

# Zion City of God | Psalm 87

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Date: 07 September 2021

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Bible and join me in Psalm chapter number 87. I think my favorite part of that song is, and I'll bear it no more. I'm thankful for that. Psalm chapter number 87, I want to read to you tonight our scripture. Speaking of Believer's Baptist Church, Tyler Chandler told me this week he was helping with the sign. He was helping over there, and a man walked by and said, I've been looking for a church for a long time. And Tyler said, here's one, here's a sign, right, for him. And he was there on Sunday, wasn't he? He sent a picture, and that's exciting. People in that area of the church, they're going to get one, and those that have been waiting for one are going to get to learn about one. So we praise the Lord for that. Psalm chapter number 87, if you should have got a handout, if you didn't get a handout, raise your hand, and we'll see how good a job Dylan did tonight. Just one, you did good tonight, Dylan. Miss Holly on the back, she'll need a handout. If you look on the back of it, you'll see that the psalm is short, and it's a short psalm tonight. And what does that have to do with the length of the message? Very little, right? It just means that I will preach a longer message on a shorter psalm. But it is, it's a short psalm that we're going to look at. And one person said that it was the most problematic in the whole Psalter. I think whatever psalm is on Thursday is the most problematic one, the one you're going to teach. But I don't find that to be the case at all. If you are ready to rejoice in what God has done, and that we get to look forward to a day that we will be with our King. We sung it earlier, and we'll sing it, I believe, the night before we leave, which is that we have Kings to Zion sitting where we will walk with the King. And I'm looking forward to that. That's what

I believe the response to God's Word should be for the night, is that you are to rejoice that there is a city that is waiting for us where we get to be with our King, King Jesus.

Psalm chapter number 87. I'm going to read it to you, and then we'll pray together. Verse 1, Psalm chapter 87. I'm going to read it to you, and then we'll pray together.

As well as the singers, as the players on instruments shall be there, all my springs are in thee. Heavenly Father, I pray that tonight you will cause our hearts to rejoice in the fact that there is a city, Lord, that is prepared for us, Lord. And we want to thank you for how much, Lord, you help us through your Word, fight for the joy, to help take comfort in a future, Lord, that is victorious in you. We pray that you give us understanding of this passage, in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Psalm 87 is a psalm that two of my kids really like.

Selah likes any of the psalms that have her name in it, and Selah is in here on two occasions. And then Carson Zion, he really likes to hear the word Zion read in a psalm. Stephanie and Carson are home tonight. He had surgery yesterday, and he was supposed to stay in the hospital, but there wasn't a bed for him. And so we're glad that we get to get him to be home early. But Carson, I want you to pay attention because we're going to talk about your middle name here for a second as we talk about Zion.

[ 3 : 22 ] And as I tell Thatcher and Tinsley, and I'll tell others in this room, if you're reading the Bible and you find the word Thatcher, please set the book down and walk away, all right? Because that is not the Bible that you're reading if you find your name there. But Zion and Selah show up a lot in the psalms. Actually, Zion shows up 150 times in our Bible, and it ought to be something that when you see it, that brings you great hope and comfort. And I want to help you in that area. The psalm 87, it picks up some imagery that we looked at in psalm 86. Psalm 86, last Thursday, we're talking about this prayer of revival, praying unto God to hear us. And in the middle of that psalm, it gave some verses that reminded us of who God was in his position. First, it said there was a king, and he was a Lord unlike any other in verse number eight. But then in verse number nine, it says, and all nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name. That's what this psalm is about. It's a missionary psalm. It's a mission psalm talking about a future date where people from all nations will worship him as citizens of this city. It was exciting when Chesley said that in Columbia, there are going to be refugees. There's going to be people that in Afghanistan may have never heard the gospel, but God has now placed them in Columbia. And it's wild to think that a boy from the backwoods of Kansas, maybe, all right, Kansas will learn Spanish, and he may share the gospel with a person who learned Spanish from Afghanistan. What a beautiful thing that God would do there.

And they both would be citizens of a new Jerusalem. And so, this psalm here is proclaiming that city of God glorious and joyful because it is the center of worship for the redeemed of all nations.

So, what is Zion? Asked many people this week, and sometimes I would ask, and several would answer at one time. Some would say it was a city in the Old Testament. Some say it was a future city. Some say that it represents being in the presence of God. And the answer to that was yes, it's all those things.

