

Part 2 – Being Down and Out

In Psalm one-hundred-two, part 1, we learned that the subject/title of this Psalm is “***The King, in His Humiliation and Coming Glory as the Eternal***”. And therefore, it’s very prophetic of Jesus Christ. But, this Psalm is also good to remember when we get ‘down and out’ from living in the world. For, the first lesson we learned from the Psalmist was how to humbly beseech our Heavenly Father when we’re having hard times, *especially* when we are *really* needing help *quickly*. Thus, we saw that, after the Psalmist begged the Lord (YHVH) for help, he began to tell Him *why* he needed help (so quickly). And, as is common in the Psalms, he used analogies to explain his dire situation. So, he first off said that his *days are consumed like smoke*, which implies he didn’t think he had long to live. And then he also said that his *bones are burned as an hearth*, which showed that his flesh body was also suffering from the internal pain he was in. And we *know* he was having deep internal anguish *because* the subtitle told us that this Psalm was a prayer of someone who was ‘afflicted’, which means *to be depressed, in mind or circumstances* (#6041). And yet he also confessed his heart was smitten (in verse 4) and even likened it to withering grass to explain how he *was quickly losing hope*. And, again, his internal anguish was having a *deeply negative* influence on his flesh body, for he was so stressed out that he even forgot to eat; and it’s quite likely he didn’t even *have an appetite*, which is common for people who are terribly distressed (or depressed). And this is the thought we pick up with in this ‘Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord’...

Psalm 102

5 By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.

This verse is a little hard to understand, due to the translation. The words ‘**by reason of the voice**’ are actually one Hebrew word that means **a voice** or **sound** and comes from an unused root that means **to call aloud** (#6963). And the word ‘**groaning**’ actually means **sighing** (#585) while the word ‘**bones**’ can mean **a bone** (as strong) it can also mean (by extension), **the body** or (figuratively) **the substance**, i.e. (as pron.) **selfsame** (#6106). And then the word ‘**cleave**’ means (in the context of this verse) **to impinge**, i.e. **cling** or **adhere** (#6106). Lastly, the word ‘**skin**’ means **flesh** (from its freshness) and (by extension) also means **a body** or **person**; and it can also (by euphemism) mean **the pudenda of a man** (#1320). Now, let’s remember that, in the prior verse (4) the Psalmist spoke about his heart being so pained (smitten) that he forgot to eat food. So, it’s likely he was getting pretty thin, which would be why (in this verse 5) he speaks of his bones cleaving to his skin (flesh body). When you get so thin your bones cling to your skin that’s *way too* thin and, most likely, is painful too - which is possibly why (or at least one reason) he mentions groaning (sighing). So, what is clear from this verse is that the inner turmoil this Psalmist is in is having an incredibly negative impact upon his flesh body, even to the point where he’s practically starving to death...

Psalm 102

6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert

Now the Psalmist goes back to explaining his inner turmoil (instead of his fleshly pain). And again, he's using analogies to explain how he feels *inwardly*. First off, a pelican and an owl are both unclean birds (Lev 11:16,18). So, the implication from this is that he feels unclean, either inwardly (spiritually) or physically... and it's possible he feels unclean in *both* ways. And the word '**wilderness**' actually means *a pasture* (i.e. open field, whither cattle are driven) or, by implication, *a desert* (#4057) while the word '**desert**' means *drought*, i.e. (by implication) a *desolation* (#2723). The Moffett Bible renders this verse as: "*I am like a pelican in the desert, like an owl moping in the ruins*". So, another implication from this analogy is that he must also feel quite alone...

Psalm 102

7 I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.

Here's another analogy and it confirms the Psalmist did feel quite alone. The word '**watch**' is a prim root that means *to be alert* or *on the lookout*, but it can also mean *sleepless* (#8245), which is likely the way the Psalmist is using this Hebrew word here. And the '**sparrow**' is actually a *little bird* (as hopping) (#6833) while the word '**alone**' means *to divide* or *to be solitary* (#909), so 'alone' was a pretty good translation. And the words '**house top**' mean either *a roof* or *the top of the altar* (#1406). So, the Psalmist is having great troubles sleeping (along with eating) and also feels terribly alone.

