

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 111 – Glorious Zion Through Blessed Be The Lord (Psalms 87-89)

1. How special was Zion to the Lord?

Very special: *“(1) His foundation is in the holy mountains. (2) The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. (3) Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah” (Psalms 87:1-3).*

* *“(1) Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. (2) Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King” (Psalms 48:1-2).*

* *“(2) And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (3) And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 48:2-3; cf. Acts 2).*

** Even the figure of Zion is used to show the spiritual kingdom of now (**Hebrews 12:22-23**).

2. What is the difference between Zion and any other place the Psalmist made mention of (i.e. Babylon, Tyre, etc.)?

While one might make mention of other cities, Zion is much more significant. The person born there, the singers there, etc. are all highly noted: *“(4) I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. (5) And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. (6) The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah. (7) As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee” (Psalms 87:4-7).*

3. In the first nine verses of the eighty-eighth Psalm, what do we learn about the penman of this Psalm?

**Before we even start, let's remember that because some say God is punishing them, that does not mean He is (i.e. JOB). We will proceed with the assumption that this Psalmist is not exaggerating.

“(1) O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee” – He's been diligent in prayer. This certainly can be a mark of the faithful (**Luke 6:11-12 and I Thessalonians 3:9-10**). We'll soon realize that he's not being heard.

“(2) Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry” - Now we find him begging for God to listen to his prayers (**Lamentations 3:8**).

“(3) For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.” - Death is knocking and this individual is in trouble (**Proverbs 11:8**).

“(4) I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength.” - (Isaiah 38:17-18).

“(5) Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.” – He’s saying he’s looked at like he’s already dead (Isaiah 38:10-12).

“(6) Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.” – (Proverbs 4:19).

“(7) Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.” – (Psalms 102:10).

“(8) Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.” – (Psalms 31:11).

“(9) Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.” – (Lamentations 3:49-51).

4. What does the Psalmist ask God about the dead and the “land of forgetfulness”?

“(10) Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.

(11) Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?

(12) Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness” (Psalms 88:10-12)?

** Consider this: “What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth” (Psalms 30:9)?*

** “(18) For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. (19) The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth” (Isaiah 38:18-19).*

5. While this Psalmist has cried unto God, does he feel that God has responded kindly?

Not at all: *“(13) But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. (14) LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? (15) I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. (16) Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. (17) They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. (18) Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness” (Psalms 88:13-18).*

6. Is the mercy of God something good to sing about?

Sure: *“(1) I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. (2) For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens” (Psalms 89:1-2).*

** “And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name” (Romans 15:9).*

7. Whose seed did God promise to establish forever?

David's: "(3) *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, (4) Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah*" (**Psalms 89:3-4**).

* "Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel" (**I Kings 8:16**).

* "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (**Isaiah 55:3**).

** "(31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. (32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: (33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (**Luke 1:31-33**).

8. What should be found in the congregation of God's saints?

"(5) *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.* (6) *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?* (7) **God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him**" (**Psalms 89:5-7**).

* Yes, fear should be in the assembly concerning Go (**Acts 5:11** and **Hebrews 12:28-29**).

9. What things does the Psalmist say shows God's strength?

"(8) *O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?* (9) Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. (10) Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. (11) *The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.* (12) The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name. (13) *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.* (14) Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (**Psalms 89:8-14**).

10. What will the blessed people of God do?

"(15) *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.* (16) In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. (17) *For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.* (18) For **the LORD is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king**" (**Psalms 89:15-18**).

11. What is revealed to us about a vision concerning David?

“(19) Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one (**cf. II Peter 1:21**), and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. (20) I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him (**cf. I Samuel 16:1; 13**): (21) With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. (22) The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. (**cf. I Chronicles 17:7-10**) (23) And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him (**II Samuel 3:1; 7:1; 9**). (24) But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. (25) I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers (**cf. I Kings 4:21**). (26) He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation (**cf. II Samuel 22:1; 47**). (27) Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth (**this certainly appears to be a reference to the resurrected Christ – Colossians 1:14-18**). (28) My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. (29) His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven (**I Kings 2:12 and Matthew 1:1**). (30) If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; (31) If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; (32) Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. (33) Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail (**II Samuel 7:12-16**). (34) My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. (35) Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David (**Numbers 23:19 and Titus 1:2**). (36) His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. (37) It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah” (**Psalms 89:19-37**).

12. The Psalmist realized God would not cast off Israel forever (Psalms 89:34-37). However, what in our current context reveals that God was angry with Israel at the time the eighty-ninth Psalm was written?

“(38) But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. (39) Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. (40) Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. (41) All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours. (42) Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. (43) Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. (44) Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. (45) The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah” (**Psalms 89:38-45**).

* “(9) ¶ And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, (10) And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. (11) Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. (12) Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son” (**I Kings 11:9-12**).

* Israel often had to plead with God to remember His covenant with them: *“Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us”* (**Jeremiah 14:21**).

** They really needed not worry that God would forget His covenant with them: *“He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations”* (**Psalms 105:8**).

13. What did the Psalmist fear about the wrath of God?

“How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire” (**Psalms 89:46**; cf. **Hebrews 10:31**)?

14. Did the Psalmist fear dying before God's wrath subsided?

Yes: *“(47) Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? (48) What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah”* (**Psalms 89:47-48**).

15. What did the Psalmist ask God to remember?

“(49) Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth? (50) Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people” (**Psalms 89:49-50**).

16. What had the enemies of Israel been doing during this time?

“Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed” (**Psalms 89:51**).

* *“(3) And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, **I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.** (4) Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; (5) They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind”* (**Jeremiah 19:3-5**).

17. Though the Psalmist wanted the punishment of the people of God to cease, what does he conclude this Psalm with?

Praise to God: *“Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen”* (**Psalms 89:52**).