

# THE PSALMS

## BOOK THE FIFTH<sup>1</sup>

### PSALM 107

#### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Examples of Men's Straits, leading to Prayer;  
and of Jehovah's Deliverance, calling for Praise.

#### ANALYSIS

After a Summons to Thanksgiving addressed to the Redeemed, vers. 1-3,  
Examples are given:—

1. Of Hungry Wanderers, vers. 4-9;
2. Of Guilty Prisoners, vers. 10-16;
3. Of Dying Transgressors, vers. 17-22;
4. Of Imperilled Sailors, vers. 23-32;

whose Straits move them to Prayer, and whose Prayer brings them from  
Jehovah Deliverance. Further Examples are suggested:—

5. Of a Fruitful Land, first Sterilised, then Blessed, vers. 33-38;
6. Of Nobles, first Diminished, then Multiplied, vers. 39-42

(These suggestions are without the *Refrains* with which the previous "Exam-  
ples" are "finished.") A Brief Admonition Closes the Psalm.

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(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!<sup>2</sup>

- 1 *Give ye thanks to Jehovah for he is good,  
for to the ages is his kindness.*
- 2 Let the redeemed of Jehovah<sup>3</sup> say—  
whom he hath redeemed out of the hand of the adversary;

1. See Table II., *ante*.

2. See notes to Ps. 105. Sep and Vul. have this "P.R.I." here.

3. Cp. Isa. 62:12 (also Isa. 63:4, 35:9).

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- 3 And out of countries hath gathered them,—  
 out of the east and out of the west,  
 out of the north and out of the south.<sup>4</sup>
- 4 Men have wandered about in a desert in a waste,  
 way to a city to dwell in have they not found:
- 5 Hungry yea thirsty  
 their soul within them fainteth.
- 6 *So they make outcry unto Jehovah in the strait they are in,  
 that out of their distresses he will rescue them.*
- 7 And he leadeth them in a way direct,  
 that they may come to a city to dwell in.
- 8 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,  
 and his wondrous doings for the sons of men:*
- 9 Because he hath satisfied the longing soul,  
 and the hungry soul hath filled with good.
- 10 Men are sitting in darkness and death-shade,  
 prisoners in humiliation and iron,—
- 11 Because they have rebelled against the sayings of GOD,  
 and the counsel of the Highest have spurned,<sup>5</sup>
- 12 And he humbleth with travail their heart,  
 they have staggered and there is no one to help.
- 13 *So they cry out unto Jehovah in the strait they are in,  
 that out of their distresses he will save them.*
- 14 And he leadeth them forth out of darkness and death-shade,  
 and their bands he bursteth asunder.<sup>6</sup>
- 15 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,  
 and his wondrous doings for the sons of men:*
- 16 Because he hath shattered the doors of bronze,  
 and the bars of iron hath hewn asunder.<sup>7</sup>
- 17 Foolish men because of their way of transgression,  
 and because of their iniquities bring on themselves  
 humiliation:
- 18 All food their soul abhorreth,  
 and they draw near unto the gates of death.
- 19 *So they cry out unto Jehovah in the strait they are in,  
 that out of their distresses he will save them.*

4. So *Gt.*—*Gn.* And so *Dr.* *M.T.*: "the sea."

5. Or: "despised."

6. Or: "he teareth open."

7. *Isa.* 45:2.

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- 20 He sendeth forth his word<sup>8</sup> and healeth them,  
and rescueth [them] out of their pits.<sup>9</sup>
- 21 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,  
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men;*
- 22 And let them sacrifice sacrifices of thanksgiving,  
and tell of his works<sup>10</sup> with jubilation.<sup>11</sup>
- 23 Men go down to the sea in ships,  
doing business through great waters :
- 24 They have seen the works of Jehovah,  
and his wondrous doings in the deep;
- 25 And he commandeth and there ariseth <sup>12</sup> a tempestuous wind,  
and it lifteth on high the waves thereof :
- 26 They mount the heavens they descend the deeps,  
their soul by trouble dissolveth :
- 27 They reel and stagger like a drunken man,  
and all their wisdom is engulfed.
- 28 *So they make outcry unto Jehovah in the strait they are in,  
that out of their distresses he will bring them forth.*
- 29 He stilleth the storm to a whisper,<sup>13</sup>  
and silent are their waves :
- 30 Then are they glad because they subside,  
and he guideth them to their desired haven.<sup>14</sup>
- 31 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his goodness,  
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men;*
- 32 And let them extol him in an assembly of people,  
and in a seated company of elders let them praise him.
- 33 He turneth rivers into a desert,  
and springs of water into thirsty ground :
- 34 A land of fruit into a waste of salt,—  
for the wickedness of them who dwell therein.
- 35 He turneth a desert into a pool of water,  
and a parched land into springs of water ;

8. Job 33:23, John 1:1.

9. "That is, *their graves*"—Dr. "Pitfalls"—Del. "From the pit their life"—Br. (conj.).

