

PSALM 147

Praise for Jerusalem's Restoration and Prosperity

INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Septuagint Version makes verses 12-20 a separate psalm, and others have suggested that there are three psalms here; (1-6), (7-11), and (12-20). But these three sections form one beautiful unity for praising God. The time seems to be the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and may be the time of rebuilding the walls and hanging the gates in 445BC.
- B. Miller points out the three works of God which make Him praise worthy as the divisions of the psalm:
 1. He is the Builder of Jerusalem (147:1-6).
 2. He is the Sustainer of the Universe (147:7-11).
 3. He is the God of Zion (147:12-20).

THE TEXT.

147:1 Praise the LORD!

For it is good to sing praises to our God;
For it is pleasant *and* praise is becoming.

2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem;

He gathers the outcasts of Israel.

3 He heals the brokenhearted

And binds up their wounds.

4 He counts the number of the stars;

He gives names to all of them.

5 Great is our Lord and abundant in strength;

His understanding is infinite.

6 The LORD supports the afflicted;

He brings down the wicked to the ground.

7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;

Sing praises to our God on the lyre,

8 Who covers the heavens with clouds,

Who provides rain for the earth,

Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

9 He gives to the beast its food,

And to the young ravens which cry.

10 He does not delight in the strength of the horse;

He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man.

11 The LORD favors those who fear Him,

Those who wait for His lovingkindness.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

13 For He has strengthened the bars of your gates;

He has blessed your sons within you.

14 He makes peace in your borders;

He satisfies you with the finest of the wheat.

15 He sends forth His command to the earth;

His word runs very swiftly.

16 He gives snow like wool;

He scatters the frost like ashes.

17 He casts forth His ice as fragments;

Who can stand before His cold?

18 He sends forth His word and melts them;

He causes His wind to blow and the waters to flow.

19 He declares His words to Jacob,

His statutes and His ordinances to Israel.

20 He has not dealt thus with any nation;

And as for His ordinances, they have not known them.

Praise the LORD!

COMMENTS.

A. He is the Builder of Jerusalem.

[v1] "Praise the Lord!" Notice that the call to praise begins each division. Miller points out that most of the verbs of this psalm are in the present tense, which indicates that the actions being described are taking place at the time of writing the psalm.

[v2,3] "The Lord builds up Jerusalem..." But the descriptions of the building is not of the physical structure, but of the people: "...He gathers ...the outcasts... heals the brokenhearted... binds up their wounds." So this psalm does not seem to focus on the walls or gates as much as on the people.

[v4] "He counts the number of the stars; He calls them by name." The *Interpreter's Bible* points out that "According to the ancient ideas, to name a thing was to call it into existence." This would then, praise God for creating the stars.

[v5] God is not only great in power but also in understand or wisdom.

B. He is the Sustainer of the Universe.

[v8,9] "...clouds... rain... grass... He gives to the beast its food..." God's blessings in nature provides for both man and beast.

[v10,11] "He does not delight in the strength of horses... legs of a man." Here are symbols of physical strength. "The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him... who hope in His mercy." God wants man's reverence and appreciation.

C. He is the God of Zion.

[v13] "For He has strengthened the bars of your gates..." It seems less likely that this refers to the physical building of the gates as to the Lord's blessings which strengthen the people. It may well be both as Miller says, "The result obtained in the building and fortifying of Jerusalem is that parents feel that their children are secure."

[v13-18] Coffman says that M'Caw lists a four-fold blessing that God had brought upon Jerusalem: "Security (13a), numbers (13b), peace (14a), and provision (14b)."

"...Snow... frost... hail... cold..." are mentioned which seemed unusual for Jerusalem which seldom had either. It may be figurative or refer to unusual characteristics that they were spared because "He sends out His word and melts them..." God's blessings spare them these discomforts.

[v19,20] "He declares His word to Jacob... to Israel." Here is the greatest blessing that God gave Israel--His word to guide them. "He has not dealt thus with any nation... they have not known them."

Therefore, "Praise the Lord!"