That throughout the Bible, we see that the scope and understanding of Zion, it grows. The word itself means a fortification. It's an idea of being raised up as a monument. It's described as both the city of David and the city of God. And as I said, the word Zion progresses in our understanding. First, we see in 2 Samuel chapter number 5, verse 6 and 7, and the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites.

This is David. The inhabitants of the land which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither, thinking David cannot come in hither.

[ 5 : 58 ] And I love this. Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, the same as the city of David. So, what it said was, this city is so fortified that we could protect it with the blind and the lame.

That's how easy it would be that our blind people and our lame people, not Jeffrey Brown lame. We're talking about people that aren't able to walk, all right? And so, they said, we can protect it with the blind and the lame. And then I love it. It says, nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion.

Like, say all you want to. We're taking this city, and he will take it, and it will not be given back. David promised his men that whoever could discover a means of access to the city would be promoted to be commander-in-chief. And so, that becomes Joab, 1 Chronicles 11, 6. And David said, whoever smiteth the Jebusites shall be chief and captain. So, Joab, the son of Zariah, went first up and was chief.

So, a little competition there about who was going to be the chief. We learn in 1 Chronicles how he does that, that apparently he passes through this water tunnel, which connected Jerusalem's water supply inside of the city there. 2 Samuel 5, 8. And David said on that day, whosoever getteth up to the gutter and smiteth the Jebusites and the lame and the blind that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore, they said, the blind and the lame shall not come into the house. So, jokingly saying that we can take it over with them. They said the blind and the lame can protect it, but we're going to take it over them. And so, now we see it progress. They've taken the Jebusite city, and now it is the city of David, be called Zion.

And when Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the meaning of Zion expands to include the temple area. Psalm 2, 6. Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion, upon this mountain range here of Zion. Psalm 48, 2. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of a great king. He'll speak about Zion with a longing to be in it, this place of refuge, this fortified place. Psalm 48, 11 and 12. Let Mount Zion rejoice. Let the daughters of Judah be glad because of thy judgments. Walk about Zion and go round about her, tell the towers thereof.

[ 8 : 15 ] And so, throughout 150 times as we see it here, Old and New Testament, it's mentioned. Starts off as a city, then the temple's going to be there, and then in prophecy in Jeremiah 31, 6. For there shall be a day that the watchman upon the Mount of Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. Then it becomes synonymous about going into the presence of God. People that were removed from Jerusalem, when they would talk about being back into the presence of God, would talk about rising up and being in Zion. So, in the Old Testament, it means a name of a city, Jerusalem, Isaiah 49, a land of Judah, Jeremiah 31, and the nation of Israel as a whole would speak about Zion. And the word Zion is used in a theological or spiritual sense. We sang it tonight, marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion. A song that we don't sing that comes straight from the song that some of you might know is, Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken. I listened to it. It would have been a really hard song to sing, all right? But it's beautiful. I'd encourage you to go home and listen to it. Glorious things of these are spoken. And of course it is. Glorious things about being in the presence of God, about spending eternity in the presence of God, a place where

Jesus Christ is King. There's most certainly glorious things to be said about it. So, Zion refers strictly to the Israel and the people of God and being into His presence. In the New Testament, we see it as a spiritual kingdom. Hebrews 12, 22, but you are come unto Mount Siam and unto the city of a living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. And then Peter, quoting from Isaiah in 1 Peter 2, 6 says, Wherefore, also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay Zion a chief cornerstone, elect precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. The older we get, the more aware of the fact that we are that one day we could be again in the presence of God, the more that saying about Zion ought to mean to us. So, this geographical area is currently the center of much dispute, and it will be unto Christ's return.

But the Bible is clear that one day Zion will be the sole possession of the Lord Jesus, and Zion, the nation and city, will be restored. And so, it's a place on earth that God has chosen to make His presence known. Psalm 9, 11, saying, Praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Zion, declare among the people His doings. It ought to be a place that we long for. It ought to be a place that we ache for being with Him. Now, we get to our psalm here in Psalm 87, verse 1. It says, His foundations is in the holy mountains. God's foundations is in Jerusalem, the center of His redemptive work. Since God's work happens in time and space, and it had to happen somewhere, and God chose Jerusalem as the place in which it would happen, that much things would happen.

