

Israel's Hymnal
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PSALM ONE HUNDRED FORTY-SEVEN

[Pss 147:1] Praise ye Jehovah; For it is good to sing praises unto our God; For it is pleasant, (and) praise is comely.

[Pss 147:2] Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem; He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

[Pss 147:3] He healeth the broken in heart, And bindeth up their wounds.

[Pss 147:4] He counteth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by (their) names.

[Pss 147:5] Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

[Pss 147:6] Jehovah upholdeth the meek: He bringeth the wicked down to the ground.

[Pss 147:7] Sing unto Jehovah with thanksgiving; Sing praises upon the harp unto our God,

[Pss 147:8] Who covereth the heavens with clouds, Who prepareth rain for the earth, Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.

[Pss 147:9] He giveth to the beast his food, (And) to the young ravens which cry.

[Pss 147:10] He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.

[Pss 147:11] Jehovah taketh pleasure in them that fear him, In those that hope in his lovingkindness.

[Pss 147:12] Praise Jehovah, O Jerusalem; Praise thy God, O Zion.

[Pss 147:13] For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within thee.

[Pss 147:14] He maketh peace in thy borders; He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

[Pss 147:15] He sendeth out his commandment upon earth; His word runneth very swiftly.

[Pss 147:16] He giveth snow like wool; He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.

[Pss 147:17] He casteth forth his ice like morsels: Who can stand before his cold?

[Pss 147:18] He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.

[Pss 147:19] He showeth his word unto Jacob, His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel.

[Pss 147:20] He hath not dealt so with any nation; And as for his ordinances, they have not known them. Praise ye Jehovah.

THE WORK OF THE RECONSTRUCTION PREPARATORY TO THE MILLENNIUM

- I. The work of reconstruction and the process of accomplishment (vss. 2-6)
- II. God's present provision for all (vss. 7-11)
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"Praise ye Jehovah: For it is good to sing praises unto our God:
For it is pleasant, *and* praise is comely (Ps. 147:1).

It is a good thing for one to praise God; it is pleasant; and it is proper. People who know Him, and who appreciate His goodness to them, never need the exhortation to worship Him. They instinctively and naturally do this, through a feeling of gratitude and appreciation for what He does for them. At the same time it becomes necessary for those who do not realize keenly their utter dependence upon God to have their attention called to the fact that they should praise and worship God.

I. The work of reconstruction and the process of accomplishment

"Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem; He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
He healeth the broken in heart, And bindeth up their wounds.
He counteth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by *their* names.
Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.
Jehovah upholdeth the meek: He bringeth the wicked down to the ground (vss. 2-6).

In order for us to understand the full significance of this quotation, we must know certain things that are foretold in the other portions of the Scripture. In other words, the psalmist assumed a knowledge on the part of his readers of certain other vital facts that are necessary for the understanding of his message.

From other passages we know that, during the great Tribulation, God's judgments will be thorough-going, and that the civilization upon the earth will be destroyed completely. Also the very foundations of this earth will be broken up. Our globe itself will be moved out of its place, and it will therefore sway to and fro like a hammock and stagger like a drunken man. In addition to the things that will take place upon the earth at that time, there will occur great changes in the heavenly bodies. For instance, in Isaiah, chapter 34, we see that at the end of the Tribulation all the hosts of heaven will be dissolved, and that they will disappear from the skies like the leaves from off the fig tree or those from off the vine. The Apostle Peter spoke of the same events in II Peter, chapter 3. There is perfect agreement in the two passages. When these changes take place among the heavenly bodies and upon the earth, conditions upon the earth will be such that there could be no millennial reign of righteousness, peace, and joy. In order that there might be such a reign established, the Lord will have to do some creative work, both in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. With these things clearly in mind, we are now prepared to examine the verses quoted above more particularly.

According to verse 2, "Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem; He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel." One would judge from these words that in the original the finite verbs occurred. But such is not the case. With the noun, Jehovah, occur participles which make the picture very graphic. The inspired psalmist, as onlooker, observes Jehovah as He is building up Zion and speaks of it as "Jehovah building Zion." We could express the same thought by saying, "Behold, I see Jehovah as He is building up Zion." In other words, the psalmist states that he was carried forward in vision and saw Jehovah as He carried on His work of reconstruction, making Jerusalem the praise and the joy of the whole earth. It is to be the beauty spot of the globe. (For these thoughts, see Psalm 48:1,2; Isaiah 62:7.) At this future time the topography of Palestine will be changed. The mountain of Jehovah's house, the Temple area, will be lifted up above the mountains and the hills and will be a lone mountain, the dimensions of which will be 25,000 reeds by

25,000 reeds. The size of this mountain, given in English measurements, is 50 by 50 miles. The city of Jerusalem will be built on the southern section of this mountain. It will indeed be the joy spot of the world. These and many other facts may be gleaned from Ezekiel, chapter 40-48.

