel) – another enemy of Israel.
 - Ethiopia – Cush – a far off place in that time (north Africa) – the emphasis is that all these places near and far will be worshipping the true God (Zech. 2:11; 8:22; 14:19).

Point: This is pointing to national rebirth – this will be experienced in the time of the Kingdom of Christ. These nations will worship (as the whole earth) the Lord in Jerusalem (Is. 14:28-32).

- “This one was born there” – in other words the truth of the one and only God will be in all these nations. They will not have to travel to Israel to know God (Is. 11:9).
- There is a right kind of pride over Jerusalem that is seen as the seed of the Gospel.

III. **Special bond** (87:5-6)

- **Vs. 5** – “But of Zion” – again Jerusalem – “this one and that one were born in her” – in other words the work of God is taking place in a mighty way in Jerusalem. “It will be said” – shows the reputation of Jerusalem will now be that of a place of new birth.
 - “and the Most High Himself..establish her” – this will all be the direct act of God by His presence – this is far different than the past history of Israel – their rejection of God, their disbursement into the world, & their current paganism.
 - Zion (Jerusalem) will be the mother city of the new kingdom – here likely is also a suggesting people of special note, influence, consonant with the importance of the city in the coming kingdom (Mic. 4:1-3).
- **Vs. 6** – “The Lord will count when He...born here” – this is a reminder of the direct sovereignty of God in salvation (Jer. 23:1-4). This is the NT idea of 2 Peter 3:9 – “not willing that any should perish.”
 - Once again this idea of recording His own is seen throughout Scripture (Ps. 69:28; Is. 4:3; Ezk. 13:9). It is very personal, very reassuring. It is similar to the Words of Christ in John 10:22 “My sheep...no one will snatch...hand.”

IV. **Stirred affection** (87:7)

- **Vs. 7** – “then those who...” – whatever our role in glory, our talents, our use – there will be worship. A worship of joy & gratefulness.
 - Notice – “all my springs” – springs represents that which is life giving, refreshing, the picture is a fountain – the epitome of blessing.
 - These are people stirred from within exemplifying their love, joy, attachment first of all to God, but also to what God loves and all associated with Him.
 - Prophets tell of a literal fountain flowing from the temple watering the surrounding land (Joel 3:18; Ezk. 47:1-12).
 - Where is all of this? “are in you” – we will take this to personify the Zion or Jerusalem – why? That is where Christ Himself will reside. He will be worshipped and adored, and seen as the “all and in all” (Col. 3:11).

Closing:

- There is no excuse in this age when Israel has been re-gathered in the land, & the understanding of the literal promises God has made to Israel are evident and should not be ignored.
- As the Abrahamic covenant stated “I will bless them that bless you, and curse them that curse you” (Gen. 12:3) a promise that has not changed.
- We are to naturally love what & who God loves – as Jerusalem is important & chosen of God for so many past events, & as the future place of Christ’s leadership of the world – we must love it with the same enthusiasm as the Psalmist.