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Psalm 103

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 103.

Topics.

- Bless the LORD; forget not all his benefits, who forgives your sins.
- The LORD made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people.
- God does not repay us or deal with us according to our sins.
- God shows compassion to his children, as fathers show compassion.
- The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting.
- The LORD'S Kingdom rules over all.
- Bless the LORD, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word.
- The Commonwealth of Israel.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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BOOK FOUR (PSALM 90-106)

PSALM 103:1-5

A Psalm of David.

Bless the LORD, forget not His Benefits, who Forgives Your Sins.

- **Psalm 103:1-5:** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, ³who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, ⁴who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, ⁵who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The word bless means happy, David is telling his own spirit, heart and mind to be happy in the LORD and not to forget the benefits of God and then through the Psalm list the benefits by saying that the LORD:

- Forgives our sins, heals our diseases and redeems us from the pit (v3-4).
- Crowns us with His steadfast love and mercy (v4).
- Satisfies us with good and renews our youth like the eagle's (v5).
- Works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. (v6).
- Does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. (v10).

- Removes our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west. (v12).
- Shows us compassion as an earthly father shows compassion to his children. (v13).

The pit: (v3) refers to a huge hole in the ground that people are buried in sometimes an area within this massive pit where the dead bodies lie is called the grave. During the Old Testament it was common for twenty-thousand men to be killed on a battle field in one day. To prevent disease, and wild animals and birds eating the decaying corpses they would be buried in a mass grave. The same thing is done today when there is a plague or too many bodies and not enough men to bury them all in separate graves, this mass grave was called a pit.

God will renew your youth like the eagles: (v5) the eagle spreads its magnificent wings and glides through the air with the greatest of ease and grace. In this context the eagle speaks of vitality, energy and strength.

PSALM 103:6-9

The LORD made Known His ways to Moses, his Acts to the People.

- **Psalm 103:6-9:** The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. ⁸The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever.

As one travels through the Old Testament Scriptures it becomes very clear that one of the great things God hates is the oppression of the poor and the helpless for one's own gain. God made known His ways to Moses refers to the Ten Commandments and the ways in which He requires His people to walk in and his promises and purposes and Moses made them known to the people of Israel. These ten laws are underpinned by love since each one protects the innocent from harm this is why it is right and proper to balance God's ways with mercy and love. God even had the law place in the Ark of the Covenant under the mercy seat which means for anyone to access the law they have to pass through mercy.

The LORD is merciful, gracious and abounding in steadfast love: (v8) this is the nature and character of God, to some looking at the suffering upon the earth may not think so, but God is also a God of justice which means He must judge and punish the wickedness of mankind, at this moment His longsuffering and good character is holding Him back from pouring out his wrath since He is giving mankind a time of grace to repent, but eventually the cup of iniquity will overflow and God will once again will intervene into mankind's history as the Almighty judge and pour out His judgment as He did in the days of Noah and the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The LORD will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever: (v9) the word, chide comes from the Hebrew word (*riyb*) in this context it carries the idea of God striving and contending with mankind. Though God punishes the corruptness and wickedness of mankind His love, kindness, mercy and compassion restrains Him from destroying mankind completely. When Moses went up Mount Sinai with the two tablets of stone the LORD passed by him and said:

- The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness (Exodus 34:3-6).

When Israel set their hearts diamond hard against the word of the LORD and not only practised gross wickedness, but turned to other gods to worship them God used king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to chastise Israel for their blatant rebellion, but He never destroyed them completely.

God does Not Repay us or Deal with us According to our Sins.

- **Psalm 103:10-12:** He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Truly God is good to all, but in a unique manner especially good to Israel. The following verses show that the United Kingdom of Israel has always been God's special and unique nation unlike any other nation. God said:

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deuteronomy 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deuteronomy 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation:

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power. (Exodus 20:1-17).
- To Israel God declared his word, statutes and his rules. (Rom. 9:4)
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises. (Romans 3:4)
- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory. (Romans 3:5)
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted. (Rom. 3:2)
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith. (Romans 9:7)
- From Israel's race came the Christ the Saviour of the world. (Rom. 9:5)

Added to these God said:

- Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine (Exod. 19:5).
- The LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments (Deut. 26:18).

The Psalmist wrote:

- God declared his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his rules. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 147:19-20).

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges. These are the many reasons the Jews (especially the religious leaders of Jesus generation) considered themselves to be the holy race with God and the Gentile nations to be the unclean race without God.

