

Part 1 – The Lord Loveth the Gates of Zion

Psalm 87

1 A Psalm or Song for the sons of Ko'-rah.

Now, this Psalm begins a bit different than most; and for a couple of reasons. While we've seen the title 'sons of Korah' several times in the Psalms, this is the first time it's been with the words 'A Psalm **or** a Song'. However, we *have* seen a 'Psalm **or** Song' of David (Ps 68), and of Asaph (Ps 73, 83) and even a couple that were *anonymous* (Ps 66, 67). And we've even seen a 'Psalm **and** Song' of David (Ps 30, 65) as well as a 'Psalm **and** Song' that was written by Hezekiah (Ps 48). So, by now we know that, while the words Psalm and Song *seem* to be the same, there is a *slight* difference. And, just to refresh our memories, let's remember that the word 'Psalm' is the Hebrew word *mizmowr* (#4210) and means *instrumental music*; by implication, *a poem set to notes*. And it comes from a prime root (#2167) that means *to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument, i.e. play upon it; to make music, accompanied by the voice*; hence to *celebrate in song and music*. And then, the word 'Song' is *shiy'r* (#7892) and means *a song or singing* and comes from a prime root (#7891) that means *to sing*. So essentially, a **Psalm** is *a form of meditating (like a poem)* while a **Song** is *something to be sung*. And you can learn more about the distinction between these two words in the *Companion Bible's* appendix 65 in XXIII and XVII.

And then, of course, this is yet another Psalm 'for the sons of Ko'-rah'. It's now the **tenth** of eleven so ascribed. Seven were in the 'second book' (of Exodus: 42,44-49) and four are in this 'third book' (of Leviticus: 84,85,87,88) (Apx 63 VIII). And, as we've learned before, Exodus 6:16-24 tells us that Korah was a cousin of Moses and Aaron who (along with some other men) rebelled against the Lord (YHVH) and was killed (miraculously) by the Lord (YHVH) Himself (Num 16:1-3, 24-27) for doing so. However, not all of Korah's children died with him *because they obeyed* Moses' command to *get away* from their father before the earth 'opened up' and 'swallowed' him, *and all those who remained* close to him (Num 26:9-11 and 27:3). This just goes to show that the Lord (YHVH) doesn't punish the children for their father's sins **if** they are *not* doing the same sins (Ezek 18 and 33). And that's why the descendants (i.e. 'sons') of Korah were later allowed to be singers, and porters, for the Lord's Temple (1 Cor 9, 15); and they were even appointed over the 24 courses of singers for the Temple (1 Chron 6:33, 1 Chron 16:39-43, 1 Chron 25:1-7).

And, as we learned in the Prelude, this Psalm 87 was written at the time when the Ark of the Covenant (which was symbolic of God's presence *on earth*; i.e. Jesus Christ) was taken to Zion (in Jerusalem) when David was king (2 Sam 6:12-19, 1 Chron 15). And it therefore expresses '**the joy of the entrance of the Ark of the Covenant into Zion**' with dancing, music, singing and even shouts for joy. Therefore, this Psalm covers an *incredibly* joyous event! Moreover, the 'sons

of Korah’ would have been a *very large* part of the procession of the Ark of the Covenant into Zion. For, during that time, it was their duty to play music, and to sing, during events like this. And, as 1 Chron 25:1 tells us, they were not only to play with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals... they were also to **prophesy** when they played (when the Holy Spirit led them to). **So, music was not only a very important part of worshiping, and praising, the Lord (YHWH), it was also very prophetic... and this is a very key point to remember when studying this Psalm 87.** And therefore, the *historical* account of when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Zion (in Jerusalem, during the days when David was king) is quite *prophetic* of the *true* King of kings (Jesus Christ) returning to Zion. And, just as it was an *incredibly* joyous occasion for the people of that time, so too will it be an *incredibly* joyous occasion *for us* to be able to see Jesus Christ return to the earth, *and enter into* Zion, where He will rule from *forever* (Zech 14:4; 2 Thess 1:10).

Psalm 87

1 ... His foundation is in the holy mountains.

