A Prayer for the Afflicted

Psalm 102:1-28
A Prayer for the Afflicted

Commentary

by

Clyde M. Miller

Text:

Psalm 102:1-28,

1. Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, And let my cry come unto thee.
2. Hide not thy face from me in the day of my distress: Incline thine ear unto me; In the day when I call answer me speedily.
3. For my days consume away like smoke, And my bones are burned as a firebrand.
4. My heart is smitten like grass, and withered; For I forget to eat my bread.
5. By reason of the voice of my groaning My bones cleave to my flesh.
6. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am become as an owl of the waste places.
7. I watch, and am become like a sparrow That is alone upon the house-top.
8. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; They that are mad against me do curse by me.
9. For I have eaten ashes like bread, And mingled my drink with weeping,
10. Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: For thou hast taken me up, and cast me away.
11. My days are like a shadow that declineth; And I am withered like grass.
12. But thou, O Jehovah, wilt abide for ever; And thy memorial name unto all generations.
13. Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; For it is time to have pity upon her, Yea, the set time is come.
14. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, And have pity upon her dust.
15. So the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah, And all the kings of the earth thy glory.
16. For Jehovah hath built up Zion; He hath appeared in his glory.
17. He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute, And hath not despised their prayer.
18. This shall be written for the generation to come; And a people which shall be created shall praise Jehovah.
19. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; From heaven did Jehovah behold the earth;
20. To hear the sighing of the prisoner; To loose those that are appointed to death;
21. That men may declare the name of Jehovah in Zion, And his praise in Jerusalem;
22. When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah.
23. He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days.
24. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations.
25. Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
26. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:
27. But thou art the same, And thy years shall have no end.
28. The children of thy servants shall continue, And their seed shall be established before thee. ASV
Introduction:

I. The title suggests a psalm of lament and petition.

A. The title also suggests a liturgical use of the psalm.

1. It can be used as a source of comfort and consolation for any troubled person who feels the need to plead with God for help.

   a. The average Israelite would not possess the necessary literary skill and training to compose a beautiful poem to adequately express himself before the Lord, but he could utilize the products of the skills of others.

2. All the psalms came to be used as types of similar problems or blessings that attended individual Israelites or the nation.

Commentary:

A Plea for Help

Psalm 102:1, 2, Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, And let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day of my distress: Incline thine ear unto me; In the day when I call answer me speedily. ASV

Note: The choice of verbs and their objects employed in these opening verses reveals the fervency with which the prayer is uttered.

Ps. 102:1, Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, And let my cry come unto thee. ASV
I. The word for “prayer”, t’phillah, refers to a plea made before a judge in a court of law.

   A. The “cry” is obviously a cry of distress (cf. Ps. 102:2).

      1. Psalm 102:2, Hide not thy face from me in the day of my distress: Incline thine ear unto me; In the day when I call answer me speedily. ASV

   B. The imperative “hear” is tempered by the imperfect jussive “let come”.

   C. In combination, these varied modes of expression reveal the urgency of the need and the humility and reverence with which mortal man should approach the holy God.

   D. The latter part of the verse means, “Give attention to my cry”.

Ps. 102:2, Hide not thy face from me in the day of my distress: Incline thine ear unto me; In the day when I call answer me speedily. ASV

I. God's hiding His face is a figure used to express His refusal to grant the petition (cf. Ps. 34:15-16).

   A. Psalm 34:15, 16, The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous, And his ears are open unto their cry. The face of Jehovah is against them that do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. ASV

II. In another context, the expression may refer to God's hiding his face from one’s sins (cf. Ps. 51:9).
A. Psalm 51:9, Hide thy face from my sins, And blot out all mine iniquities. ASV

III. “Turn your ear to me” suggests the condescending nature of God who stoops down to lift man out of his sinful condition.

