

Tuesday, April 25, 2023 • Read Psalm 87

Questions from the Scripture text: Who wrote this Psalm (superscript)? Especially for what (cf. v7a)? What does v1 describe? Whose foundation? In mountains of what is it found? What/where (v2a) does Yahweh love? More than where/what (v2b)? Than how many of them? What are spoken (v3)? Whom does v3 address? From what places will the Lord enroll people in Zion (v4a–b)? To what extent (v4c–5b)? How can such naturalized (new-nature!) citizenships occur (v5c)? Who records this new/renewed status (v6)? How does v7a convey that this is the public worship of the temple (cf. v2a)? What do all the temple-worshippers think of the church and her public worship (v7b)?

What is so glorious about the church? Psalm 87 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these seven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God Himself is the glory of the church, and He makes her the home and fountain of the holiness of all His holy people.**

Where God's glory is displayed, v1–3. There are two great places where God has appointed to be worshiped: the church and the family. He may be worshiped anywhere, and all of life is to be lived in wonder at Him and devotion to Him, but these are the two institutions that He has specifically established for His worship and for the discipling of His people that comes by that worship.

And even among these two, the Lord has a favorite. "His foundation is in the holy mountains." He has displayed His glory especially at Sinai and Zion/Jerusalem, holy mountains where He gathered His church—and earthly expressions not only of the third heaven, where the assembly of the firstborn now gathers, but even the New Jerusalem, that great and holy city which will descend on the last day. So great is God's preference for public worship that He loves it more than all of the family worship of Israel taken together (v2). This is a glorious thing that is spoken, indeed (v3)!

We love private worship, and well we should, for God loves it. We love family worship, and well we should, for God loves it. But God loves public worship exceedingly more, and so will we, as our hearts and minds are conformed more and more to His.

Where God's people are derived, v4–6. The list of countries in v4 is a who's who of dangerous and devilish enemies ('Rahab' refers not to the prostitute, but is a vicious nickname for Egypt). The Lord makes Himself known among the nations, but these of whom He speaks in v4 are coming to know Him in a way that changes their country of origin. Instead of being "born there" in v4, they are now noted by others to be "born in her" in v5. They have a new birth from "the Most High Himself."

Then, in v6, it is God Himself Who makes a legal declaration about her as He registers the peoples. There are two ways that this happens among men, and both are pictures of what happens as the Lord builds His church: adoption and marriage. Both bring one into the full status of a family as if he had been born there.

Believers must be strangers and aliens to their former homelands by comparison to their new allegiance to Christ. The church is their home because God is their home. The church is their family because God is their family. cf. Ps 45:10; Rut 1:16–17; Luk 14:26; Mt 10:37; Eph 2:19; Php 3:20; Heb 11:9–10, 13–16.

Where God's people are discipled, v7. Finally, in v7, it is God's people themselves who declare their origin to be in the church. The singers and players on instruments are priestly clans, who lead the public worship of the temple, which establishes the setting as public worship. Further, these are those who lead and facilitate the prayers and songs by which the Lord trains His people's thoughts.

Believers are to say of the worship assembly of God, and especially of God Himself, "All my springs are in you." Having begun by the wisdom and power and life of God, let us not think that we will grow in wisdom or strength or life, except in those ways by which God Himself grows us. Specifically, as Christ the "singer and player on instruments" of the New Covenant as admonished us (cf. Eph 5:18–21; Col 3:16–17; Heb 2:12; Ps 19, 119), let us seek especially His grace to us in the means of those grace, means which He has ordained to comprise His public worship.

Where is God most glorified? In church. Where do Christians belong? In church. Where do they grow? In church.

How does the church's place in your life, your week, your hopes, and your heart reflect its glories in this Psalm?

Sample prayer: Lord, Your church is glorious. Your glory is visible everywhere, but You display it most of all in the assembly of Your people. You have given us a new birth into Your city. You have adopted us into Your family. You have betrothed us into Your household. And You have made Your church the place where You cause the life of Christ to grow in us by the work of Your Spirit in the means of Your grace. We bless Your Name for this and ask that You would strengthen and gladden us now in that very worship assembly, through Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP86B "Your Way, Teach Me, LORD" or TPH5 "Hear My Words, O LORD"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 87. These are the words of god, the psalm of the sons of korah. A song. His foundation is in the holy mountains. Yahweh loves the gates of Zion. More than all the dwellings of jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you. Or city of god. I will make mention of rehab and Babylon.

To those who follow. Let's start over.

Psalm 97. These are the words of god. A psalm of the sons of korah a song. His foundation is in the holy mountains. Y'all who he loves the gates of zion. More than all the dwellings of jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you. The city of god. I will make mention of rehab and Babylon to those who know me.

