

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CII. Handling Personal Trials Linked To Christianity's Trials
(Psalm 102:1-28)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Biblical Christianity has long faced claims that it is a false faith, what has also afflicted believers individually:

(1) Liberal Theology began to get its view that the Old Testament is not God inspired from Jean Astruc (1684-1766) who noticed that God was called only “Elohim” in Genesis 1 and mostly “Yahweh” in Genesis 2 in the Hebrew text. He concluded that Moses used two different accounts of creation, and cited one author who knew God only as “Elohim” and another who knew Him only as “Yahweh.” (Gleason L. Archer, A Survey of O. T. Intr., 1972, p. 73-74)

Astruc's view influenced Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) to author the Documentary Hypothesis that held the Old Testament evolved under multiple authors after Moses' era. (R. K. Harrison, Intro. to the O. T., 1973, p. 21-22).

With the lack of archaeological evidence that Moses used “Elohim” and “Yahweh” in Genesis 1 and 2 as different names for the same God, Liberal Theology supporters have long charged that the Bible has errors, that it is not divinely inspired, a charge that has plagued Biblical Christianity as a whole and individual believers along with it!

(2) Another common critique of the Bible's creation account comes in the form of the question, “If the universe is just thousands of years old, how can we see starlight from galaxies that are billions of light-years away?” (Brian Thomas with John Morris, Jake Hebert, & Timothy Clarey, Why The World Looks So Young, 2020, p. 33)

(3) Opposition to Biblical Christianity occurs in other realms, too: the Associated Press story, “We're not getting enough sleep” by Deepti Hajela and Linley Sanders (Republican-American, April 19, 2024, p. 4B) told how a recent Gallup poll found that “(a) majority of Americans say they would feel better if they could have more sleep.” The authors cited two university sociology professors who said that “(o)ne likely reason for Americans' sleeplessness is . . . a long-standing emphasis on industriousness and productivity” by “Protestants from European countries who colonized the country.” They believed “that working hard and being rewarded with success was evidence of divine favor,” that “being ‘individually responsible for creating our own destinies’ implied “that if you're wasting too much of your time . . . you are responsible for your own failure.” (Ibid.) So, some blame the Protestant work ethic of American colonists for causing many Americans today to work so long and hard that they don't get enough sleep!

(4) We face trials to our faith in evangelical circles: the April 18, 2024, reading, “Disobedient Angels” in the “Days of Praise” devotional claims that the “Genesis 6:1-4” term, “‘sons of God,’” refers to demons who cohabited with women so that they produced evil men. However, this claim counters Jesus' Mark 12:25 remark that angels are neuter, so, in countering Christ's statement, the reading treats Him as having sinned by lying, undermining the faith!

Need: *So, we ask, “How should we handle the undermining of Biblical Christianity that personally afflicts us?”*

I. In Psalm 102:1-11, the psalmist expressed his personal plea to God for help, describing his troubles in life that led to his plea, but in Psalm 102:12-22 he noted that the whole nation of Israel stood in need of God's deliverance, and “the wretched state of Zion is” evidently “part of the affliction that bears the psalmist down.” (H. C. Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms, 1974, p. 706)

II. Thus, Psalm 102:1-28 addresses trials that INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS face that are LINKED to trials that God's PEOPLE as a WHOLE face, so this psalm provides insightful instruction for us today:

- A. The psalmist expressed his cry to God for help (v. 1-2) for a variety of personal troubles he faced, v. 3-11:
1. Emotionally, the psalmist felt blighted and withered like grass as he even forgot to eat his food, v. 3-4.
 2. Mentally, he suffered sleeplessness and felt lonely like a bird among ruins, Psalm 102:5-7.
 3. Relationally, his enemies cast blaming scorn at him, leaving him depressed, Psalm 102:8-10.
 4. Physically, the psalmist felt his days were about to end like an evening shadow or withering grass, v. 11.
- B. Significantly, the psalmist's own personal trials were linked to Israel's national trials, Psalm 102:13, 20:
1. God needed to arise and have compassion on Israel as a nation, Psalm 102:13.
 2. The nation's prisoners were groaning and needed to be released from unjust condemnations to death, v. 20.
- C. Nevertheless, God was eternal, sovereign, good and faithful to Israel and her individual citizens, v. 12-22:
1. The Lord is eternal, enduring through all generations (v. 12b), and though He made the universe, it will all perish though God will remain standing as the unchanging Creator God (Psalm 102:25-27).
 2. God is eternally sovereign over the universe as He sits enthroned forever (Psalm 102:12a).
 3. The Lord is also good and faithful to His people, delivering and blessing them (Psalm 102:14-22).

