



PRAISING GOD FOR HIS STEADFAST LOVE

PSALM 107

2

HOW THIS PSALM IS ORGANIZED OR WRITTEN

- **Versus 1–3 Reasons for Thanksgiving**
- **4 – 9 First group: wanderers in the desert**
- **10 – 16 Second group: prisoners**
- **17 – 22 Third group: those who suffered from their own folly;**
- **23 – 32 Fourth group: sailors on the sea;**
- **33 – 42 reasons for praise**

- (The Expositor's Bible Commentary pages 682 – 687)
- (ESV Study Bible pages 1078 – 1080)

As we go through this Psalm, we are going to look at each section.

It's also important to remind ourselves that the most important thing in our life is to know God. We read this in the following verses. (next slide)

3 **KNOWING GOD—THE GREATEST PURSUIT IN OUR LIFE**

- **“And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (Joh 17:3 ESV)**

Next slide

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- **“17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2Pe 3:17-18 ESV)**

Psalm 107 helps us to know God and his surpassing love for his people. As we think about and consider these verses, let us remind ourselves of the words of the apostle Paul. The love of God does not depend on us and our behavior. God's love is rooted in himself.

5

“17 If, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.” (Ro 5:17-19 ESV)

As the apostle John tells us in 1 John 4:16, God is love.

The responsibility of man is to receive his grace freely given.

As we read Psalm 107, we will see that God love is steadfast, dependable and worthy of all of our praise!

GIVING THANKS TO THE LORD

“1 ¶ Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble

**3 and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.”
(Ps 107:1-3 ESV)**

Looking at commentaries, the timing of the Psalm is uncertain. The Psalm focuses on the restoration of God’s people.

The theme of Psalm 107 is God’s steadfast love for his people. We see his willingness to forgive his covenant people in the face of rebelliousness, turning him away from him and as a result getting into all kinds of troubles.

The Psalm begins by addressing the whole community of God’s people to be thankful to God because of his goodness. God’s love will last forever. For the people living at that time, evidence of this steadfast love was the fact that God gathered them in one place from faraway places where they were dispersed.

If we think in terms of the New Covenant, we know that Jesus is the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

We know that Jesus became sin and a curse for us in our place. He was completely sinless. In him, we are reconciled to God. In the New Covenant, we are to receive this gift of eternal life which is a person, God’s eternal Son!

In the next verses, the author was inspired to write about the type of troubles the Israelites had fallen into and how they were redeemed when they cried out to God. Their redemption is not rooted in themselves but in God's covenant love for his people.

In his magnificent plan, God was preparing the coming of the Messiah through the tribe of Judah.

7 1ST GROUP: WANDERERS IN THE DESERT

**(Ps 107:4-9 ESV) “4 Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in;
5 hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.
6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.**

8

7 He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

8 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.” (Ps 107:4-9 ESV)

Why did the Israelites wander in the desert or waste land finding no way to the city where they could live?

The Old Covenant was a covenant of grace.

As we look at the condition of the Old Covenant, if the Israelites obeyed God, they would be blessed physically. If they disobeyed God, all kinds of problems would follow. Israel chose to disobey God so many times in their journey with him.

They wandered in the desert of Sinai for a period of 40 years as they had forgotten the mighty miracles that God had done in their midst. Later, when they were given the terms of the Old Covenant, they were told of the horrible things that would happen if they forsook God.

In verse 5, the Israelites were in a place where there was a lack of food. They were hungry and thirsty. They became very discouraged and disheartened. Their soul fainted within them, the Bible tells us.

Deep in their trouble and in their distress, they turned their attention to God and

cried to him. God heard their cry and he led them to a city where they could peacefully live.

As a community of God's people, they are to be thankful for all the awesome work that God does toward the children of man. (**man = Adam in Hebrew which includes all of mankind [Strong's Concordance].**)

God gives both physical food and spiritual food to his people. All things were created by Jesus. He holds everything together. **"16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."** [Col 1:16-17 ESV].