Behold of philistia entire with ethiopia. This one. Was born there. And of Zion, it will be said this one and that one. Were born in her the most high himself shall establish her. Thought we will record. When he registers the people's, This one was born there. Both the singers and the players on instruments say, All my springs.

Firing you. Oh man. Sorry, i just noticed that i missed the Say laws. For whatever reason, this The format of the spinal puts them way out in the margin.

There's a say law. Which, Does not mean breast. The. That hebrew root means increase. So, it may mean, Increase. Pace. The song gets faster. It may mean, Like increase in. Tone like a key change. It may mean increase in. Amplitude. Uh, like it would be louder. It may be an increase in earnestness.

Um, No, no, we don't know. It does. However, Therefore, mark. Some sort of transition. In which either, what has immediately proceeded, or what is coming next? Is emphasized. And the spirit. Thereby breaks the sum up. Into various parts. And so, there's Let's say law at the end of verse 3 there.

And one at the end of verse 6,

So this psalm is about the church. Israel, of course, as The church, Zion Jerusalem. Is. The Lord's church. That he Establishes even at Sinai. Remember? Uh, Stephen refers to

The. People of Israel, even as the church in the wilderness. As he preaches filled with the Holy Spirit, On the day that he died. This is especially looking forward. To the church after Pentecost. The church with Rahab, which is One of the. Scary nicknames for Egypt not related at all to The woman of similar name.

Um, but The name of a sea monster. By which Egypt was sometimes called? But this is talking about the age in which, Uh, even does from Egypt and Babylon Philistia. Entire. An Ethiopia who at one point in scripture have an army of over a million, Uh, with which they're about to come and attack.

But it's describing an age in which The Lord has saved. People from each of these. And, There are three. Glorious things. Not quite literally, his first three says, Where three glorious things. Which are said that the church, In this psal. The first is that the church is where God's glory is displayed.

His foundation is in the holy mountains. So you go up to the holy mountains and really there are two holy mountains and On earth in scripture. Um, And one. Holy mountain, or at least the highest heaven, the third heaven. That glory in which God, Makes his Glory. Most to be displayed among the angels.

What we often call haven't. Um, But in all three cases, then these A holy mountains. That stand tall in the bible. That's the foundation. That's just The, the base of his house. Um, So, you are Uh, you're barely starting to To scratch the surface of Um, Of the lowest part of the display of God.

But his foundation is in the holy mountains. And, The Lord prefers. Public worship over private, we know, That he established the household. He established. Family worship. That's something that has. Precious and highly valued in scripture. But here is Excuse me, here is an amazing statement then. Yahai loves the gates of Zion.

You know, we loves Um, Even the outward. Entry to the assembly of his people. More than all the dwellings of Jacob. He prefers. The one public worship to. All of the family worships put together. There is. X. This is an extraordinary statement. About the value. Of the holy convocation.

On the sabbath. Or the assembling of ourselves together. On the Lord's day. Yes. The Lord referring. In Leviticus numbers. To the holy convocation of the sabbath. And referring to. In the book of Hebrews. To the assembling of ourselves together. On the Lord's day and they're in Hebrews. Uh, talks about coming not to Sinai.

But to Zion, As you go from. Here's 10 and the Assembling of ourselves together and from the Hebrew in, on the day that Hebrews 4 refers to as the Sabbath keeping that remains and then In Hebrews 12. The assembling of ourselves together. At Zion at the congregation of the firstborn.

Um, Making. Uh, reference to those souls of the just That have been perfected. Many of the souls that were described in Hebrews chapter 11. As examples of faith, we're not perfected certainly, in the time that they were examples. And this amazing glorious assembly. Um, where the great feature is of course, got our father and Christ the mediator, whose blood Speaks better.

Then the blood of able. And so, as important as personal worship is, As more important as household, family worship is. Corporate worship public worship. Is. Uh, much more important still. Your way loves the gates of Zion. More than all the dwellings of Jacob. And we as our hearts and minds.

Come to be conformed to Christ's by his spirit. This grows us Through the means of his grace throughout this life. We will come to love and value the public worship more and more. It will be The high point, the place. Where we know God, prefers. The display of his glory.

So, the first glorious thing about the church is that Uh, that it is the great place of The display of God's glory. The second thing is that it becomes, Um, the Home, the family of origin. Of God's people. It is the place from which God's people are derived. As the Lord here.

Takes captive by salvation, of course. Uh, but as he here, takes captive of an Egyptian, a Babylonian, a Philistian material. And Ethiopian. He writes them as it were. New birth certificates. This one was born there. This one and that one. We're born in her outside. You know, it records when he registers the people this one was born there.

He completely changes their allegiance and identity. Now, this is in line with Um, two of the great images that God gives us. For what he is doing in salvation. Adoption and marriage. He has adopting us. As his children in Christ. That Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren. And an adoption, what happens?