Now, the words ‘**His foundation**’ simply means *a foundation* (#3248) and comes from a word that also means *foundation* but, figuratively, it means *beginning* (3246). And that comes from a prime root that means *to set* (literally or figuratively); intensively, *to found*; reflexively, *to sit down together*, i.e. *settle, consult* (#3245). And then the word ‘**holy**’ means *a sacred place* or *thing* or even *sanctity* (#6944). It comes from a word that means *to be* (or *make*) *clean* (#6942). And then the word ‘**mountains**’ simply means *a mountain* (#2042). So, let’s remember, this Psalm was written for the time frame when the Ark of the Covenant was being brought – *for the first time* – to Zion, which *was* a mountain in Jerusalem (#6726), where David had made a tabernacle for it (the Ark) to ‘ *dwell* ’ in. So, the Psalmist (who *literally* witnessed the procession of the Ark of the covenant *going into Zion*) begins this Psalm simply by stating that the Lord (YHWH) had chosen Zion (the holy mountain) to set (establish) His righteous rule from. In other words, His (the Lord, YHWH) ‘**foundation**’ – which **is** His throne (i.e. the mercy seat on top of the Ark of the Covenant) - was now in the holy mountain, Zion (in Jerusalem). And, as we learned back when studying Psalms 78...”

67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:

*68 But chose the tribe of Judah, **the mount Zion which he loved.***

69 And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

70 He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:

71 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

Ps 78:67-72

Ps 78:60 also told us that God forsook the Tabernacle at Shiloah, which was in the territory of Ephraim. And verse 67 (above) reiterates this fact. The word ‘**refused**’ means *to spurn* or *to disappear* (#3988). So, God refused (forsook) the tabernacle in Shiloah (which Israel had made when they were in the wilderness) *because* the priesthood had become corrupted (and 1 Sam 4 tells us *why*) and also because the tribe of Ephraim (where Shiloah was located) were *not* good spiritual leaders (Ps 78:9). So, this is just another way to say that **God had chosen another location** (other than the territory of Ephraim – who was also called ‘Joseph’ at times, because he became the largest tribe of Joseph’s sons) **to put His Ark of the Covenant at**. However, that didn’t mean that Ephraim lost their *inheritance*. The tribe of Ephraim only lost *precedence*, which means the right to superior honor on a ceremonial or formal occasion. In other words, because Ephraim had been such a piss poor *spiritual* leader for the nation (as Ps 78:9 documents), **God allowed His Ark of the Covenant to be moved to Zion, where David had another tabernacle erected for it** (2 Sam 6:17). And eventually, Solomon was allowed to build a physical Temple for the Ark of the Covenant in Zion, which is in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6-7).

And, the Psalmist (of 78) also pointed out that God Himself chose David to be king over Israel. And, as our studies in the Psalms reveal, David was a type for the *true* King of kings, Jesus Christ Himself. So, while David was not the first king over Israel, David is spoken of here because he’s the *type of the Messiah Himself* (Jesus Christ) who will rule Israel (and the world) forever (Isa 8:7, Rev 21:22, 22:3). And that’s because David really was the best king Israel ever had (except for Jesus Christ, of course). As Samuel told the first king of Saul, the Lord (YHVH) sought out a man to be king over Israel who was a ‘man after his own heart’ (1 Sam 13:14). That man was David, the son of Jesse. And when David was anointed king (1 Sam 16:13) he was just a young man (likely around 17 years old) who took care of his father’s sheep (1 Sam 16:11). Yet, the Lord (YHVH) eventually raised him up to be the ‘shepherd’ of His people, Israel (2 Sam 7:7-8). And (again) this is one of the reasons why he was a wonderful ‘type’ for Jesus Christ (John 10). So, the ‘climax’ of Psalm 78 was to tell us how God chose Zion to dwell in (via His Ark) forever, *and* that He chose David to be king over Israel. And thus, this also points to (is a type of) how Jesus Christ will rule the world, from Jerusalem (Zion) *forever*. And this really sums up what this Psalmist is relaying to us in verse 1, here in Psalm 87. God chose Zion to be the capital of Israel, where Jesus Christ would (eventually) rule the world from, *forever*. So, eventually, Zion will become the capital of the world!

