

Poetry that Preaches: Insight into Preaching and Teaching the Psalms

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Gripped by the Psalms

As you approach the study and preaching of a psalm from the Psalter, keep in mind your mission statement:

*Let's read, sing, pray, seek to understand, and meditate on the Psalms
to heighten our worship of God and to change our lives.*

1.0 Let's Read the Psalms

- It is more important to listen to God (reading His Word) than to speak to Him (praying) or to speak about Him (witnessing).
 - ✓ “Hear, O Israel!” (Deut 6:4).
 - ✓ “Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; give ear to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah” (Isa 1:10).
 - ✓ “But who has stood in the council of the LORD, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?” (Jer 23:18).
 - ✓ “Until I come, give attention to the *public reading of Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching” (1 Tim 4:13).

2.0 Let's Sing the Psalms

- “To be saved singing is to be saved indeed.”—Charles H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (reprint; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 1/1:237.
- “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Eph 5:18–19).
- Augustine approved of putting the psalms to music, but whenever he found “the singing itself more moving than the truth which it conveys, . . . [he] preferred not to hear the singer.”

3.0 Let's Meditate on the Psalms

- Augustine spent an hour of every day for several decades meditating on the Book of Psalms verse by verse. In this fashion he put into writing his reflections on the psalms. *Why not keep your own journal of meditations on Psalms?*
- “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law he meditates day and night” (Ps 1:2).
- “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer” (Ps 19:14).
- “I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways” (Ps 119:15).
- “My eyes anticipate the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word” (Ps 119:148).

4.0 Let's Pray the Psalms

- Although there are prayers of various lengths found throughout the Scriptures, only the Book of Psalms is itself a series of prayers. The book's Hebrew name is *Tehillim* = Praises.
- Psalm 100
 - 1 A Psalm for Thanksgiving.
Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.
 - Father, accept my prayer of thanksgiving today.
 - I shout for joy while giving thanks to You.
 - On this Lord's day, may all believers from all lands bring their thanks to You with great joy.
 - 2 Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before Him with joyful singing.
 - Lord, help me to serve You with gladness today.
 - Give me a joyful heart and fill my mouth with songs of praise.
 - As I prepare for church this morning, help me to sing Your praises rather than to be impatient and complaining.

5.0 Let's Think about the Psalms

5.1 Are the Psalms Really So Special?

- Of the New Testament's approximately 360 quotations from the Old Testament, one-third are from Psalms.

5.2 What's in the Book of Psalms?

- 150 psalms.
- 5 "books" paralleling the 5 books of Moses.
- Each "book" concludes with a doxology:

BOOK	COLLECTION	DOXOLOGY
I	Psalms 1–41	41:13
II	Psalms 42–72	72:18–20
III	Psalms 73–89	89:52
IV	Psalms 90–106	106:48
V	Psalms 107–150	150:1–6

5.3 What's in a (Psalm) Title?

- 116 psalms have titles/headings.
- Psalm titles are Scripture, because
 - They are authentic.
 - ✓ Compare 2 Samuel 22:1 with Psalm 18:1.
 - They are ancient.
 - ✓ The terms used in psalm titles like those on Psalms 46 and 58 are so ancient that they have not been understood since at least 250–300 years before Christ.
 - They are accurate.
 - ✓ Compare Luke 20:42 with the title on Psalm 110.

- Thirtle's Theory*

Habakkuk 3
Superscription

Verse 1: **A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.**

Verse 19: The LORD God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' *feet*, and makes me walk on my high places. **For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.**

Subscription

***See:** John Richard Sampey, "Psalms, Book of," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 5 vols., ed. by James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), 4:2487–94. Available online: www.internationalstandardbible.com/P/psalms-book-of.html

6.0 Let's Appreciate the Poetry

6.1 Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry

- Concise, economic use of language.
- Relative scarcity of certain elements of Hebrew syntax:
 - *Wayyiqtol* forms of the verb that are characteristic of Hebrew narrative framework.
 - Relative pronoun **אֲשֶׁר**.
 - Definite article (**הַ**).
 - Accusative marker (**אֶת**).
- Parallelism of thought between lines of poetic text.
- Balanced lengths of lines of poetic text (determined primarily by counting the number of syllables per line).
- Employment of imagery.

