

PSALMS 86 and 87

This psalm was written when David was experiencing great affliction, and it is eminently suitable for all Christians. We are everywhere encouraged in Scripture to lift up our souls to God in prayer, for he is great in goodness and mercy and does wondrous things.

Psalm 86 A Prayer of David.

- 1 Incline Your ear, O YAHWEH, *and* answer me; for I am afflicted and needy.
- 2 Preserve my soul, for I am a godly man;
O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You.
- 3 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You I cry all day long.
- 4 Make glad the soul of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
- 5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive,
and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.
- 6 Give ear, O YAHWEH, to my prayer; and give heed to the voice of my supplications!
- 7 In the day of my trouble I shall call upon You, for You will answer me.
- 8 There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours.
- 9 All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
and they shall glorify Your name.
- 10 For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God.

- 11 Teach me Your way, O YAHWEH; I will walk in Your truth;
unite my heart to fear Your name.
- 12 I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
and will glorify Your name forever.
- 13 For Your lovingkindness toward me is great,
and You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.
- 14 O God, arrogant men have risen up against me,
and a band of violent men have sought my life, and they have not set You before them.
- 15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.
- 16 Turn to me, and be gracious to me; oh grant Your strength to Your servant,
and save the son of Your handmaid.
- 17 Show me a sign for good, that those who hate me may see *it* and be ashamed,
because You, O YAHWEH, have helped me and comforted me.

The 87th psalm is a song in honor of Jerusalem, often called Zion. The Psalmist takes a particular thought of the preceding psalm and develops it more fully, namely, verse 9: "All

nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and they shall glorify Your name." The form this psalm takes is one of exuberant praise on the part of Zion herself over the prospect of adding these many outside nations to her citizenship rolls. Therefore this psalm is eloquent testimony to the high hope of the nation of Israel's worldwide mission.

Many scholars conceive that the psalm was written at the time of the founding of David's city of Zion. But the mention of Babylon seems to imply a later date. It would appear that Jerusalem and the Temple had enjoyed a long history, and thus "glorious things" of her could be spoken, as that great hymn, based on verse 3, declares. Among other marvels of God's love for Jerusalem was the fact that the Assyrian Sennacherib left it untouched when other cities of Israel and Judah had fallen victims to his cruelty. It was during Hezekiah's reign that Babylon became prominent and Tyre more famous, and thus we are not surprised to find those nations mentioned in the psalm. But without more sufficient evidence, nothing definitive as to the date and occasion of its writing can be determined.

Psalm 87

A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song.

- 1 His foundation is in the holy mountains.
- 2 YAHWEH loves the gates of Zion more than all the *other* dwelling places of Jacob.
- 3 Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah
- 4 "I shall mention Rahab and Babylon among those who know Me; behold, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia: 'This one was born there.'"
- 5 But of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her"; and the Most High Himself will establish her.
- 6 YAHWEH will count when He registers the peoples, "This one was born there." Selah
- 7 Then those who sing as well as those who play the flutes *shall say*,
"All my springs of joy are in you."

PRAYER

O Lord God, you are good and gracious. Your mercy has been extended to all who call upon you in saving faith, both Jew and Gentile. Bless all those who go abroad to foreign lands, often at the risk of their own lives, to spread the message that Jesus Christ calls sinners to repentance, and that if they come they will most assuredly be welcomed and not cast away. Let your word be heard especially in Israel, that you have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but you plead with them to turn back in repentance and live. The Lord Jesus will be coming again soon, and then Jew and Gentile will live together praising the triune God throughout eternity. Let us be zealous servants until then. We ask in the name of our great Redeemer, Jesus the Messiah. Amen.