

June 1

Scriptures: Read Psalms 107 & 108

Key Verse: “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so...” (Psalm 107:1-2a)

Overview

Psalm 107 is closely related to the two previous psalms in subject matter. They all praise God for His goodness and mercy. Psalm 107 is the answer to the prayer of 106:47, showing how God saved His people from the hand of the enemy. Isaiah 62:12 uses the same term “the redeemed of the Lord” for the children of Israel who returned from the Babylonian captivity, but a wider interpretation can also be applied. Those from all corners of the world whose souls have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, our Lord Jesus, have good reason to sing and give thanks to God for His goodness (Eph. 1:7).

The psalmist gives four real-life illustrations as to why the redeemed should thank the Lord for His deliverance. After each example of God’s redemptive work, the psalmist repeats the refrain, “Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness”. He does so to remind the people to thank the Lord in every situation (107:8,15, 21, 31). The first example is of God’s care over the wandering sojourners who called out to Him in their distress; he brought them out of their trouble and led them along the right path (107:7). This may be referring to some of the returned exiles at a time when God miraculously strengthened them and provided for their needs (cf. 87:5 — 7). He not only satisfied their physical need but, more importantly, their spiritual need (107:9). Within every person there is a void that only God can fill, and until He does, the soul will remain unsatisfied and longing to be filled. (Ps. 42:1, 2; 63:1,2).

The second illustration is of God’s care over the captives. Those who were chained and had the sentence of death looming over them called out to God. He miraculously freed them and brought them out of darkness (107:13-14). Those who are enslaved by sin today can still be brought by Him into His wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9; Col. 1:12-13; Eph. 5:8; Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:16). The psalmist may be referring to the people of Judah who were carried away captive to Babylon, since the reason for their affliction was “their rebellion against the words of God” (107:11). A similar divine deliverance is shown in the third illustration. Those whose souls and physical well-being were afflicted because of sin. They were on the brink of death and destruction, but the Lord graciously heard their cry; “He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions” (107:20).

The final illustration is that of the sea traveler whose life is endangered by the stormy sea. He is totally at the mercy of God, for only God can calm the raging storm; He also calms and makes glad those who cry out to Him. God guides their weathered ship to a safe haven of rest (107:30). What should be the response of all those who experience these blessings from the Lord that accompany redemption? The psalmist repeatedly exclaims that the redeemed of the Lord are to give thanks, publicly and joyously declaring His mercy and goodness in providing redemption; and they are to exalt Him before the congregation of the Lord (107:1, 22, 32). God’s mercies are further expressed in His providential care of the righteous (107:35-42). If they are wise, they will

understand these deeds of lovingkindness of the Lord (107:43, 22) and will naturally respond by offering Him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

Psalms 108 is a song of victory, expressing hope and confidence in the Lord, for He delivers His people from their enemies and He wins the battle. It contains portions of two previous psalms of David. Verses are taken from Psalm 57:7-11, and verses 6 to 13 are from Psalm 60:5-12, with only slight variations (for a more detailed study, see the comments on these earlier passages). One difference is that in verse 3 we find the Hebrew word “Yahweh” used instead of “Adoni”, but they are both translated as “Lord”. Yahweh is a more personal word that signifies a close relationship with God. Only His servants can truly call Him by His personal name. This psalm is not just a vain repetition, for such words of praise to the Lord can never be exhausted. Whether the psalmist was David himself or a compiler, there was a specific occasion which demanded such a hymn of praise in order to encourage the people. Notice that this psalm is composed of only the joyous and uplifting portions of the previous psalms. The distressing situations that David experienced before penning these words of praise are excluded. It always encourages the soul to hear positive reports and dwell on the goodness of God (cf. Phil. 4:8).

Prayer

We give you praise, oh God, for satisfying our spiritual emptiness: a void only You could fill. What a privilege it is to be counted among Your redeemed.