6.2 Literary Devices in Hebrew Poetry

- **Parallelism:** Parallel thought expressed in similar grammar, similar sentence length, and similar vocabulary.

➤ Psalm 6:9

a	b	c
The LORD	has heard	my supplication,
The LORD	receives	my prayer.

- **Repetition:** Repeated words or phrases.

➤ Psalm 29—Where is the repetition?

- **Refrain:** Chorus-like repetition dividing the psalm into sections.

➤ Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31



- **Inclusio (Envelope Figure):** A bracketing or envelope form of repetition that occurs at the beginning and ending of the psalm or a major section of the psalm.

➤ Psalm 103:1, 22

- **Chiasm (Mirror Image):** A sequence of lines with a mirror relationship in which the first and last are parallel, the second and next to last are parallel, the third and third from last are parallel, etc.—so that the last half is in inverted order. The emphasis or focus in such a construction falls on the central elements (see the box below).

➤ Psalm 19:1

A The heavens

B are telling of

C the glory of God;
C' the work of His hands.

B' is declaring

A' and their expanse

- **Metaphor:** Use of a figure as an illustration for expressing a concept.

➤ Psalm 23



7.0 Let's Identify Resources for Personal Bible Study of Psalms

- Adams, James E. *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace: Lessons from the Imprecatory Psalms*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1991.
- Bateman, Herbert W., IV, and D. Brent Sandy, eds. *Interpreting the Psalms for Teaching and Preaching*. Atlanta: Chalice Press, 2010.
- Boice, James Montgomery. *Psalms*. 3 volumes. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996.
- Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Book of Psalms*. Encountering Biblical Studies. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Davidson, Robert. *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.
- Goldingay, John. *Psalms—Volume 1: Psalms 1–41*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- . *Psalms—Volume 2: Psalms 42–89*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- . *Psalms—Volume 3: Psalms 90–150*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Grogan, Geoffrey W. *Psalms*. Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2008.
- Kidner, Derek. *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973.
- . *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975.
- Lawson, Steven J. *Psalms 1–75*. Holman Old Testament Commentary 11. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2003.
- . *Psalms 76–150*. Holman Old Testament Commentary 12. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2006.

Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. *The Treasury of David*. 3 volumes. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.

Travers, Michael E. *Encountering God in the Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003.

Zemek, George J. *Road Maps for the Psalms: Inductive Preaching Outlines Based on the Hebrew Text*. Valencia, CA: Master's Academy International, 2006.

“One reason we love the Psalms is because they tell us so much about God. The Psalms give us a dialogue with God in which we speak our joys and sorrows to God, and God for his part meets our needs and receives our praise.”

— Michael E. Travers, *Encountering God in the Psalms*
(Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), 12

8.0 Let's Exegete and Expound a Psalm

Following a series of steps as you prepare to understand a text in Psalms supplies a means by which to be certain that you cover every issue and look at a text unit from every possible angle. Exposition stands as the goal for this type of exegetical preparation. Therefore, at various points along the way, the exegete must ask some pertinent questions relating to the ultimate exposition.

8.1 Read and reread the psalm again and again and again. Read in, if possible, in the original Hebrew.

8.2 Identify the limits of the text unit (or, of the full psalm).

Many preaching situations in the Psalter fit well with expounding the entire psalm. The longer psalms might need to be treated at greater length, but each preacher must make a determination about the amount of time he wants to keep his congregation either in the Psalter or in a single psalm. Some psalms, although, lengthy, might easily lend themselves to a single sermon because of their organization and the way a singular sermon proposition stands out in the expositor's mind.

For the purpose of this seminar, I am choosing Psalm 87 as an illustration.

8.3 State the argument or theme of the psalm in your own words.

A person whose physical birth took place in a foreign country may also claim to be a citizen of Zion and a person whose physical birth occurred in Zion might not be able to claim citizenship in Zion.

