

Psalm 87

Since the Torah reading in Leviticus 23 described the feasts of the Lord, this psalm emphasizes the focus of the feasts - Jerusalem, the Temple and Zion, God's dwelling place - the destination of the pilgrimage feasts.

Superscript: *A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah.*

Psalm 87:1 - "His foundation is in the holy mountains."

The rabbis put together the first verse as part of the intro, and take this to mean that this psalm "is concerning the holy mountains" of Zion and Jerusalem.

The Temple was positioned on Mount Moriah, traditionally where Abraham took Isaac to be sacrificed. King David built his city and palace on Mount Zion, which was adjacent to and overlooked the Temple Mount. Zion took on a deeper meaning in the Prophets - it came to represent the whole city, and then the people of God and their spiritual dwelling place with Him, since the Ark of the Covenant and the Shekinah glory resided there. (There were seven hills in or surrounding Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives was 300 feet taller than the Temple Mount).

The Tabernacle sanctuary was erected first on Mount Zion by King David, then (as the Temple) on Mount Moriah.

The Targum connects these words together: "by the hands of the sons of Korah is said a song, which is founded by the mouth of the fathers that were of old"

Compare with a similar phrase:

- **Psalm 48:1-2** - "A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation (*nôph* - elevation. Or possibly as an adverb: 'supremely beautiful'), the joy of the whole earth (*eretz* - land, earth), is mount Zion, on the sides (*yarek* - side, recesses, remoteness, peaks) of the north (*zaphon* - north, but also secret, dark, hidden, treasured), the city of the great King."

North - The temple was on Mount Moriah, the northern part of Mount Zion, **Isaiah 14:13**; the altar and altar gate were on the north side at the temple, as were the tables on which the sacrifices were slain, **Ezekiel 8:5**; and on the north side of the altar was the sacrifice killed, **Leviticus 1:11** - *Gill's Exposition*

Christ's sacrifice then was "zaphon" - Kept secret in its detail until the appointed time, hidden from human understanding, dark as experienced by God's sinless Son, but treasured by those who receive it.

- **Psalm 2:6** - "I have installed My King on Zion, upon My holy hill."

- **Isaiah 14:32** - "The LORD has founded Zion, where His afflicted people will find

refuge."

- **2 Timothy 2:19** - "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

- **Ephesians 2:19-20** - "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone"

Psalm 87:2 - "The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

He loves for His people to gather at the gates of Zion to worship and praise him. The image of the gates represents the city itself.

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

- **Revelation 21:2** - "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

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."

Jewish translation: "I will remind Rahab and Babylon of My beloved ones. Behold Philistia and Tyre with Cush, 'This one was born there.'"

Rahab the harlot is a different word in Hebrew. This Rahab is Egypt's Delta region, which was in the form of a pear; which in Egyptian is "raab" or "rib."

Rashi says this relates to **Isaiah 27:12** - "At that time the LORD will shake the tree, from the Euphrates River to the Stream of Egypt. Then you will be gathered up one by one, O Israelites."

Psalm 87:5 - "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her."

Psalm 87:6 - "The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah."

i.e. written in the "book of the heavens," the Book of Life.

- **Luke 10:20** - "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

- **Philippians 4:3** - "...my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life."

Rashi - Jews who have lost or been forced to give up their Jewish heritage and have been assimilated will be recognized by God, plucked out and regathered with Israel from all the nations:

This is what Isaiah says (**Isaiah 66:21**): "And from them, too, will I take for priests and for Levites." From the nations bringing them for tribute, I shall take those assimilated among them. And there will be among them priests and Levites who are unrecognizable, but they are revealed to Me, says the Lord. Now where did He say it? (**Deuteronomy 29:28**) "The secret things belong to the Lord, our God."

But early Christian commentators saw its fulfillment at Pentecost the conversion of Egypt and Babylon as well as other Gentile nations. i.e. Gentiles will be engrafted into Israel, and serve as priests and Levites.

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

or "Singing as well as dancing will they chant, 'All my springs are in thee.'"

This is a picture of a great heavenly procession after the final ingathering of God's people and His ultimate triumph.

Jewish translation - "all my inward parts are concerned with you."

"springs" = *ma`yan* - spring, fountain, figuratively 'offspring' or a place of fountains, an emblem of happiness

"thee" = God/ Zion / the gathering of the people of God

Every source of pleasure, music, singing, and joy is to be found in Zion.