



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 102

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Introduction

- The Hebrew, and nearly all the Versions, give the following title to this Psalm: *A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Lord*
- This afflicted one borrowed his tone and some of his expressions from Job, who is the Old Testament's greatest example of affliction
- This Psalm describes Jerusalem in a state of ruin
- If this is taken as literal ruin, the Psalm may have been written by those in exile when, towards the end of the captivity, they were almost worn out with oppression, cruelty, and distress



Introduction

- There were several opinions about who wrote it, its occasion, and its date
- According to some scholars, this Psalm was written after the return of the scribe Ezra from captivity with a mandate to rebuild the temple of the Lord (Nehemiah 1:3-11)
- In that case, the author could be either Ezra, Nehemiah, or someone contemporary of them
- And some think this Psalm was written at the end of the Babylon captivity, and represents the cry-outs of the captives, who, almost losing hope in going back home, seek from the Lord to fulfill His promise



Introduction

- Some think that David wrote this Psalm either at the time of Absalom's rebellion; or, not connected to a particular occasion, but he wrote it with the spirit of prophecy
- However, since Zion was a type of the New Testament church, it may be very well applied to Gospel times
- And it is clear, from the application of verses 25, 26, to Christ (Hebrew 1:10-12), that the Psalm has reference to the days of the Messiah and speaks either of His affliction or of the afflictions of His church for His sake
- According to St. Augustine, this prayer is presented by the Lord Christ, together with His church, His body



Introduction

- *A Prayer of the afflicted*, understood of Christ, who became poor for our sakes, and was afflicted of God and men
- St. Augustine asks, “If it is He, then, how is He poor? ... there He received our poverty, when He was clothed in the form of a servant, emptying Himself; lest you should dread His riches, and in your beggarly state should not dare approach Him. There, I say, He put on the form of a servant, there He was clothed with our poverty; there He made Himself poor, and us rich.”
- And it may very well be applied to any afflicted person and suits the believer in his spiritual strife, seeking the divine help



Introduction

- Many commentators regard the Psalm as the exclamation of the nation
- But at the same time the Psalm expresses the intensity of personal feeling
- Therefore, it can be said that they mourned over both their personal and national affliction
- The psalmist is indeed afflicted, and while he does pour out his heart to God, we also see that he is full of confidence in God and in His promises to His people
- This has been regarded as one of the seven repentant Psalms (along with Psalms 6,32,38,51,130,143)



Introduction

Psalm Outline

- The Lamentation of the Poor 102:1-11
- The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22
- The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28

The Lamentation of the Poor

102:1-11



- The entire Psalm is a prayer, and it serves as a good example of what it looks like to cry out to God in our time of need
- It can be seen throughout the Psalm, but especially in verses 1 and 2 that the psalmist knows that God's intervention and God's salvation are his only hope
- According to its title, this Psalm comes from an afflicted one
- The psalmist begs God to *hear* his prayer, knowing that if the God of goodness and compassion heard his prayer, He would not ignore the plea
- The psalmist is in a situation where he feels deep distress

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- He lifts a pure cry to God
- The psalmist supplicates to God, his Savior, to hear his prayer, and to let his cries enter into the throne of His grace
- The two terms: *prayer and cry* complete one another; and together reveal the extent of the urgency that his condition has become
- *let my cry come to You*, his prayer, accompanied with an outward expression of his sincerity
- It was not a silent, or a mental prayer; it was a loud and earnest cry

The Lamentation of the Poor

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- He asks God not to hide His face from him
- This is the primary and principal petition of a poor man in trouble, or of a repentant sinner
- The affliction itself was bad enough, but it was made worse beyond measure by the sense that God did not see or care
- When he had the sense that God's favor and face were evident, the affliction could be endured
- St. Augustine comments on *hide Your face from me* and says, "When did God turn away His Face from His Son? when did the Father turn away His Face from Christ? But for the sake of the poverty of My members, 'Turn not away Your face from Me: whatsoever day I am troubled, incline Your ear unto Me'"

