
Church in Campbell Weekly News

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LIFE-STUDY OF THE PSALMS -37 THE EARTH TURNING TO THE LORD THROUGH ZION

Scripture Reading: Psalms 102—106

At the beginning of our study of the Psalms, we pointed out that the Psalms were written by godly saints. These saints were very close to God, and they had much thought and consideration concerning God and God's interest. Many of the psalms were written during times of suffering. When, as they were suffering, the psalmists were expressing certain of their feelings and complex sentiments, some high thoughts came forth mainly related to Christ, God's house, God's city, and God's recovery of His title over the earth. In the Old Testament this recovery is called the restoration, referring to the millennium. God's house denotes God's home and also His family, His household; God's city refers to His kingdom; and the coming restoration refers to the millennium. These four matters—Christ, God's house, God's city, and the coming restoration—are the essential elements, the inner essences, of the Bible.

We may say that the Psalms are an extract of the entire Bible. The Bible begins with God's existence and then goes on to speak of God's creation, which has certain indications concerning Christ. Out of Christ there issues the church, which is God's house. When the church as God's house is strengthened and enlarged, it becomes the city, that is, the kingdom of God. Eventually, the kingdom of God will bring in the restoration of the earth during the millennium, which will consummate in the new heaven and the new earth with the New Jerusalem—the consummation of God's house and God's kingdom—as the center. This extract of the Bible in the Psalms is a key that opens the whole Bible.

In this message we come to another group of psalms, consisting of Psalms 102 through 106, which is somewhat hard to understand. In this group we first see Christ. Psalm 102 is a psalm on Christ. Strong evidence of this is the quotation of verses 25 through 27 in Hebrews 1:10-12.

The title of Psalm 102 tells us that it is a prayer of an afflicted one, one who was suffering. The psalmist, a godly one, was suffering because of the destruction and devastation of Zion with the temple and the holy city. He suffered to such an extent that he was fainting. In this matter he was somewhat like Jeremiah who, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, sat on a mountain outside the city, looked at the devastation of the temple and the city, and wrote the book of Lamentations, probably fainting as he did so. The godly one who wrote Psalm 102 was also afflicted by the destruction of the temple and the city. Fainting because of his suffering, he prayed to God and poured out his complaint. The word "complaint" in the title of this psalm does not mean that the psalmist was complaining to God; rather, here this word denotes a miserable situation—the suffering caused by the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

Psalm 102 has three sections. Verses 1 through 11 are the first section, concerned with suffering and affliction; verses 12 through 22 are the second section, concerned with the rebuilding of Zion, the restoration of the destroyed temple and holy city; and verses 23 through 28 are the third section, unveiling the Lord as the One who is everlasting in His resurrection. In Revelation 1:18 Christ, the living One, says, "I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever." Resurrection is the lengthening of the Lord's days; He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection.

According to Psalm 102, the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem turns the nations to God. For this reason, I have entitled this message "The Earth Turning to the Lord through Zion." Zion here is the Zion that has been rebuilt after its devastation. Thus, the second section of this psalm presents us a picture of the restoration of the destroyed and devastated temple and city of Jerusalem. This rebuilding turns the entire earth with the peoples of all the nations to the Lord.

In typology, Psalm 102 first refers to Christ's suffering, especially to His death. Christ's suffering consummated in His death, and through His death the church, God's house, came into existence. Eventually, the church as God's house becomes God's city, God's kingdom. Ephesians 2:19, therefore, refers both to the household of God and to the kingdom of God.

The history of Israel is a picture of the history of the church. Israel passed through a time of destruction and devastation, and the people of Israel were captured and carried away to captivity in Babylon. Likewise, in the book of Revelation we see that Babylon the Great is versus the church. Eventually, Babylon the Great will fall, and the church will be fully established. That rebuilding of the church will turn all the nations to the Lord, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of God and of Christ (Rev. 11:15).

Psalm 102 unveils Christ's death and His existence in His resurrection. The product of Christ's death and resurrection is Zion with God's house and God's city. Therefore, in Psalm 102 we have Christ's death, Christ's resurrection, and Zion.

Zion is a total title of the church. Galatians 4:26 says that the "Jerusalem above" is our mother, and Hebrews 12:22 tells us that we have come to "Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Furthermore, in our study of Psalm 84 we saw that the "highways to Zion" mentioned in this psalm (v. 5) are the highways of the church life. Revelation 14 shows us that the one hundred and forty-four thousand will be raptured to Mount Zion. Today we are heading to Zion, the highest peak of God's mountains. This Zion is the church.

Psalm 102 is very deep, containing some hidden secrets. If we have insight into this psalm, we will see that Christ's suffering and death are not only for redemption but also for restoration. Verses 1 through 11 speak of suffering; verses 12 through 22, of restoration; and verses 23 through 28, of Christ's continued existence in His resurrection. Christ's suffering is for redemption, and His redemption is to produce the church as the house of God and the city of God, which will consummate in the restoration. It is in Christ's resurrection, by Christ's resurrection, and through Christ's resurrection that the church will consummate in the restoration. Christ's death produced the church, and His resurrection prolongs

the existence of the church. Having been produced through Christ's death, the church has its continued existence in Christ's resurrection. This is the revelation in Psalm 102.

We should not study Psalms 102 through 106 in a superficial way, in a natural way, or in the way of paying attention only to the letters in black and white. We need to study these psalms, as well as all the psalms, with much prayer and with much consideration of the Holy Word. If we study the Psalms in this way, we will realize that Psalms 102 through 106 are a group. Psalm 102, the prayer of an afflicted saint, is the foundation of this group. We have emphasized the fact that this psalm shows us Christ's sufferings, the church produced by His sufferings, and the continued existence of the church in Christ's resurrection due to Christ's unchanging existence in His resurrection. As we will see, the four other psalms in this group are a narration of God's history and that three of these four psalms—Psalms 104, 105, and 106—are "hallelujah psalms." With these three psalms we have the beginning of the "hallelujahs" in the Psalms.

Let us now consider Psalm 102 in more detail and then go on to consider the narration of God's history in Psalms 103 through 106.

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Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for winter training that the Lord release His speaking to water the whole earth.
- Pray for the 5-day and 5th term GOWT that the Lord continue to train us with His grace.
- Pray for YP that they will experience Christ in their spirit as the reality of all the sacrifices and the offerings for building up of God's dwelling place.
- Pray for the growth of the feeling of the Body of Christ.
- Pray for spreading to nearby cities
- For daily exercise in GOW training: prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth and attend Lord's day meeting on time.
- For gospel preaching on West Valley College campus, as well as for English-speaking testimony in Campbell.

Announcement

- Morning Revival on Psalms: 75 ~ ??, Life Study: 34 ~ ??.
- YP Bible reading: John chapter 9
- Prayer meeting Tuesday (12/27) at -----.
- GOW 5th term registration is still open, please register with brother Liu.