IV. “Quickly”, in conjunction with “when I call”, stresses the need for immediate help.

A. It should not be interpreted to indicate impatience on the part of the petitioner.

Plaintive Description of Distress

Psalm 102:3-11, For my days consume away like smoke, And my bones are burned as a firebrand. My heart is smitten like grass, and withered; For I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning My bones cleave to my flesh. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am become as an owl of the waste places. I watch, and am become like a sparrow That is alone upon the house-top. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; They that are mad against me do curse by me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, And mingled my drink with weeping, Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: For thou hast taken me up, and cast me away. My days are like a shadow that declineth; And I am withered like grass. ASV

Psalm 102:3, For my days consume away like smoke, And my bones are burned as a firebrand. ASV

I. Hyperbolic language is generally characteristic of laments.

A. This feature makes it difficult at times to determine the real life situation of the psalmist.
B. However, there are usually sufficient clues to enable the careful student to discern between exaggeration and reality.

II. The clear statements in Ps. 102:23-24 reveal the fact that the psalmist fears that his life will be cut short in his prime.

A. Psalm 102:23, 24, He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations. ASV

III. From Ps. 102:13-17 we get the picture of one in exile hoping for restoration to the homeland.

A. Psalm 102:13-17, Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; For it is time to have pity upon her, Yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, And have pity upon her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah, And all the kings of the earth thy glory. For Jehovah hath built up Zion; He hath appeared in his glory. He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute, And hath not despised their prayer. ASV

IV. The highly descriptive language in Ps. 102:3-11 should be interpreted in light of these identifiable facts.

A. Psalm 102:3-11, For my days consume away like smoke, And my bones are burned as a firebrand. My heart is smitten like grass, and withered; For I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning My bones cleave to my flesh. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am become as an owl of the waste places. I watch, and am become like a sparrow That is alone upon the house-top. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; They that are mad against me do curse by me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, And min-
gado my drink with weeping, Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: For thou hast taken me up, and cast me away. My days are like a shadow that declineth; And I am withered like grass. ASV

Ps. 102:4, 5, My heart is smitten like grass, and withered; For I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning My bones cleave to my flesh. ASV

I. The distracting distress has caused him to fail to nourish his body so that his he is “reduced to skin and bones”.

A. “Because of my loud groaning” is an elliptical phrase.

B. The distress that causes the loud groaning also causes him to fast, which in turn causes him to be reduced to skin and bones.

Ps. 102:6, I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am become as an owl of the waste places. ASV

I. His loneliness is described as being “like a desert owl”.

A. The birds here mentioned cannot be definitely identified, but the synonymous terms “desert” and “ruins” suggest regions uninhabited by man.

Ps. 102:7, I watch, and am become like a sparrow That is alone upon the house-top. ASV

I. This loneliness is further pictured as being like “like a bird alone on a roof”, apparently without its mate.

Ps. 102:8, Mine enemies reproach me all the day; They that are mad against me do curse by me. ASV
I. His enemies contemptuously use his name as a curse.

Ps. 102:9, For I have eaten ashes like bread, And mingled my drink with weeping, ASV

I. He is a picture of one sitting on the ash heap in mourning (cf. Job 2:8) with the wind whipping the “ashes” into his food.

   A. Job 2:8, And he took him a potsherds to scrape himself therewith; and he sat among the ashes. ASV

II. Alternately, he has put “ashes” on his head in mourning (cf. 2 Sam. 13:19; Est. 4:1), and they keep falling into his food.

   A. 2 Samuel 13:19, And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that was on her; and she laid her hand on her head, and went her way, crying aloud as she went. ASV

   B. Esther 4:7, And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and the exact sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. ASV

III. His tears mingle with those ashes.

Ps. 102:10, Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: For thou hast taken me up, and cast me away. ASV

I. The language here must be analyzed carefully.

   A. The psalmist does not state the cause of God's wrath, but only focuses on the results of His displeasure.
B. “You have taken me up and thrown me aside” is a veiled reference to the exile (cf. Ps. 102:13-17).

1. Psalm 102:13-17, Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; For it is time to have pity upon her, Yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, And have pity upon her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah, And all the kings of the earth thy glory. For Jehovah hath built up Zion; He hath appeared in his glory. He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute, And hath not despised their prayer. ASV

C. God was perfectly justified in being angry at Israel because of her cumulative sins committed throughout many generations (cf. Ps. 106).