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- *Incline Your ear to me*, This is a second petition, but a consequence of the first; for, the moment God begins to look upon anyone, that moment man begins to see his own impurity and nakedness, and, through it, his real poverty
- He then begins to be troubled and afflicted, and to reappear to the supreme Physician, who is rich in mercy; for he knows that God never despises an afflicted spirit and a contrite heart
- He, therefore, says, with confidence, *in the day of my trouble; Incline Your ear to me*
- And he repeats it, *In the day that I call, answer me speedily*, whenever I shall be in trouble, and call upon You, hear me

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- St. Jerome says, “Do not hide Your face from me’: This prayer could only be uttered by Him who prays with a pure heart and a blameless conscience; For a sinner would not dare say: ‘Do not hide Your face from me’, but would rather say: ‘Hide Your face from my sins’ (Psalm 51:9)”
- While the psalmist never fully identifies the nature of his suffering, it is evident that he is in a dire and desperate situation
- He uses vivid language to describe his weakness and his feelings of frailty

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- He expresses that his life seems short and fleeting and that outside of God's intervention he will soon pass away
- His days passed like meaningless *smoke*
- So, in a style similar to Job, the Psalmist described his agony
- Pain from deep inside his body made his *bones* feel as if they were burning
- His *heart* ached and he had no appetite
- The imagery that the psalmist uses suggests that he is suffering physically, but it's also obvious that he is burdened spiritually and emotionally

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- *my days are consumed like smoke*, Disappear, pass away into nothingness, they are spent in affliction, and seem to accomplish nothing
- The psalmist gives a reason for having said, *answer me speedily* and the reason is, that man's life draws to a close with the greatest rapidity
- Through trouble and grief, his bones, the strongest parts of his body and its support, were so weakened, that they were as if they had been burnt up, as the *hearth* by fire
- The psalmist continues lamenting his past state, and says, *My heart is stricken and withered like grass*

The Lamentation of the Poor

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- His heart, the center of vital force, is dried up like a plant struck by the fierce heat of the sun and withered (Psalm 121:6; Hosea 9:16)
- Sorrow and sickness have deprived him of all appetite for food
- Grief has the effect of taking away the appetite, but he may mean, his is in a complete immersion in trouble that everything else is forgotten
- Mourning and fasting are naturally associated with each other
- Ahab, struck with one kind of grief, David with another, and Daniel with a third, all 'forgot,' or 'refused to eat their bread:' 1 Kings 21:4; 2 Samuel 12:16; Daniel 10:3

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- As in Job 19:20, he was so weak and thin that there seemed to be nothing between his *bones* and his *skin*
- Some interpret these verses of the feeling of a sinner
- *the sound of my groaning* Under the burden of sin, and pressure of afflictions
- From his constant lamentations, his flesh neglects its daily food; and thus, *My bones cling to my skin*
- It is an evident approval of fasting and penance, being both the signs and the fruit of true repentance
- According to St. Augustine, this is the groaning of the righteous

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- He says, “For many groan, and I also groan; even for this I groan, because they groan for a wrong cause. That man has lost a piece of money, he groans: he has lost faith, he groans not: I weigh the money and the faith, and I find more cause for groaning for him who groans not as he ought, or does not groan at all. He commits fraud, and rejoices. With what gain, with what loss? He has gained money, he has lost righteousness. For the latter reason, he who knows how to groan, groans; he who is near the head, who righteously clings to Christ’s body, groans for this reason. But the carnal do not groan for this reason, and they cause themselves to be groaned for... For we wish to correct them... and when we cannot, we groan”

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- He felt like a lonely and restless bird, *pelican, owl, or sparrow*
- *Pelican* is classed as an unclean creature and not to be eaten by the people (Leviticus 11:18)
- It is a solitary and mournful bird
- The pelican is a very vivid picture of sorrow and shows how the man feels, being both depressed and miserable
- The *owl* is a well-known bird which dwells in solitudes and old ruins and it seeks such places of dwelling and is also an unclean creature, not to be eaten by the people (Leviticus 11:17)
- It is a symbol of desolation by its appearance and by its sad cry

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- The Psalmist compares himself to solitude-loving birds which haunt desolate places and ruins, producing weird and mournful cries, Isaiah 34:11; Zephaniah 2:14
- To tears and fasting he unites solitude and watching
- His nights are sleepless
- Trouble drives sleep from his eyes, and he is kept awake at night which is a common effect of grief
- A sparrow is sociable and would normally be found in groups
- So when the psalmist talks about being like a sparrow alone upon the housetop, he is speaking of what is out of character and unnatural for the bird

