

Series: Psalm
Title: The Glory of God's City
Text: Ps 87: 1-7
Date: Sept 16, 2021
Place: SGBC, NJ

Psalm 87 is such a comforting Psalm, giving the LORD God in Christ the praise for his church—HIS HOLY CITY.

Psalm 87: 3: Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

This is to be understood figuratively of the church of God, which is often in scripture compared to a city,

Proposition: The church is God's holy city of Zion made up of chosen, redeemed, regenerated citizens by God's grace in Christ.

It God's building. It is where God dwells. The name of it is *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there (Ezekiel 48:35).

The Church of God is both local and universal. The local church is that assembly that God has assembled by his Spirit and his gospel in this world. In the local church his gospel, his worship, and his ordinances are maintained by the grace of Christ. But the church of God is also universal. The universal church of God is *the city of God* whose citizens are all God's elect in every age both on earth and in heaven.

Whether in heaven or earth, Paul is speaking of this universal church when he says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." (Eph. 5:25). The universal church is described as "Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...the general assembly and church of the firstborn," unto which all believers have come (Heb. 12:22-23). So the Psalm is speaking of God's church—the city of God—Zion—in heaven and in earth.

Subject: The Glory of God's City

Divisions: The Psalm divides easily into three parts so we will take these for our divisions: 1) The Foundation and Provider of Zion 2) The citizens of Zion; 3) The joy and praise of Zion.

THE PROVIDER AND FOUNDATION OF ZION

Psalm 87: 1: His foundation is in the holy mountains. 2: The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. 3: Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

Every city needs a city planner and a solid foundation. Venice, Italy is a sinking city. It had no good city planner because they built it on no foundation. It is not so with God's Zion!

The LORD, Jehovah, purposed all before the world was made. He laid Zion's foundation on the Rock Christ Jesus, the Son of God—*His foundation is in the holy mountains.*

Isaiah 28:16: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

1 Corinthians 3:11: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Christ Jesus is the foundation laid by the LORD God from eternity. In eternity, God the Father choose his Son, Christ Jesus—doing so he laid the foundation of his church. In eternity, God the Father made the mountains holy by choosing his people in Christ the Holy One—"that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." In eternity, Christ entered covenant and became the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the works were finished from the foundation of the world in Christ.

In time the Son of God took flesh and accomplished the redemption and salvation of every citizen of Zion chosen by God.

Christ is *the tried stone*—when he walked this earth he was tempted in all points as his people are—yet found pure, obedient, righteous and holy unto the death of the cross

Christ is the precious corner stone—precious to God the Father who he glorified. Christ manifest God's glory. He upheld his holy justice. In Christ God is righteous to be merciful to his people for Christ put away our sin and made us the righteousness of God in him. And Christ is precious to his people—the citizens of Zion were all redeemed from all our iniquity by Christ.

Christ is the sure foundation—his church, his holy city, is eternally secure on Christ our Foundation. Zion is no sinking city. Christ shall bring his holy city—each citizen in particular—to holy God perfect, holy, without blemish. His city is holy in Christ. This is new Jerusalem, Zion, the city of God coming down out of heaven adorned as a bride for her husband by Christ her Husband.

The Church's One Foundation
Is Jesus Christ Her Lord
She is his new creation
By water and the word
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.

The LORD loveth Zion—*The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.* The LORD in Christ loves the church, his holy Zion, which Christ has established by his blood which he assembles to worship him publicly.

He loves *all the dwellings of Jacob*—all the places where his elect live. His grace is upon his people at all times. But he loves the public assembly of Zion more. It puts the importance on assembling publicly to worship Christ under the gospel. It is assembling together publicly to give Christ all the glory that most resembles the description of heaven.

Christ has finished the work and risen to heavenly Zion with all his people in him and now from heavenly Zion his gospel goes forth into the assemblies he has gathered for public worship in the earth. Zion in heaven—the spirit of just men made perfect—together with his saints in the earth—all assemble in united worship with all eyes on Christ. It is where the glorious gospel is declared—glorifying Christ. It is where his ordinances are observed—glorifying Christ. It is where he reveals himself in the hearts of his people—glorifying Christ. It is public worship where his regenerated people glory only in the Lord our Savior.