1. Psalm 106:1-48, Praise ye Jehovah. Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; For his lovingkindness endureth forever. Who can utter the mighty acts of Jehovah, Or show forth all his praise? Blessed are they that keep justice, And he that doeth righteousness at all times. Remember me, O Jehovah, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people; Oh visit me with thy salvation, That I may see the prosperity of thy chosen, That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, That I may glory with thine inheritance. e have sinned with our fathers, We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; They remembered not the multitude of thy lovingkindnesses, But were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, That he might make his mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: So he led them
through the depths, as through a wilderness. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their adversaries; There was not one of them left. Then believed they his words; They sang his praise. They soon forgot his works; They waited not for his counsel, But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, And tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul. They envied Moses also in the camp, And Aaron the saint of Jehovah. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, And covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company; The flame burned up the wicked. They made a calf in Horeb, And worshipped a molten image. Thus they changed their glory For the likeness of an ox that eateth grass. They forgat God their Saviour, Who had done great things in Egypt, Wondrous works in the land of Ham, And terrible things by the Red Sea. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them. Yea, they despised the pleasant land, They believed not his word, But murmured in their tents, And hearkened not unto the voice of Jehovah. Therefore he sware unto them, That he would overthrow them in the wilderness, And that he would overthrow their seed among the nations, And scatter them in the lands. They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, And ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked him to anger with their doings; And the plague brake in upon them. Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment; And so the plague was stayed. And that was reckoned unto him for righteousness, Unto all generations for evermore.
They angered him also at the waters of Meribah, So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes; Because they were rebellious against his spirit, And he spake unadvisedly with his lips. They did not destroy the peoples, As Jehovah commanded them, But mingled themselves with the nations, And learned their works, And served their idols, Which became a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons, And shed innocent blood, Even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, Whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their works, And played the harlot in their doings. Therefore was the wrath of Jehovah kindled against his people, And he abhorred his inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the nations; And they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, And they were brought into subjection under their hand. Many times did he deliver them; But they were rebellious in their counsel, And were brought low in their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their distress, When he heard their cry: And he remembered for them his covenant, And repented according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. He made them also to be pitied Of all those that carried them captive. Save us, O Jehovah our God, And gather us from among the nations, To give thanks unto thy holy name, And to triumph in thy praise. Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, From everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye Jehovah. ASV

2. Israel's sins may well be implied in the first half of Ps. 102:10 (cf. Ps. 38:1-4).
Ps. 102:11, My days are like a shadow that declineth; And I am withered like grass. ASV

I. “Evening” is literally “lengthened”, as the “shadow” would appear in the lateness of the day.

A. The figure of withered “grass” suggests that though he is not old, life seems to be almost over (cf. Ps. 102:23-24).

1. Psalm 102:23, 24, He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations. ASV

2. For other expressions of the brevity of life, see Ps. 102:3.

a. Psalm 102:3, For my days consume away like smoke, And my bones are burned as a firebrand. ASV

Zion's Appointed Time

Ps. 102:12-22, But thou, O Jehovah, wilt abide for ever; And thy memorial name unto all generations. Thou wilt arise, and have
mercy upon Zion; For it is time to have pity upon her, Yea, the set
time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, And
have pity upon her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of Je-
hovah, And all the kings of the earth thy glory. For Jehovah hath
built up Zion; He hath appeared in his glory. He hath regarded
the prayer of the destitute, And hath not despised their prayer.
This shall be written for the generation to come; And a people
which shall be created shall praise Jehovah. For he hath looked
down from the height of his sanctuary; From heaven did Jehovah
behold the earth; To hear the sighing of the prisoner; To loose
those that are appointed to death; That men may declare the
name of Jehovah in Zion, And his praise in Jerusalem; When the
peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve Jeho-
vah. ASV

I. The eternal God can easily bring to pass what He decrees according
to His timetable.

   A. The psalmist doubtless was aware of the prophecy of
       Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11-12) concerning a seventy-year captivity.

          1. Jeremiah 25:11, 12, And this whole land shall be a
desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations
shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it
shall come to pass, when seventy years are accom-
plished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and
that nation, saith Jehovah, for their iniquity, and the
land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it desolate for
ever. ASV

   B. Daniel (Dan. 9:1-2) calculated the time and discovered that
it was time for God to restore the exiles to their homeland.