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- This would tend to indicate that the bird was either ill or it had lost its mate
- According to St. Augustine, these three kinds of birds: the pelican, the owl, and the sparrow, mentioned by the Psalmist, refer to the care of the Lord Christ for three classes of men
- Those who are like the pelicans of the wilderness; are the nonbelievers, who live away from the house of the Lord
- Those who are like owls that live among the ruins; are the apostates who live in the darkness
- Those who are like sparrows, are Christians only by name, they walk lukewarmly in what they believe

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- The psalmist's affliction came from more than poor health; he had *enemies* set against him
- They opposed him with constant and continual disapproval and rejection, *all day long*
- Their wrath was unrelenting and unceasing, accompanied with insults
- The psalmist's griefs were their subjects
- They added a tone of mocking and cursing, *who deride me and swear an oath against me*

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- They were so furious that they bound themselves by oath to destroy him
- *swear an oath against me*, As the Jews were against Jesus Christ and sought to take away His life
- St. Augustine interpret it of Christ, he says, “With their mouth they praised, in their heart they were laying snares for Him. Hear their praise: ‘Master, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth, neither care You for any man. Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?’”
- *I have eaten ashes*, A figurative expression
- The life of the psalmist seemed to be constant mourning

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- Mourning and tears are as it were his food and drink, Psalm 42:3, 80:5
- Ashes as the symbol of mourning, Job 2:8; Lamentations 3:16; Ezekiel 27:30
- Instead of eating bread, he has laid down in dust and ashes
- Tears have fallen into the cup from which he drank, and have become a part of his drink
- The idea is, that he had shed many tears; and that even when he took his food, there was no relief to his grief
- *Because of Your indignation and Your wrath*, This suffering is the punishment of sin

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- The mourning was all the more bitter because of the sense that this affliction came as some kind of punishment from God
- What gave him the greatest uneasiness; not so much the reproach of his enemies, and his other outward afflictions, as the sense he had of God's *wrath and indignation*
- The psalmist punished himself because he saw God's anger and indignation were lighted up against him for the sins he had committed; and that he saw, because *You have lifted me up and cast me away*
- He was raised to the highest dignity by God's friendship and adoption

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- Then, because of his own sins, he was degraded to an enemy
- Sinners may imagine that the loss they suffer by the commission of sin is a small thing, but the word, translated *and cast me away* signifies complete demolition
- It alludes to a vessel thrown on the ground from a high place, and thereby broken into a thousand pieces along with losing its high position
- And so with the sinner, who, blinded by the desires of the flesh, does not see the injury done to him
- The shadow made by the descending sun was about to disappear altogether

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- It had become less distinct and clear, and it would soon vanish
- The psalmist is old before his time; the shades of evening have come upon him, when he should have been in his midday brightness
- Overwhelmed with a sense of divine rejection, *You have lifted me up and cast me away*, he felt that his life was short and had little meaning
- The psalmist is a very downcast man and, no doubt, in his present state of mind, considers the situation hopeless
- He saw life's sunset quickly approaching, and death lie in wait on the horizon

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- The previous verses spoke of the psalmist's weakness and the temporary nature of life
- This verse, 12, gives a sharp and wonderful contrast
- Man may have days like shadows or *wither away like grass*, but God *shall endure forever*
- The psalmist can therefore reject all self-reliance and hold on to a true reliance upon God
- Though the psalmist has been cast down from an exalted position, though kingdoms rise and fall, yet God is unchanged
- His purposes will abide, His promises will be fulfilled, and His character is the same

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- The generations come and go, and the memory of man perishes, but the name of God endures and is the object of adoration and praise
- The Psalm draws upon God as He has revealed Himself in the past to His people
- In Exodus 3:15, we read, “*This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.*”
- This is how God revealed Himself to Moses
- He is the God who has been faithful to the forefathers of Israel, and initiated the covenant with them

