

PSALMS 102

Prayer of an Afflicted Man for Mercy on Himself and on Zion

INTRODUCTION.

- A. A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Lord.
- B. Some have classes this as a Penitential Psalm, but there is no confession of sin anywhere in it. Some also have labeled it Messianic, as the last part does seem to apply to the Christ. It seems to have been written when Jerusalem was in ruins and the people were in exile (102:13-21). It pictures a time of great difficulty and asks the Lord to deliver.
- C. The psalm has three divisions:
 - 1. Sufferings of the Afflicted (102:1-12).
 - 2. Hope Based upon God's Eternity and Changelessness (102:13-21).
 - 3. The Glory of the Messiah (102:22-28).

THE TEXT.

- 102:1** Hear my prayer, O LORD!
And let my cry for help come to You.
- 2** Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my distress;
Incline Your ear to me;
In the day when I call answer me quickly.
- 3** For my days have been consumed in smoke,
And my bones have been scorched like a hearth.
- 4** My heart has been smitten like grass and has withered away,
Indeed, I forget to eat my bread.
- 5** Because of the loudness of my groaning
My bones cling to my flesh.
- 6** I resemble a pelican of the wilderness;
I have become like an owl of the waste places.
- 7** I lie awake,
I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop.
- 8** My enemies have reproached me all day long;
Those who deride me have used my *name* as a curse.
- 9** For I have eaten ashes like bread
And mingled my drink with weeping
- 10** Because of Your indignation and Your wrath,
For You have lifted me up and cast me away.
- 11** My days are like a lengthened shadow,
And I wither away like grass.
- 12** But You, O LORD, abide forever,
And Your name to all generations.
- 13** You will arise *and* have compassion on Zion;
For it is time to be gracious to her,
For the appointed time has come.
- 14** Surely Your servants find pleasure in her stones
And feel pity for her dust.
- 15** So the nations will fear the name of the LORD
And all the kings of the earth Your glory.
- 16** For the LORD has built up Zion;
He has appeared in His glory.
- 17** He has regarded the prayer of the destitute
And has not despised their prayer.
- 18** This will be written for the generation to come,
That a people yet to be created may praise the LORD.
- 19** For He looked down from His holy height;
From heaven the LORD gazed upon the earth,
- 20** To hear the groaning of the prisoner,
To set free those who were doomed to death,

- 21 That *men* may tell of the name of the LORD in Zion
And His praise in Jerusalem,
- 22 When the peoples are gathered together,
And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.
- 23 He has weakened my strength in the way;
He has shortened my days.
- 24 I say, "O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days,
Your years are throughout all generations.
- 25 "Of old You founded the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.
- 26 "Even they will perish, but You endure;
And all of them will wear out like a garment;
Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed.
- 27 "But You are the same,
And Your years will not come to an end.
- 28 "The children of Your servants will continue,
And their descendants will be established before You."

COMMENTS.

A. Sufferings of the Afflicted.

[v1-12] This section gives a vivid description of individual suffering from some unnamed cause. He feels that the Lord has hidden His face from him. He is in trouble and is consumed like smoke and his bones are burned like a hearth. He feels as frail as grass and his bones cling to his skin. The only hint of sin is in 102:10 which describes his condition to "...Your indignation and Your wrath; for You have lifted me up and cast me away." He withers away like grass, "But You, O Lord, shall endure forever..." He then begins to describe hope in the eternal nature of God.

B. Hope Based upon God's Eternity and Changelessness.

[13] "You will arise and have mercy on Zion..." This seems to identify the situation as one of the city and nation rather than the individual. The only time that Jerusalem was destroyed was the Babylonian exile. This may be near the end when the Lord was ready to restore the city.

[14-16] "Your servants take pleasure in her stones... So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord..." "For the Lord shall build up Zion." We are interpreting these verses from a historical viewpoint, but this seems to describe the rebuilding of the city for the glory of the Lord, and renewed respect of the surrounding nations.

[17] "He shall regard the prayer of the destitute..." Their prayers must have been requesting the restoration of the city, worship and the respect of the nation.

[18] "This will be written for the generation to come..." The mighty deliverance from Babylon through the Medes and the Persians and Cyrus sending them back to Jerusalem with money and supplies to rebuild the temple and city was certainly told by Ezra and Nehemiah.

[19-22] "For He looked down... from heaven... to hear... to release..." God did know their condition: their sin that took them to captivity and their suffering which brought repentance and restoration.

[22] "When the PEOPLES are gathered together, and the KINGDOMS to serve the Lord." This seems to look forward to the Messiah who would be worshiped by the Jews and all nations.

C. The Glory of the Messiah.

This division could still be referring to the Jews of the exile who felt like their days were shortened by the Lord because of their sin. The God who punished them, is the same God who allowed His Son suffer for them that they might be redeemed. There is some similarity here to Heb. 1:2-12 in describing Christ, and 102:25-27 are quoted in Heb. 1:10-12 and applied to Christ. Therefore, Kinder uses this application by the Hebrew writer to apply the entire psalm to the suffering of Christ. Each will have to decide for himself.