And, when we're going through hard times (even from being sick for a while), it is *really* easy to feel like we're 'all alone'. But the truth is that, we're *never* alone. Why? Because our Heavenly Father is *always* there for us. One of the blessings from studying God's Word is that it helps to remind us of God's promises *and* of His faithfulness to help those who truly love and obey Him. There are many examples throughout His Word that remind us of this (1 Cor 10:11). That's why, when we're 'down in the dumps' (especially when we're having some 'crisis' in our life (as this Psalmist clearly was) we should go to God's Word and study *intently*. For *that* is what will cheer us up. Remember, in John 6:63, Jesus told us that His Word (which is God's Word, John 1:1, 14) is what gives us life because His Spirit is what 'quickens' (makes *alive*) our inner man. And that's because **it gives us hope** in all our times of trouble, if we only *sincerely* believe in it. As Rom 8:24-25 says, ***we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it***. So, we must learn to patiently endure the hard times; and having hope that God will help us IS what gets us through the hard times (and He *will*, if our heart is right with Him). As Rom 5:5 so beautifully explains, hope maketh not ashamed; because **the love of God is shed**

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. And, because God's Word is His Spirit in written form (John 6:63), we willingly take in His Holy Spirit into our spirit (heart and mind) when we read God's Word (with understanding). That's *why* it 'quickens' us, i.e. God's Word makes us 'alive' *because* of the **hope** it gives us. Psalms 73 did a really good job explaining this [https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Psalms/841] and Ezekiel 37 does as well, when speaking of the 'dry bones' who had no hope *until* the Holy Spirit came upon them (i.e. they began to understand God's Word) [https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Ezekiel/692]. And (spoiler alert) that's *exactly* what will help this Psalmist out of his troubles too...

Psalm 102

8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.

Now we're given some insight into *what's* bothering the Psalmist so much. The word '**enemies**' means **hating** or an **adversary** (#341) and comes from a prim root that means **to hate** (as one of an opposite tribe or party) and, hence, **to be hostile** (#340). And the word '**reproach**' means (in the context of this verse), figuratively, **to carp at**, i.e. **defame** (#2778). And then the words '**all the day**' do mean **a day** (as from sunrise to sunset) but also, figuratively, can mean **a space of time, defined by an associated term** (#2778). So, the Psalmist clearly has some enemies; and while we're not told *why*, we know they are speaking badly about him (defaming his name) quite a lot. And he goes on to say that those who are made at him are '*sworn against me*'. The word '**mad**' here is interesting, for it means (in the context of this verse) **to make a show** or **to boast**; and thus to be (clamorously) **foolish**; and it can also mean **to rave** or even **to celebrate** or to **stultify** (#1984). One of the meanings of 'stultify' is **to cause to appear or be stupid, foolish, or absurdly illogical**, which is likely what the Psalmist is saying here. So, his enemies are clearly slandering him *mercilessly*. But they are also 'sworn against' him. The word '**sworn**' here means (in the context of this verse) **to seven oneself**, i.e. **swear** (as if by repeating a declaration seven times) (#7650).

Now, the *Companion Bible* has a note stating that this means his enemies have made an oath (sworn) together, against him. And it cites the example of Acts 23:12-21 where *certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy*. While we don't exactly what oath the people who were this Psalmist's enemies made, the point is that they could have bound themselves together (as in a conspiracy) against this Psalmist via an oath, which is pretty serious. That means they were 'hell bent' on destroying this poor guy. But, at the very least, they were determined to destroy his 'good name'. However, the *Moffett Bible* renders this verse as "*those who mock me call me 'the accursed'*". So, it's also possible they were simply slandering him intensely by saying he was 'accursed' of God (for some reason); but, it's also possible they also were actually trying to get him killed, as was the

case with Paul in Acts 23. And, interestingly, today we have a figure of speech that's a lot like this, when we say that someone is your 'sworn enemy'. It implies that you will *never* be friends with them. So, this verse shows us how deeply these people hated the Psalmist and (again) how mercilessly they were slandering him. And from this, we can begin to see *why* the Psalmist was having such a hard time...

