

The title heading Psalm 102 clearly announces the theme, a theme sharply in contrast to the victorious rejoicing and blessing in ten preceding Psalms which look at the successful Messiah. Psalm 102 looks forward to the afflicted Messiah, who, overwhelmed with the rejection He suffers, pours out His heart to the LORD (Jehovah). He expresses His inward feelings as He suffers abandonment by the very God that sent Him, and by the very people He came to rescue and to rule. His mission, by all human measures, has been a failure regarding Israel. But Psalm 102 shows that His own personal experience while on earth was actually reflecting the suffering of His people Israel in God's governmental setting aside of the Nation. He suffered for that nation so that He might righteously claim it and restore it to Himself on earth forever. That same nation had abandoned its God and was carried captive for 70 years to Babylon before being returned. Therefore some commentators believe this Psalm may have been written by Daniel or Jeremiah or some other godly man at the time of their 70 years captivity.

Historically, as we now know, after rejecting and crucifying its Messiah the nation was not carried captive again but was totally abandoned (except for God's providential preservation). They were scattered worldwide, to suffer affliction (now still in progress) until they repent. This Psalm seems to reflect that abandonment as well as their earlier captivity. It reflects the awakening of the first godly remnant to return to Jerusalem to rebuild, which they did under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. But it also reflects the still future awakening of another godly remnant in the nation of Israel. By the work of the Holy Spirit they will come to realize the real reason for the affliction they have suffered for the last 19 centuries. They will come to especially value this Psalm's outpouring of sorrows they will feel then.

But it is not only the feelings of some Israeli's of the future but Christ's own personal human feelings that are revealed in this Psalm. Psalm 22 expresses the deep, innermost sufferings of Christ being abandoned by His God. Psalm 102 also is a cry of His abandonment by His God. But there is a difference. Psalm 22 speaks of Him suffering alone, forsaken by God while bearing our sins and because of our sins. This was infinite hurt!! Psalm 102 speaks of Him suffering also. God's faithful servant forsaken and suffering alone, while being allowed by God to be taken to His death through no fault of His own. This hurt too! We fellowship in that kind of suffering.

We do well to observe and take note of each of the sufferings of Christ revealed in Scripture. Many are revealed in-depth by the Psalms. Treasure these! And we may recognize and experience many of them in our walk with Him today. Thereby we are privileged to be able to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. In doing so we come to know Him most deeply and personally. The

personal suffering of loneliness and abandonment so deeply expressed in this Psalm also strike an answering response in each of our own hearts. Haven't we at one time or another felt abandoned, hung out to dry so to speak, by someone we had trusted would do better to us. Whether our feelings are always truly warranted or not they are genuine and painful. Jesus suffered them too. He knows the way we are made and has suffered the same, sin apart. So we can go confidently to Him for comfort and encouragement as this Psalmist does, and receive it.

In the midst of these helpless, forsaken feelings the Psalmist is reminded of some encouraging promises and some unquestionable facts. He looks back to the LORD (Jehovah). HE doesn't change! (v.12.). HE doesn't age, though the heavens will.* The Psalmist predicts they will **perish**, v24, but Jehovah won't. The Psalmist rests in his Creator and Eternal Unchangeable God, even if left alone to die undeservingly. He bemoans his days being shortened. In Psalm 90 Moses bemoaned the seventy short years common to man. He lived a vigorous 120, dying then only because he had disobeyed God in anger. Many of us regret the shortness of life, no one really wants to die. Jesus didn't want to die either. The Messiah is prophetically pictured as being cut off having nothing (Daniel 9:26). Jesus was about 33 when crucified. Less than half of the normal 70 years life span of Psalm 90. "Nevertheless thy will be done!", Matthew 26:42. But that statement was in regard to the cup of wrath He was about to be given, not simply the fact of dying. Still, He looked forward to returning to His Father when He had completed the work. "I go unto my Father and Your Father," John 20:17; John 17:4,5; John 14. Similarly Paul regarded death to be with Christ as preferable to life, Philippians 1:21-24; but he still had work to do so assented to wait until it was done.

But looking back to the beginning of Psalm 102 we see a lonely figure isolated from normal life blessings, out of place to say the least. A pelican in the dry barren wilderness. A sparrow alone on the house top (sparrows are never alone). Certainly this world was that to Him. Here was One who had faithfully completed the work given Him to do but facing untimely and undeserved death, without deliverance from His God, the One who could rescue and deliver if He willed.

But this Jesus says to us I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Hebrews 13:5! He will reward us too for our service. It cost Him. Cost Him everything to come to save us, and His nation Israel. It cost Him to serve His God and to show the Universe who God really is and what He is like.

By Ron Canner, May 21, 2008.

*This incidentally points out a basic scientific "law" of the whole universe, the principle of "entropy," the second law of thermodynamics, which declares everything is winding down, and every thing tends to move from order to disorder. R.