All the glory of Zion, and the glory of each citizen in particular, is the glory of our Redeemer—this is why *glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.* When John saw the holy city descend out of heaven, he described her as,

Revelations 21: 11: Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.”

Brethren, the glorious things spoken of the city of God is the glory of God. What do we have that we did not receive from him?

THE CITIZENS OF ZION

Psalm 87: 4: I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this *man* was born there. 5: And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. 6: The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, *that this man* was born there. Selah.

The LORD declares that he shall call all his elect out of all nations—from *Egypt [Rahab], Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia.* It includes elect out of Gentile nations that did not exist then—ours included. We were first born in this and that nation of the earth but by God's regenerating grace he birthed us anew into

Zion. The only way to be a citizen of God's holy city of Zion is to be born-again into it by the Spirit of God by the living Word of God. The highest himself gets all the glory—*the highest himself shall establish her.*

Ephesians 2: 19: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints,...

The LORD is spoken of here as taking a census—*The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.* When God elected his people unto salvation in eternity, he wrote all our names in the Lamb's book of life. And in the end, each chosen child of God shall be accounted for when the census of all heavenly Zion is taken.

Now all these things are taking place in these last days. The last days began with the coming of Christ—God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:2)

God promised in these last days the Lord God will build again Zion. His Church shall flourish! In Isaiah 53 we see Christ accomplish the redemption of his people on the cross. It was then the veil in the temple rent in two. Christ ended Judaism and the Mosaic economy (Habakkuk 2:3; Hebrews 1:2) Seventy years later the Lord destroyed the political nation Israel.

Then Isaiah 54 declares what Christ is doing in this day. Christ began calling his lost sheep out of the nation Israel—then he turned to the Gentiles—so he says to his church:

Isaiah 54:1: Sing, O barren, thou [that] didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou [that] didst not travail with child...2 Enlarge the place of thy tent,.. 3: For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. 4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. 5 For thy Maker [is] thine husband; the LORD of hosts [is] his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Galatians 4: 25: Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26: But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

On the day of Pentecost Peter declared Christ hath done this. God had made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ. We are living in the day which some think will only come in some distant later day millennial age. There will never be a time in which sinners will be saved by their works. Never a time we shall return to old covenant Jewish worship. God's Israel shall be saved when each elect child is born again into the city of Zion. Christ is in heavenly Zion sending his gospel and the Spirit is birthing his redeemed into the city of Zion by the new birth through the preaching of the gospel.

Isaiah 2:2: And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations [elect out of all nations] shall flow unto it. 3: And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion [heavenly Zion where Christ sits] shall go forth the law [the gospel], and the word of the LORD from [heavenly] Jerusalem. [into his local assemblies in the earth] 4: And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 5: O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

So our text declares the LORD shall birth his children into his holy city *out of every nation*

Isaiah 56: [speaking of the sons of the stranger—Gentile elect]...7: Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar [spiritual sacrifices through faith in Christ our Altar]; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

REJOICING OF ZION

Psalm 87: 7: As well the singers as the players on instruments *shall be there: all my springs are in thee.*

Since salvation is due only to the Lord's grace by Christ's blood and righteousness by his Spirit, his church rejoices and glories and sings only unto the Lord. The singers and players of music represent the joy and praise in God's holy city as we give God all the glory for salvation.

All the Lord's springs of spiritual life and renewing and reviving are in his city in her citizens born of him. The fountains of living water, springs of spiritual peace and refreshment are in his people in Zion. Therefore, true citizens of Zion worship in Spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus alone giving God all the glory—for salvation is of the Lord.

Isaiah 12:6: Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

Revelation 5: 9: And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10: And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Citizens of Zion are not looking for a secret rapture. We are looking for Christ. When Christ has called the last redeemed citizen then the Lord shall return.

Philippians 3: 20: For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Brethren, Christ is working everything in this world for the furtherance of the gospel—so we can send his gospel into all the world—until he has called the last citizen into Zion—and he shall not fail. Paul said,

Philippians 4: 1: Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved....4: Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

Isaiah 35: 10: the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Amen!