

Glorious Impermanence*

Psalm 87:3

Glorious things *are* spoken of you,
O city of God.

This statement is actually a completion of a contrast made in the preceding verse:

Psalm 87:2 Jehovah loves the gates of Zion more than all the tents of Jacob.

Consider this contrast. Gates are permanent; tents are temporary. God longs for our permanent state. He grieves over our temporary state. We wisely grieve with Him.

The verse in the box above follows the contrast with a *praise of the permanent*- this time of the whole city which the gates give entrance to.

By implication, our temporary tents are not praiseworthy. Of course not. They are vestiges of the Fall. Yes, our bodies are *also* vestiges of

God's original creation, but since the Fall, we look to God's REcreation of all things as the main hope for our corruptible bodies.

Hence, some 'angst' here is a good thing. "Angst" is a term for a pervading sort of anxiety. If we can detach it from its original technical usage, it aptly describes the general dissatisfaction a Christian should have with this fallen world and with his own fallenness. The present world should make us a bit 'antsy':

Romans 8:23 And not only so, but also we ourselves having the *firstfruit of the Spirit, also we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly expecting adoption, the redemption of our body

With this anxious backdrop, then, we can be **stabilized** by thoughts of what is permanent, what is to come.

So far, simple enough.

But why is it so hard to keep such an attitude within us? Why can't we constantly bear our anxt in mind *unto* its transformation *into* hope for the future- infusing us *with* present courage?

The reason is that the world argues so loudly and effectively that IT is permanent. It *looks* like it is permanent. Our experience of it agrees that it is. It is our future state that seems unreal. Only our faith informs us otherwise.

Also, because anxt is unpleasant, it seems somehow illogical to use *it* to arrive at a hopeful state of mind. It does not naturally occur to us to use our angst to a positive end. Again, such use is only apprehended by faith.

Glorious things are spoken of you, O permanent city of God! *I* will be one of the ones who speaks such things of you! I will do so in spite of my impermanence! I will do so *because of* my impermanence!