In the Old Covenant, God provided physical blessings.

For us who live during the time of the New Covenant, the apostle John writes that all who thirst are to come to Jesus. He will give us a living water, referring to the Holy Spirit [John 7:37-39].

In John 6, Jesus tells us that he is the bread of life! Jesus is the one who satisfies the deepest needs of our soul and hearts.

We cannot emphasize this enough. Everything good comes from him. Even our repentance is a gift of God.

We can come to Jesus because in him we have been reconciled to God.

Jesus filled the Israelites' soul with physical rest.

For us, in the New Covenant, the spiritual promises are so much greater. God promises to abide in us and we in Him as we accept his gift of grace!

We live in an imperfect world. We live in the "in between times" waiting for the return of Jesus and the fullness of his kingdom. In the meantime, accepting God's grace, we can have the peace of Jesus which surpasses all understanding as we give our burdens to him in an attitude of thanksgiving.

9

2ND GROUP: PRISONERS

(Ps 107:10-16 ESV) “10 ¶ Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons,

11 for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High.

12 So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor; they fell down, with none to help.

10

13 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.

15 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men!

16 For he shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron.” (Ps 107:10-16 ESV

Although God is very forgiving, in his steadfast love, he also corrects.

Because the children of Israel had not heeded the word of God to go their own way, they were taken captive. Sin which is walking independently from God always has dire consequences. Even today, when people break physical laws or certain moral laws as defined by society, they end up in jail.

God is light. Jesus is the light of the world. Walking apart from him means darkness from which we need to be rescued.

The Israelites had rebelled against the word of God and had treated his loving instructions with contempt and disdain. We see that over and over in the history of Israel. Israel is really a type of humanity.

As a consequence, they sat in the darkness and in the shadow of death suffering in afflictions and in iron bars. They needed to be rescued. They could not do that on their own.

We read that God discipline them because he bowed their hearts down with hard

labour with no way out. In that state, they turn to God and in desperation cried out to him. God delivered them from this awful subjugation, distress and suffering even if they did not deserve such incredible love. God is not like man. God does not hold a grudge. He loves people and has affection for people, for us. He will go to any length to save us from our trouble. God came down to earth in the person of Jesus Christ to save us from all of our sins.

God delivered the Israelites physically. Now, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, he has completely shattered the imprisonment of sin and death. Once he opens our eyes and we receive his grace, he liberates us from the slavery of sin and transfers us into the kingdom of God. We are afraid from the shackles of sin and eternal death!

The Israelites had much to be thankful for and so do we!

|| **3RD GROUP: SUFFERERS FROM THEIR OWN FOLLY**

(Ps 107:17-22 ESV) “17 ¶ Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;

18 they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

12

20 He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.

21 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men!

22 And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!” (Ps 107:17-22 ESV)

The author of Psalm does not describe what sinful ways some of the Israelites took that made them sick. Because of their sinful ways, some of the Israelites became so ill and so weak that they had an intense dislike and disgust of food - so much so that they came close to dying.

Sins do have terrible consequences. Some sins make people physically sick. For example, in Deuteronomy 28:58 God told the Israelites that if they were not careful to obey all the words of the law inspired by God that he would bring to them and their offspring sicknesses grievous and lasting. **“58 “If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God, 59 then the LORD will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting. 60 And he will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. 61 Every sickness also and every affliction that is not recorded in the book of this law, the LORD will bring upon you, until you are destroyed.” (De 28:58-61 ESV)**

In the New Covenant, when the Corinthians were disrespecting the Lord’s supper, because they ate and drank without discerning the body of Christ, they brought

judgment upon themselves and many became weak and ill and some died (1 Corinthians 11:29-30). Sin does have serious consequences, both physical and spiritual.

Even today, there are sins which have obvious physical consequences.

Stealing can bring imprisonment, loss of employment. etc.

