

PSALM 107

The LORD Delivers Men from Manifold Troubles

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (5-8-96).
- B. Book Five of the Psalms (107-150).
- C. This last Book of Psalms has 44 psalms and most seem to be of later date than many of the others. Many seem to reflect the time of return from Babylonian captivity. Some claim that these psalms were intended for use in worship. Fifteen of these are attributed to David.
- D. "Israel Restored from Captivity to Canaan"
- E. This psalm seems to describe with different metaphors, the joy of deliverance from captivity or distress. This should comfort us when we are relieved of some distress or trouble today. It also teaches us to, not only be thankful, but to express our thanks to the Lord and to tell others what the Lord has done for us. Happiness is found in being grateful for our blessings.
- F. Coffman suggests the following organization for the psalm:
 1. Announcement of the Theme (107:1-3).
 2. The Metaphor of the Weary Traveler (107:4-9).
 3. The Metaphor of People Imprisoned (107:10-16).
 4. The Metaphor of Folly and Sin-Sickness (107:17-22).
 5. The Metaphor of a Dangerous Sea-Voyage (107:23-32).
 6. A General Statement of God's Gracious Mercies (107:33-43).

II. THE TEXT.

107:1 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the adversary

3 And gathered from the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region;
They did not find a way to an inhabited city.

5 They were hungry and thirsty;
Their soul fainted within them.

6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
He delivered them out of their distresses.

7 He led them also by a straight way,
To go to an inhabited city.

8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!

9 For He has satisfied the thirsty soul,
And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.

10 There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Prisoners in misery and chains,

11 Because they had rebelled against the words of God
And spurned the counsel of the Most High.

12 Therefore He humbled their heart with labor;
They stumbled and there was none to help.

13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
He saved them out of their distresses.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death
And broke their bands apart.

15 Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!

16 For He has shattered gates of bronze

- And cut bars of iron asunder.
- 17** Fools, because of their rebellious way,
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.
- 18** Their soul abhorred all kinds of food,
And they drew near to the gates of death.
- 19** Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
He saved them out of their distresses.
- 20** He sent His word and healed them,
And delivered *them* from their destructions.
- 21** Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!
- 22** Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And tell of His works with joyful singing.
- 23** Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters;
- 24** They have seen the works of the LORD,
And His wonders in the deep.
- 25** For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind,
Which lifted up the waves of the sea.
- 26** They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths;
Their soul melted away in *their* misery.
- 27** They reeled and staggered like a drunken man,
And were at their wits' end.
- 28** Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
And He brought them out of their distresses.
- 29** He caused the storm to be still,
So that the waves of the sea were hushed.
- 30** Then they were glad because they were quiet,
So He guided them to their desired haven.
- 31** Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!
- 32** Let them extol Him also in the congregation of the people,
And praise Him at the seat of the elders.
- 33** He changes rivers into a wilderness
And springs of water into a thirsty ground;
- 34** A fruitful land into a salt waste,
Because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it.
- 35** He changes a wilderness into a pool of water
And a dry land into springs of water;
- 36** And there He makes the hungry to dwell,
So that they may establish an inhabited city,
- 37** And sow fields and plant vineyards,
And gather a fruitful harvest.
- 38** Also He blesses them and they multiply greatly,
And He does not let their cattle decrease.
- 39** When they are diminished and bowed down
Through oppression, misery and sorrow,
- 40** He pours contempt upon princes
And makes them wander in a pathless waste.
- 41** But He sets the needy securely on high away from affliction,
And makes *his* families like a flock.
- 42** The upright see it and are glad;
But all unrighteousness shuts its mouth.
- 43** Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things,
And consider the lovingkindnesses of the LORD.

COMMENTS.

- A. Announcement of the Theme.

[v1-3] “Oh, give thanks to the Lord...” One of the great values of studying the psalms is to be reminded to depend on the Lord when we have difficulty and to give thanks to the Lord when we are blessed. We should especially give thanks to Him, and tell others what He has done for us when our prayers are answered.

[v2] “Let the redeemed... whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy...” These had been captive by an enemy. We would think of Israel destroyed by the Assyrians and Judah held captive for 70 years and delivered by God. This may be referring to the rejoicing of the southern kingdom of Judah when they returned from Babylon.

B. The Metaphor of the Weary Traveler.

[v4] “They wandered in the wilderness...” This reminds us of their deliverance from Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

[v5] “Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.” This also was characteristic of the wanderings under Moses, but it also describes many difficulties we can have in life where we do not feel like eating because of our depression or anxiety.

[v6,7] “Then they cried out to the Lord... and He delivered them... and He led them forth by the right way...” We need to realize that many times our trouble was by our own choice, and also that only the Lord can show us the way that we should go.

[v8] “Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” This is the refrain that is given at the end of most of the stanzas. It is the main point or theme of the psalm.

C. The Metaphor of a People Imprisoned.

[v10] This gives several characteristics of prison life in that day: they “sat in darkness,” “in the shadow of death,” “bound in affliction and irons.”

[v11] “Because they rebelled against the words of God...” This is probably the most frequent cause of our troubles. Note also, that it was the “words of God” that they had received. Moses did not give them his own judgment, nor did the prophets tell them what they thought, but they spoke the “words of God.” This is what Peter said about all inspired men (2Pet. 1:19-21). Men who talk about where Paul got his doctrine, and where Peter got his, do not believe that the NT is the word of God, but the ideas of men.

[v12] God punished them for their sins with hardships.

[v13,14] When we give up our selves and realize that we cannot save ourselves, we can then turn to God and be saved. But even when He saves us, we may still may have scars and consequences that cannot be removed in this life.

D. The Metaphor of Folly and Sin-Sickness.

[v17,18] “Fools, because of their transgression...iniquities, were afflicted.” We must understand that the psalmist is not talking here about those who are intellectually limited, nor those who have mental or physical illness. He is referring to those who are morally foolish and spiritually sick in sin. This also seems to be the context of James’ admonition in 5:14-16.

[v19,20] “They cried out to the Lord...and He saved them...” When we cry to the Lord in the way that He commands, He will heal our sins.

[v22] “Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving... with rejoicing.” Our forgiveness should result in a heart that wants to study God’s word and worship Him at every opportunity.

E. The Metaphor of the Dangerous Sea-Voyage.

[v23] “Those who go down to the sea in ships...” This is a common and popular expression in English culture and literature. The terror of being on a large steel modern ship with sealed compartments and great power cannot be compared to a wooden sailing ship with no other power, and at the mercy of the storm. This latter is a much better picture of ancient Israel against the Assyrians, and Judah against the Babylonians.

[v29] “He calms the storm...” Jesus calmed the Sea of Galilee, but that was nothing compared to calming the storms of sin and worldliness that wreck havoc and destruction in men’s lives.

F. A General Statement about God's Gracious Mercies.

[v33-36] "He turns rivers into a wilderness...a fruitful land into barrenness." God can make wet places dry, and dry places wet. He can make those who have an abundance to have want, and those in want to have an abundance.

Therefore, we should seek His will so that we will walk in the right way, and return to Him when we stray. When He restores us and blesses us, we need to give thanks to God, and tell men of all of His wonderful works.