          1. Daniel 9:1, 2, In the first year of Darius the son of
Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made
king over the realm of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years. ASV

2. Apparently, the psalm was written about the time of Daniel's reckoning.

Ps. 102:12, But thou, O Jehovah, wilt abide for ever; And thy memorial name unto all generations. ASV

I. While the Hebrew word rendered “enthroned” means literally to “sit” or “dwell”, its frequent use in the technical sense of one enthroned is to be understood here (cf. Ps. 9:7; 10:16-18).

A. Psalm 9:7, But Jehovah sitteth as king for ever: He hath prepared his throne for judgment; ASV

B. Psalm 10:16-18, Jehovah is King for ever and ever: The nations are perished out of his land. Jehovah, thou hast heard the desire of the meek: Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear; To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, That man who is of the earth may be terrible no more. ASV

Ps. 102:13, Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; For it is time to have pity upon her, Yea, the set time is come. ASV

I. God's faithfulness in keeping His word suggests that “Zion” will now become the object of His “compassion”.

Ps. 102:14, For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, And have pity upon her dust. ASV
I. Though Zion is in ruins (cf. Ps. 79:1-4), God's “servants” still love her.

A. Psalm 79:1-4, O God, the nations are come into thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled; They have laid Jerusalem in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be food unto the birds of the heavens, The flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; And there was none to bury them. We are become a reproach to our neighbors, A scoffing and derision to them that are round about us. ASV

Ps. 102:15-17, So the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah, And all the kings of the earth thy glory. For Jehovah hath built up Zion; He hath appeared in his glory. He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute, And hath not despaired their prayer. ASV

I. Because God regards “the prayer of the destitute” (Ps. 102:17), He will “appear in His glory” and “build up Zion” (Ps. 102:16), which will cause the “kings of the earth” to “revere” His “glory” (Ps. 102:15).

Ps. 102:18-22, This shall be written for the generation to come; And a people which shall be created shall praise Jehovah. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; From heaven did Jehovah behold the earth; To hear the sighing of the prisoner; To loose those that are appointed to death; That men may declare the name of Jehovah in Zion, And his praise in Jerusalem; When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah. ASV

I. This paragraph extends the thoughts of the former.
Ps. 102:18, This shall be written for the generation to come; And a people which shall be created shall praise Jehovah. ASV

I. It is not certain whether the pronoun “this” refers to the rebuilding of Zion (Ps. 102:16) or to the psalmist's trust recorded in this psalm.

A. Psalm 102:16, This shall be written for the generation to come; And a people which shall be created shall praise Jehovah. ASV

B. At any rate, both the glorious event of the restoration of Zion and the psalmist's declaration of trust have been recorded for generations far removed from his day.

Ps. 102:19-22, For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; From heaven did Jehovah behold the earth; To hear the sighing of the prisoner; To loose those that are appointed to death; That men may declare the name of Jehovah in Zion, And his praise in Jerusalem; When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah. ASV

I. These verses reveal the content of the wonderful things worth recording.

Ps. 102:19, For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; From heaven did Jehovah behold the earth; ASV

I. The holy God who inhabits the high and lofty heavens condescends to look down on man in his lowly estate (cf. Isa. 57:14-21).

A. Isaiah 57:14-21, And he will say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and hum-
ble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit would faint before me, and the souls that I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid my face and was wroth; and he went on backsliding in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near, saith Jehovah; and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. ASV

Ps. 102:20, To hear the sighing of the prisoner; To loose those that are appointed to death; ASV

I. In His compassion, the loving Lord sets free the prisoners “condemned to death” (literally “the sons of death”, cf. Ps. 79:11).

A. Psalm 79:11, Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee: According to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to death; ASV

Ps. 102:21-22, That men may declare the name of Jehovah in Zion, And his praise in Jerusalem; When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah. ASV

I. Because of His deliverance, God will be praised by all men in Jerusalem (cf. Ps. 79:9-10,13).

A. Psalm 79:9, 10, 13, Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; And deliver us, and forgive our sins, for thy name's sake. Wherefore should the nations say, Where is their God? Let the avenging of the blood of thy

servants which is shed Be known among the nations in our sight. So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture Will give thee thanks for ever: We will show forth thy praise to all generations. ASV

The Eternal and the Temporal

Ps. 102:23-28, He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; And the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, And thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, And their seed shall be established before thee. ASV

Psalm 102:23, 24, He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations. ASV

I. The psalmist returns from his meditations about Zion's great past, present ruins and future glory to the reality of his own sorrowful state in exile (cf. Ps. 102:3-11).