We learn about Melchizedek, a king and a priest of God that would reign. We learn of him being from there. Abraham was willing to offer Isaac on the mount of the Lord where his perfect sacrifice would be provided. There David, Israel's greatest earthly king, would reign and be made into the kingdom's capital. There the tabernacle of God found its fulfillment and permanence in the great temple David designed and Solomon built. There the institutions of sacrifice and worship and priestly service were established for centuries. It's there that Jesus recognized and honored the city and observed the feast and the temple rituals. It's there that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead. There was the church was born on the day of Pentecost. There the apostles served and were sent out with the gospel. And there God will establish His physical geographic center of the ultimate kingdom of God. Isaiah 11 10, And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an inside of the people.

To it shall the Gentiles seek, and His rest shall be glorious. Someday our rest will be found with Him in that city, and it will be called glorious. And it is. I'm sure many of you have taken vacations before and try to vacate from the things of life. But sometimes you get into a place in life and you just feel like it wouldn't matter where I go on this earth, that I can't leave the trouble and the sorrows that are here. But I can promise you that there will be a place someday, and it will be here upon earth, and there will be a rest that is there, and it will be glorious. And so I ask you today, have you ever felt that way? There is coming a day where this will be a place of rest upon this earth. And so what does the Lord say about it, or God say about it? Verse number two, The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than the dwellings of Jacob. This is a place that God chose the place of His affection. It's a special place. And it should be said about us, those that love the Lord, we love the things that the Lord loves. And it says that He loves the gates. And so we should talk more about Zion. Let's think more about it than our next vacation. Let's lay up stuff and store for that place, not just this current world, because one day all of this will burn up. But there will be a place of glorious rest there in Zion. And we've been given the keys, and one day we will walk with the King. We've sung about that. In verse number three, it says, Glorious things of thee are spoken, and most should be. Glorious things are spoken. And then we're told, O city of God,

[ 13 : 24 ] Selah, to reflect upon this and to think about it and meditate. So the psalmist praised Jerusalem by noting what others have said about the city. Many spoke glorious things about the city. There was a glorious faith that was exercised in Jerusalem. Glorious things happened in Jerusalem. Glorious things were taught in Jerusalem. Glorious worship was offered in Jerusalem. Glorious atonement was made in Jerusalem. Glorious anointing was poured out in Jerusalem. God's glorious presence was evident in Jerusalem, and a glorious future awaits Jerusalem. Y'all remember when Brother Don Sisk was here, and he says he spends a lot of his time studying about heaven, because he said, you will as well when your loved one or your spouse is there sometime. It's a glorious place. Glorious things of thee are spoken. And so the Bible teases that there's coming a day when the Lord will rule over all the nations from his seed in Zion. Psalm 2.6 says, Yea, I have set my king upon the holy hill of Zion.

So not only do we see that as a city of God, but we see that as a city of nations, and you're not going to believe who is there. You ever been somewhere and it's like, I can't believe you are here? Well, that's what he says. God says to them, to the children of Israel, as they would sing the psalm in verse number four. During a time, we don't know when the psalm was written, but we know that constantly who their arch nemesis are. We know constantly that Babylon and Egypt and Tyre and different places are constantly persecuting them or constantly killing them, constantly fighting against them. And this is what God says in verse number four of our psalm. I will make mention of Rahab, which is Egypt, and Babylon to them that know me. Behold, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopian, this man was born there. God now numbers the great two superpowers that were in exile, that it caused the people to be in exile, the Egyptians and the Babylonians as part of that city. In the New Testament, we say it like this, but God commended his love towards us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Not just the children of Israel get to count their citizenship as citizens of Zion, but Egyptians and Babylonians and people that had hated the children of God. We've seen it, right? Now, once your enemy, what? Seated at your table. That's what God was saying. He's always been a missionary, God. In the middle of this psalm, he says, those people that have hurt you and fought against you and killed you and have cursed God, that there's going to be people from them that will be made citizens of Zion, a citizenship. If a city is regarded as a great or important, people enjoy identifying. I'm very proud to be from Hardin, Kentucky. Not really, okay? Now, there's only a very few of us get to say we're from Hardin, Kentucky. If Elise was here the night or anybody from Michigan, if you ask somebody like where they're from and they immediately bring up their hand, you know what? They're from Michigan, right? It's like the only state. They always say,

I'm from Michigan right here. And if they're from this area, the UP, they don't have to tell you. You know, all right? They don't have to tell anybody. Where Chris Fies and I were at lunch the other day, somebody said they were from Michigan. They always bring up their hand. And he says, if you're from Louisiana, you can always see their bare feet. And you know where they're from. If they bring their feet to the table, they're from Louisiana and their hand, they're from Michigan. But you know people, don't you, Jeffrey Brown? They're just so proud to be from their city, from a place with the holy mountains and the place of all the hills and all that, that sin city natty that you are from. And so, Jeffrey is a person that's very proud to be from his city. And we get that, the pride of citizenship.