The Lord will regather the outcasts of Israel from the four corners of the globe. That regathering has already begun. It will continue, doubtless with many interruptions, from now on. But it will be completed in the Millennial Age when Jehovah is building up Zion.

At that time He will wipe away all tears from every eye and will heal the broken in heart, and will bind up their wounds. This prediction foresees the time when all earth's ills will be cured. The disappointments of this present time will be a thing of the past. Joy, bliss and comfort will be the order of the day.

In verse 4 our psalmist looks into the heavens and tells us that He observes Jehovah as He counts the number of the stars. According to the ancient astronomers, when Greek learning and philosophy were at their highest stage of development, the general consensus of opinion was that there were something like 1056 stars. According to the revelations of modern astronomy the stars, which are but blazing suns, are innumerable. New heavenly bodies are constantly being discovered. The second statement of verse 4 is: "He calleth them all by *their* names." The word "their" has been inserted by the translators. By thus putting it into the sentence, the meaning has been modified. Instead of saying that the Lord is calling them all by their names, the original states that He is calling them all names; that is, He is naming them. This translation is in perfect accord with statements which tell us that, at the end of the Tribulation when our Lord returns, He will create the heavens anew and the earth anew. (See Isa. 65:17. Study this passage in its connection.) Preceding it appear prophecies concerning the Tribulation; following it are others that deal with the glorious millennial reign of our Lord. Hence this work of creation in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath will be for the reconstruction and reshaping of the present solar system in order that a millennial reign of glory might be possible.

The psalmist seeing what the Lord Jehovah does, is impressed with the greatness of the power of the Almighty and His infinite wisdom. Everything will indicate that He is all-powerful and that He has unlimited wisdom.

As the Lord thus continues the work of reconstruction, He at the same time is interested in the meek of the earth and in bringing the wicked down to the ground. Of course the wicked are destroyed during the Tribulation; and at the end of this period of judgment the Lord will establish the meek and cause them to inherit the earth.

II. God's present provision for all

"Sing unto Jehovah with thanksgiving: Sing praises upon the harp unto our God,
 Who covereth the heavens with clouds, Who prepareth rain for the earth,
 Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
 He giveth to the beast his food, *And* to the young ravens which cry.
 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.
 Jehovah taketh pleasure in them that fear him, In those that hope in his loving-kindness (vss. 7-11).

After having given us a vision of God's creative activity and the repairing of the earth in anticipation of the Millennium, the psalmist shows his contemporaries that Jehovah who will thus act in the future is now

working in behalf of every individual living upon the face of the globe. Hence he calls upon men everywhere to sing unto Jehovah with thanksgiving and to sing praise upon the harp to God. The reason assigned for our praising God is that He is the one who produces the rain, which makes the pastures to grow and the crops to mature. Some men who are imbued with the scientific spirit and convinced of man's ability to accomplish his desires look forward to the time when men can produce machines that will cause rain wherever and whenever they desire. The scientists may be able to learn something about the causes of rain and may produce a shower, but to cause rain in any appreciable way, they will never do. God is the one who causes the seasons and sends the rain, which makes possible the crops. Whenever God withholds the rain, man is impotent and is helpless. The Lord sends the food therefore for both man and beast. Since it is in God that we live, move, and have our continual being, He is not delighting in the strength of the horse or taking pleasure in the legs of man. The horse was the most powerful means of warfare in the days of the psalmist. The war horse and the war chariot were deadly weapons or means of prosecuting war. The Lord does not delight then in the horse as a means of waging war. Neither is He delighting in the horse as a beast of burden—as the ancients did. Neither is He interested in men and his developing his physique to the highest point of efficiency so that he can become a marathon runner. Unlike men God is not interested in and taking delight in the achievements and the accomplishments of men. They are of a civilization that is only temporary and will eventually be destroyed.

On the other hand, the Lord takes great pleasure in them who worship Him and those who trust, or hope, in His loving-kindness. Man's only hope in this life is in God's grace and in His loving-kindness. God is seeking men to worship Him who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Man can be saved in no other way than by trusting the sovereign grace and mercy of God. He wants all to be saved. Hence He is delighted whenever anyone sees grace in its proper perspective and comes trusting Him for salvation.

III. The work of reconstruction completed

"Praise Jehovah, O Jerusalem Praise thy God, O Zion.

For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within thee.

He maketh peace in thy borders; He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat (vss. 12-14).

Everything which God undertakes, He accomplishes. He may be delayed in His work, but He never stops short of His goal. As we saw in verse 2, the psalmist was, in vision, observing God in action in His creating Jerusalem and building it up to become the joy of the whole earth.

In verse 12 and 13 we see the city of Jerusalem completed and standing in all its beauty, glory, and power. The psalmist therefore declared, speaking to Jerusalem: "He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within thee." A beautiful picture of Jerusalem as it will be is found in Psalm 48. It will be the place to which pilgrims from all parts of the globe will stream constantly throughout the Millennial Age to hear Jehovah speak the Word and to behold His glory and majesty.

Jerusalem will be created the joy of the whole earth first when Jesus returns. He then will establish His reign of righteousness upon the earth. He mounts the throne of David when Israel invites Him to come back and to be her rightful King. He never forces anyone's will. He has been waiting nineteen hundred years for Israel to revoke the decision which she made against Him when He was here the first time. When she does that and acknowledges her national sin, He will come back, and will become the King of the Jews, reigning in Jerusalem; but there will be and increase of His government and of peace upon the throne of

David. One nation will be evangelized by converted Israel and will apply to be annexed to His government. Then another nation will follow suit until all are converted, and all tribes of the earth are annexed to His government. For a beautiful statement of this truth see Isaiah 9:6,7.

When the Lord thus comes and accomplishes His work of reconstruction, He will lift the curse from the earth. When man disobeyed the Lord, He said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Thorns, briars, and thistles have come from the cursed ground ever since. All the trouble in the world today is due to the curse and to the devil and his hosts. But this condition is not to remain always. The Lord will lift the curse; then the earth will bring forth its increase. Reference is made to this fact in the statement: "He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat." All plants, vegetables, and grains are more or less deficient in one element or another. Chemical analysis shows this to be true. When the curse is lifted from the earth, the grain, vegetables, and fruit growing in the earth will have the necessary vitamins; and every chemical element in its proper proportion will make them a perfect food for man and beast. Since man will have a balanced ration, and since the curse will be lifted, there will be no disease or sickness at that time. Of course then there will be no need of physicians or dentists, or those who attend to men's health.

IV. God's control of the seasons

"He sendeth out his commandment upon earth; His word runneth very swiftly.

He giveth snow like wool; He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.

He casteth forth his ice like morsels; Who can stand before his cold?

He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: He causeth his winds to blow, and the waters to flow (vss. 15-18).

In this section of Psalm 147 we see that God sends forth His command upon the earth, and that "His word runneth very swiftly." The angels are the ministers of the Almighty. They do His bidding at all times. They are His courtiers, that go very swiftly. It is quite likely that they are referred to in this verse. The speed with which angels go might be gathered from different passages in the Scriptures. For instance, in Daniel, chapter 9, we are told that, when Daniel began to pray the petition found in verses 3-19, Gabriel left heaven and arrived on the scene and interrupted Daniel in his prayer. One can read this petition at an ordinary rate in four minutes' time. If everything that Daniel said is given in the recorded petition, and if he spoke about as we read, then the angel Gabriel left heaven, where he was standing in the presence of God and reached the side of Daniel in four minutes time.

We thank God that the angels are ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). These ministers of God, carrying out His commands give snow; scatter the hoar-frost like ashes; cast forth ice like morsels and control the cold. In the proper season they are sent forth to execute God's Word; to melt the ice and the frost, to cause the wind to blow, and the waters to flow. In other words, the changing of the seasons and the seasons themselves are in the Almighty's hands.

V. God's dealings with Israel

"He showeth his word unto Jacob.

His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel.

He hath not dealt so with any nation And as for his ordinances, they have not known them.

Praise ye Jehovah (vss. 19, 20).

God created Israel to be the channel of world-blessing. (See Isa. 43:1.) He therefore revealed His Word to Israel and showed His ordinances to her. He committed His Oracles to the Hebrews in order that they should proclaim His Word to the world.

But He has never dealt with any other nation as He has done with Israel. Nevertheless, she has not been obedient, but has disregarded His ordinances and His will. Of course there are exceptions to this general rule. We praise God for that fact. But the time will come when the remnant of Israel will yield to God and allow Him to work in and through her according to His own will and purpose. When that time arrives, Israel will make known the truth of God to all nations. Then will be fulfilled the promise that the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

In anticipation of this glorious era, all of us should unite with the psalmist in saying, "Hallelujah!"