A. Psalm 102:3-11, For my days consume away like smoke, And my bones are burned as a firebrand. My heart is smitten like grass, and withered; For I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning My bones cleave to my flesh. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am become as an owl of the waste places. I watch, and am become like a sparrow That is alone upon the house-top. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; They that are mad against me do curse by me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, And mingled my drink with weeping, Because of thine indignation
and thy wrath: For thou hast taken me up, and cast me away. My days are like a shadow that declineth; And I am withered like grass. ASV

B. Whether the psalmist is literally in the throes of death, or imagines it in his state of mental depression is uncertain.

1. However, the pain of the latter state is as real as that of the former.

2. To die in the midst of one’s prime was considered a divine judgment for one’s sins (cf. Ps. 55:23; Jer. 17:11; Isa. 38:1-6,9-11,17).

a. Psalm 55:23, But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you. ASV

b. Jeremiah 17:11, As the partridge that sitteth on eggs which she hath not laid, so is he that getteth riches, and not by right; in the midst of his days they shall leave him, and at his end he shall be a fool. ASV

c. Isaiah 38:1-6, 9-11, 17, In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Remember now, O Jehovah, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect
heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the word of Jehovah to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city. The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness. I said, In the noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of Sheol: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see Jehovah, even Jehovah in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Behold, it was for my peace that I had great bitterness: But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. ASV

d. To contemplate such an end would be extremely depressing.

e. Surely, the eternal God can spare mortal man a few more years!

Ps. 102:25-28, Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; And the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, And thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, And their seed shall be established before thee. ASV
I. Orientals love vivid descriptions.

A. In a culture where God's creative acts can be so beautifully described as God's clothing Himself with light, stretching out the heavens like a tent, laying beams upon the waters, and setting the earth on its foundations (Ps. 104:1-6), the language here is not surprising.

1. Psalm 104:1-6, Bless Jehovah, O my soul. O Jehovah my God, thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honor and majesty: Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; Who maketh the clouds his chariot; Who walketh upon the wings of the wind; Who maketh winds his messengers; Flames of fire his ministers; Who laid the foundations of the earth, That it should not be moved for ever. Thou coverest it with the deep as with a vesture; The waters stood above the mountains. ASV

2. The consummation is the opposite of the creation.

3. These garments will wear out and need to be changed (Ps. 102:26).

   a. Psalm 102:26, They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: ASV

4. Foundations eventually give way, even though they seem so permanent (Ps. 102:25).
a. Psalm 102:25, Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; And the heavens are the work of thy hands. ASV

B. God, however, is eternal.

1. “You remain the same”, reads literally “you are He”.

2. God is the unique one, the only true God in the universe whom Israel knew as eternal.

3. Because the Israelites are a special object of care in the heart of their eternal God, they and their posterity live in His presence.

Application:

I. Psalm 102:22 expresses a time when “peoples” and “kingdoms” will assemble to worship the LORD.

A. This declaration involves an eradication of the distinctions between Jews and Gentiles.

B. Christ has “destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” and so “made one new man out of the two”, that is, He brought Jew and Gentile together in one body, the church, by reconciling them both to God through the cross (Eph. 2:14-18).

1. Ephesians 2:14-18, For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in the flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having
slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father. ASV

II. In every place where God and Christ are honored as deity this international worship can occur.

A. Man can be brought out of his prison house of sin and alienation, and be reconciled to God through the death of Christ.

B. All men need to accept God’s plan of salvation freely offered by Christ.
Questions

Psalm 102:1-28,

(Questions based on NIV text.)

1. The superscription of Psalm 102 reads, “A ______________ of an ______________ _______________. When he is _____________ and ___________ out his _____________ before the ____________.”

2. “____________ my _____________, O ________________; let my ____________ for _______________ come to _______________. Do not ________________ your _________________ from me when _____________ am in _______________ ___________ your _________________ to _______________; when _________________ _________________, _________________ me ________________.

