

Surrey Chapel Fellowship Group Notes 27th/ 28th June 2012
Psalm 102 Testing Times

We do not know who wrote this Psalm or when. We do know that he was afflicted and feeling weak and downtrodden. Whilst this Psalm is an individual lament the writer knows that his well-being is bound up with the promised well-being of God's people. Taken as a whole the Psalms deal with the whole range of human emotions and experiences and as such they provide a guide for us in how we should approach God in both the joys and sorrows of life.

The prayer of an afflicted man v.1-11

The opening verse of this Psalm tells us two things about the Psalmist:- he is desperate and in distress yet at the same time he cries out to God with boldness. The rest of this Psalm reveals his hope and confidence in the Lord.

What is your reaction when in distress? Do you confidently turn to God in prayer?

Just as with Paul's thorn in the flesh, we do not know what it was that was afflicting the writer. That is probably the intention as it allows us to apply this Psalm to various difficulties rather than one specific affliction. Verses 3-11 provide a vivid description of the writer's sense of despair and mourning.

The Rebuilding of Zion v.12-22

Whilst the first part of this Psalm is very personal this second section looks at the wider picture of God's people. It reminds us that God will work for the ultimate good of His people. See Romans 8:18, 28.

What is "the appointed time" in verse 13?

Some people have taken the view that these verses relate to the end of the Babylonian exile. Though whilst these verse may have had something to say then, the BST commentary on the Psalms tells us "They foresee something greater than the end of the Babylonian exile. It will be the rescue of *prisoners... condemned to death*, by a Lord who will *appear in his glory*. It will cause all the *kings of the earth* to revere him, *the peoples and the kingdoms* to worship him.

Verse 17 tells us that this will happen in answer to prayer.

The phrase *the appointed time* occurs at least 19 times in scripture (see if you can name some of them) reminding us that things happen according to God's timing and that sometimes we have to wait patiently. Can you give an example from your own experience when you have had to wait for God's timing for something?

The eternal God - the source of hope V.23-28

The section is generally interpreted as being Messianic, although from a straightforward reading of the text it is not explicitly so. Hebrews 1:10-12 quotes from this passage. The difference in wording is due to Hebrews quoting from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). From the way this passage is quoted in Hebrews we can be assured that this is a valid interpretation of the Psalm.

With this Messianic interpretation how do these verses help the Psalmist? What help and encouragement can they provide us with today?

Prayer Points

Summer outreach events such as holiday club and beach missions
Follow up from hot potato, CAP, Innerlink.
How often do we pray for revival?

ADB