

Psalm 87

- This 87th Psalm is devoted to extolling the city of God, Jerusalem. It then moves on, more or less, to the New Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a foreshadowing of the New Jerusalem that will come down from God out of heaven.
 - Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, this was established by God through King David, and is often referred to as Israel's eternal capital - because it was ordained by God.
-

V: 1 God has laid the foundations of Jerusalem there in the mountains of Judea.



- Jerusalem: "foundation of peace."
- Jerusalem is centrally located within Israel, a former Jebusite city conquered by David and established as Israel's capital.
- It doesn't matter from which direction you approach, you are always going "up" to Jerusalem.

V: 2 Jacob dwelt in various places throughout the land of Canaan, before it came to be known as Israel, he was a nomad, a sojourner - he stayed in a number of places that were described as being good - but the Lord loves the "gates of Zion" - Jerusalem best of all.

- The city of Jerusalem was God's preference for the Ark of the Covenant to rest; He preferred it above Shiloh, above Kirjath-Jearim - Jerusalem was where He chose to place His name, and where His presence abode.

Map: Shiloh, Kirjath-Jearim, Jerusalem.

God speaking to Jeroboam:

1 Kings 11:36 "And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there."

- Hence Jerusalem is also referred to as "the city of God."

V: 3 Glorious things are spoken about the city of God; there is no other place that God has set His name.

- Jerusalem is the most disputed and sought after city in the world, everyone seems to want to control it.

Zechariah 12:2 “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the surrounding peoples...”

V: 4 “Rahab” - Rahab was a worldly woman, a prostitute who eventually gave her life to and served the Lord.

- First mentioned in Joshua Ch. 2, she is also spoken of in Hebrews and James as a positive example of faith.
- Rahab: pride, insolence. Is sometimes used as a reference to Egypt, worldly and prideful.

Referring to Egypt:

Psalm 89:10 “You have broken Rahab in pieces, as one who is slain; You have scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm.”

Isaiah 51:9 “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Are You not the arm that cut Rahab apart, and wounded the serpent?”

“I will make mention of Rahab / Egypt and Babylon...”

- Those who were born in Egypt were proud of it; “I’m an Egyptian”, the same with those who were born in Babylon - kind of like home town pride. “Don’t mess with Texas...” Proud of their birth places.

V: 5 God, the “Most High” (*El Elyon*) will establish Jerusalem, and people will be proud of Jerusalem the same way, bragging that they were born there.

- Now we move onto the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem described in **Revelation 21**.

V: 6 The Lord will record or count when He registers the people; this is that final census as God counts those that are His.

- When the sheep are separated from the goats, the wheat from the chaff & tares, when God makes a final accounting, a final record.
- There is the “*book of remembrance*” spoken of in **Malachi 3:16**, it’s good to be mentioned in that book.
- There is also the “Lamb’s book of life” spoken of in Revelation in several places, and it is absolutely necessary to be recorded in that book!

Revelation 20:12, 15 “¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of

Life.” - “¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

- This may be where that final census or record is located.
- Where we are listed in that final census is determined by what we've done with Jesus.

John 3:5-7 “⁵Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.””

- Our names are recorded in the book of life by virtue of our new birth in Jesus
- “Selah” - “consider” this, think about it, meditate in that.

V: 7 Both the singers, and the players / musicians - the worshippers - all declare:

“*All my springs are in you.*” - “All my joy, and gladness, and fruitfulness comes from you!”

Psalm 1:3 “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

- When we are rooted and grounded in Him, our roots go down to draw from Him; all our springs are in Him.

Psalm 88

- This Psalm is very much a lamentation.
- Psalm 88 deals with despair, discouragement, depression, and death. (Ye, ha!)
- These are all real things that we all need to be able to deal with in a biblical way.
- There are many Psalms that start off with a prayer laying out the psalmist's distress or his difficulties, starting off on somewhat of a low, then breaking into praise and worship for what and who God is. Not so with this Psalm, it is rather melancholy.

V: 1 “**Oh Lord, God of my salvation...**” The only real positive, or the most hopeful declaration in this Psalm.

V: 1b-3 I am crying out to you, I've been crying out to you, hear my prayer: implying that he hasn't been heard thus far.

"I have cried—or prayed," the psalmist declares. Therefore, no matter how dark the remainder of the psalm, continuing prayer is proof of a lingering hope within his heart.

