

**=Story Behind the Psalm=
Psalm 103**

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.*

Scripture Reference: Psalm 103

AUTHOR: Daniel

The Story Behind the Psalm

When Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews into captivity, he took the very rich and middle class or craftsmen. However, he left the very poor in the land of Canaan. God gave to each of these three groups a prophet. Daniel was the prophet for the very rich who went into captivity, Ezekiel went into captivity to be the prophet for the craftsmen or middle class, and Jeremiah stayed with the very poor.

This Psalm was supposedly written either while the remnant of Jews was preparing to return to Palestine or as they returned. Now if Daniel was the author, it was probably written while they were still in the land making preparation to return. Regardless, this Psalm was no doubt written at the very end of the captivity for the remnant that returned to rebuild the temple. Because of this, there are some who believe that Ezra wrote the Psalm and some even attribute its authorship to Zerubbabel.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

This was a thanksgiving Psalm used at all thanksgiving seasons and even at thank offerings.

Notice the happiness here. Notice how the Psalmist is blessing the Lord and for what he is blessing the Lord. The first few verses are among the most popular verses of all the Psalms. They are quoted often in churches across the land and around the world. I can still hear the church of my childhood saying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Then notice why the Psalmist blessed the Lord— because his sins were forgiven, because his diseases were healed, because his life was useful and redeemed from destruction, because of His lovingkindness and tender mercies, and because of His provisions of food, not only which is healthy but which is delightful to the taste. He then praises Him for strength. When times of great thanksgiving come, by all means the 103rd Psalm should be included.

Lesson:

1. **Do not forget all His benefits.** In times of bondage and struggle we are often tempted to look at the raging storm about us and we take our eyes off the Lord (as did Peter in Matthew 14:30). The Psalmist penned I these times “forget not all his benefits”. Then he lists several of them:
 - a. **Who forgiveth thine iniquities.**
 - i. Occasionally the Christian should list the sins he has been forgiven of.
 - b. **Who healeth thy diseases**
 - i. He restores our health. We have been released from addictions and other such health issues.
 - ii. He heals the spiritual diseases. Lusts and corruptions purged by His Grace.
 - iii. He heals the corporal diseases. These are the punishments that we brought on ourselves for our sins. God often times removes His hand of punishment.
 - c. **Who redeemeth thy life from destruction**
 - i. Image where we would be today had our life not been redeemed. We no doubt would have a life destroyed by sin. Many of us escaped the destruction of drugs, alcohol, divorce, prison, disease, and such like. There is a song that says, “roll back the curtain of memory now then; show me where you brought me from and where I could have been.” It is good for us to occasionally reflect on our life that was redeemed from destruction.
 - d. **Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness**
 - i. God does not see it as enough to forgive our sins and have mercy. He wants to give us positions of royalty and use us in His work. We are adorned with the qualities of God and are used by the King of Kings in His work.
 - e. **Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things**
 - i. Remember the food He has given us. We are living in a wealthy nation and a land of plenty. We should never take that for granted.
 - ii. He also gives many pother good things to satisfy us. From needs to pleasures God is fulfilling and satisfying.
 - f. **Who is merciful**
 - i. Mercy is not giving someone what they deserve (grace is giving them what they do not deserve). God is merciful. We all deserve to be in hell.
 - g. **Who hath not dealt with us after our sins**
 - i. We should be punished for all the wrongs we have done.
 - ii. He has removed our sins as far as east is from west.
 - iii. He has pity (compassion) on us as His own children
2. **The Lord is blessed when we remember all He does for us.** Nobody likes to be forgotten. Everyone likes to have their efforts recognized. This is a quality we got from God. God is blessed when we rejoice in His benefits and praise Him for them.

Memory Verse: *Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Psalm 103:1-2*