Some someone gets brought into a family and becomes every bit as much part of that family. As if they had been born there, And in a marriage. What happens? The wife is joined to her husband and he is now her Uh, her her primary identity. She used to forget her father's house, she used to take his name.

Um, And so yeah, no longer. Are is the primary identity of these? Um, Egyptians Babylonians and so forth. That from which they came. But God gives us. Such a completely new identity and allegiance and belonging. That it is. As if we were born. Into his family. For the difference between Of course, the Jew and the Gentile.

The Israelites and someone from the nations. That would have been shocking to them. To read and hear the Lord saying, Than it is as much. And that those who need converts are as much Israelites as much. Zionite, if we can. Put it that way, since that's The name entitled it's being used here.

Not just of Israel generally. But of the public worship specifically of the family as it is gathered before, God? I want to shocking for them to hear. That these have. Um, On their birth certificate as it were born in Zion. And when the Lord gives us the spiritual birth from about, The new birth, the second birth.

He is giving us. A birth that comes by his spirit and identifies us. With the assembly of his people. With that worship. Well, would that worshipping assembly? Where his glory is displayed. So the first great glory of the church where God's glory is displayed. The second great glory of of the church, the assembly of the church.

Um, it is where god's people are derived. And the third great glory. Is. It is where god's people are disciplined. Verse 7, both the singers and the players on the instruments. Say And these singers in the players on the instruments. Remember, are priests Their priests ordained by god. For the leading of god's people in the singing of god's word.

And these songs. Uh, come in various forms of instruction. The three. You're with because the new testament repeats their names and translates their names for us, Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. And so, god has given His word to instruct us. Uh, even by song. And so here are these singers.

And here are these players on instruments? Officers, provided by god to lead. The people who have been given a new birth from god in see, in songs that are taught by god. And one of the things that we sing and that we learn from As this design for the singing in public worshipers fulfilled, as we learned to say of god's worship assemblies, all my springs, Are in you.

So we're admonishing one another in Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. And we're saying, god has given me. The public worship. As the place where he continues to give me life. This is the difference between a spring. And a sister. Or even a well sometimes. Wells are dry. Um, They need to be filled up from the groundwater around them.

Uh, sometimes systems are empty. If you don't fill them up or if the rain doesn't fill them up. Uh, they may be filled up one of the one of the great images. Of the hopelessness of our righteousness in scripture. Is that of a cracked sister. Where even if you try to have cold water in it, it runs out because this system has a crack in it.

But this is not a sister and it is not a well, it is a spring or a fountain. Where there is continual fresh supply of new water, new life. Uh, and that is the picture for the believer. Of god, providing. His public worship was. As the place from which he continues to give us new fresh supplies of grace.

His words to dwell richly in us, his spirit to fill us. All of the benefits of his breathed out word, read. Heard. Preached heard preached. Prayed son. And even. Um, Even a sacraments, which Communicate via our other census. Those things which we read and hear. In his word. But here is the place where the lord continues to give us from the springs of his life.

Uh, just as we read of course. In hebrews chapter 12. That the lord is shaking earth and heaven. And they are not going to remain. But we are going to remain. And our inheritance is going to remain. And jesus speaking to us from heaven, because he now is the singer.

And he now is the player on the instruments, and he now is the preacher. The Lord jesus. Interceding for us from having the, the mediator. The public worship on earth is now led. By him who sits in the heavenly zion, which we join In our worship assemblies. And one of the things he trains our tongues and hearts to say, Of those worship assemblies because god is there.

Because it's God's foundation. One of the things he trains us to say, Of those worship assemblies is All my springs. Are in you. God has given me. Um, a fountain, a spring From which He continually gives me more of himself. More of his grace. More of his spirit more of his life, more of christ.

By the faith. That the spirit. Increases and through which the spirit applies christ to me. And he keeps giving me more and more. Of himself. And so, The worship assembly the church. The people of god. Indeed. Is glorious. And he's given us this song. To sing. To be instructed, thereby.

Let's pray. Father, we confess that we have not loved the assembling of your people. Or understood. How it is the foundation. Your own foundation, where you display your glory. As we as we ought to love it. And as we ought to understand it, We have not followed you in loving the gates of zion.

More than all the dwellings of Jake. And we have not beheld, you and considered you. In your glory, where your Foundation is laid. Indeed, we have often. Continue to identify ourselves. With. Those places on earth. From which you have brought us. Rather than to the heavenlies rather than with the heavenly Zion To which you have brought us.

Into which you have adopted us. In which you have married us unto christ. As members of his bride. And we have lived as those whose life dries up. Rather than those. Who have a continual spring of life from you? By the means that you have provided, In your church.

And so we pray. Oh god, that you would give us repentance. And faith toward jesus christ. That resting upon him. And believing according to what he says. We might buy your spirit by your grace, by your power. By your life. Come to think of your church. The way that you do.

Grant that we would do. So For, we ask it in jesus name. Amen.