

=Story Behind the Psalm=

Psalm 102

NOTE: *These lessons are designed simply as a guideline. As a Sunday School teacher part of your job is to study the lesson and develop it for the pupils in your class according to their age and spiritual development.*

AUTHOR: Perhaps Daniel

Some attribute the authorship to David, but it seems to be a captivity Psalm, which means it was written by Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah or some leader in captivity. Probably the words were penned by Daniel.

The Story Behind the Psalm

Read it carefully, especially verse 13. It was obviously written at the close of the captivity; that is, at the close of the 70 years of captivity in Babylon. Notice especially verse 13, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come." The time had come for deliverance of God's people. Though we have no evidence that Daniel returned to the land, we nevertheless feel that whoever wrote this Psalm (probably Daniel) was signaling the end of the captivity.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

This Psalm was used when sorrow was ending or a bad time was coming to an end. Perhaps a Jew was nearing the end of a serious illness or a time of crisis in his life. During such times this Psalm was very dear.

LESSON:

- 1. In times of affliction turn to the Lord in prayer.** God longs to hear from His people (II Chronicles 16:9). So often we struggle through trials and forfeit all that God can do for us. God may choose to not remove the affliction, but He can give extra grace, peace and wisdom as we go through the trial.
- 2. Most of us can identify with this Psalm and its author.**
 - a. Loss of energy and feeling completely wasted because of the trial (verse 3). Through afflicting times we are consumed by the trial; every thought, every action, every moment we are weighed down.

- b. Loss of appetite (verse 4). How often when we are overwhelmed we become even sick to the stomach. The fret and worry drives away our appetite and we are overtaken by the affliction.
- c. He became emaciated with sorrow (verse 5). Worn so thin by the groaning of the heart even his very health was being affected. Affliction can bring about even physical aging.
- d. Overtaken by depression and solitude (verse 6).
- e. Feeling as if I lost my only friend or hope (verse 7). Actually implying the sparrow to have lost a spouse. The trials can take away your peace, joy, and all that seems so special to you.
- f. Life is completely over taken by the burden (verse 9). We cannot eat without the food being tainted by the sorrow. We cannot drink without the affliction causing a bitter taste. We cannot go to work without the affliction preoccupying our thoughts.
- g. At times we even feel if God Himself is against us (verse 10). We think that because God does not remove the affliction then He must have either caused it or enjoys watching us struggle (Psalm 50:21).

3. In the affliction the Psalmist realized several things:

- a. God is the same in the trial as He was in times of bliss (verse 12). God does not change because the circumstances change.
- b. God will have mercy when the time is right. Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us everything is beautiful *in His time*. We need to wait for the right time that God sees fit to remove the affliction.
- c. The righteous are always victorious in the end (verse 15). God will make them to shine above their enemies.
- d. God's ears are open to our prayers (verse 17).
- e. When we are weak then are we strong (verse 23). Times of affliction drive us to depend on God for our strength.

4. It is good to be afflicted (Psalm 119:71). Never fall into the mindset that problems and afflictions are not good. Diamonds are made under pressure. Trials build character and great Christians

Memory Verse: *Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily.* **Psalm 102:2**