- D. Therefore, the Lord will establish and bless His people forever, Psalm 102:13a, 15-22; 28:
1. God will have compassion on Zion, Israel's capitol city of Jerusalem, Psalm 102:13a.
 2. He will hear the petitions of His people to deliver them from troubles (Psalm 102:15-22) and cause the children of His servants to settle down in security and be established before Him forever (Psalm 102:28).

Lesson: *Though the individual trials of God's people are intertwined with their trials as His people as a whole, the eternal, sovereign, good, and faithful Creator God will establish and bless all of His people forever.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we face attacks on Bible Christianity and the trials they fuel for us individually by trusting our eternal, sovereign, good, and faithful God to establish and forever bless us.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

Our eternal, sovereign, good and faithful Creator God of Scripture has graciously provided us **edifying answers** to the issues of concern noted in our introduction by **Scripture** and **archaeological discoveries** (as follows):

(1) On Liberal Theology's critique of the Bible's divine inspiration by assuming that the different names for God in Genesis 1 and 2 imply that multiple writers and not Moses authored Genesis, a recent archaeological find shows that Liberal Theology has greatly erred on this issue: In 2019, a lead curse tablet was found on Mount Ebal in central Israel that was tested and found to have a proto-alphabetic script that was used between 1750 and 1200 B. C., and the inscription bore the phrase, "You are cursed by the god (*EL*) *YHW* – cursed." (Henry B. Smith, Jr., "Cursed," ***Answers***, April-June, 2024, p. 52-58; parentheses ours). Experts performed a metallurgy test, carbon dating and a ceramic analysis on the tablet and its environs (that contained pottery), and the pottery was dated 1400 to 1300 B. C. (Ibid.) The tablet's lead was found to have come from a mine in Greece that was in use in the Late Bronze Age, so the tablet was dated between 1400 and 1300 B. C. The presence of *EL* (short for "Elohim") for the word "god" that was right next to *YHW* (short for "Yahweh") on the tablet shows that soon after the early date of the Exodus (1446-1440 B. C.; ***Ryrie St. Bib., KJV***, 1994, "Exodus: Intr.: Date of the Exodus," p. 87), ***Hebrews in Israel*** (what supports the early date for the Exodus!) used **both** "Elohim" **and** "Yahweh" for God! (Ibid.) Liberal Theology's Documentary Hypothesis and Jean Astruc's view are thus in great error, and Moses' authorship of Genesis is clearly supported!

(2) On the claim that if we see stars that are billions of light years away, the universe is billions of years old in support of evolution, (a) galaxies seen in strong telescopes "that are extremely distant appear fully formed or mature" while evolution requires that they be "immature and poorly developed." (Ibid., Thomas) (b) Advocates of evolution claim "the arching 'arms' that protrude from spiraling galaxies are supposedly 10 billion years old. But because the inside stars rotate faster than the outside stars, the arms they form would have 'wound up' to form a disk after only about 100 million years. And what possible forces could have spun them out of a mass of hydrogen atoms or a clump of stars in the first place?" (Ibid., p. 34) (c) Also, "Einstein's theories of relativity have shown that supposedly intuitive ideas about light, space, and time are incorrect, and many creationists think that relativity may be the key to answering this common objection (of seeing distant stars) to biblical creation." (Ibid., p. 33; parentheses ours)

(3) On the charge that the Protestant work ethic of early American colonists is causing a lack of sleep among Americans today, (a) Ecclesiastes 5:12 claims that the sleep of a laboring man is sweet! Physical work makes for better sleep, not a lack of it! (b) Besides, America's economy was built on the Protestant work ethic, and many generations of Americans have not complained about a lack of sleep! Rather, today's lack of sleep is the fault of people failing to get to bed earlier, or poor diets, or a lack of exercise, or even failure to gain enough training or to manage one's career in order to make an adequate living without suffering a loss of sleep (Proverbs 12:11 NIV). Blaming the Protestant work ethic for a lack of sleep is an inane Marxist tactic to try to discredit Biblical Christianity!

(4) On the charge that Genesis 6:1-4 teaches that demons impregnated human women to produce evil men in contrast to Jesus' Mark 12:25 remark that angels are neuter, archaeological discoveries of ancient pagan literature reveal that the "sons of God" term in Genesis 6:1-4 was a critique of ancient pagan views that kings were divine, half-divine, or demigods, for "(m)any mythological traditions describe them as being the offspring of the gods themselves." (B. K. C., O. T., p. 36) "Genesis 6:1-4, then, describes how corrupt the world got" by Noah's era, and it is "a polemic *against* the pagan belief that giants . . . and men of renown . . . were of divine origin . . . The sons of God were not divine; they were demon controlled. Their marrying as many women as they wished . . . was to satisfy their baser instincts." (Ibid.) These evil men died in the Genesis Flood as proof that they were just mortal men.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we handle the attacks on our faith by relying on God to establish and bless us forever.