You know, I was born here. In case you meet somebody from Forsyth County and you're surprised, you know, that they're from here. There's citizenship here. And so, you take pride in this. And so, when you appreciate high regard of Zion, the city of Jerusalem, you see the value in being regarded as her citizen, the city established by the Most High himself, the one that God says, I love their gates. When my son hopefully is listening, I'm going to give you a test on this later, okay? When Carson was adopted into our family, not only did we get to put Carson, Zion, and Cornwall, but we got to put what city that he was born in. We could decide to say that he was born whatever city I was in. And so, I made him a citizen of Switzerland. All right? No, I'm just kidding. You could pick the city because they know that would be part of our family's story. And so, choosing that, that's a big part of a person's identity is where they are born. So, in Jesus Christ, every believer can have the privilege of registration in Zion, of being a citizen of the heavenly city of God. Austin Till, I know you're having a hard time getting your paperwork to be a citizen of China, but ultimately, you're a citizen of the city of God. And that's wonderful, isn't it? When you feel like you don't have things going for you, when you feel like everything's been taken away from you, you have a citizenship that is not disputed, that's been given to you as a citizen of the city of God. This does not eliminate the special regard that God has for the people that are the literal land of Israel and Jerusalem and the Jewish people, but it allows us as the people of Babylon and as the people of Egypt to be considered with them. Ephesians 2.12 said it like this, that at the time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, which is me. I know y'all think I look Jewish, but I'm not Jewish, all right? But I was an alien and I was a stranger. We were not a people and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope without

God. But God ran the middle wall and has now made a way for us to become citizens. Citizens not just by documents, but citizens by birth. Verse 7, 6, and the Lord shall count when he writeth of up the people that this man was born there. Selah. Think about that, all right? Just think about it, all right?

[19:18] Just think about the fact that you get to be this man was born there. Spurgeon says, four nations are here described not as captives or tributaries, not even as doing voluntary homage to the greatness and the glory of Zion, but as actually incorporated and enrolled by a new birth among her sons, that this man was born there. And so we're members together. We're not just saved by a crowd or a congregation, but we have surely been saved to a crowd and to a congregation.

Ephesians 1, 5, having predestined us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. So believers in Jesus Christ are not only adopted into the family of God, but we are born into the family and we're placed in the positions of sons.

And that God says that we're going to allow you citizenship into the city of God. And that's pretty exciting. So Zion, city of David, yes, but most certainly the city of God, city of Zion, a city of nations that God allows us, regardless of where we were born, regardless of our background, that he does not treat us as tributaries, does not treat us as captives, but we get to be citizens of this city. And then lastly, before we respond, singing together, is I want you to know that it is a city of joy. Verse number seven, as well, the singers as the players on instruments shall be there. All springs are in thee. There will be music and we will sing.

Singers and instruments from all nations. Tinsley just started the band. So when you have a kid that's in sixth grade playing a bassoon and you have a seventh grader trying to play the trombone, there's a lot of Tylenol being passed around at the house, all right? And a bassoon, I didn't even know what a bassoon was. I thought it was an insult, you know, that you would tell somebody, I guess that's a buffoon. But she got this bassoon. It's got a nice sound to it. I like this, but I don't know where the bassoon comes from, but I know in India they have a sitar. My cousin played a jug, you know, another cousin played the spoons like that. And so can you imagine all these instruments that are common around the world, the bassoon and the Thatcher on the trombone, me on the jug, an Indian man on a sitar. Maybe Stephen will grab the wooden flute that they play in Peru. And then all the instruments that have been created that are all around the world will be brought to Zion and they will all be used to do exactly what they were created to do, which is the worship King Jesus.

And it's going to be glorious, isn't it? Not just the way we in which we worship, but get the worship with all the nations of the world. In the middle of Psalm, God lets people know that, that I'm not just the God for you. You're not just going to be my citizens, but even the Egyptians would say to you, even the people of Babylon, that someday these people that are fighting against you, that someday they will come into my presence and they will worship you. And so not only do we get this exciting thing about knowing and picturing that, okay? And I may have ruined the picture of Zion for you, as you see me and all my cousins playing our redneck instruments, all right? But picturing a little bit of people from all over the world coming together and knowing that we got to have part in that, Katie, to know that the instruments of Chile would be played because of work that your family has done down there and all around the world. Graham, I don't know what kind of instruments they have in Nigeria, but when you see them and when you get there and you can look at them and say, someday that instrument may be played by the Nigerian man in Zion for King Jesus.