It is true that Israel has been and still is a special nation to God, but since Christ death and resurrection salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Israel remains a clear sign of where we are in prophecy concerning Christ's return. It could be said that they are the thermometer of God's prophecy much like the mercury on a natural thermometer measures the heat of the day and moves up the vertical red line warning us of impending danger when the heat of the sun is reaching temperatures that are dangerous for the good health of the skin and our well-being. Likewise Israel can be seen as the mercury of Bible prophecy in the sense that world events that come upon the nation of Israel (especially Jerusalem) are signs that give us some insight as to how close we are to that glorious breathtaking and world changing day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But God's focus during our present age for eternal salvation is upon creating a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is also called a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God. For further information concerning this new nation God is building in Christ see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel," at the end of this chapter. He has not dealt with us according to our sins carries the following ideas:

- God has not inflicted suffering upon mankind according to our sins, Hollywood produces movies that corrupt teenagers worldwide, and our schools teach evolution which denies the existence of God as an absolute truth, the world is full of war, rape, murder, child abuse, drugs and teenage girls being kidnapped and used as sex slaves, yet God has not judged the world accordingly.
- God reproves his people by His Spirit, by his ministers by his chastising rod; but not according to them, or as they deserve, but with mercy and grace.
- If every transgression received it's just recompense of reward we would all be doomed, the Bible states, "The wages of sin is death," and since we are all sinners God would be justified in wiping us all out and sending us to the grave, but instead He has invited us into His eternal Kingdom through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. It could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace.

Ezra upon seeing that from the days of their fathers to his day Israel's guilt had mounted up to the heavens fell upon his knees and spread out his hands to the LORD ashamed to lift his face to God and said:

- After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved and have given us such a remnant as this. (Ezra 9:4-13).

All the faithful may say "God does not deal with us according to our sins," (v10) this is the ground of all thanksgiving and praise because God has not done to us as our sins deserve. Who of us can stand before God's Holiness and claim our own righteousness? Who can declare their character, thoughts and behaviour are so holy God must count them worthy of Eternal life. Who can stand without a covering before God's awesome power and Holiness without fear and trembling, God even covered Himself in the darkness of a cloud when He appeared before Moses and lead the people of Israel through the wilderness so that His glory would not destroy them. The Father considers the frailty of our bodies and the weakness of our human nature and from this awareness He pities and comforts His children understanding that they are lacking in knowledge and wisdom, feeble in sickness and filled with grief, sorrows and troubles and therefore has a sympathetic heart toward those who He has created and willing forgives them when they have offended Him and return to Him in repentance.

God said of King David:

- I have sought out a man after my own heart to be prince over my people. (1 Samuel. 13:14).

Paul after the reading from the Law and the Prophets said: -

- God raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, "I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will." ²³Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus, as he promised. (Acts 13:22-23).

But even though God said this of David, David in this Psalm acknowledges that he and other faithful believers with him were all guilty of sins. David fully understood that no man or woman no matter how devoted and faithful to God lives free of sin.

God will keep his anger forever: (v9) since anger is listed in the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:18) some find it difficult to understand God being angry, but consider the following: in 2011 on a national T.V. News program a lady who was well into her retirement years was filmed racing across the street with no fear for her own life armed only with a handbag to stop five men with baseball bats robbing a jewellery store (they all fled). This brave and courageous woman had such a strong love for justice and what was right that it overrode any concern for her own life. When she saw these five men robbing the store, she was so angry at the injustice of it and the fact some honest hard-working person was being burgled her anger drove her to protect his store without any thought for her own safety. This is righteous anger, meaning that it is anger against injustice and anger motivated by the passion to protect others from harm, in contrast to anger that is motivated from pride and self, being offended in some manner.

God seeing the gross corruption amongst the people of Israel (especially the leaders) is angry because His people are destroying themselves and their future generations for all eternity by their corruptions. The expression "God is angry" is the same as saying, "God is enormously grieved because His own people who should be blessed are not only bringing judgment upon themselves by their gross wickedness but are also leading their future generations into spiritual darkness and eternal destruction and by their wicked behaviour turning secular nations against God instead of toward Him. It is very much like a father who raises his son in love and the son turns to drugs and crime and eventually kills someone. The father is forced to do the right thing and give his son over to justice to protect others. In these circumstances it is common to hear the father say, "I am so angry," meaning he is angry that his son has destroyed his life. This kind of anger stems from deep hurt, because all the good future hopes the father had for his son are crushed. Likewise God's anger stems from the same hurt, because his chosen people are so grossly corrupt they force him to act against them rather than for them.

PSALM 103:13-16

God shows Compassion to His Children, as Fathers Do.

- **Psalm 103:13-16:** As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. ¹⁴For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. ¹⁵As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; ¹⁶for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

There is a reason God is titled the heavenly Father, it is not just a title, but expressive of His character. Just as an earthly father who loves his children will discipline them to teach them the right way to go and punish them when they deliberately behave in a manner that is clearly wrong in the hope it will prevent their sons and daughters getting into greater trouble as they grow older. Likewise, God deals with his children in the same way.

God knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust: (v14) God has a father's heart, He not only understands that our nature is flawed with sinful dysfunctions and aberrations, but is also mindful that we are but dust, meaning we are mortal and prone to sickness, disease, grief's and sorrows etc.

NOTE: the prideful of heart exalt themselves, yet before God we are all dust, how humbled would the prideful be if they held this thought in their minds. Scientist now know that everything that exists is made up of trillions and trillions of molecules, everything at a nano-level (one thousand millionth) is made of the same stuff, we are all nano molecules made from the same molecules that dust or dirt is made of (humbling is' ant it) held together by the ever present power of God,

PSALM 103:17-18

The Steadfast Love of the LORD is from Everlasting to Everlasting.

- **Psalm 103:17-18:** But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, ¹⁸to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

Compared to God and eternity human life is but a moment in time, a fleeting glance, a blink of the eye. God's love is eternal love is not a part of God's character, God, is love to know God one must love. Anything contrary to love in the human heart limits God's presence dwelling in that heart, this is why hatred, bitterness and such like things is so destructive and forgiveness so important. To fully know God and inwardly experience Him in the human heart one must be free of any form of resentment, bitterness and hatred etc.

John in his letter wrote:

- Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8).
- God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16).

PSALM 103:19

The LORD'S Kingdom Rules over All.

- **Psalm 103:19:** The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

David in his mind saw God as the King of His life and King of every human on earth he saw every circumstance, good or bad as being in the hand of God, both Job and Habakkuk (as did all the faithful of the Old Testament) had this same great faith. Even though Job suffered great affliction his attitude was:

- Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him (Job 13:15).

Habakkuk begins his prayer saying, "Even though his body trembles at the power of the LORD and he feels weak and feeble because of the enemies who are coming to invade his land, he will quietly wait for the day of trouble." He then ends his prayer with the following great words of faith.

- Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, ¹⁸yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. (Hab. 3:17-19).

David, Job and Habakkuk made the LORD their fortress and refuge by making him their greatest love, their best thought and the passion of their heart and mind and rested in the knowledge that if everything fails in this life they would be raised to be with the Lord in eternal glory where happiness everlasting dwells and while living in this life rested in the confidence and faith that the Lord was with them by his Spirit, his love and his grace.

A PERSONAL NOTE

I have seen a man born with no legs and no arms, who to the natural mind would appear a mistake made by God, but this man lived his life before God worshipped him and kept a right attitude as did David, Job and Habakkuk. He is an amazing testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and went on to become one of the world's greatest motivational speakers. He is an encouragement to hundreds of thousands of people who are suffering their own difficult circumstances. I have heard testimonies of teenage girls who have suffered absolute horror, terror and abuse find the love of God and go on to become the source of comfort to many hurting girls in similar circumstances and help them live a life of mental and emotional freedom and joy. We may not all reach hundreds of people, but if we take the right attitude to difficult circumstance, we can all be an amazing testimony to God and to those who know us. While on this side of eternity no-one is exempt from trouble and difficulty, it is the attitude and who we go through it with that makes the difference. God does not promise freedom from trouble but He does promise comfort, love and strength to cope and grow from it.

PSALM 103:20-22

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Bless the LORD, O You His Mighty Angels, who Do His Word.

- **Psalm 103:20-22:** Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! ²¹Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will! ²²Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

The word angels come from the Hebrew word (*mal'ak*) meaning to despatch as a deputy; a messenger; especially of God. It can refer to a supernatural angel, a prophet, priest or teacher or a king. In these verses the word angels refer to faithful ministers of the LORD who do His will.

A PERSONAL NOTE

David also says, God heals all your diseases and works justice for those who are oppressed. I personally know Christians including myself, who have recovered from many sicknesses, but I also know other beautiful and faithful believers who did not. I also see many good people oppressed by the greed of the rich and wealthy. For me personally I can only see these words applying fully to the following two periods of time:

1. To Israel under the Old Testament covenant, because part of the blessing that they entered into with God at Mount Sinai was that providing they did what was right before God and obeyed the covenant God would bless their health and prosper all they put their hand to do.
2. To the New millennial Age when Christ returns to rule and reign as, the King of kings and Lord of Lords and administers justice to the poor, the needy and the oppressed and all the faithful who belongs to God will receive an immortal and eternal body that will be made totally whole in every way never to suffer illness or sickness ever again.

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ. This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God). The Apostle Paul said:

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles).¹⁷ And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews).¹⁸ For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father.¹⁹ So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone²¹ in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord.²² In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states:

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
