

When You Wonder What God Thinks about Ethnic Diversity

Psalm 87

Background

We feel inclined to take our place by the side of those who would suggest the days of Hezekiah as the time that is most suitable for the writing of the psalm **though no writer dare speak on this subject with finality.**¹

There is little evidence for dating the psalm.²

God has chosen the _____ for his worship, 1-3.

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

The LORD founded his city in Zion and made the mountain on which it stands “holy” by his act. Zion, the human city built by men, *became* the city of God. It acquired a specific role in God’s way with the world (see Psalms 48 and 132). **The reason for the choice of Zion is “not the worth of the place, but the free love of God”** God preferred Zion to all the other sanctuaries (NRSV, “dwellings”) in the territory of Jacob-Israel. It is God’s inexplicable love, which has no basis beyond its own existence, that led to the election of Israel (Deut. 7:8) and to the choice of Zion (Ps. 78:68—69), and will be expressed in the election of all people, the world, in Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Faith sees the earthly things God has chosen, not in terms of themselves alone, but in the light of what God’s love has made them. That is the reason glorifying songs are sung about Zion (v. 3).³

God did not choose Zion because it was _____. God chose Zion and that made it _____.

Glorious things that might be said of Zion:

“the Lord has chosen Zion for His habitation” (Ps. 132:13); or that His holy mountain “is the joy of all the earth” (48:2); or, “out of Zion shall go forth the law” (Is. 2:3); or that it is “a habitation of justice” (Jer. 31:23).

It is place of “prayer for all nations,” Mark 11:17.

God has chosen the _____ to come to this place of worship, 4-6.

Why they are here.

They “know” God, has to do with intimate knowledge, salvation, v 4

They will be counted as those who are born there, (3x!), 4, 5, 6.

They have all the rights and privileges of Jewish people, they belong here.

“I’m not worthy to be here, but praise God I belong.”⁴

¹ Leupold, *Psalms*, p. 622.

² Tate, *Psalms*, p. 393.

³ Mays, *Psalms*, p. 281.

⁴ From a Bill Gaither song.

God has chosen to include them.

the highest himself shall establish her. ⁶The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there, v 5c, 6a.

Who is there?

Ancient foes, people who caused Israel no end of pain, sorrow, death, destruction!

Rahab = Egypt

Babylon

Philistia, old nemesis.

Cush = black people

What is the mood?

Celebrative, v 7

So What?

It is clear that God desires all kinds of people to worship together in his temple, unified worship in the here and now.

Christ has made that possible, this is the gospel, all ethnics worship as one in one place.

¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. **His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,** ¹⁶**and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.** ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ⁵

⁶This mystery is that through the gospel the **Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.** ⁶

¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ⁷

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁸

We must care about the _____ of the Gospel, and the _____ of God.

Who is God?	What has he said?	What has he done?	What does that mean to me?

⁵The New International Version, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984; Eph 2:14-18.

⁶The New International Version, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984; Eph 3:6.

⁷The New International Version, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984; Eph 3:10-11.

⁸The New International Version, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984; Eph 4:1-6.