Psalms 102

9 For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,

Now the Psalmist goes back to explaining how he feels and (again) gives analogies to do so. But, to understand the first part of this verse (that says he's eaten his ashless like bread) we must understand that, back in those days it was common to put ashes upon themselves (especially their heads) when they were grieving (or mourning), for one reason or another (i.e. the death of a loved one or having a hard time). It was an *outward* sign of their *inward* mourning. For example, after David's daughter, Tamar, was raped (by her own brother) and then put away from him, *she put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that was on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying* (2 Sam 13:19). And this was such a common thing, in those days, that God used it when speaking through His prophets. For example, in Jer 6:26, the Lord (YHVH) said: *O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.* And also, in Ezek 27:30-31, the Lord (YHVH) said: *And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes: And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.* And this wasn't just something Israelites did. Jonah 3:7 tells us that even the king of Nineveh *laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes* when repenting after Jonah warned them of what would come if they didn't repent. So, this shows that even the king himself repented, which is why God didn't destroy Assyria at that time. And, even Jesus Christ referred to this common sign of mourning, in Matt 11:21, when He said: *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.* So, clearly ashes are something people used in those days to show an outward form of grief and mourning.

But (importantly), covering oneself in ashes wasn't just a sign of grief, and mourning, it was also a sign *of repentance* too. For example, after Job was afflicted (by Satan), he said he repented '*in dust and ashes*' (Job 42:6) for any wrong doing he *might* have done. Although we know (from Job 1:1, 8) that Job *hadn't* done anything wrong, he still repented for anything he *might* have done (that would have caused all the calamities to come upon him) and used 'dust and ashes' as a way to outwardly show his repentance. Further, Daniel himself said: *I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes* (Dan 9:3). Now,

we know Daniel was a faithful servant of the Lord; so, he wasn't in bad standing with the Lord (Dan 10:11,19). But, because he was seeking for understanding of God's Word, he did things that were outward signs of repentance (and humility) to show he was truly seeking understanding from the Lord, which (of course) the Lord blessed by giving Daniel many prophecies that are of great value to us today.

So, the point is that, ashes were used as an *outward* sign of grief, mourning, repentance or even humbling oneself. And that's *why* the Psalmist says that he's 'eaten ashes like bread'. This implies he had been sincerely repenting (and humbling himself) **for a long time**. And then he also said he mingled (mixed, #4537) his drink 'with weeping', which implied he'd been weeping (another sign of humility and repentance, as well as grief and mourning) **a lot**. So, this Psalmist was terribly upset and had been for quite a while, which is *why* he's begging the Lord (YHVH) for help...

Psalm 102

10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

This verse is truly part of the thought from verse 9, which spoke of the Psalmist's great grief, mourning, humbling himself and repentance (via weeping and putting ashes on himself). Thus, it explains *why* he did so. The word '**before**' can mean **before** (when used as a preposition) but also means **the face** (as the part that turns) and is used in a great variety of applications (literally and figuratively) (#6440). It's also been rendered as the '*presence*' of the Lord (YHVH) in recent Psalms such as Ps 95:2, 97:5 and 100:2. The *Companion Bible* has a note stating this would be better translated as '*from the face of*' instead of '*because*'. And, while the words 'indignation' and 'wrath' in the English seem the same, there's a slight difference in the Hebrew. The word '**indignation**' means **to strictly** (or severely) **froth at the mouth**, i.e. (figuratively) **fury** (especially of God's displeasure with sin) (#2195) and comes from a prim root that means **to be enraged** (#2194). And then the word '**wrath**' means (figuratively) **rage** or **strife** (#7110) and comes from a prim root that means (figuratively) **to burst out in rage** (#7107).

