

Why Do We Doubt God's Sovereign Care for His People?

Acts 27:39-44

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And so it was that all were brought safely to land. - Acts 27:44

Sometimes I find it helpful to ask probing questions of Scripture. For example, in today's passage:

- Why did God rescue these people in this way?
- What if God didn't save them and the ship sank?
- Why save all the prisoners and not just Paul?

Sometimes Scripture does not answer all of our probing questions. At these times, we need to be content with accepting Deuteronomy 29:29: "*The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*" (ESV)

Probing questions can be helpful, as long as we always turn to Scripture for the answers. If we are committed to consulting the context and to interpreting Scripture by Scripture, we will have safe guides for our questions. So with these guides in place, we can go back to those probing questions:

- *Why did God rescue these people in this way?* He did so because it best glorified Himself and revealed His power to preserve and save His people. He not only wanted to get Paul to Rome, but He wanted to show Himself to Paul's shipmates along the way as the true God who rescues.
- *What if God didn't save them and the ship sank?* God would only have done that if it had been better for His glory and for the good of His people. Thus, He would only have allowed the ship to sink and the people to be lost if He had a greater good in view.
- *Why save all the prisoners and not just Paul?* God clearly shows in His word that the blessings He gives His people overflow to the unbelievers around them.

These probing questions, as we ask them, begin to expose some of our own hidden assumptions and fears, don't they? The second question especially gets to the heart of what we wonder often: Why doesn't God always rescue from harm? One person is wondrously protected and cured from cancer while another person dies from the same cancer. Both are believers. Why? In the end, we cannot answer that question for certain, but we do have to trust that God knows that He is doing, has not fallen asleep at the wheel, and that He continues to always do what is ultimately best for His glory and the good of His people.

Sometimes our ship is stuck against the reef and is breaking apart and we wonder where God is and what He is doing. Sometimes we feel so desperate that we think we're going to die, and it is often at those times that God is most present and active, preserving life and displaying His sovereign goodness. When the soldiers were in full panic, God was saving their lives. We need to remember that.

Heavenly Father, You are Lord of all and You are good. Let us never forget that, no matter what our circumstances may look like to us. May we always rest in peace, knowing that we are always in Your loving hands, no matter what. In Jesus' name, Amen.