

Psalm 87

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[0 : 00] Look at this. It's just a little psalm. I don't know what version we all have. If you haven't got a Bible and you would like one, there are some in the shelves at the back and somebody will help you to get one if you would like to. Just pop down and get a Bible.

Anybody want one? Because Jerome's handing them out. Anybody want a Bible? You've got a hymn book. Do you want a Bible? You don't. Okay.

So Psalm 87 is what we're going to look at. And I'm going to suggest that we read it out loud together. So the Bible looks like that. The hymn book looks like that.

They're two different books. That one's got the songs in it. This one's got the scriptures in it. So from this one, Psalm 87, most of us have got an NIV. That's the one at the back.

So can we read it out loud together? I'll read the first bit. It says, of the sons of Korah, a psalm, a song. Now out loud together, he has set his foundation on the holy mountain.

[1 : 19] The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are said of you, O city of God.

I will record Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me. Philistia too and Tyre, along with Cush, and will say, This one was born in Zion.

Indeed, of Zion it will be said, This one and that one were born in her, And the Most High himself will establish her.

The Lord will write in the register of the peoples, This one was born in Zion. As they make music, they will sing, All my fountains are in you.

Okay, we're going to look at that psalm for a little bit. Let's pray. Lord, help us as we open your word To be spoken to by you in the power of your spirit.

[2 : 25] Amen. I've put here, which you may or may not be able to see, You don't have to be able to see them. I've put a little picture of that there, A little picture of a person here.

I've put a book here. And I tried to draw something splooshy there, But that was less successful. Okay.

I think those pick out some of the key points Of this rather remarkable psalm. It's only little, And as we read it, You probably thought, Well, it's pretty irrelevant.

But actually, I'd like us to look into the psalm And see what it says. We're Christian people. And this is our book. The whole of it is our book. So this psalm is our psalm.

And I would like us to take a look at it together. So this is one of these telepathy questions.

[3 : 25] Do you know what I meant to draw here? Pardon? Castle. Castle. Yeah. I was thinking a city. That's a person.

That's a book. And... Shower. Shower. Shower. Yeah, that will do. Okay. I think all of these things are in the psalm.

And I'd like to... And I think there's something remarkable said About each of these things in the psalm. So let's start off with the city.

So I ask for volunteers... Don't all shout at once because I won't hear you. But what remarkable thing or things Or anything really are said about the city?

Can we work out which city it is, first of all? Jerusalem. Zion. Okay. It's Zion. I should have brought this a bit closer, shouldn't I?

[4 : 27] Okay. It's Zion. And the psalms say a lot about Zion. Zion. Jerusalem. I would say in the Old Testament Is God's headquarters on earth.

It's a huge change in the New Testament Which we pick up in the ministry of Jesus In his last days when he visits Jerusalem. There's a huge change.

And if you look at Galatians 4.6 It says... It says... Galatians... Galatians...

Oh, do I mean 4.6? 4... 4.26 Paul is reflecting what it is to be a Christian As distinct from a Jew And he says in Galatians 4.25 Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia Which corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem Because she is in slavery with her children But the Jerusalem that is above is free And she is our mother So in the New Testament The theme of Jerusalem stays But it's no longer this geographical location It talks about the heavenly Jerusalem Or the Jerusalem above So... Zion is one of the things here What does it say about Zion? Just tell us some of the things that it says Yeah Doors of love Doors of love Doors of love Which verse are you on?

[6 : 14] The beginning Yep Oh, the beginning Right, okay That was the answer Right, okay Anybody like to tease that out?

Go a little bit further? What does it say about Zion? It says it's foundation It's on the Holy Mountains So probably some strong You know Thank you very much Okay Holy Mountain So it's on a mountain So that's a mountain And it's a holy mountain So this is not just some ordinary Middle Eastern city This is a holy city There's something distinctly godly about this And I think you could sort of tease out the thought And say the mountain Is sort of somewhere between earth and heaven And so maybe there's something about that of Zion It's the city between earth and heaven It's the holy mountain Thank you very much Anything else that it says about Zion?

City of God City of God Oh, thank you very much Yeah, verse 3 The city of God The city of God The place where God lives The place where the Almighty dwells What sort of things go on In this city That don't go on anywhere else That make it special The Most High Himself The Most High Himself Will establish it So which verse are we in there?