Psalm 87

2 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

The word ‘**Lord**’ here is God’s Sacred (and covenantal) Name, **Yehovah** (#3068), which means (the) **self-Existent** or **Eternal**. And, while Yehovah is the ‘God of Israel’, He’s also the God of those who are redeemed, and are thus now ‘in Christ’ (as Gal 3:26-29 explains) because, even the

gentiles can be in a covenantal relationship with Him, *now that* Jesus Christ has paid for the sins of the *entire* world (Mth 13:44). And then the word ‘**loveth**’ here means ***to have affection for*** (#157). But, *why* did the Lord (Yehovah) love ‘the gates of Zion’ more than all the dwellings of Jacob (referring to Jacob’s natural seed here). It was because of her *history*. You see, one of the first things David did after he became king over *all* of Israel was to conquer *Jerusalem*. And he not only moved into a castle on the top of that mountain (Zion, a.k.a. the ‘city of David’) but **he then moved the capital of the nation to the city of Jerusalem** (2 Sam 5:3-10; 1 Chron 11:5-9). And **from that location Jerusalem began to grow into a great city**. For while Jerusalem was not that large of a city when the Jebusites controlled her, after David conquered (and moved into) it, *he built the city round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab repaired the rest of the city* (1 Chron 11:8). And so, from that location (Zion, in Jerusalem) *David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people* (1 Chron 18:14).

And, in Ezekiel chapter 16, the Lord (YHVH) describes this beautiful transformation of Jerusalem - when David (who was anointed by God to be king) conquered, and then developed Jerusalem into a mighty city, the capital of Israel - by using a vivid metaphor. He described Jerusalem as a young baby girl who was born to heartless (heathen) parents who tossed her into a field and *left her die... still covered in her own birth blood*. This describes Jerusalem’s history *before* David took it over. But then, God saw her and had pity on her. He not only cleaned her up and nourished her she was while growing but, when she was grown up into a beautiful ‘woman’, *took her to wife* (metaphorically speaking, Ezek 16:8). And, as His wife, He gave her beautiful garments and *the best of everything*. This describes how the city flourished *amazingly* under the rule of David and then Solomon (because they obeyed the Lord, YHVH). Of course, at the end of Solomon’s rule, Jerusalem ‘turned’ and metaphorically ‘played the harlot’ because Solomon (and future kings) stopped obeying the Lord (YHVH). The rest of Ezekiel 16 covers this as well, and you can study this great chapter via this link: [https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Ezekiel/293].

So, this *history* helps to explain *why* the Lord loved the ‘gates of Zion’ more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Ps 87:2). For Zion (i.e. Jerusalem) was where righteous judgement and justice was first founded in Israel; i.e. **Zion was the first place that Israel began to do a really good job at obeying God’s Laws!** As 1 Chron 18:14 said, when David reigned over all Israel, he *executed judgment and justice among all his people*. And **judgment and justice being righteously executed IS what caused God to love the ‘gates’ of Zion**. You see, back in those days, judgment was often given at the ‘gates’ of the city. Therefore, in God’s Word, the term ‘the gate’ of a city was often used, symbolically, for judgment. And if done so righteously, justice as well. So again, the reason God loved the ‘gates of Zion’ is *because* that’s where righteous judgment and (subsequently) justice ‘dwelt’, because God’s Laws were finally being adequately enforced. And while Israel had previously had some pretty good judges, David’s rule over Israel was much further reaching. The nation became strongly united under David’s reign and, through his leadership in war, Israel gained more territory than at any other time in Israel’s history; albeit

Solomon did extend it even further. And why this pleased God so much was *because* David was *passionately* devoted to Him. So, that means ***the nation was strongly united under the Lord God Almighty (YHVVH) when David reigned.*** And, for much of Solomon's reign, it remained that way, which is why Israel flourished even more during most of his reign.

Further, other Scriptures back up the fact that when the 'gates of Zion' were ruled with righteousness, God loved 'her'. For example, Ps 118:19-20 says: *Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD: **This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.*** And, **It is the 'gate of righteousness' that IS the 'gate of the Lord (YHVVH).** This simply means God's 'gate' (judgments) is always righteous. Ps 9:14 also explains that the 'gates of the daughter of Zion' is where *salvation* lies. And that's because, *that's where righteousness dwells.* And, further to this, it was at the 'gates of the tents (tabernacle) of the Lord where the 'sons of Korah' were to give thanks and praise the Lord (2 Chron 31:2). And many other Scriptures explain how the Lord loves Zion (Jerusalem) because *that's* where justice and righteous judgement *first* truly flourished in Israel. And despite the fact that Jerusalem has (since the days of David) been ruled by many wicked men (and some wicked women, even) – and the worst of all is yet to come [<https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/345>] – the Lord (YHVVH) has not forever lost His love for His city. And, as Ezekiel 16 (and many other Scriptures) promise, He will cause the city to flourish with righteousness again (Isa 40, 52, 62, 65, 66; Ezek 16, 36; Zeph 3; Zech 2, 8, 9). Of course, this will *only* be when the *true* King of kings, Jesus Christ (which David was a type of), returns to execute *true* justice and judgment upon ***all*** the earth (Rev 20-21). But, now we know *why* the Lord (YHVVH) loves the 'gates of Zion' more than all the dwellings in Jacob (Ps 87:2): because **He first established the foundation for righteousness from that blessed city** (as vs 1 spoke of). And, Ezekiel 16 also tells us that, after Jesus Christ finishes pouring out God's 'cup up wrath' upon Jerusalem (and those who are established there; i.e. Satan and his followers) then He will fulfill His 'marriage covenant' that He made with Jerusalem (Ezek 16:62-63) for His 'Son' (Jesus Christ) will rule from that location (Jerusalem) forever (Rev 21:2).

