

Psalm 103

This Psalm is an expression of praise evoked by his own experience, and strengthened by the evidences of the Creator God's compassion and mercy towards humanity in general.

Psalms 103:1-5 [New King James] *“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: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.”*

Note the singular pronouns in these five verses.

David is in this Psalm of praise giving us plenty to be thankful for and praise our Creator for.

We receive all these blessings without deserving any of them. No matter how hard we find our journey in life we can always find many things to be thankful for, in our past, present and the promises from the Creator God for our future, when we surrender our present and future life to Him.

When we feel we have little to be thankful for, read and meditate on this list that King David has given us, and the Creator God has recorded in His Word, the Christian Bible, for our benefit.

The first and major benefit is the forgiveness of our sins through our accepting the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

For the Psalmist, before the first coming of Jesus Christ, it was the Passover Lamb and the lamb sacrificed on the Day of Atonement, both symbolic of the future Jesus Christ's sacrifice.

“Heals all your diseases,” the Psalmist would be looking back to the promise of God recorded in **Exodus 15:26, one of the blessings of obedience.**

James 5:13-15 [New King James] *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”*

The same promise, made by the same Creator God to His people today, when accompanied with obedience to His Word, as our forefathers, and faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The forgiveness of the spiritual disease of sin and physical diseases are linked in the total sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53:4-6 [New King James] *“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was **wounded for our transgressions**, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and **by His stripes we are healed**. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”*

Referring to the scourging of Jesus Christ and the spear thrust to His side that caused all His blood to be poured out.

1 Peter 2:24 [New King James] *“who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness, **by whose stripes you were healed.**”*

The same physical healing is mentioned by Peter.

Psalms 103:6-19 [New King James] *“The LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. **As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.** As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them. The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.”*

This section of the Psalm stresses the universality of the Creator God’s benevolence, [verse 6] and rule, [verse 19]. But within this worldwide compass, the intervening verses cite the experience of Israel as typical of the Creator God’s tender care for the oppressed, [verse 6].

To Israel, through Moses, the truth about the Triune God was made known, [verse 7].

This is first stated in the way that Moses received the law, [verses 8 and 9].

Exodus 34:5-7 [New King James] *“Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.’”*

The giving of the law comes alive in a relationship of human beings, Israel in particular as the then chosen people of the Creator God, in the form of a covenant, [Exodus 34:8-17]. **A reminder of this covenant was the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread each year, [Exodus 34:18].**

Also the other Holy Days during the year, [Exodus 34:19-28].

The Psalm continues to expand on the character and actions of the Creator God.

Far from dealing with us on the basis of our merits the Creator God is abounding in mercy, [Psalms 103:8-10].

The steadfast love of the Creator God is as different in its greatness from anything we can physically experience, [Psalms 103:11-12], finally and completely dealing with our sin.

The relationship we can have when we honour Him as our Creator God is the tender father/child relationship that acknowledges the weakness of a young child, [Psalms 103:13-14].

In association with human weakness, [Psalms 103:15-16] we can learn of the eternal security in being a child of the Creator God, [Psalms 103:17-18].

Throughout all these verses in this Psalm the hallmark of the people who are within the bounds of this covenant are “those who fear Him,” [verses 11, 13 and 17] which is interpreted finally as those who are obedient to the covenant He has made with humanity, that includes His laws and His Holy Feast Days, [Psalms 103:18].

The whole vocabulary of sin is expressed in this Psalm.

The Hebrew word translated “sins” [verse 10] is “*chattâ'th*” meaning to miss the mark, to stumble and fall not necessarily wilful; the Hebrew word translated “iniquities” [verse 10] is “*ăvon*” meaning perverseness, from a root word meaning bent or crooked, wrung out of the right course of life.

The Hebrew word translated “transgression” [verse 12] is “*pâsha*” meaning revolt, rebellion against lawful authority.

These words cover outward acts of wrongdoing, inner corruptions of a fallen nature and wilful rebellion against the Creator God.

Yet our wonderful Creator God “pities” [verse 13] such human beings, the Hebrew refers to the mother’s love for an unborn child in her womb.

The “everlasting to everlasting” is not only applied to the nature of the Creator God, [verse 17] but also to those who fear Him.

2 Peter 3:9 [New King James] *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*

What we have read about our Creator God in this Psalm expands greatly on the statement made by the apostle Peter who had personally experienced this love and mercy from Jesus Christ our Creator God.

Psalms 103:19-22 [New King James] *“The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!”*

The Psalm closes with a universal summons for all created beings and things to a reverence adoration of a Creator God who is so full of grace.

Finally including himself, the Psalmist King David who had been inspired to write this wonderful Psalm.