8.4 Identify the basic genre (lament, praise, wisdom).

Psalm 87 is a hymn of praise about Zion. That makes it indirectly a praise to God. Psalm 87 falls into the category known as songs of Zion. These represent descriptive praise, because they actually speak directly or indirectly of the attributes of God. (Declarative praise, on the other hand, speaks of the acts of God.)

Resource:

Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Book of Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

8.5 Perform a syntactical analysis of the psalm.

- ✓ Psalm 87:1, יְסֻדָּתוֹ (yəsūdātō): noun feminine singular with a third masculine singular pronominal suffix. The suffix acts in an anticipatory fashion to refer to Yahweh Himself, Who appears in the next verse.
- ✓ Psalm 87:2, אֲהֵב (ʾōhēb): Qal active participle masculine singular. The present tense “loves” represents the use of the participle to identify a characteristic action.
- ✓ Psalm 87:2, מִכֹּל (mikkōl): The inseparable preposition comprises a comparative construction—“more than all.”
- ✓ Psalm 87:3, נִכְבָּדוֹת (nikbādōt): Niphal participle feminine plural from כָּבַד (kābād). The Niphal participle behaves adjectivally: “glorious” or “honorable.” By context, the feminine plural refers to some abstract concept (“things”) or “words,” because of the next word. This word receives emphasis by the word order (placing the direct object before the verb).
- ✓ Psalm 87:3, מְדַבֵּר (məḏubbār): Pual participle masculine singular from דָּבַר (dābar). The Pual expresses a divine passive, referring to God indirectly. The psalmist implies that God speaks the “glorious” (or, “honorable”) things (or words).
- ✓ Psalm 87:3, בָּ (bā): Preposition with second feminine singular pronominal suffix. The preposition following this verb can mean “with,” “to,” “against,” or “about.” The last meaning seems most likely from the context. The pronominal suffix refers to “city” (a feminine word in Hebrew).
- ✓ Psalm 87:4, אֶזְכֵּר (ʾazkîr): Hiphil imperfect first common singular from זָכַר (zākar). In the Hiphil this root takes the meanings “profess,” “praise,” “take to court,” or “mention.” Due to the ל preposition (see the next analyzed word), the verb here translates well as “mention as” (or, “name as”).
- ✓ Psalm 87:4, לְיֹדְעֵי (ləyōdʿāy): Preposition attached to Qal participle masculine plural from יָדַע (yādaʿ) with a first common singular pronominal suffix = “as the ones who know Me.” It makes sense in this context to identify the participle as a substantive (noun), which can be translated by means of a relative clause type of English construction.
- ✓ Psalm 87:4, יֻלַּד (yullad): Pual perfect third masculine singular from יָלַד (yālad). The perfect here expresses a simple statement of fact looking at the action as a whole, without regard to its commencement or completion. In this context, a passive voice best represents the meaning: “was born” (or, “is born”—characteristic present). The Pual could represent a divine passive, but the context lacks sufficient evidence to confirm such an implication.
- ✓ Psalm 87:5, יֵאָמַר (yēʾamar): Niphal imperfect third masculine singular from אָמַר (ʾamar). The Niphal here is a passive with an indefinite subject: “it will be said” or “it may be said.”
- ✓ Psalm 87:5, וְאִישׁ וְאִישׁ (ʾiš wəʾiš): The repetition of the noun provides a demonstrative meaning (“this one and that one”; NASU, ESV, HCSB, NKJV, NRSV, NIV) or a distributive meaning (“each one”; NET, NJPS, NLT). The first meaning matches the use of the demonstrative in the other two occurrences of “This one was born there” (vv. 4, 6) and avoids a universalist theology that arises out of the distributive meaning (viz., that every native inhabitant of Zion experiences the new birth).
- ✓ Psalm 87:5, וְהוּא (wəhū): The third masculine singular personal pronoun with the waw-conjunction can either be taken emphatically (“and the Most High Himself”) or

disjunctively (“but the Most High”). The former fits the overall context better, since it focuses on the sovereign action of the Most High God.