3. “For my ______________ _______________ like _______________; my _________________ _________________ like _______________ _________________. My _________ ________ is _________________ and ________________ like _______________; I ________________ to _________________ my _________________. Because of my _________________ _________________ I am ________________ to ________________ and _________________. I am like a _______________ _________________, like an _______________ among the _______________. I ________________ _______________; I have become like a _______________ alone on a _______________. ________________ my ________________ me: those who ______________ against me use my ______________ as a _______________. For I ________________ ________________ as my ________________ and ________________ my ________________ with ______________ because of your _________________, for you have taken me up and _________________ me _______________. My ________________ are like the _______________ _______________; I ________________ away like _______________. But you, O ______________,
through __________; your ____________

You will ____________ and have ____________ on ____________,
for it is ____________ to ____________ ____________
to her; the ____________ has ____________.
For her ____________ are ____________ to your ____________;
her very __________ moves them to __________. The ____________
will ____________ the ____________ of the ____________
all the ____________ of the ____________ will ____________
your ____________. For the ____________ will ____________
and ____________ in his ____________.
Her will ____________ to the ____________ of the ____________;
he will not ____________ their ____________:

4. “Let this be ____________ for a ____________ ____________,
that a ____________ not yet __________ may ____________
the ____________: The ____________ ____________ ____________
from his ____________ on ____________,
from ____________ he ____________ the ____________,
to ____________ the ____________ of the ____________
and ____________ those ____________ to ____________.
So the ____________ of the ____________ will be ____________
in ____________ and his ____________ ____________
when the ____________ and the ____________ ____________
to ____________ the ____________.”

5. “In the ____________ of my ____________ he ____________
my ____________; he ____________ ____________
my ____________. So I said: ‘Do not ____________ ____________
__________, O my ____________, in the
of my ____________: your ____________ go on through ____________
__________. In the ____________ you ____________
the ____________ of the ____________, and the ____________
are the ____________ of your ____________. They will ____________,
but you ____________; They will all ____________ ____________
like a __________. Like __________ you will ___________ them and they will be __________. But you ___________ the ____________, and your __________ will __________ ___________ ill __________ in your ___________; their ___________ will be ___________ before you!”

6. The __________ to Psalm 102 suggest that it is a __________ of ______________ and ______________.

7. The title also suggests a ______________ use of this psalm. Define liturgical. __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

8. Psalm 102 can be used as a __________ of ______________ and ____________ for any ______________ who ___________ the ____________ to ______________ with ____________ for ______________.

9. All the psalms came to be used as __________ of ____________ or ____________ that ____________ ____________ or the ________________.

10. This psalm was uttered __________ as a ________________ for ________________. It is an obvious ________________ for ________________.

11. What is implied by God’s hiding his face? __________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________
12. What is meant/taught by the birds and ashes illustrations? ______

13. When and/or in view of what historical situation was Psalm 102 written? Give reasons for your answer. __________________

14. Why was God angry with Israel? Was God anxious to forgive Israel? Give reasons for your answer. __________________

15. What is the point of the withered grass illustration? ___________
16. Explain how Jeremiah’s prophecy, Daniel’s calculation and Psalm 102 are inter-related.

17. Because ________ regards the ________ of the ________,
He will __________ in His ________ and __________ up
______________ which will cause the ____________ of the
______________ to ______________ His ____________.

18. Both the ____________ ___________ ______ of the
______________ of ______________ and the ______________’s
______________ of ______________ have been ____________
for ____________ for ______________ from his ____________.

19. The ____________ ____________ who __________
the ____________ and ____________ ____________ __________
to look down on ____________ in his ____________
______________. In His ____________, the ____________
sets ____________ the ____________ to _____________. Because of His ____________ God
will be ____________ by ____________ ____________ in
______________.

20. The ____________ returns from his ____________
about ______________’s great ______________, ______________
______________ and ______________ to
the ____________ of his own ______________ in exile.
21. To ______________ in the ______________ of one’s ______________ was considered a ______________ ______________ for ______________’s ______________.

22. Speak to the psalmist’s emotional health. What produced this situation? ________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

23. How are God’s creative acts described in verses 25-28? _______
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

24. In what ways did Israel and the psalmist regard God as being unique? ________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

25. What applications can be made of Psalm 102 to our lives? _______
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________