Psalms 87

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

The word '**glorious**' here means *to be heavy* or *to make weighty* and it's definitely being used here in a *good* sense: i.e. **numerous, rich, honorable** (#3513). So, Jerusalem (also called Zion) was being spoken of in a very glorious – honorable – way. Remember now, this Psalm was written when the Ark of the Covenant was *first entering* into Zion. And purpose was not just to 'visit' the city but to dwell there. Thus, the city was not *only* the capital of all *civil* activities for Israel; it was *also* the capital city for their *worshipping* the Lord (YHVVH) too. And *that* is clearly *why* this Psalmist says that *glorious* things were being spoken of Zion. Truly, there was *no higher* honor, for any city, than to have than the Ark of the Covenant *dwell there!* Why? Because the Ark

of the Covenant was *symbolic* for *God's presence*, since that's where He showed His 'glory' from at times (Ex 40:33-35; Num 14:10, 16:19,42, 20:6; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron 7:1-3). In fact, the Ark of the Covenant was even called 'the glory' of God (and of Israel) in Ps 78:61 and 1 Sam 4:21-22. And why did God 'reveal' Himself from the Ark of the Covenant? The answer lies within God's own words...

*21 And thou shalt put the mercy seat **above upon the ark**; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.*

*22 And **there I will meet with thee**, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*

Ex 25:21-22

God spoke these words to Moses when He was instructing him on how to make the first Tabernacle, when Israel was in the wilderness (before they even entered the Promise Land). And notice how, on top of the Ark of the Covenant, there was the mercy seat, made of pure gold (Ex 25:17). The mercy seat was therefore God's throne *on earth*! And don't overlook the significance of *where* His mercy seat was... *above* the 'Covenant', which was God's Law that Moses wrote on the tablets. In other words, **the only thing that is 'above' God's Law is His mercy**. As God also said in Ex 33:19, He will be gracious and merciful to whom He chooses to. Now, His grace and mercy are based upon what is in our heart (desires, emotions, motivations, intentions) and mind (thoughts). Therefore, **He's the only one who can see into our heart and mind and know if we're truly repentant** (1 Chron 28:9, 1 Kings 8:39, Ps 7:9, Ps 11:4-5, Prov 17:3, Ps 44:20-21, Ps 94:11, Jer 16:17, Jer 17:9-10, Ezek 11:5, Matt 9:4, Matt 12:25, Luke 5:22, Luke 6:8, Luke 11:17, Luke 24:38, Acts 15:7-9, 1 Cor 3:20, Heb 4:12, 1 Thess 2:4, Rom 8:26-27, 1 John 3:20-21; Heb 4:12-13). **That's why His mercy seat (which is His throne) is above the Law.**

And then, because God's Ark of the Covenant (symbolic of God Himself) was entering into Zion, *that's* why the Psalmist then calls Zion (Jerusalem) the 'city of God', in the latter part of this 3rd verse. And the word '**God**' here is Yehovah's 'title' '**Elohiym** (#430), which means *the Supreme God*, indicating that He is the *one and only true* God. In Apx 4 I., the *Companion Bible* has the following to say about this 'title' of our Heavenly Father...

"ELOHIM occurs 2,7000 times. It's first occurrence (Gen 1:1) connects it with creation, and gives it its essential meaning as the Creator. It indicates His relation to mankind as His creatures (see note on 2 Chron 18:31, where it stands in contrast with Yehovah as indicating convent relationship). 'Elohim is God the Son, the Living 'Word' with creature for to create (John 1:1, Col 1:15-17, Rev 3:14); and later, with human form to redeem (John 1:14). "Begotten of His Father before all worlds; born of His mother, in the world." In this creature form He appeared to the Patriarchs; a form not temporarily assumed."

