

Psalm 147

This psalm is read with the Torah portion **Deuteronomy 32:1-43** - Song of Moses

Aben Ezra and other Jewish writers think it foretells the future rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Jews from their present captivity, and refer it to the times of the Messiah.

Psalm 147:1 - "Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely."

"pleasant" = *na`iyim* - delightful, sweet, beautiful

"comely" = *na'veh* - fitting, seemly, beautiful - in the way that symmetry is beautiful in nature, as a fitting proportion.

i.e. praise is the most fitting and beautiful response to God's goodness toward mankind.

What follows is a list of these good things that God accomplishes.

Psalm 147:2 - "The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel."

Initially, this concerns those in exile in Babylon.

But He's still doing this today - building the New Jerusalem and gathering its inhabitants to Himself from north, south, east and west, from where they have been exiled and cast out into the world.

"He gathers outcast sinners by his grace, and will bring them into his holy habitation"
- *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*

- **Isaiah 11:12** - "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

- **Mark 13:27** - "And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

Psalm 147:3 - "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

"broken" = *shabar* - broken, destroyed, crushed

"wounds" = *`atstsebeth* - pain, wound, sorrow, grief

From a root, *`atsab*, that means to be twisted and stretched or vexed, and thus to be reshaped and formed; it can refer to a "carved image" or idol, or the worship of it (**Jeremiah 44:19**).

Unless God heals our pain - physical, mental or spiritual - or gives us a way to deal with it, it can sometimes become an idol that we worship by giving value to by "breathing life" into it (**Revelation 13:15**).

Psalm 147:4-5 - "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."

- **Psalm 19:1** - "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

There are only about 5,000 stars visible to the naked eye. Because the Earth itself gets in the way, you can only see about half of those from where you stand. To take a census of even those stars is nearly impossible; and even with modern scientific equipment, more stars are discovered every day. But God calls them each one by their individual names, since He is their Creator.

God's great power and infinite understanding - made flesh and contained in Jesus:

- **Mark 6:2** - "what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?"

- **1 Corinthians 1:24** - "But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, - Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

- **Ephesians 3:9-11** - "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- **Colossians 2:2-3** - "My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Psalm 147:6 - "The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground."

"meek" = *ʿānāw* - meek, afflicted, depressed, humble, poor, miserable

This is a theme throughout the Bible, culminating in the salvation of His saints, and the defeat of Satan.

Said of Babylon - **Isaiah 26:5** - "For He brings down those who dwell on high, The lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy."

See Mary's 'Magnificat':

- **Luke 1:51-53** - "He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."

The Call to Praise is Repeated

Psalm 147:7 - "Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:"

This time, praise for God's provision:

Psalm 147:8-9 - "Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry."

"From dark clouds of affliction, doubt and trials come showers of blessings that cause your soul to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

- *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*

God provides even for ravens, which are unclean birds.

- **Job 38:41** - "Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat."

Later, God sent ravens to feed Elijah (**1 Kings 17:4-6**).

Jesus expands on this-

- **Luke 12:24** - "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?"

He gave Manna to Israel in the wilderness, and sent Jesus to us as the bread of life.

The Septuagint adds "ravens who call upon Him" (as in the passage from Job). The ancient fathers interpret this figuratively; and by the "ravens" understand the Gentiles; and by their "young ones" Christians that spring from them, who call upon the true God.

Psalm 147:10-11 - "He delights not in the strength of the horse: he takes not pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

The horse is a type of strength, courage and endurance. A "swift-footed warrior" was the epitome of vigor and agility.

Targum: "he delighteth not in the strength of those that ride on horses, he takes no pleasure in the legs of men that run"

But God's work is done 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' saith the Lord (**Zechariah 4:6**)

Another call to Praise

Psalm 147:12 - "Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee."

We need to see this as the New Jerusalem, our secure and pleasant dwelling place.

- **Revelation 21:12** - "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:"

Psalm 147:14 - "He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat."

This implies the whole process of planting, reaping, threshing, grinding, etc. to make bread, probably pointing to the wheat meal offering at Pentecost.

- **John 12:24** - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Psalm 147:15 - "He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly."

The Targum has "his Memra" i.e. the mystical Messiah-like figure on Jewish tradition that carries out God's work.

"runneth very swiftly" in contrast to the fastest legs of a human warrior (**verse 10**)

Psalm 147:16-17 - "He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?"

Hail, which was one of the plagues on Egypt (**Exodus 9:23, Revelation 16:21**).

Psalm 147:18 - "He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow."

Spiritual Provision

Psalm 147:19-20 - "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD."

The giving of the Law at Sinai.

- **Deuteronomy 4:5-8** - "See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?"

But His Word is also Christ, the Logos (**John 1**)

He has shown the fulfillment of the Law to us in Christ, and written His law in our hearts.