

Ps. 107:23-32 (LD 10) “Guided to the Haven”

For the Children: God’s people sometimes pray to Him and ask for help only when they face big problems – like sailors who become scared during a fierce storm. Whether we are in dangerous situations or enjoying peace and safety, we should always trust that the Lord will look after us. He is *able* to do anything needed to help us; and He cares for us as a loving, heavenly Father, so that He *wants* to give us the help we need. That doesn’t mean He will always do what we want. But He will see us safely through this life until we enter the blessings of eternal life. **Questions:** What is “Providence”? Is there any problem with which the Lord can’t help us? How can we show that we really believe in God’s Providence?

Introduction:

First Point: Providence to Sailors

- 1) Storms at Sea: Israel had a fleet at times, so God’s people had some idea of conditions at sea. There is also some similarity of language with the Book of Jonah. The description of sailors in danger from storms at sea is very vivid.
- 2) The Lord’s Work: The sea and all it contains – even the largest sea-creatures from the deep, are the Lord’s work. He also controls the weather and marine conditions. See vss. 24-25. Note the parallel with Creation: God spoke, and the stormy wind was raised up.
- 3) Hearing the Cries: In this fallen world, crises and disasters are designed, in part, to lead men to cry out to the Lord – a strong theme in Ps. 107. See vss. 6,13,19 and 28. For in such circumstances, men see that they are unable to rescue themselves. See Jonah 1:14, 2:1. The Lord hears such cries, and especially with His people, answers for their good. Here, He calms the storm when the sailors cry to Him (vss. 29-30). The Lord Jesus did something similar (Mt. 8:23f). Only God can hear prayer and answer it in a way that shows complete control over Creation. The Lord Jesus is also that God of Providence (Col. 1:17).

Second Point: Providence in All of Life

- 1) Providence Governs All: The God who can hear prayer and deal with storms at sea can and does rule all things. LD 10 lists the different areas of life – different creatures, the need for food, prosperity etc. – to stress that nothing is governed by chance, but only by the Lord.
- 2) Nowhere Else to Turn: There is therefore no one else to whom we should turn for help. Even when we use “means” to get help, we still need to seek the Lord’s blessing upon it.
- 3) Sovereign Power and Fatherly Care: We have confidence in seeking the Lord’s help because He is sovereign over all Creation – as Ps. 107 shows. He is the God who does “wonders” (v. 24) and the God who is our loving heavenly Father (LD 10; v. 31). Ps. 107 uses the Name “Yahweh” 12 times to remind us that the Lord is the faithful, covenant-keeping God. So great is His mercy and love, that He even hears the cries of those who have previously been ignoring Him, if they humble themselves before Him.

Third Point: Praise for God’s Providence

- 1) Public Praise and Thanks: Vss. 31-32 show that the proper response to the Lord’s good Providence is that we offer praise and thanks to Him – not only in private, but also in public e.g., worship services and before the elders. We can even do so during life’s storms – for there are always blessings for God’s people, even amidst tribulation. This requires faith and patience, to keep praising God while we are waiting for rescue. But there is nothing wrong with crying out to the Lord when we are in extremity.
- 2) Seeking His Guidance: The Lord guides His people to a heavenly haven, even as He guided the sailors through the storms to their desired haven. He guides us especially by Word and Spirit. He provisionally directs our lives by answered prayer, advice from others and His use of our circumstances, to place us where He wants us. But that guidance is something we should be seeking, rather than ignoring the Lord. Seek His counsel from His Word and pray that He will arrange our circumstances for His glory and our good.

Conclusion: