

Psalm 107

This begins the fifth book or scroll of the Psalms.

Rashi says this is a universal Psalm. The term "Israel" is totally absent from this psalm and there is also no other term alluding to the people of Israel and their history.

Four sorts of persons are mentioned - travelers through a wilderness, prisoners, sick persons, those who travel the seas; to which some add a fifth, husbandmen. It applies to humanity under any and all conditions.

But there are references that certainly could apply to Israel, and some rabbis saw a connection between **Psalms 105, 106** and **107** as a trilogy of Israel's history and destiny.

Psalm 106 ends with Israel exiled among the heathen:

- **Psalm 106:47** - "Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise."

But **Psalm 107** is divided from the previous psalms by the beginning of a new "book" or scroll. Why? Because something new would have to happen to get Israel to obey and genuinely "give thanks unto the Lord" - something they had not done in their history thus far.

The psalm was meant to be read on two different levels. Disconnected from the previous psalms, it is a general call for all humanity to "give thanks unto the Lord."

This psalm looks to the future. With the coming of the Redeemer/ Messiah, the general history of Israel came to include even Gentiles who call upon the name of the Lord and can claim to the "redeemed of the Lord."

[See <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/shiur-57-psalm-107-give-thanks-lord-he-good-his-loving-kindness-forever-part-iv>]

Redeemed from the Enemy

Psalm 107:1 - "O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

Psalm 107:2 - "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;"

This applies both to Israel, redeemed from Egypt, but also all believers who have been saved from the enemy, Satan, who as the enemy opposes God.

- **Isaiah 35:10** - "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with

songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

- **Ephesians 6:12** - "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Gathered

Psalm 107:3 - "And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south."

This could be said of Israel:

- **Deuteronomy 30:4** - "If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:"

- **Isaiah 43:5-6** - "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth"

But also of believers in Jesus:

- **Luke 13:28-30** - "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."

Psalm 107:4-6 - "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses."

This also could be said of Israel in the wilderness, but actually they complained rather than cried out in submission.

Paul and the writer of Hebrews quoted this in reference to believers in Jesus now:

- **Hebrews 13:14-15** - "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

- **1 Corinthians 4:11** - "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;"

Psalm 107:7 - "And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."

The Targum is: "to Jerusalem, a city to dwell in"

For believers now it is the New Jerusalem - "the bride, the wife of the Lamb", where the river of the Water of Life flows (**Revelation 21 - 22**).

The Right Way

- **John 14:6** - "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Psalm 107:8 - "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

Compare **Matthew 5:6** - "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

The first part of **Verse 7** is repeated throughout the rest of the psalm as a refrain, punctuating the different "distresses" that God has rescued us from.

Prisoners Released from Bondage

Psalm 107:10-14 - "Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder."

The Targum applies it to the Israelites in the Babylonish captivity. But really all humanity which is spiritually dead without Christ. We are captives of Satan until we cry out to the Lord.

Psalm 107:15-16 - "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder."

See **Isaiah 45:2** - "I will break down the gates of bronze and cut through the bars of iron." (referring to Cyrus, a type of Messiah, in releasing Israel from exile).

The Impious are Delivered from their Foolishness

Psalm 107:17-20 - "Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them

from their destructions."

- Like the Israelites who despised the manna in the wilderness.

"He sent his word" - Jesus healed physical diseases with a word, to show that the Word could heal our spiritual sickness.

Psalm 107:21-22 - "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing."

- **Hebrews 13:15** - "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess His name."

He Calms the Seas

Psalm 107:23-30 - "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

Illustrated by the story of Jonah. And Jesus calming the storm:

- **Matthew 8:26** - 'And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.'

- **Psalm 89:9** - "You rule the raging of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them."

Psalm 107:31-32 - "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."

He Turns Out the Wicked and Gives their Land to the Hungry

Psalm 107:33-39 - "He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow."

In the same way he dispossessed the Canaanites for Israel, but then sent Israel into

exile for their sins.

Targum: "the land of Israel, which brought forth fruit, he hath destroyed, as Sodom was overthrown"

Psalm 107:40-41 - "He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way. Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock."

Targum: "when they turn to the law" he setteth the poor...

"from affliction" = "*after* affliction" - after their time of affliction is over, then God will exalt and glorify them

- **1 Peter 5:10** - "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

See also Mary's Magnificat:

- **Luke 1:51-53** - "He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."

Psalm 107:42 - "The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth."

Specifically the iniquity within ourselves - the voices speaking either prideful boastings, or self-condemning accusations, etc.

Psalm 107:43 - "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD."