

Psalm 147

Jerusalem

Read Psalm 147:1-6: Most psalms are about one man praising God for being rescued. This is a collective praise psalm. It describes how blessed and valued Jerusalem is to God. Jerusalem is the appointed gathering place for many men to meet with God. Praise is more complete in a large group than as a solo. Many psalms are from the perspective of a wounded individual crying out to God. This psalm is geared more to the entire collection of gathered saints, who are unified before the LORD. That makes it more heavenly.

Nothing in nature or manmade can impress God; and yet he values *The Jerusalem Concept*. Does God value the literal city of Jerusalem; or is it what it represents? God orchestrates everything in the universe. It is very impressive; and is quite a backdrop if it only exists to provide a setting for *the Jerusalem concept*. You cannot think of Jerusalem without thinking of its city walls and its temple. The idea of Jerusalem is about God dwelling with holy men (Immanuel).

We all have our place (in the wall) where we fit in. It may seem like nothing is happening until you step out of place. Our presence is missed, and it leaves a void. You feel the weight of your decision when you try to fit in elsewhere. We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us; and we hold up the next generation in prayer. We also share the load with our brothers and sisters alongside of us.

Masonry Walls of Living Stones

Jerusalem is built largely of Jerusalem Stone, which reflectively-shines at sunrise and sunset. It is a This special city of God is a picture of the interconnected and supporting saints gather with a heart of praise and worship.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)



A single block of Jerusalem stone is not very valuable or useful. In fact, a single block looks more like construction debris, but a wall is beautiful. A well-constructed wall, made of many blocks or stones is useful and valuable. The bible tells us that figuratively, **we are living stones** that have a place in the walls in God's temple.

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Revelation 21:22-27)

To further this illustration, we are told that **Jesus is the cornerstone** of these temple walls.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

What does it mean that Jesus is the cornerstone? The cornerstone is the first stone in the structure. It establishes the vertical and horizontal controls and direction. It also holds together two walls (Jews and Gentiles). Jesus is the first member of the church, who leads the way and provides direction for all of us.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed

to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:28-29)

These verses also describe God's use of the outcasts of Israel. The idea is that God can make use of that which has been discarded and thrown out (individual stones). The dispersion of Israel has been to every nation; but God is bringing his people back home to Israel. The word diaspora is used to describe how the Jews were taken out of their homeland. Diaspora means dispersion. It was a prophesied correction from God.

The word *Aliyah* translates as going up in elevation. It is the word used today, for Jews who are returning to Israel. That is partially because you have to go uphill if you are traveling to Jerusalem. It is a hill surrounded by valleys. God is regathering his scattered Jews from around the world, back to their homeland. God is regathering his scattered stones.

The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers (Deuteronomy 7:7)

The Jews were a scattered and humiliated people. God has other societal rejects that he is calling as well. God also puts a premium on those who cannot care for themselves.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

The idea is that what man did resulted in disaster and destruction.

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:41-45)

God had to tear it down and rebuild it. Israel became a notable place of idolatry and sin. The walls of Jerusalem were eventually rebuilt with broken and burnt stones.

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mathew 24:1-2)

We should rethink our concept of modern masonry walls, having cement components. The temple walls in the bible were built differently. We have archaeological findings that provide some insight on how the temple walls were built. The remains of Herod's Temple have been studied.

Herod's temple stones weighed between 4,000-160,000 lbs. each! They were *dry stacked*, without mortar. The massive stones were moved on wooden rollers, and pulled with ropes and yoke of oxen. The surrounding grade at the temple site was gradually raised with every course, so that the oxen just pulled the stones into place, without any hoisting. The surrounding soil was later cut back down to its original grade after the completion.

Each stone was carefully studied before the stone masons began to cut it to size. There are uniquely natural flaws and fissures in each vein of pale limestone (Jerusalem Stone). Likewise, we have natural tendencies that determine our place in the body of Christ. A mason would use a pick to make a groove 4-6" deep along those natural divisions. Then pieces of wood would be inserted into these cracks...and soaked with water until they expanded. The stones were typically cut to widths between 18"-5'. The temple walls were 16' thick. Next, they would be squared off on each side. An extra 12" handle was left on a couple sides for transit; so that ropes could be wrapped and secured. This wing was cut off upon delivery.

The entire temple construction process consisted of cutting down the foundation grade to a level bedrock, then shaping the stones, and lastly bringing the stones into their places. Each stone was carefully sized to fit for a very specific dimension. In the same way, our role is based on those who we support and stand alongside with.

The Book of Nehemiah is about rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem amidst a massive heap of rubble. Nehemiah was broken hearted over the report of his homeland, as he served the King of Persia. Nehemiah was given the king's support and provision to undertake this wall-rebuilding project. This is similar to where we stand today. Our society is in moral ruins. Like Nehemiah, we survey the terrain in unbelief. So much destruction. So much loss...and for no good reason. God has called us to be a little like Nehemiah; and begin the work of taking ahold of ruined lives and societies outcasts; and rebuilding lives in the body of Christ. As each life is rebuilt, our society (wall) comes back together.

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. (Ezekiel 22:30)

Read Psalm 147:7-11: In heaven we will sing praises with greater understanding and depth. The closer the pilgrims get to the temple in their trek for the holy holidays the more that the praise psalms sound like songs from heaven.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be

their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.” (Revelation 21: 3-5)

God is not impressed by anything; but he does appreciate followers who take him seriously. God has put many things in place in heaven and earth to make a home for us. Contrary to all expectations, the laws of physics seem precisely “fine-tuned” for the existence of complex life. God uses complexity far beyond our understanding, but presents it in the most simple ways. We have a lot to be thankful for.

- The Earth’s **distance** from the sun is just right. The sun warms the Earth, and it is not too hot or too cold—it is just right
- The Earth’s **tilt** on its axis is ideal for life.
 - a. If it were tilted any more, the temperature would swing too much between super-hot summers and super-cold winters.
 - b. If it were tilted any less, too much sunshine all year long would super-heat the equator and too little heat would reach the north and south regions.
- Liquid **water** is necessary for life to exist. The Earth is the only planet with enough liquid water—consider the oceans, lakes, rivers, and streams.
- The **size** of the Earth is perfect for maintaining the gravity we need so we don’t float away or get crushed. We can walk and run with ease. Many other planets don’t have the right amount of gravity for us to live there.
- The Earth has a **magnetic shield** around it that protects life from the sun’s harmful rays.

God has set up many factors that affect our suitable home on earth; making it uniquely-able to be a home for mankind. There are endless aspects to our air content, planetary orbits, our atmosphere, and so many other things that have to be exactly as they are. NASA has spent a lot of money looking for habitable places throughout the universe. None have been found.

God is not impressed by things he has made, or things he has to sustain. Armies and jets and rockets do not impress him at all. There is nothing that man or nature or the universe can do to affect God. God has to make them exist and he determines their paths. To find life outside of God is hopeless, because it does not exist.

All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" (Daniel 4:35)

Read Psalm 147:12-20: God has a well-orchestrated universe and planet for us to live. We have everything that we need. We have sustenance and direction as well. All of the nations in the world have a history that is somewhat defined by their interaction with the Jews.

Everything that we need is in the Jerusalem Concept. Faith, food and love. Our wandering hearts take us away beyond the gates to explore our options. The alluring messages do not live up to their billing. There is no place like home. Home is uniquely a place where we fit in.

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133:1)*