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- He is this faithful God that will continue to uphold His end of the covenant
- Some fathers see Christ in this verse saying that the psalmist inspired by the Holy Spirit, prophesizes the future restoration and renovation of the Church through Christ, as the Apostle Paul explains in the first chapter of Hebrews
- The Apostle, wishing in that chapter to prove the divinity of Christ, first quotes the words in Psalm 45, *“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;”*

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- Then the words of verse 25 of this Psalm, saying, *“Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands”* which were addressed to the same person as those words of verse 12, *But You, O Lord, shall endure forever*
- If the former, verse 25, were addressed to the Son, so are these words of verse 12
- The psalmist goes on to declare something that will happen in future based on his knowledge of this God
- His knowledge of the nature of God anchors his faith in what God will do

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- *Zion* has gone through some trouble and perhaps, God's enemies have taken over it
- The *Zion*, on which God would *have mercy* was not the city only, but the people belonging to it
- What's significant here is the idea of the appointed time, *Yes, the set time, has come*
- God is not reacting to situations but He sees before time and sets what He will do before that
- He will bring things to pass in the right time

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- He knows when to act, and when He acts, it is the best time to do so
- By *the set time* is probably meant the time fixed by Jeremiah, *after seventy years*, for the termination of the Captivity and the restoration of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10), and alluded to by Daniel in Daniel 9:2
- Though in deep affliction, the psalmist had steadfast confidence that God *would* act and show *mercy* to Jerusalem once again
- The reason why *the remembrance of Your name to all generations* is, because God will not forget dealing mercifully with His people

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- But He *will arise* as if from a long sleep, *and have mercy on Zion*
- With the eye of a prophet, the psalmist see the future as if it were really present
- This is the time of which the Apostle speaks when he says, “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son*” (Galatians 4:4) of whom Isaias in 49:8 says, “*In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You*”
- In explaining this St. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 6:2, says, “*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*”

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- St. Jerome comments on *For the time to favor her, Yes, the set time, has come*, and says, “Whether it is because of repentance, it is time for mercy, or because this verse refers to the second coming of the Savior; I wish he, who repents would have confidence, that the time for salvation has come, and that the Lord is merciful and compassionate.”
- The psalmist was overwhelmed by a sense of his *own* ruin and need, as verses 1-11 showed
- Yet he did not allow that to turn him completely inward; he also cared for his community, *For Your servants take pleasure in her stones*

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- Another argument to move God's compassion
- His servants look with yearning love towards Zion in its ruin
- Even the broken stones and scattered heaps of debris which are all that remain of it are very dear to them, Isaiah 64:1,11; Lamentations 4:1; Nehemiah 2:13,4:2
- If every stone of God's city was precious to His *servants*, then by analogy, so is every stone representing the people of God in His great building, "*you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house,*" (1 Peter 2:5)
- Some fathers see, *God's servants*, His holy Apostles

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- The Apostles who previously had been devoted to fishing and such humble pursuits, now, after having been instructed by Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit to establish the Church, devoted themselves to that one object alone after abandoning all the cares of this world
- *take pleasure in her stones*, The building of the new Jerusalem, the collecting and placing the living stones together that were to be built upon the foundation already laid
- By stones are meant in this verse the steady and the perfect, while the dust represents the weak and the infirm

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- the weak of whom the Apostle says, *“Receive one who is weak in the faith.”* (Romans 14:1)
- And *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”* (Romans 15:1)
- Also, *“Who is weak, and I am not weak?”* (2 Corinthians 11:29)
- The restoration of mercy to Jerusalem is only the first part of a much larger work among *the nations*
- God would so reveal Himself that *all the kings of the earth* would honor His name and glory

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- The surrounding people, who hear what God has done for His people, will see the evidence that He is God, and learn to love and worship Him
- God's manifestation of His power and His faithfulness towards His people will win the reverence of all the nations
- This is a fundamental thought in Isaiah 40-66
- When the new Zion shall be in progress of building, the gentiles will be converted, and *shall fear* with a holy fear and sincere veneration, *the name of the Lord* Jesus Christ

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- Verses 16 and 17 are in close connection with verse 15
- The nations will offer reverence to God, when He has manifested His glory in the redemption of His people
- The kings and kingdoms of the world honor God because He reveals Himself in His work toward Zion
- His blessing and mercy to Jerusalem are a foretaste of His goodness to all the earth
- The Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, translation is *Because the Lord has built up Zion*
- This also is the most natural and correct translation of the Hebrew