- ✓ Psalm 87:6, בְּכָתוּב יִסְפֹּר יְהוָה (*yhwh yispōr biḵtōb*): In this sentence the subject precedes the verb for emphasis (an emphasis carried on from the conclusion of the previous verse). The third word represents a preposition attached to a Qal infinitive construct from כָּתַב (*kātab*) and acts as a temporal adverbial phrase (“when writing”).
- ✓ Psalm 87:7, וְשָׂרִים כְּחֹלְלִים (*wəšārîm kəḥōlōlîm*): The two Qal active participles masculine plural behave as nouns. The preposition prefixed to the second participle represents “as” or “like”: “and the singers like the dancers.” The psalmist omits the verb (perhaps “say” or “sing”) as unnecessary to the meaning. The omission helps keep the poetic line of the first half of the verse short to match the next poetic line in the second half of the verse.

8.6 Identify the structure of the psalm, taking into account clues derived from comparative analysis of the genre.

Psalm Superscription (heading, Heb. 1a)

Psalm Stanza 1 (vv. 1b–3)

Psalm Stanza 2 (vv. 4–6)

Psalm Postlude (v. 7)

Psalm Subscription (most of heading from Psalm 88, Heb. 88:1)

8.7 Observe the usage of literary devices like tricola, refrains, inclusios, and change of persons with regard to the internal division of the psalm. For the Psalter, pay attention to the use of “Selah.” Identify the exegetical significance for each literary device.

Resources:

Watson, Wilfred G. E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*. 2nd edition. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 26. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.

- ✓ Verse 1 comprises a monocolon which functions to open the poem.
- ✓ The placement of “Selah” at the end of verses 3 and 6 help identify the psalm’s structure, dividing it into three parts (see above under 3).
- ✓ Repetition: “this one was born there” (vv. 4, 5, 6)—strikes the theme of the psalm and sets up the contrast between verse 5 and verses 4 and 6.
- ✓ Metaphor: The figure of birth and recording births comprises the major metaphor of this psalm. Another metaphor arises in the “springs” of verse 7. These metaphors help the reader to understand the topic more clearly by analogy.

Daniel 12:1; Isaiah 4:3–5

- ✓ Inclusio with בָּאֵר (bā’er) in verses 3 and 7. This does not appear to mark any structure, but acts more as a repetition focusing on the city of Zion.
- ✓ Inverted inclusio of superscription and subscription:

A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

A Song.

A Song.

