
Church in Campbell Weekly News

March 11, 2012

Issue 12- 11

Christ's Eternal and Unchanging Existence in His Resurrection

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.

I. PSALM 102 BEING A PRAYER OF AN AFFLICTED ONE

The title of Psalm 102 is "A Prayer of an afflicted one, when he is fainting and he pours out his complaint before Jehovah." This psalm is therefore an expression of the psalmist's sentiment, with his affliction (vv. 1-5, 9-11) referring to the affliction of Christ (vv. 6-8).

II. CHRIST BEING THE KEY THAT TURNS THE EARTH TO THE LORD

Verses 6 through 8 and 12 through 27 reveal that Christ is the key that turns the earth to the Lord and that recovers God's title and right over the whole earth. Without Christ this cannot be accomplished.

A. Based upon His Suffering

Christ's being the key that turns the earth to the Lord is based upon His suffering (vv. 6-8). Verse 7 says, "I lie awake, and I am like/A lone sparrow on a housetop." The "housetop" here refers to the flat roof of a Jewish house. People would often go to the housetop to pray. Peter did this in Acts 10:9. Since Psalm 102:7 refers to Christ, this verse indicates that when the Lord Jesus was on earth, probably there were times when in the night He, like a lone sparrow on a housetop, would watch and pray, caring for God's interest. This was also the situation of the writer of this psalm. Because of the devastation of Zion, he could not sleep nor

stay in bed. Instead, he went to the housetop where he poured out his complaint to God, asking Him to look upon Zion, the city, and the temple.

Psalm 102:7 is a particular verse concerning Christ's suffering, His affliction. His affliction was related to His zeal for God's house (John 2:17; Psa. 69:9). In His suffering Christ was a watcher, caring not for His own interest but for the interest of God's house. Thus, He likened Himself to a lone sparrow on the roof of a house. As He was watching for God's interest, He was like a lone sparrow on a housetop. This was an aspect of Christ's suffering.

As we have pointed out, Christ's suffering was for the producing of the church. Today's Christians realize that Christ's suffering, which consummated in His death, was for redemption, but very few realize that His suffering was also for the producing of the church. We need to see that Christ's death was for redemption to produce the church.

B. Through Zion

We have seen that the turning of the earth to the Lord is based upon Christ's church-producing suffering. Now we need to see that this turning of the earth to the Lord is through Zion, that is, through the church. The church today is Zion. We should not think that what we are doing in the Lord's recovery is a small thing. In the sight of God, the work in His recovery is very significant.

The church was produced through Christ's death, and then the church existed on earth for a while. However, the church has been devastated, destroyed. We today must be those who are afflicted because of the church's degradation. We should be afflicted to such an extent that we are fainting. As such afflicted ones, we should present our complaint to God, saying, "Lord, where is Your Zion? Where is Your holy city? We can see the great Babylon everywhere, but where is the church?"

Israel is a type of the church. In the upcoming messages on Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, we will see that these books are a record of the history of God's elect. From our point of view this record is unpleasant, even a tragedy. From God's point of view, however, this record is pleasant because even among the devastated elect of God, there was still something on earth for God, and as long as God can have something for Himself on earth, He is satisfied. The principle is the same with the church today. The proper church life has been fully devastated, and everywhere we can see Babylon the Great. But God still has something on earth for Himself. This is the Lord's recovery.

Even though the record of the history of Israel in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth is disappointing, there was nevertheless a line that was for God. God still had a line. For a while, at the time of the judges, this line consisted of only two persons—Boaz, a Jew, and Ruth, a Moabitess. After they were married, they became the unique line to bring in Christ. According to the genealogy in Matthew 1, Boaz begot David's grandfather of Ruth. Thus, although Israel, God's elect, had been defeated, there was still a line that could bring forth Christ. Today, in spite of the degradation and devastation of the church, God still has a line that is for Christ, and for this we should worship Him.

1. Zion as the Center of the City Jerusalem

Zion is the center of the city Jerusalem (Psa. 102:16, 21), typifying the church as the center of God's kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19). In Matthew 16:18 and 19 the words church and kingdom are used interchangeably. This indicates that the church is the kingdom and that the kingdom is the church.

2. Zion's Stones as the Pleasure of the Lord's Servants and Her Dust in Which Is Their Favor

Psalm 102:14 says, "Your servants take pleasure in her stones,/And show favor to her soil." The Hebrew word translated "soil" can also be rendered "dust." In this verse the stones typify the believers as the building materials of the church (1 Pet. 2:5), and the dust, the soil, typifies the ground of the church. Do you take pleasure in all the members of the church? Do you favor the ground of the church? We should be happy with all the members of the church, and we should care for the ground of the church.

3. Bringing the Peoples and the Kingdoms of the Earth into the Praise and Worship of Jehovah

Psalm 102:21 and 22 say, "That the name of Jehovah may be declared in Zion,/And His praise, in Jerusalem;/When the peoples are gathered together,/And the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah." These verses indicate that it is through the established, restored Zion—the church—that all the nations and kingdoms will be brought into the praise and worship of Jehovah. This means that the church turns the world to the Lord.

C. Because of His Eternal and Unchanging Existence

Christ is the key that turns the earth to the Lord because of His eternal and unchanging existence (vv. 24-27; Heb. 1:10-12). Christ died and resurrected, and now He lives forever in His resurrection. Christ's existence is unchanging throughout all the generations because of His resurrection.

Christ's death produced the church. The church has been devastated and will be restored. Christ's resurrection then will enable the church to continue its existence.

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for the blending and one accord among the saints
- Pray for the burden how to raise up spiritual children at home
- Pray for YP that they will be companions with one another to pursue the Lord together.
- Pray for the English-speaking testimony and gospel preaching on West Valley College campus.
- 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.

Announcement

- Morning Revival: Crystallization study of Psalms Message 17.
- YP Bible reading: Correspondence Course for Gospel of John
- Prayer meeting Tuesday (3/13) at meeting hall ◦
- GOWT 3/24, Spring YP retreat 3/16 ~ 18, registration fee:\$95. Sister Conference 4/13~14(\$25+\$6), Bible Camp 6/18~22, SST for YP 7/22~27, please sanctify the week.