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- The reference, however, may be to the future, but the Psalmist's talk here came as something that has already taken place
- See why all nations and all their kings shall fear Christ's glory,
For the Lord shall build up Zion
- In the present day, having established His Church in spite of all kings and nations, "*the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it;*" (Matthew 16:18)
- *He shall appear in His glory* in the time to come, when He shall come with all His Angels, in the clouds of heaven, with great power to judge the world

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- As the psalmist walks through what he knows about God, he also sees how God doesn't despise *the prayer of the destitute*
- At this point, the psalmist's circumstances has not changed, but he finds comfort not in personal relief, but in seeing God at work at the larger scale
- Knowing that God is enthroned forever shapes the way he thinks about Zion, and also about his circumstances
- God shows by thus building up Zion that He does regard prayer; that He hears the supplications of His people

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- St. Augustine says, “This work is going on now. O you living stones, run to the work of building, not to ruin. Zion is in building, beware of the ruined walls: the tower is building, the ark is in building; remember the flood. This work is in progress now; but when Zion is built, what will happen? “And He will appear in His glory... He was seen by Zion, but not in His glory... But truly when He shall have come with His angels to judge, shall they not look then upon Him whom they have pierced? and they shall be put to confusion when too late, who refused confusion in early and healthful repentance.”

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- The psalmist goes on to address a future generation not yet born
- God's goodness to Zion and the whole earth is a testimony for the future, so that *a people yet to be created may praise the Lord*
- The mercy of God in restoring His people to their own land and city must be recorded in writing, as His past mercies have been (Exodus 17:14; Deuteronomy 31:19), for the edification of future generations
- God will be worshipped not just by the nations, but by the generations too
- What was to be recorded for the generations to know, is God's salvation of His people

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- The psalmist pictured God bending down low from heaven to see *viewed the earth*
- God had not yet *looked down* upon His people when the Psalmist was writing; this is clear from verse 13; but He will assuredly do so, and His renewed regard will be the occasion and theme for their thanksgiving
- St. Augustine says, “He has looked down from on high, that He might come unto the humble: from on high He has become humble, that He might exalt the humble.”
- God has lowered Himself to look down from His holy place on high on this place of our wretchedness

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- And that, not with an indifferent eye, but with a view to let Himself down, to be seen on earth, and to converse with men
- He looks at them with an eye of love, grace, and mercy
- God heard the cries of His people for they were destined for death before the Lord intervened
- God is bending down low from heaven to hear *the groaning of the prisoner* and to act *to release those appointed to death*
- Verse 20 is an echo of the prayer in Psalm 79:11; Isaiah 42:7,61:1

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- God Almighty so humbled Himself *To hear the groaning of the prisoner* imposed upon them by the prince of darkness, and held in captivity by him; and that He will, on hearing their groans, free them from this captivity of Satan
- That was accomplished, as the Lord Himself testifies, by His own coming, as we read in Luke 4:18, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- The Lord came to break the bonds of those that were in bondage, and to rescue them from the power of darkness, in that they may *declare the name of the Lord in Zion*
- By their faith in the true and living God, they may glorify the name of the Lord in the Church, which is the spiritual Zion which he repeats when he says, *And His praise in Jerusalem*
- To proclaim that the first offers of mercy might be made to the Jews, from whom the word of reconciliation was to go out to all the ends of the earth
- Israel does not return alone; its restoration will be the signal for that gathering of the nations to worship God in Jerusalem

The Gracious Lord and the Care for His People 102:12-22



- *When the peoples are gathered together*, When all the Gentiles are enlightened, and the kings of the earth brought to pay reverence to the King of kings
- The psalmist started by crying out to the Lord to save him from affliction; but as the Lord heard his prayer, he now presents to Him his heart's desire, that the nations and the peoples would receive faith in the Savior
- He supplicates, not only to liberate the people from the Babylon captivity, but to liberate all humanity from the captivity of the devil