Gossip and lying can and does destroy relationships.

Abuse of drugs and alcohol has serious physical and relational consequences and can destroy marriages, families, friendship, etc..

Expression of our sexuality outside God's covenant love bring all kinds of difficulties such as sexually transmitted infections which are on the increase in Canada. It also brings all kinds of other difficulties including the destruction of marital relationship because of betrayal. The list simply goes on.

When the Israelites cried out to God, God delivered them from their distress. The Bible tells us that he brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death.

Nothing is impossible to God. They did not deserve to be healed. Their rebelliousness did not cause God to reject them and to stop loving them. **In fact, God sent out his word and healed them!**

As we read in the epistle to the Corinthians, the rock that followed the Israelites was Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). He doesn't change in character. His love his steadfast worthy of all of our praises.

As we read these verses, it should give us encouragement to not judge others even if they are caught up in sins. As God did not give up on the Israelites, he does not give up on the people. His desire is that all would come to repentance. **"3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Ti 2:3-4 ESV)**

13

4TH GROUP: SAILORS ON THE SEA

- **(Ps 107:23-32 ESV) “23 ¶ Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters;**
- **24 they saw the deeds of the LORD, his wondrous works in the deep.**
- **25 For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.**
- **26 They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight;**

14 (Ps 107:23-32 ESV) 27 they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end.

28 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

29 He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.

15 30 Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.

31 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men!

32 Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.” (Ps 107:23-32 ESV)

Some of the exiles were sailors possibly working in the service of foreign kings. In the early history of the Israelites, they were not known to be sailors.

They went out to sea, possibly the Mediterranean Sea, where they faced dangerous and perilous storms. We know from our modern experiences that the Mediterranean Sea can be quite treacherous at times. God has controlled over everything. As we saw earlier, it was given to Jesus to sustain the whole universe by the word of his power. He knows exactly what is going on with people.

In the stormy seas where they did not have any control over what was happening, being tossed to and fro, they staggered on the ship as if drunk.

As they called to God in their fear of drowning, God stilled the water. There is no doubt that God is able and can do this. We have the example of Jesus in the Gospels who walked on water and stilled the sea.

Those sailors, sailing on the seas, saw the wondrous work of God. Although they did not understand what we understand today about the sea and the life below, they acknowledged God for the grandness of the sea. Solomon, and Ecclesiastes, says

something quite remarkable about the sea (next slide)

16

7 All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.” (Ec 1:7 ESV)



From: <https://commons.Wikipedia.org>

How all the waters flow towards the ocean and never fill it up is amazing. Just thinking about this helps us to realize that this is not happenstance. It is the work and the creation of Almighty God.

God heard the prayer of these people and he brought them to a safe place.

It is important to note that God's people are commanded to assemble together to pray, to worship and worship God! The Israelites were a chosen people. They were to come together as a community to offer sacrifices of praise to God.

The church is also a called out people. Today, God still wants us to come together to praise him and worship him.

In the book of Hebrews, God encourages his people not to stop assembling together (Hebrews 10). When we do assemble together, God works in a very special ways both in the life of the congregation and in our individual life.

Today, we have so much to be thankful for. We take so many things for granted. God gives us the air we breathe.

He provides physical clothing for the whole world.

He gives us heat in the winter and warmth in the summer.

So many times, we assume that the basic necessities of life are owed to us. They are not.

They all come from the one source, God's steadfast love for people!

He gives us food to eat. He gives us a roof over our heads.

As God's church, we can praise God because we know even more of God's love for people the Israelites of old. God sent Jesus to the earth, his eternal Son so that all those who would come to faith in him would have eternal life! ***"16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (Joh 3:16-17 ESV)***

17

REASONS TO PRAISE

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- 18 (Ps 107:33-42 ESV)**
“33 ¶ He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground,
34 a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the evil of its inhabitants.
35 He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water.
36 And there he lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in;

19 (Ps 107:33-42 ESV)

37 they sow fields and plant vineyards and get a fruitful yield.