10. Or: "doings."

11. Or: "a ringing cry."

12. So it shd. be (w. Sep.)—Gn.

13. "He husheth the storm to a gentle air"—Per. "He turned the storm into a gentle breeze"—Del.

14. "Longed-for-haven"—Del. "Haven of their desire"—Dr. "City of their desire"—O.G.

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- 36 And causeth to dwell there the hungry,  
and they establish a city to dwell in;  
37 And sow fields and plant vineyards,  
and obtain fruits to be gathered in.  
38 So doth he bless them and they multiply greatly,  
and their cattle suffereth he not to be few.  
40 He poureth contempt upon nobles,<sup>15</sup>  
and letteth them wander in a pathless waste;<sup>16</sup>  
39 And they become few and are brought low—  
by the pressure of misfortune and sorrow.<sup>17</sup>  
41 And he setteth the needy on high out of humiliation,  
and maketh families like a flock.<sup>18</sup>  
42 The upright see and are glad,<sup>19</sup>  
and all perverseness hath shut her mouth.<sup>20</sup>  
43 Who is wise?—let him observe these things,<sup>21</sup>  
and diligently consider the kindness of Jehovah.

(Nm.)

## PARAPHRASE

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Say "Thank You" to the Lord for being so good, for always being so loving and kind.

2. Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others He has saved you from your enemies.

3 He brought the exiles back from the farthest corners of the earth.

4 They were wandering homeless in the desert,

5 Hungry and thirsty and faint.

6 "Lord, help!" they cried, and He did!

7 He led them straight to safety and a place to live.

8 Oh, that these men would praise the Lord for His loving-kindness, and for all of His wonderful deeds!

9 For He satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry soul with good.

15. Vers. 39 and 40 are transposed according to the judgment of Ginsburg on the inverted *nun* found here in the margin.

16. Heb. *tohu*: cp. Gen. 1:2. Cp. Job 12:21-24.

17. So Del. "Through coercion, adversity, and sorrow"—Dr.

18. Cp. Job 21:11.

19. Cp. Job. 5:16.

20. Cp. Job 22:19.

21. Cp. Ho. 14:9.

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10 Who are these who sit in darkness, in the shadow of death, crushed by misery and slavery?

11 They rebelled against the Lord, scorning Him, who is the God above all gods.

12 That is why he broke them with hard labor; they fell and none could help them rise again.

13 Then they cried to the Lord in their troubles, and He rescued them!

14 He led them from the darkness and shadow of death and snapped their chains!

15 Oh, that these men would praise the Lord for His loving-kindness and for all of His wonderful deeds!

16 For He broke down their prison gates of brass and cut apart their iron bars.

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17 Others, the fools, were ill because of their sinful ways.

18 Their appetites were gone and death was near.

19 Then they cried to the Lord in their troubles, and He helped them and delivered them.

20 He spoke, and they were healed—snatched from the door of death.

21 Oh, that these men would praise the Lord for His loving-kindness and for all of His wonderful deeds!

22 Let them tell Him "Thank You" as their sacrifice, and sing about His glorious deeds.

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23 And then there are the sailors sailing the seven seas, plying the trade routes of the world.

24 They, too observe the power of God in action.

25 He calls to the storm winds; the waves rise high.

26 Their ships are tossed to the heavens and sink again to the depths; the sailors cringe in terror.

27 They reel and stagger like drunkards and are at their wit's end.

28 Then they cry to the Lord in their trouble, and He saves them!

29 He calms the storm and stills the waves.

30 What a blessing is that stillness, as He brings them safely into harbor!

31 Oh, that these men would praise the Lord for His loving-kindness and all of His wonderful deeds!

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32 Let them praise Him publicly before the congregation,  
and before the leaders of the nation.