That's verse 5 The Most High Himself Will establish it So we've got some titles of God here The city of God He's referred to as the Lord Yahweh The I Am And he's referred to as the Most High So we've got some very special things About the inhabitant of this city Yeah And the establishing That's in the first verse as well The foundation So something very strong and secure about this Established Foundation The place of the Lord The Most High Thank you Okay Other things that go on in this city That are That don't go on anywhere else It's a promise The nations The people In Zion Okay I'm going to hold that thought Because I'm going to come to that in a minute So There's something about the nations Let's just Hold that for a sec Because that's a great thought But let's come to that in a moment

What did they do in In Yeah Yeah Yeah Thank you very much Yeah It says that the Lord loves this place And You know The psalm is quite sparing about what it says Quite a short psalm But it does say that the Lord loves this place And I guess that's where our seminar got the gates of love Or that The Lord loves Zion He has set his foundation on the holy mountain The Lord loves the gates of Zion And it actually says More than All the dwellings of Jacob It uses the word for tents So there's something quite special about this Isn't it That God's people are They live in all sorts of places But This particular place It says the Lord Loves the gates of Zion

[9 : 59] More than all the dwellings of Jacob Yeah So Very special actually Isn't it We ought to be impressed by this And And I'll just ask that question again What else goes on In Zion That doesn't go anywhere else That particular thing And Steve mentioned the temple So Let's Can we go any further with that thought What happens in the temple Worship Thank you very much Worship Anything else go on in the temple It's glorious Thank you very much Yeah We've got We've got glory Let's come back to that But I'm trying to chase something down Singing Sacrifice Is what I was looking for This is The temple Is not just a place of Of singing It's also a place of sacrifice It's a place of Blood Sacrifice It's a place of atonement And of course All the other things Depend on that And the Lord Jesus When he said

Destroy this temple And I'll raise it again In three days And they said What on earth are you talking about But the temple Of which he spoke Was His body Yes he says Yeah So the The temple Thing Is fulfilled In Jesus And of course He is the sacrifice As well So Before we Move on From this city Let's remember It's a place of Sacrifice And It's a place That the Lord loves And It is a place Of glory That's verse Three isn't it Glorious Things Are said Of you City Of God And that's a remarkable Thing isn't it Here is this city And This is the place The Lord loves Where his people Gather Where the sacrifice Is made And where he lives Which in nowadays

As I was trying to say Is not a geographical city But it It's The Christian church It's us We are the The place Where the blood Operates As it were Where people gather Where God dwells When his people Gather together So The city bit And then I had the Little person bit And I also got a book So Now Jerome Tell us what Your thoughts were on this Now This is a really Remarkable statement

Isn't it That Who are the Inhabitants Here Well You would expect It to say The God of Jacob The people of Israel But it Actually It's got a list Of foreigners And it isn't Just any old foreigners Would anybody like to Suggest What is Particularly Striking About this list Of foreigners Somebody over there Was saying Thank you very much Egyptians Babylonians Rahab means Egypt Babylon is Babel How does Egypt Fit into the history Of Israel They enslaved them Yeah Enemies As you said They enslaved them So this is surprising And Babylon How does that fit Into the history Of God's people It was the place Of exile It was the horrible Place It was the place Of the utmost Anti God Nation I've got a reference In Isaiah 14 22 Isaiah 14 22 Roger Could you read us out Isaiah 14 22 Please I will cut off From Babylon Her name And survivors Her offspring And descendants Declares the Lord Thank you very much And that's one of a number Of Almost Well it seems Without exception That God Treats Babylon As A total enemy Without exception A little bit like Orcs In [15:02] Lord of the Rings You know There's no such thing As a good orc There's no such thing As a good Babylonian And As you know In the book of Revelation The Babylon Is put as The city of destruction You've got Jerusalem As the city Of salvation And Babylon As the city of destruction And there's nothing In between Which makes Psalm 87 Quite remarkable Because this is An exception God brings His enemies Into his city So you have The Egyptians Rahab You've got The Babylonians You've got The Philistia Which I presume Is the Philistines Yeah And Tyre And Cush I think That the notable Enemies Are the Egyptians The Babylonians And the Philistines So I think this is

A remarkable thing That God says He's going to bring His enemies Into his city And I think That's what this week Has been about And the remainder Of the week Is about Isn't it That God brings People who are not His By birth By Upbringing By anything Into his city And here it is In this psalm It's It's the mission Of the New Testament So I don't really know How to draw that But these Foreigners Enemies Are brought near You get that In the classic Sort of Ephesians Thing The wall of partition That separated Gentiles From Israel Is broken down And even The rubbish Gentiles Which is most of us Are brought into The city of God And there's something There about Writing and recording Anybody like to

