

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Eighty-Seven - Finding Stability In Threatening Times

(Psalm 87:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. There are times when events or relationships can threaten to undo the institution of a marriage, a family, a Christian ministry or job arrangement. The threat itself may overwhelm the believer so that he may not know how to handle, or perhaps even understand what he must do so as to deal effectively with the threat.
- B. Psalm 87:1-7 reveals how to handle such a problem by giving direction and encouragement toward finding stability in such threatening times:

II. Finding Stability In Threatening Times, Psalm 87:1-7.

- A. The background to this psalm's authorship was apparently the nation's sense of insecurity at the close call it had experienced during Sennacherib's attempted invasion, 2 Chronicles 32:23 with Leupold, Psalms, p 622.
 1. The psalmist identifies Egypt figuratively with the mythical figure, Rahab in verse 4, harking to Isaiah's same reference recorded in Isaiah 30:7. Isaiah then lived contemporaneously with king Hezekiah who was involved as Israel's king during Sennacherib's invasion attempt against Jerusalem, Ibid.
 2. Since **Babylon** and *not Assyria* is mentioned in the list of nations in Psalm 87:4, it seems proper to conclude that Assyria had passed out of prominence, also fitting the era of Hezekiah, Ibid.
 3. According to 2 Chronicles 32:23, many people brought gifts to Jerusalem in honor of the Lord, a fact that would fit the theme of this psalm, Ibid.
 4. Thus, these facts coupled with the Psalm's extolling the beauties and strength of Mount Zion in Jerusalem *probably* indicate a chord of insecurity that had been plucked through Jerusalem's close call with Sennacherib's failed invasion attempt. **Whether this was the setting or not, we can use the psalm to address the problem of insecurity and instability in such a circumstance by virtue of its INTERNAL content ALONE!**
- B. To offset insecurity then, we apply the content of the psalm that notes that the **FOUNTAINHEAD** of blessing for **all INDIVIDUALS** of *even (possibly) threatening GENTILES* is Israel's **GOD!**
 1. God is presented as establishing Mount Zion in Jerusalem **Himself**, Ps. 87:5b.
 2. Accordingly, He sets His foundation there on the holy mount of Zion, Ps. 87:1.
 3. This being so, even the mere **gates** of Zion are more blessed by God's favor than the entire **dwelling**s of the **rest** of the nation of Israel, Ps. 87:2.
 4. Glorious things are spoken of Zion due to God's honor and blessing of it, Ps. 87:3.
 5. In fact, from this place, the **individuals** of the **GENTILE nations**, the Gentiles who have been the cause of much of Israel's insecurities as in Sennacherib's invasion attempt, will **themselves** be blessed by their submission to and identification with Israel's God, Ps. 87:4-6.
 6. These **individuals** of even the **GENTILE** nations will glorify Zion, testifying that all of their individual fountains of blessing are in Zion because the God of blessing who blessed them is there, Ps. 87:7.

Lesson: *Overcoming insecurity and instability when events or relationships threaten our jobs, marriages, family relationships, Christian ministries, etc. takes REALIZING that ALL security and stability comes from GOD ALONE! That REALIZATION causes one to trust in GOD ALONE as OPPOSED to INSECURE sources of blessing, be they one's own strength or that of other people (like a nation or fellow nations)! In this way, what THREATENS us ceases to be a THREAT, for the fickle CREATED entity we USED to trust upon is REPLACED by the SURE GOD Himself!*

Application: *(1) Insecurity and instability arise from making non-divine entities our SOURCE of security and stability, for, as THESE reveal their CRACKS in being inadequate provision sources, they lead to trouble. (2) Conversely, security and stability arise from making GOD ALONE one's Source of security and stability, for HE has NO cracks of weakness or unfaithfulness. (3) Thus, we must learn through insecurity trials to SHIFT our expectation of security away from man's institutions and from "strong" people in them, and look to God alone (cf. Jer. 17:5-6, 7-8)!*