38 By his blessing they multiply greatly, and he does not let their livestock diminish.

39 When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow,

20 **40 he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes;**

41 but he raises up the needy out of affliction and makes their families like flocks.

42 The upright see it and are glad, and all wickedness shuts its mouth.” (Ps 107:33-42 ESV)

God is true to his word. He had told the Israelites that if they walked in all his ways that they would be physically blessed. The physical blessings for obedience were rich (Lev. 26 and Deut. 28). He told them to choose life.

If they chose to go their own way, God was very clear about what would happen to them. He described the terrible curses that would follow their blatant disobedience.

God's intent was not to give the Israelites a hard time. He wanted to bless them. They were created with moral freedom to either obey or disobey him. Even in their disobedience, God never abandoned them, as we see throughout the Old Testament. God's hands, to use an analogy, was in their life. God never stopped loving the Israelites even when they were the furthest away from him.

When the Israelites chose evil, God turned rivers into the desert.

We also see that he blesses people in all kinds of ways as we have read in verses 35–42.

We see him rescuing people from the terrible physical consequences that they had

gotten themselves into.

Under the New Covenant, the spiritual promises God gives us are so much greater than the physical promises he gave Israel.

However, it does not mean that we are immune from the dramatic changes that we see on the earth. The apostle Paul is very clear in Romans chapter 8 that the whole earth is groaning. It is groaning like never before. We have ice in the North Pole in South Pole which is melting and increasing the volume of the oceans of the world.

From: <https://www.digitalistmag.com>

"The climate change story here is that the North Pole has been experiencing unusually high temperatures, reaching 32° Fahrenheit in December 2016, which was 50° warmer than typical! This trend has led to an alarming shrinkage of the Arctic Sea ice masses that equates to approximately 1.07 million km² of ice loss every decade.

Even the coldest place on Earth is getting warmer!

Now, in the completely opposite direction, what can we learn from the South Pole and Antarctica? At 90° south latitude, Antarctica, which includes approximately 90% of the ice on the planet, is a little over 300 feet above sea level with an ice sheet on it that is about 9,000 feet thick.

Much colder than the North Pole, the temperature here has dropped to a chilling low of -135.8° Fahrenheit in 2013. However, this pole, too, is experiencing warmer weather, with its highest temperature reaching 63.5° in March 2015.

NASA indicates that Antarctica has been losing about 134 gigatonnes of ice per year since 2002. And just recently, a new concern emerged – a rift in the continent that could send a significant part of the polar cap off into the ocean and create one of the largest icebergs ever recorded. This could, in the long run, raise global sea levels by four inches.

We have part of great bodies of water which are dead because of industrial runouts.

Various species of animals, birds, insects and fish have either disappeared or are on the verge of disappearing because of man's mismanagement of the earth.

The Amazon forest which is said to be the lung of the earth is being destroyed through man-made activities.

Despite its vast size, the Amazon rainforest ecosystem faces environmental pressure that threatens its very existence. One of the primary threats is deforestation. Since 1970, over 200,000 square miles of Amazon rainforest have been lost due to

deforestation, according to Monga Bay. The rainforest soils are poor, lacking in fertility. Most of the nutrients are locked in the above ground plant growth. Due to the ecology of the ecosystem, recovery is difficult, if not impossible. (From <https://sciencing.com/ecosystem-amazon-rainforest-6495612.html>)

I was reading somewhere that every one minute, the equivalent of three football fields are being destroyed in the Amazon forest.

God doesn't change because the earth is groaning or because the majority of the world is denying the true one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God has promised us a brand-new world where no traces of evil will exist as we read in the last chapters of the book of Revelation.

We were given better promises than the Israelites under the Old Covenant. In fact, even the saints did not yet receive what was promised. (next slide)

21

“39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” (Heb 11:39-40 ESV)

Let us praise and thank God for his steadfast love! Let us pray