

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 45

Psalm 103

INTRODUCTION: Psalm 103 is a pure psalm of worship. There is not a single petition in it from the first to the last. The Psalmist gives no expression of any desire whatsoever. From the beginning to the end he pours out his soul in praise and thanksgiving. This psalm is attributed to David.

Praise is the adoration of God for what He is Himself. Thanksgiving is the adoration of God for what He has done for us. These two forms of worship David gives to God. The psalm was written for use in the temple and for temple worship. It is divided into several divisions.

- I. A SOLO. Psalm 103:1-5. No plural noun is found in these verses. One man sang the chorus of this part of the psalm. The name “Jehovah” is mentioned twice, and with it the relative pronoun “Who” occurs five times. In this psalm a singer was talking to himself about Jehovah. He was calling upon himself to praise Jehovah, and he gave reasons for so doing. Let us notice the things for which he praised Jehovah and the reasons why he called upon himself to praise Jehovah. These would come under the five “Who’s.”
  1. “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,” Psalm 103:3a. The first reason for adoration is always that of moral cleansing and forgiveness.
  2. “Who healeth all thy diseases,” Psalm 103:3b. The phrase, “all thy diseases,” means the diseases of the mind, the diseases of the body and the diseases of the spirit. It is very interesting that the words “holiness” and “health” are derived from a common word in Anglo-Saxon. In other words, a healthy body helps to bring a healthy spirit, and a healthy spirit helps to bring a healthy body. The two words mean the same thing. One’s spiritual condition often determines his physical condition. The Psalmist is praising the Lord for good health—mentally, physically and spiritually.
  3. “Who redeemeth thy life from destruction,” Psalm 103:4a. The word “redeemeth” here is one that means “preserves.” It is not so much the idea of bringing life back from the realm of destruction but keeping it from that realm. In other words, it does not mean He saves me from a life of destruction, but He keeps me from a life of destruction. It does not mean He brought me back from terrible sin but that He has kept me from terrible sin. (Teacher, stress this to young people very strongly.)
  4. “Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies,” Psalm 103:4b. This implies royalty. We are priests of God, and we are royalty. We are crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies. These are the jewels in our crown.
  5. “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,” Psalm 103:5a. Other ways to say this truth are as follows: “Who satisfieth thy years with good things”; “Who ornaments thee with good things”; and “Who satisfieth thy prime years with good things.” At any rate, God is saying that all of our lives He satisfies us with good things, and the Psalmist is praising the Lord because of it.
- II. THE CHORUS. Psalm 103:6-19. These verses compose a chorus in which other voices join, and the plural pronouns begin. In other words, many voices come together to sing. The first five verses were sung as a solo; now we have a choir singing. Let us notice something about their part of the psalm. In it there are four movements, giving four reasons for united praise. They are indicated by the employment of the name “Jehovah” four times.
  1. The chorus praised the Lord because He executeth righteous acts. Psalm 103:6, 7. His government is righteous.
  2. The chorus praised the Lord for His patience. Psalm 103:8-12. He is full of compassion, slow to anger, and has great mercies, etc.
  3. The chorus praised the Lord for His pity. Notice the words in Psalm 103:13-16, especially those which say, “For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”
  4. The chorus praised the Lord for His lovingkindness. Psalm 103:17-19. “The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all,” Psalm 103:19.

Just as the first five verses show how the individual should praise the Lord and for what he should praise the Lord, these verses show the need for collective praise and what we should praise the Lord for collectively.

- III. A GREAT CHORUS. Psalm 103:20-22a. We have a great chorus. The volume is increased by angelic voices. Bear in mind, verses 1-5 deal with a solo, verses 6-19 deal with a chorus of people, and then verses 20-22a deal with the joining of angels to form a great chorus reinforced by the whole universe of God. These verses tell for what the whole universe should praise the Lord.
- IV. A SOLO. Verse 22b. The last line, “bless the LORD, O my soul,” is a solo again. Now follow the progression. The psalm starts with five verses of solo, then a chorus of human voices, then a chorus of human voices combined with angelic voices. The crescendo swells and swells and the song gets louder and louder until there is a great abrupt stop; then the soloist sings, “...bless the LORD, O my soul.”

CONCLUSION: This is one of the most beautiful of all the Psalms and certainly is the most beautiful of all when it comes to praise.