

Psalm 147:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.

Analysis

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. This verse marks a structural shift in the psalm, transitioning from celebrating God's universal providence to His particular covenant relationship with Israel. The imperative shabbechi (שְׁבַחֵי, "praise") appears twice in parallel Hebrew poetry, intensifying the call to worship. The first address is to "Jerusalem" (Yerushalayim, יְרוּשָׁלָם), the political capital, while the second is to "Zion" (Tziyon, צִיּוֹן), the religious center where the temple stood.

The phrase "**thy God**" (Elohayik, אֱלֹהֵיכֶם) uses the second-person singular possessive, emphasizing personal covenant relationship. This is not merely 'God' in general, but 'YOUR God'—the One who has bound Himself to Israel through covenant promises. This echoes the covenant formula repeated throughout Scripture: "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 6:16).

The dual address to Jerusalem/Zion anticipates the New Testament reality where God's people are not defined by geography but by spiritual citizenship. Believers are called "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22), "Mount Zion" (Hebrews 12:22), and "fellow citizens with the saints" (Ephesians 2:19). The call to praise becomes universal, extending to all who enter covenant relationship with God through Christ.

Historical Context

Post-exilic Jerusalem was physically rebuilt but still vulnerable, a small province in the Persian Empire. The temple had been reconstructed (516 BC) but lacked the glory of Solomon's original structure (Ezra 3:12). Despite physical weakness and political insignificance, Jerusalem remained God's chosen dwelling place, and Zion His holy mountain. This psalm calls the faithful remnant to praise not based on present circumstances but on God's covenant faithfulness and their identity as His chosen people.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

John 15:13 – Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does identifying as part of spiritual 'Jerusalem' and 'Zion' shape your identity beyond national or cultural affiliations?
2. What prevents contemporary believers from praising God with the intensity and consistency this command implies?
3. In what ways does personal covenant relationship ('thy God') transform corporate worship from ritual to authentic praise?

Interlinear Text

אָלָה יְהֹוָה	פָּלָל	יְהֹוָה	אֶת	יְהֹוָשָׁלָם	שְׁבַח	כָּזְבוֹן
Praise	O Jerusalem	H853	the LORD	praise	thy God	O Zion

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 12:6 (Parallel theme): Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

Isaiah 52:7 (References God): How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Psalms 146:10 (Resurrection): The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalms 149:2 (Parallel theme): Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

Joel 2:23 (References God): Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

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