Pick out Which verses Mention writing And recording Yes Verse 6 Says Thank you very much And anything else Four Yeah Which says Yeah I will record Rahab and Babylon And one of those Places I did look it up This afternoon It's actually written It's twice I will writing Record Or I will In writing Remember There's something Being said here Isn't it The Lord Will write In his Register These people Who in some Sense Are Babylonians Are also In some sense Born In Zion And they have Their Birth certificate Recorded I will record Rahab and Babylon Along those who Know me Is what it Actually says And of these People I'll say This one was Born in Zion So I don't know Is God Rewriting Their birth Certificate And saying Actually you've Got a Babylonian Birth certificate But let's tear That up And let's Write you A new Birth certificate Which says Born Of Zion And I think In New Testament Born again Born again Born again Born again Born again Born again Born again Born again Born again Born again one are born in her this one and that one your birth certificate is a heavenly birth certificate you're born again you're born again you're born again you belong in god's city you belong in god's city you belong in god's city and everybody of whom that's saying well actually i'm a babylonian and and god says oh you might have been but now you belong in zion i think that's remarkable isn't it that he brings people from uh as my one of my predecessors used to say from the gutter most to the uttermost from being far away and enemies to being brought near through the blood of jesus it is a remarkable thing isn't it that he does this and um so i put the little little person here and the book in which their names are written uh and the fact that it's written down i think makes it more certain doesn't it don't you do you ever say this can i have that in writing please you know we get a trades person to come and estimate to do some work on your car or whatever it is and and here they say oh mate oh yeah that cost you could i have it in writing please could you just tell me exactly what it's going to be because that makes it more certain and here god says well you can have this in writing you can have it in writing it's definite it's for sure and i think that's a wonderful thing about christianity isn't it about biblical christianity we have an assurance from god of what it is to be a member of zion and i'll just move to one more thing which is my shower here uh which verse was i thinking of do you think yeah the one at the end uh as they make music they will sing all my fountains are in you i i did look this up the the translators do it in different ways uh do you have the esv uh no okay that's all right anybody got a

different version yeah what have you got all my springs are in you yes springs is a lovely word isn't it springs are in you uh anybody yet again got anything okay people play flutes excellent okay and one of the versions says singers and dancers and i did look look it up and i couldn't quite work out where the dancers come but there's something musical here isn't there there's something joyful um there's something uh positive uh yeah joyful and i i'd like to think about that word springs so here in england most of the time we're up to our eyeballs in water because it always rains uh shouldn't give away trade secrets like that um but in the middle east here a spring is something to be remarked on isn't it uh in in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water to find a spring is a wonderful thing um i put a reference to psalm 46

which says um about the city of god there is a river psalm 46 verse 4 actually there is a river the streams of which make glad the city of god and there's a spring of water that really makes the city habitable doesn't it and it also makes it joyful uh in the new testament the idea of water is often i'm not sure always but often carried over well if i said john 4 what where would you go with that um where would you think that that's the the woman at the well uh where jesus says uh if if you knew who was asking you you would have asked him and he would have given you live living water yeah and then later on in john's gospel he says on the last and greatest day of the feast jesus stood up and said in a loud voice if anyone thirst let him come to me and drink uh and rivers of living water will flow from within him and it says this he spoke concerning the spirit but the spirit was not yet given because jesus was not yet glorified um this is in new testament terms i think we would say this is the work of the spirit that um we have life through the spirit of god and that's where our springs come from um there's a it's interesting there's a connection here between what looks as a connection between uh the springs and music and we get a similar sort of thing i think in ephesians 5 where it says be filled with the spirit speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs does it say making music in your heart to the lord or i got another verse mixed up but there's connection between music and and uh the work of the spirit so anyway here's this little psalm which i think sort of leads us to think about some really good things um the city of god that god loves and the fact he brings in people who by nature have no right to be there but actually were his enemies and uh he brings them in and makes it certain and secure because he gives it to them in writing and uh this is the very last verse says there's music in the city and there's joy in this city because there are living waters in this city and uh i think we just say an amen to that don't we i mean that's that's and i was just thinking in terms of this week um number one i think it makes us really glad to be god's church doesn't it i mean whatever the numbers are and you will have realized that our church is much smaller than the church in livernia whatever the numbers are it's a great thing to belong to god's city the lord loves the gates of zion i mean of where else can you say that um glorious things are spoken of you city of god it's a great thing to belong to god's city