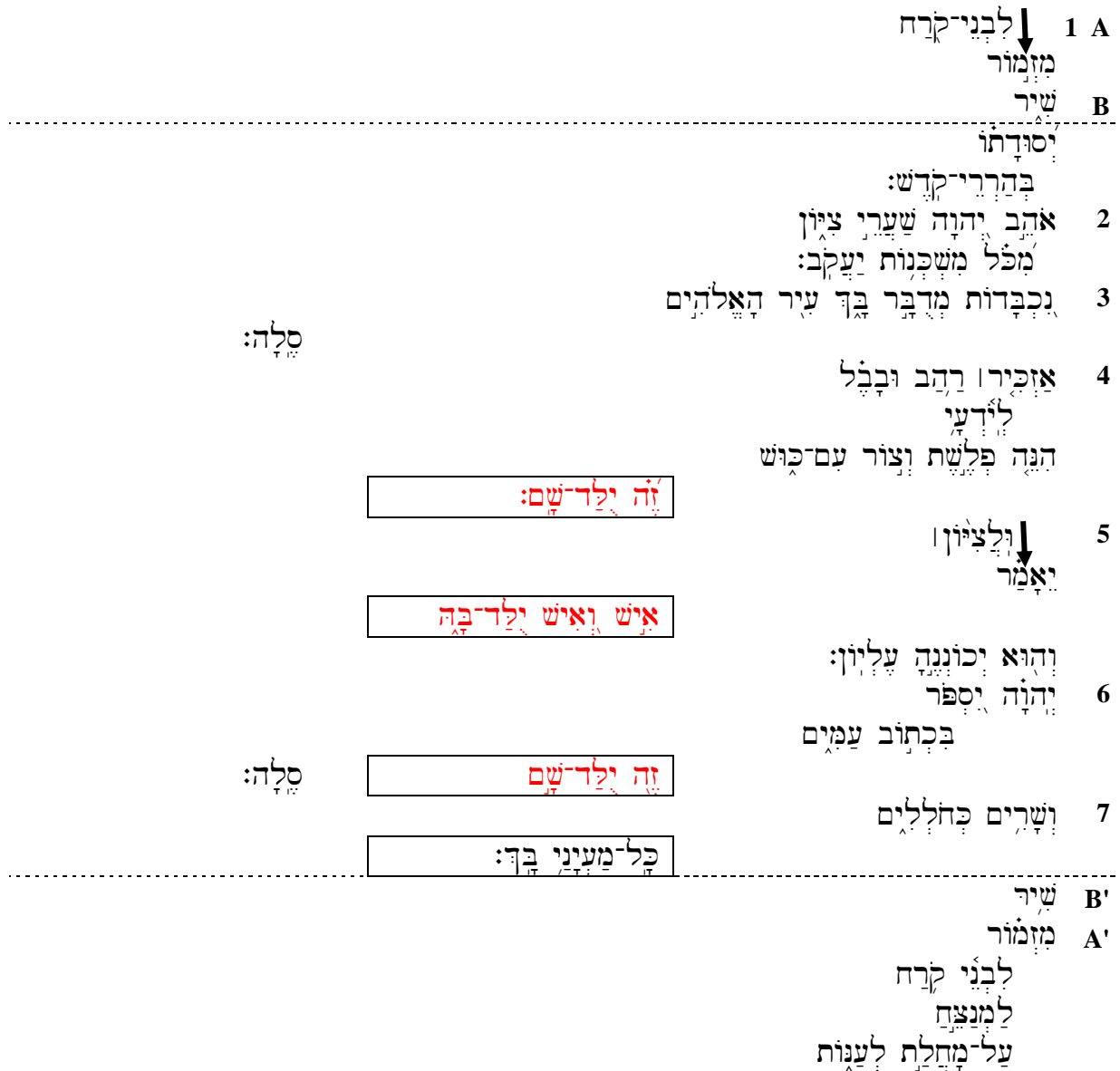
A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

8.8 Study the super- and subscriptions when they occur.

Superscription: The sons of Korah are descendants of the Korah who rebelled against Moses (Num 16). Numbers 26:11 reveals that the sons of Korah did not die with him when the ground swallowed him. They experienced God's grace and continued to testify of His grace throughout all their generations. David appointed those descendants to the ministry of song in the Tabernacle and Temple.

Subscription: "Mahalath Leannoth" (מַחֲלַת לַעֲנוֹת) might mean "to be sung at a dance" (Artur Weiser, *The Psalms*, trans. by Herbert Hartwell, Old Testament Library [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962], 585 n. 2). If so, it fits Psalm 87, due to its reference to "dance" (v. 7) and its exuberance and joy.

8.9 Diagram the Hebrew text.



8.10 Arrange the English text in poetic lines, highlighting parallelism, repetitions, inclusions, and other literary cues—keeping in mind the Hebrew diagramming results. The following is from New American Standard Update of 1995.

- A 87:1** A Psalm of the sons of Korah.
B A Song.
- His foundation is in the holy mountains.
- 87:2** The LORD loves the gates of Zion
 More than all the *other* dwelling places of Jacob.
- 87:3** Glorious things are spoken **of you**,
 O city of God. **Selah.**
- 87:4** “I shall mention Rahab and Babylon among those who know Me;
 Behold, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia:
 ‘This one was born there.’”
- 87:5** But of Zion it shall be said,
 ‘This one and that one were born in her’;
 And the Most High Himself will establish her.
- 87:6** The LORD will count when He registers the peoples,
 ‘This one was born there.’ **Selah.**
- 87:7** Then those who sing as well as those who play the flutes *shall say*,
 “All my springs *of joy* are **in you**.”
- B'** A Song.
A' A Psalm of the sons of Korah.
 For the choir director;
 according to Mahalath Leannoth.