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33 He dries up rivers,

34 And turns the good land of the wicked into deserts of  
salt.

35 Again, He turns deserts into fertile, watered valleys!

36 He brings the hungry to settle there and build their cities,

37 To sow their fields and plant their vineyards, and reap  
their bumper crops!

38 How He blesses them! They raise big families there,  
and many cattle!

39 But others become poor through oppression, trouble and  
sorrow.

40 For God pours contempt upon the haughty and causes  
princes to wander among ruins;

41 But He rescues the poor who are godly and gives them  
many children and much prosperity.

42 Good men everywhere will see it and be glad, while evil  
men are stricken silent.

43 Listen, if you are wise, to what I am saying. Think  
about the lovingkindness of the Lord!

## EXPOSITION

This psalm stands high for its artistic beauty and for its broad applicability to the experiences of men, as well as for the same lofty devotion as that by which most of the psalms are distinguished. Its artistic beauty is greatly owing to the two refrains which adorn each of its four principal stanzas, one refrain shewing how trouble leads to prayer, and the other suggesting that answered prayer calls for praise; and, though this feature is missing from the concluding strains of the psalm (vers. 33-42), yet this absence ceases to appear as a blemish, when once it is apprehended that the lack was intentional, and that the super-numerary lines were merely intended to shew, by two further examples, in how many other ways than those above wrought out, the prayers of men might be called for and their praises evoked. Such an apprehension enriches us by revealing *psalmody in the making* as well as psalmody fully prepared for public use. We first think we can see whereabouts amidst the supplementary lines the refrains might have been inserted, and then reflect on the numberless other ways in which the ever-varying experiences

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of life may with equal fitness fan the flames of petition and adoration. Let *the redeemed* from every other conceivable *distress say* whether it is not still true of *Jehovah*, that *he is good, For to the ages is his kindness.*

By this very suggestiveness—of other like experiences—is the *breadth* of this psalm discovered; as also by the typical character of the instances actually given. In the first and fourth refrained stanzas, we have instances of men in distress through no apparent sin or fault of their own: in the second and third finished stanzas, are given examples in which it was sin that brought on the suffering. We can choose between them, according as we apprehend our own troubles to be punitive as well as disciplinary, or the latter only. We may be passing through trouble—not because we are bad, but that we may be better. Besides this, some troubles read like parables of others to which they bear a striking resemblance. Many a man seems to himself to be like a prisoner with no imaginable way of escape; and many another, like the mariner whose *soul by trouble dissolveth, And all his wisdom is engulfed.* Courage, brother! *He still liveth who can still the storm to a whisper.* Sooner than thou thinkest, thou mayest have cast anchor in thy *desired haven!*

Among other manifestations of the devotional spirit which pervades the psalms in general, this psalm is delightfully conspicuous in that, instead of employing inferior deities, one to send a trouble and another to remove it, all the vicissitudes of life are traced ultimately to *Jehovah's* holy will. He mercifully overrules the troubles which he inscrutably permits: he raises the storm which he abates. In no case are we debarred from recognising his hand in the controlling and moulding of our lives. *Who is wise? let him observe these things, And diligently consider the kindness of Jehovah.*

There is not a word in the body of this psalm to suggest a late date for its composition; and though the Sopherim may very well have adapted it for a post-exilic time by the prelude which amplifies the gathering of scattered Israel, yet it should not be forgotten that Israel suffered extensive deportations even before Hezekiah's day. Those readers who will be at the trouble of looking up the numerous references to Job and Isaiah here supplied will of course be struck with the coincidences thereby brought to light. At the same time there are two weighty considerations to be borne in mind: the one is the brightening evidence that the latter part of Isaiah was after all mainly written

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by the man whose name it bears; and the other the much forgotten circumstance that the Great Return from Exile from the four quarters of the earth is manifestly an event which has yet to be fulfilled.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is the artistic beauty of this psalm shown?
2. In what way can we see "psalmody in the making"?
3. There are lessons to learn from distress. Examples are given—how do these two examples fit all men?
4. These distresses can be read like parables—how?
5. Is it true that all natural phenomena is to be attributed to Jehovah? Can we make Him immediately and personally responsible for the millions who have died in famine and flood?
6. How is the problem of the late date of this psalm answered?

## PSALM 108

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Two Fragments of Earlier Psalms.

### ANALYSIS

Vers. 1-6 are taken from Ps. 57:7-11: and vers. 6-9 from Ps. 60:5-8. For Exposition, see those psalms. Probable Occasion for this Composite Psalm: Danger from Edom, Not so Accute as in Ps. 60.

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(Lm.)—Song—Psalm—By David.

- 1 Steadfast is my heart O God!<sup>1</sup>  
I would fain sing and would play,—yea my glory!<sup>2</sup>
- 2 Oh awake lute and lyre!  
I would fain waken the dawn:
- 3 I would thank thee among the peoples O Jehovah,  
I would celebrate thee in psalm<sup>3</sup> among the races of men.

1. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.) repeat the clause: "steadfast is my heart." Cp. 57:7—Gn.

2. See Ps. 16:9 note.

3. Or: "make melody unto thee."