

June 17

Scriptures: Read Psalm 147

Key Verse: “Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.”
(Psalm 147:5)

Overview

Psalm 147 is truly one of the most pleasant psalms. It has no words of complaint nor any petitions. It is purely a song of praise to the Lord. Because of the references to the building up of Jerusalem (vv. 2, 13-14), it is possible that this psalm was composed after the return from the Exile (as is generally thought of the whole collection of Hallelujah Psalms). They may have been used on the occasion of the dedication of the city wall (Neh. 12:27).

The psalmist encourages the people of the Lord to praise Him, for doing so is good, pleasant, and beautiful. The psalm emphasizes the goodness, omnipotence, and providential care of God for which He deserves to be praised. God has infinite wisdom and understanding. He not only created all the stars, but He even knows their number and their individual names. Even with our modern technology, scientists have not been able to see all the stars nor can they be numbered. Only the infinite God knows the vastness of the universe. Only He can sustain and care for His creation (vv. 8-9; 16-18). Environmentalists would do well to ask the Lord for His help since He is the One in ultimate control (v. 15). Yet, even though he is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, He is still concerned about mere man. He heals their broken hearts and binds their wounds. Only the Great Physician can bring healing to the soul and the inner man. Those who have experienced His inner healing have good reason to sing praises and thanksgiving unto the Lord.

The Lord is not impressed with strength, speed, or beauty (v.10), He desires to see humility in the people He has created (v.6). He desires that they love, respect, obey, and reverence Him (all implied in the biblical term “fear”), and also that they put their “hope in His mercy” (v.11). To do this means that they have trusted in Him for His gift of salvation. The greatest mercy of God to mankind was in sending His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus. Mankind’s hope is only found in Him. If we do not believe in Him, we will stand condemned before God. Only through Jesus do we receive atonement for our sins and are made righteous in the sight of God.

The last half of Psalm 147 celebrates God’s providential care of His own people who dwell within the city of Jerusalem. It can be understood today as being all those who by faith in Jesus have become citizens of Zion (Eph. 2:19). To them, God gives protection, strength, blessings, and peace.

As the psalmist expressed, God was truly gracious to the ancient Israelites. He chose them to be the recipients of His Holy Word. That was a wonderful privilege. With it came a great responsibility, namely, to be instruments whereby the whole world was to hear of the mercies and judgments of God. Contemplating upon the thought of Israel’s election by God, causes the psalmist to close with a loud “hallelujah”. We today must be equally enthusiastic with being chosen by God to be His people. Let us also shout hallelujah!

Prayer

Each psalm we read, oh Lord, reminds us of Your majesty and power. We marvel with the psalmist over the fact that though You are the great Creator of our vast universe, You call us Your children and are intimately concerned for us as individuals. We praise You today for Your goodness to us and ask for the wisdom to communicate this truth to others.