So, this tells us that the Psalmist *felt* as though God's 'indignation and wrath' had come upon him. And perhaps that's part of why his enemies were calling him 'accursed' and slandering him (back in verse 8). And he confirms his thoughts of this in the latter part of this verse 10, when stating that "*for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down*". The words '**lifted me up**' mean **to lift**, in a great variety of applications (#5375) and the words '**cast me down**' means **to throw out, down** or **away** (literally or figuratively) (#7993). However, the fact that this Psalmist's Prayer is in the Word of God shows us that he must not have been an unbeliever of the Lord (YHVH). And truly, the Lord (YHVH) only chastises **those who He loves** (Heb 12:6). And He does so, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness (Heb 12:10). And, even though His chastisements are difficult to endure (as this Psalmist clearly found out), *nevertheless afterward*

it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Heb 12:11). So, even though this Psalmist is really ‘down and out’, He’s not truly ‘cast off’ by the Lord, even though he may feel like it.

Psalm 102

11 My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.

Now, the Psalmist explains *why* he feels so ‘cast down’ by the Lord (YHVH). His ‘days’ seem like a ‘shadow that declineth’ and as ‘withered grass’. As we’ve learned before, the word ‘day’ can mean **a day** (as from sunrise to sunset) but can also mean (figuratively) **a space of time defined by an associated term** (#3117). So, the Psalmist is referring to his life since the ‘hard times’ have come upon him. And he clearly feels his life is about to end, for he (again) uses two analogies to explain this. The first of which is a ‘shadow that declineth’ which simply means that: just as a shadow disappears, as the sun moves across the sky, so too does he feel his life is ‘slipping away’. And he also uses the analogy of grass withering (as back in verse 4) to explain the same thing. Once grass is cut, it only stays green for a short time before it begins to wither and dry up, eventually dying. This analogy is also used in God’s Word to express how very temporary our life in the flesh really is (Ps 37:2, 90:5-6, 103:15-16; 1 Pt 1:24), but the Psalmist is using it here to explain how very close to death he thinks he is. In other words, he feels his body is withering away (as the grass) – or slipping away quickly (as a shadow does) - and thus, death is not far from him.

So, this Psalmist has (in the first part of this Psalm) laid out his need for God’s help rather well. And while we weren’t given too many details of his troubles, we know he felt as though God was chastising him, that he was in great internal (spiritual) and physical pain, and that he also had enemies who were mercifully slandering him too. And from this we can see why this Psalm is a type for Jesus Christ ‘in His humiliation’. For indeed, Jesus Christ did have enemies; and He did endure great internal, and physical, pain when He was delivered up to Pilot, mocked, spit upon, beaten (almost to the point of being unrecognizable) and then hung on the cross and left to die a terribly painful (and slow death) – all of which was prophesied in of beforehand in the prophets. And the 53rd chapter of Isaiah [https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Isaiah/1386], in particular, spoke a lot about that. And, while our Heavenly Father never needed to chastise Jesus Christ (for He was without sin, Heb 4:15, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:5), *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all* (Isa 53:5-6). And that’s **why** this Psalm’s title includes the King (Jesus) in His ‘humiliation’. However, it also speaks of His “**Coming Glory as the Eternal**”, which is what we’ll begin to learn about in our next study!

So, let's always remember that, no matter how hard times get, if we keep our heart right with God *and trust in Him* patiently (and repent for any sins we see) then our Heavenly Father promises to *always* help us out of our troubles and temptations (1 Cor 10:11). We are, after all, His servants on earth. As such, He'll *always* help us in our times of trouble. So long as we don't forsake Him, He'll *never* forsake us!

*14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that **through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;***

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

*17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, **that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.***

*18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, **he is able to succour them that are tempted.***

Heb 2:14-18

We'll pick this up in part 3...

AMEN.