8.11 Develop an exegetical outline.

- I.** Zion's Sovereign Selection (vv. 1–3)
 A. Divine Sanctification: Holy Foundation (v. 1)
 B. Divine Selection: Great Love (v. 2)
 C. Divine Statements: Glorious Words (v. 3)
- II.** Zion's Selected Citizens (vv. 4–6)
 A. Designation of Foreigners as Citizens (v. 4)
 B. Divine Registry of Citizens (vv. 5–6)
- III.** Zion's Celebrating Citizens (v. 7)

8.12 Revise your statement of the argument or theme of the psalm.

Being a citizen of Zion relates to one's spiritual birth, rather than to one's physical birth.

8.13 Select key words for word studies (more than merely looking at lexicons).

Resources:

VanGemeren, Willem A., ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 volumes. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.

- ✓ Psalm 87:1, **קֹדֶשׁ** (*qōdeš*): “Holy” means to be completely different (or, without rival) and without sin or fault (in other words, pure and clean). In this context, the attribution of holiness to mountains must, of necessity, point to the divine consecration (sanctification or setting apart) of those mountains. This appears to occur as the result of His own holy presence on the mountains at Zion.
- ✓ Psalm 87:3, **שֵׁלָה** (*selâ*): This notation in the Psalms most likely indicates a pause in the instrumental music or in the singing. The psalmists might have intended the pause to be a time to briefly meditate on the immediately preceding statement.

8.14 Research the geographical, historical, and cultural setting and contents of the psalm as much as possible.

- ✓ The ark of the covenant had several dwelling places: Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon, and Beth Shemesh. The place that God loves best is the one He led David to establish as the dwelling place of the ark—Jerusalem.
- ✓ It is not the most beautiful place in all Israel—Mt. Hermon is higher and more beautiful.
- ✓ It is not the most defensible place in all Israel—the top of Mt. Tabor might be more defensible.
- ✓ But, it was the place God chose. A place where Israel would need to trust Him as their defense. See **Isaiah 31:5; 37:35**.
- All of the major people in the region are included in these examples or representatives. Rahab is Egypt. See **Isaiah 30:7**.

8.15 Examine the canonical placement within the five books of Psalms and relationships to near and far biblical contexts.

- ✓ Psalm 87 picks up the prophecy of 86:9 in the near context.
- ✓ Psalm 87 (in Book 3) interprets Psalms 46 and 48 in Book 2 (also by “the sons of Korah”) in the more distant context.
 - Psalm 46 declares that the LORD of hosts will be exalted among the nations (vv. 10–11).
 - Psalm 48 declares that Zion is the city of the Great King, the city of the LORD of hosts, the city of our God.
 - Consider the verbal similarities:

Psalm 87	Psalms 46–48
“in the holy mountains” (v. 1)	“His holy mountain” (48:1)
“dwelling places of Jacob” (v. 2)	“the holy dwelling places” (46:4)
“city of God” (v.3)	“the city of God” (46:4) “the city of our God” (48:1, 8)
“those who know me” (v. 4)	“know that I am God” (46:10)
“the Most High” (v. 5)	“the Most High” (46:4)
“Himself will establish her” (v. 5)	“God will establish her” (48:8)
“my springs of joy are in you” (v. 7)	“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God” (46:4)