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- The psalmist began the Psalm by recognizing his own weakness verses 1-11
- Then he praised God for His deliverance and ultimate victory, verses 12-22
- Now in the last section of this Psalm, he confessed once again his weakness and frailty, *shortened my days*
- He reflects again on his mortality and how his life is short and limited
- In addition, the psalmist recognized that it was *God* who either caused or allowed his weakness and frailty

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- Life has been a difficult journey for him
- God had taken his strength away; He had weakened him; humbled him; brought him low by sorrow
- He would not survive to see with his own eyes the glory which he knows is to be revealed
- Men of the old covenant have longed so fervently for the coming of the Savior of the world, that they became frail
- Overwhelmed by both his sense of great weakness in affliction, and by the awareness of God's greatness and ultimate victory, the Psalmist cried out in prayer, pleading for God's merciful help

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- *O my God*, who has so graciously begun our deliverance, *Do not take me away in the midst of my days*, before it be completely finished, but let me see Your promise fulfilled
- *Your years are throughout all generations*, which are not as men's years, of the same measure or number; but are boundless and infinite
- This verse is expressive of the eternity of God, or Christ; which the psalmist opposes to his own frailty
- This is a ground of consolation, that God was ever the same; that whatever might happen to people, God was unchanged, and that His great plans would be carried forward and accomplished

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- He compares God to the heavens and the earth: Creator vs creation
- The psalmist proves that God alone is eternal from the fact of His being alone absolute unchangeable
- And he proves God to be unchangeable from the fact of His having brought the heavens from nonexistence into existence
- God always remains the same, without any change, and what it is said of the heavens applies to all creation
- Verses 25-27 are quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12 as the words of God the Father unto God the Son, the Messiah

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- In the Hebrew text the psalmist says, verses 25-27 to God, but the idea that God Himself speaks these words is more clear in the Greek translation of the Hebrew (the Septuagint), which St. Paul quoted
- By the Septuagint, the Father is here replying to the Son, *'through Him all things were made'*
- St. Paul is declaring that the Psalm point to Jesus and he views these words as spoken by the Father to Jesus Christ

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- The contrast was clear to the psalmist
- The mighty God is eternal *throughout all generations* and can do all things *You laid the foundation of the earth*
- The things God creates *will perish*, but He Himself *will endure*
- *You will change them*, The psalmist's thought here is rather of the shortness and brevity of heaven and earth contrasted with the eternity of God than of the new heavens and new earth, Isaiah 65:17,66:22
- God has complete power over creation, including the power to *change* the heavens as He pleases

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- Yet He Himself is unchanging *You are the same* and eternal *Your years will have no end*
- Creation is like changing clothes
- God, however, will remain and be the same
- He does not merely just exist forever, but He does not change
- God is immutable; God cannot increase, grow or improve
- Changes are made with a view to further attainments, which does not apply to God, He being most pure, most perfect, even infinitely perfect, and, therefore, can acquire nothing
- The psalmist ended his prayer and this Psalm with a note of confidence, even triumph

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- His affliction seems to have remained, and he does not proclaim hope for his present trouble
- At the same time, he is utterly confident of God's goodness and ultimate victory for His people *Your servants*
- If the psalmist did not see it in his own day, his *children* surely would, *and their descendants will be established* by God's goodness and strength
- This is a remarkable declaration of trust in God's promise to make all things right and good, if not in the present day, then in days to come
- It shows a wonderful progression in this Psalm

The Poor Praises and Glorifies God 102:23-28



- He began with an honest declaration of his own misery; then he looked outside himself to his community; then he looked outside his community to the world; then he looked outside his time to future generations
- It is remarkable that the psalmist does not draw the conclusion that he himself shall receive an answer to his prayer, but that, *The children of Your servants will*
- We may say that the servants of God here represent the patriarchs; their sons represent the Apostles; and their sons again represent all other Christians



Discussion

- What initial appeal introduces the Psalm?
- What motivated the psalmist to write this prayer?
- What imagery is used to depict the psalmist's suffering?
- Where did the psalmist obtain his hope for the future?
- How is God described in this Psalm?



Discussion

- How did the psalmist expect God to treat His people?
- What does this Psalm say about God's reliability?
- What is the major contrast that comes back repeatedly in this Psalm?
- What is new about the psalmist's complaint in verses 23-28?