[ 22 : 53 ] And I may not be able to teach you to play the satire, but I can teach you to love King Jesus. And when the moment comes, this is your chance, all right? And that's going to be wonderful.

And so when we sing, we ought to take a moment and imagine that, close our eyes and think about it. Today we all sang and we limited in the different ways that we express ourselves, but there's a day that is coming. And not only do we get to have this picture that all these instruments are going to be used in Zion, but we have to get to know the content of this song that is being pictured. And that's at the end of the verse here. All my springs are in thee. That's the content of the message. All my springs are in thee. You see, the spring refers to this spontaneously flowing source of water of life. Many of you have given me tissues since I've become the pastor, you're thinking brother TJ and others, because you know that I spontaneously have flowing water that comes from my face. And that's what we're supposed to think of as springs is this spontaneous flowing source of water. James 1, 17, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the father of lights, which whom there is no variableness, neither shadow or turning, that all that we could ever need flows from God. All that we could ever spring out is going to come from him. And so all of our springs are in thee. He is everything. He is the ocean. He is the river.

He is the tributaries. He is the reserve. It all flows from him through us and back to him. When I was in high school, me and my friend Justin, we had a great idea that we could get in the pond behind the big reservoir behind this house. And if we took that, we could go down the Turkey Creek, which would take us to this river. We had a long plan. We just knew that we were going to make it to the ocean. All right, from his backyard, we would make it to the ocean. And we packed up and we put everything in our canoe. And about five hours later, we had to call his parents and say, yeah, to go to somebody's house and knock on the door. We didn't know how far we were from home.

And they came about 15 minutes down the road and they picked us up and they said, you didn't make it. And we're like, all the water runs to the same place. All we got to do is follow this. And it's going to all the springs of life flow back to him. He is the source of all goodness. If God ministers to you through somebody else, they were not the spring. He is the spring. And so all these instruments being played are going to play this one song is that in you, Lord, we find our spring that you cometh down the father lights. There's no variableness, no shadow of turning. And there is a place to long for because we long to be in his presence. If you don't long to be in his presence, it's not because you have such a good life. It's just because you misunderstand the life that you're in. And if you don't understand why we would long to be in the presence of the Lord, I promise you it's not because we're not grateful in the state that we're being in. But it's because we know the greatest parts of the life we live in are getting to know him. And there's going to become a time where he will not be to us veiled, that we will know him fully. And so we should look for that day. Psalm 20, verse 2, send the help from the sanctuary and strengthen thee out of Zion. So how are we to respond? It's with joy, loving what God loves. And so let it sing together as we long for Zion.

Isaiah describes it this way in a brief hymn in Isaiah chapter number 12. And what a great way to see ourselves. Therefore, verse 3 through 6, therefore with joy shall we draw waters out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall you say, praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted, saying unto the Lord, for he has done excellent things. This is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. Thou inhabitant of Zion, kind of encourage you tonight when we take a moment and pray, I want you to think about in your heart all the great things that he's done, all the excellent things. I want you to make mention of his name and I want you to make it exalted. I want you to declare his doings unto the people.

[ 27 : 05 ] I want you to praise the Lord. I want you to recognize that great is the Holy One of Israel in our midst. And then in closing, before I pray, Hebrews 13, 14, and it says, for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. And the one that we seek is Zion, and among it is King Jesus, and we should rejoice. And we have a bright future, and I'm so grateful for it. So I'm going to pray as somebody comes and plays the piano. I just want to give you a moment to think about that. I want you to say, God, I want my heart to rejoice. I want to take my mind off of all the earthly troubles that I've been given. I want to take my eyes off of all my earthly possessions and say, I am an inhabitant someday of Zion, and I want to rejoice in that. After I give you a moment to pray, Stephen's going to come up here, and we're going to sing one last time about that city of Zion.

Heavenly Father, I ask that you be with us tonight, Lord. I pray that you would cause hearts to rejoice in knowing that there is a place prepared for us, and that we get to be called citizens, Lord, by birth. Lord, not strangers, not aliens, no longer pilgrims on earth, but we will find the city for which we seek when we find it in you. And we pray these things in your son's name. Every head bowed, every eye closed. Just take a moment there with the Lord. Ask him to prepare your heart as we will sing and exalt the King of Kings.