8.16 Identify the theological implications of the psalm.

- It is not the people, the city, or the nation who chooses God. God chooses them.
Compare Deuteronomy 7:6–8; 9:4–6.
- ✓ The text speaks of a dual citizenship—being citizens of both earth and Heaven—being born physically and being born spiritually.
- ✓ Salvation is for those who are “born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13).
- ✓ All nations will worship God. See Psalms 22:27–28; 48:9–10; Isaiah 2:2–4 (//Micah 4:1–2); 19:23–25; 45:22; 56:6–7; Zechariah 2:10–11; 8:22–23; 14:16–19; Malachi 1:11; Ephesians 3:4–7; Philippians 2:9–11; Revelation 7:9–10. Compare John 4:22.
- ✓ Some interpreters conclude that such phrases refer to the Jews in the Diaspora—they have been born in various nations around the world. For this viewpoint, see Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, trans. by Hilton C. Oswald, Continental Commentary (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 187-89.
- ✓ One Jewish commentator writes: “the chief lesson that emerges from the psalm is that Zion is the birthplace of all those who come to it to serve God there, even if they are non-Jews and even if they come from very far-off lands.”—Amos Hakham, *Psalms*, 3 vols., Koschitzky Edition (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 2003), 2:300.

Resources:

- Grogan, Geoffrey W. *Psalms*. Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2008.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *The Majesty of God in the Old Testament: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006.
- Travers, Michael E. *Encountering God in the Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003.

8.17 Study the NT usage of any portions of the psalm. Identify the purpose for quoting the psalm and any apparent change in contexts.

- Your audience lives under the authority of the NT as well as that of the OT.
- What differences might exist between the OT believer’s relationship to the text and the NT believer’s relationship to the text?
 - ✓ *OT believers living in the light of the Davidic Covenant, expect a messianic kingdom headed by a Davidic king at Zion, the city of David (cf. 2 Sam 5:7; Pss 2:6; 48:2). OT believers also look upon Zion as the earthly residence of the visible glory of Yahweh (cf. 1 Kgs 8:1; Pss 9:11; 76:2).*
 - ✓ *NT believers live after the revelation of the greater Son of David, the Messiah. He still has not taken the throne of David, however—He sits only in the throne of His Father. We still await the coming kingdom when Messiah will reign over Israel and the world from the throne of David.*

An ancient Greek translation of verse 5 translates “Zion” as “Mother Zion.”

Galatians 4:26

Hebrews 12:22–24

Romans 9:6

The text speaks of a supernatural (or spiritual) birth just like Ezekiel 36:26–27; **John 3:1–10** and 4:19–24.

Resource: Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson, eds. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

8.18 Identify the applicational implications of the psalm.

- The Almighty God loves Jerusalem and chose it for Himself—He does not base His election or His love on merit.
- Those gentiles who truly know God are among His chosen people.
- Christ provides salvation for those who are “born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13).

8.19 Compose your sermon proposition and your homiletical outline.

Sermon Proposition: *Our salvation comes only through the new birth, not through our national or family heritage and standing.*

Homiletical Outline:

- I.** *God alone chooses the place where His visible glory resides (vv. 1–3).*
 - A.** *God’s selection of Mt. Zion results in His making it holy—set apart to Him and set apart from sin (v. 1).*
 - B.** *God chooses and loves on the basis of His own purposes, not on the basis of merit (v. 2).*
 - C.** *God speaks of Mt. Zion with glorious words (v. 3).*
- II.** *We receive God’s favor totally by grace (unmerited favor)—God alone chooses individuals to be the citizens of His chosen place (vv. 4–6).*
 - A.** *When we are born again, God counts us as though we had been born in Zion (v. 4).*
 - B.** *Only when a Jew is born again, does God count them as though they were truly born in Zion (vv. 5–6).*
- III.** *We should celebrate the fact that God counts regenerated believers as true citizens of Zion (v. 7).*

9.0 Additional Comments on Preaching a Psalm

9.1 Coordinate the music of the service with the psalm.

- You can sing <http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/z/i/zionfoun.htm> (“Zion Founded on the Mountains”) to the tune of “Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us.”
- You can sing “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken.”

9.2 Give the congregation the privilege of participating in the reading of the psalm. When appropriate, employ antiphonal reading.

9.3 Remind your congregation of the human nature of the psalmists. Deal openly with issues of apparent lack of faith (e.g., Ps 42) or such problems as imprecatory psalms.

9.4 Emphasize the beauty of the Psalter’s poetry and its use in corporate worship in OT times.