This information explains why ‘Elohiym (or ‘Elohim) is God *the Creator* putting His omnipotence (‘*El*) *into operation*. And it also explains that this ‘title’ is closely related to God as our Creator – even the one who redeems us (i.e. as Jesus Christ). You see, God’s Word *is life itself*. He *is our existence*. Without Him we cannot exist. And because, like all creation, we were spoken into existence (“*And God said, Let us make man in our own image...*”), **it is His Word that did the actual creation**. His Word is His creative force. **His Word is from whence all life derives its ability to exist**. As it’s written in John 1:1-3, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” **So, God and His Word are One. And Jesus is the Living Word of God because Jesus is God**. That’s to say, He is YHVH in His ‘role’ (office) of the Savior - which is precisely what Jesus’ name (#2424) means in the original Hebrew language (#3091). As John 1:1,14 declares, **Jesus Christ is the *physical* manifestation of God**. In the heavenly dimension, *God is a Spirit* (John 4:24). But in material form – the form He used when He visited us on earth - He is Jesus Christ. To learn more about this, you can check out the following special studies...

Two Separate People <https://t.me/BibleStudyGodsWord/460>
Was Christ Here On Earth Before His Birth <https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/485>
The Trinity <https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1013>
Keep God’s Word, Part 2 of 4 <https://t.me/BibleStudyGodsWord/466>
The Power of God’s Word <https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1223>

And the fact that our Heavenly Father is our *Creator* – and that He chose to dwell in Zion, *forever* (Ezek 16) – is *incredibly* important to understand *the rest of this Psalm*. For it will be speaking about *spiritual* ‘rebirth’ – otherwise known as *salvation*. For it is because of the Holy Spirit – given to us when we believe in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and sincerely strive to obey Him [<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1220>] – that we can be spiritually changed into a new person inside. Paul calls this putting off the ‘old man’ (Rom 6:6, Eph 4:22, Col 3:9, Luke 9:23) and putting on the ‘new man’ (Eph 4:24, Col 2:10). Paul also explains this inner transformation in Romans 8, and points out (in vs 14) that: *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. And, as James 1:18 also explains it: *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures*. And John also explained this inner transformation we must all make if we want to have eternal life: ***Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*** (1 John 5:1). 1 Peter 1:3-5 also speaks about how we are ‘begotten’ by God (spiritually), through Jesus Christ. This process (putting off our rebelliousness to God, learning of Him, and striving to *sincerely* obey Him) IS *what* saves our souls from spiritual death. For only those who actually *want* to obey God *and sincerely* strive to do so, will be allowed to live *eternally*. In short, there will be no rebels (trouble makers) in eternity. So, if you want to have *eternal* life, you’ve got to submit (willingly) to the one and only *true* God (YHVH)

and to Jesus Christ (God manifested in the flesh) who shed His precious blood to atone for our sins, which redeems our soul (from spirital death) when we accept Him *and then* serve Him...

How Much Does God Love Us <https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1344>

Jesus - Our Kinsman Redeemer <https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1347>

Now, this verse also ends with a ‘selah’, which always means to ‘*stop and think*’ about what *has been said* (vs 3) with what’s about to be said (vs 4). So, the ‘glorious things’ spoken of in Zion (the city of God) will be further explained in the following verses (until the next selah). Thus, the *Companion Bible* states that the purpose of this ‘selah’ is to connect the first alternation with the second, showing that it is to be a repeated alternation, which you can see if you look at the outline of the chapter in the notes on the *Companion Bible* [<https://t.me/BestStudyBible/6>].

And so, while this Psalm 87 speaks about the joy of the entrance of the Ark of the Covenant into Zion’ with dancing, music, singing and even shouts for joy... it is *prophetically* speaking about the joy of those who have been ‘begotten’ by the Holy Spirit (and are now, therefore, in a covenantal relationship with God, through Jesus Christ – i.e. Christians) will feel when we see the *true* Jesus Christ finally returning to the ‘city of God’, which is Jerusalem (Zion). And just as ‘glorious things’ were spoken of Zion back in the days this Psalm was written (when Jerusalem was made Israel’s civil and worship capital), so too will glorious things be spoken of it when the most glorious King (Jesus Christ) returns to dwell in Zion (Jerusalem) and rule (righteously) forevermore!

16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.

*17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee **is mighty**; he will save, **he will rejoice over thee with joy**; **he will rest in his love**, **he will joy over thee with singing**.*

18 I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.

19 Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

*20 At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: **for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth**, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.*

Zeph 3:16-20

We’ll pick this up in part 2...

AMEN.