- He is desperate, almost done for, drawing near to the grave, to certain death.
- Obviously the writer of the Psalm did not have a New Testament perspective on death, viewing it as defeat or a negative occurrence. They didn't have the same hope of eternal life that we have.
- In the NT through the blood of Jesus and His resurrection the taking away of our sin, and the penalty of our sin the sting of death has been removed.

That is why Paul could write:

1 Corinthians 15:53-57 ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- We don't need to have this same attitude as though death is a victory of the enemy. For us it is the victory of God in our lives, it's graduation day!
- Jesus made mention over and over of the day when the son of man would be glorified, and that was always a reference to His death. So for the child of God it is our victory as well.

Paul said:

Philippians 1:21, 23 ²¹For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." - ²³For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

2 Corinthians 5:8 "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

- So as children of God we have a totally different perspective on physical death.

Jesus said:

John 11:25-26 ²⁵... I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

- Meanwhile back on the ranch, the Psalmist is having a really hard time:

V: 4 People are already accounting me as being dead, I'm feeble and weak - vulnerable.

- I remember some of those awkward moments when people would continually ask Pastor Chuck what was going to happen when he died, intimating that it would be pretty soon.

V: 5 Adrift among the dead, aimless - like those who are already dead who are soon forgotten, cut off from your hand of blessing.

V: 6-7 It just gets worse and worse, the wrath of God being upon him (his perspective) and coming at him in successive blows like the waves of the sea.

- The Psalmist is sounding an awful lot like Job when he was in despair.
- "*Selah*" - I don't really want to meditate on that or think about it too much. Sure makes me glad I'm saved!

V: 8 Describing his isolation. He is saying that God has done this to him, I'm always dismayed when people do that to themselves.

V: 9 His eye wastes away - from his many tears. He's calling on the Lord and seemingly God has not answered.

V: 10-12 "*Shall the dead arise and praise You?*" - Yes in fact they will.

Philippians 2:9-11 ⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

V: 13-14 He's dealing with despair, discouragement, and depression, "*but*" he is still praying! I'm still crying out, in the morning my prayers are still coming before you.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 "*Pray without ceasing.*"

Colossians 4:12 "*Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you always laboring fervently for you in prayers...*"

- Laboring fervently: generally means to fight or contend but the Greek word is ^(G-75) "*agōnizomai*" the root word from which we get our English word "agony" or "agonize."

- Paul is describing Epaphras' willingness to "agonize" in prayer for the saints, which seems to be what the Psalmist is still doing, he hasn't quit.
- He's cried out to God and God has not answered. He's thinks he's been cast off and that God has hidden His face from him, we get this great sense of despair on the part of the Psalmist.
- There are different possibilities when examining this; thinking about God hiding His face from us at times.

Sometimes, like Job it's a test of our faith:

Deuteronomy 8:2 "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commands, or no."

Sometimes the issue is sin:

Ezekiel 39:24 "According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them."

But God also describes that time of restoration:

Ezekiel 39:29 "And I will not hide My face from them anymore..."

- Restoration for the child of God comes through repentance and confession of sin.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

V: 15-17 This seems like an ongoing situation from his youth.

- Your fierce wrath has gone over me, I'm drowning in it, it's overwhelming.

Psalm 61:2 "From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

V: 18 Why would the Lord allow anyone to fall into despair like this?

"Loved one and friend You have put far from me..."

- Another way to put that might be "All I have left is you Lord..."
- I may not know what He is doing, but I do know what He has said:

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

- You may not see His face, you may not hear or discern His voice, but His word is still true.

Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”

- *“Never doubt in the darkness what God has taught you in the light.”*
- God has made a number of promises to us that we can count on:

Hebrews 13:5 “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.””

Paul exhorts us:

Philippians 4:6-7 “⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

- I can't put this down as my favorite Psalm, yet the Lord has given it to us; meaning there is good to be gleaned from it.
- This Psalm ends with the Psalmist not understanding what is going on, but pressing on in the Lord. We won't understand everything we go through, but God will give us the grace to get through it.
- I am very grateful to see this Psalm in light of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, and to have a different outlook according to the revelation of Jesus Christ and the New Testament in general.

Peter encourages us:

1 Peter 1:3-5a “³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith...”