

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CIII. Edifying Living In A Messed Up World
(Psalm 103:1-22)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The world is a proverbial mess: Last Sunday, a believer asked me, “The world is a mess, isn’t it?” and Alyssia Finley’s editorial, “If You Give a College Student a Cookie . . .” in The Wall Street Journal (April 22, 2024, p. A17) asked, “How did our world, culture and politics become such a mess?” The evidence abounds:

(1) At the international level, with past Presidents “George W. Bush and Barak Obama not gauging Russian President Vladimir Putin’s potential for evil,” with “the collapse during Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s incumbency of . . . hopes that trade ties would make China ‘a responsible stakeholder’ in world trade and politics” and with “the Obama administration’s inexplicable cozying up to the mullahs of Iran, . . . (j)ust as Nazi Germany made a pact with Joseph Stalin’s Soviet Union in 1939 and formed the Axis with Japan and Italy in 1940, America is faced now with a working alliance of (revengeful) dictatorial powers determined to alter the balance of power in their favor.” (Michael Barone, “A turning point for foreign policy?”, Republican-American, April 27, 2024, p. 8A; parentheses ours)

(2) At the national level, “Americans are grappling with soaring costs, from new homeowners needing 80% more income than they did four years ago to credit card debt reaching all-time highs. This is all while the federal deficit and interest rates soar.” (Miles Pollard and Hope Canlas, “‘Green’ policies have high costs,” *Ibid.*, April 20, 2024, p. 6A) As for that federal deficit, “Congress is irresponsible all the time. Legislators have accumulated \$34 trillion in debt without any real collective thinking about how to pay for it.” (Veronique De Rugy, “Stop ‘emergency spending’ charade,” *Ibid.*, April 26, 2024, p. 6A)

(3) At the institutional level, after National Public Radio’s discipline of its own award-winning journalist Uri Berliner for “(s)uggesting in an op-ed” that “the NPR” was “not interested in divergent viewpoints” that fail to “align with their liberal mindset,” Katherine Maher, CEO of NPR, said, “(S)eeing the truth . . . might not be the right place to start . . . (O)ur reverence for the truth might be a distraction that’s getting in the way of finding common ground and getting things done.” (Christine Flowers, “NPR leader shows her true colors,” *Ibid.*, April 24, 2024, p. 6A)

(4) At the academic level, (a) “most universities have many infantile . . . faculty . . . who have glided from kindergarten through postdoctoral fellowships” to whom most “of the world adjacent to campuses is as foreign as Mongolia . . . (In one case, at) UCLA’s medical school . . . a recent . . . lecturer in a *mandatory* course on ‘Structural Racism and Health Equity’ led students in a ‘Free Palestine’ chant, directed them to get on their knees and touch the floor in a ‘prayer’ to ‘mamma earth’ and warned the future doctors against the ‘capitalist lie’ of ‘private property.’” (George Will, “The leakage of universities’ prestige is most welcome,” *Ibid.*, April 29, 2024, p. 8A) (b) Their students “want to feel safe in classrooms and will ask for trigger warnings to protect them from ideas they don’t like. When you agree . . . (they) will occupy buildings and demand that speakers be canceled. When you . . . disinvite speakers, students ask you to excuse tardy and incomplete assignments because they were busy protesting. When you give them an A for no effort, they will graduate with honors and think they don’t have to work hard to succeed.” (*Ibid.*, Finley)

Need: So, we ask, “How are we to live an edifying life if the world, culture and politics have become such a mess?”

- I. Psalm 103:1-22 is a great hymn of praise to God for His deliverance of His people from many problems. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 103; Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 867)**
- II. Accordingly, the psalm opens (v. 1-2) and closes (v. 20-22) with calls for all creation to praise the Lord.**
- III. The author, Israel’s king David, gives his reasons for this call for praise in Psalm 103:3-19 (as follows):**
 - A. God was to be praised for His great pardoning grace toward His people, Psalm 103:3, 8-18:
 1. David praised the Lord for pardoning his sins and healing all his diseases that were God’s discipline for sin according to the Mosaic Covenant under which David lived in his time, Psalm 103:3; Deut. 28:15, 21-22a.
 2. The psalmist added in verses 8-18 that the Lord was very gracious in not punishing His people Israel to the degree they actually deserved, but that He expressed His *hesed*, His “loyal love” (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1064; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 305-307) to those who revered Him, v. 11.
 3. God recalled the human frailty and sinful failings of His people (v. 13-16), so He had gracious compassion on them and His *hesed* (again, *Ibid.*, Kittel, v. 17) was extended toward those who revered Him, v. 18.
 - B. God was to be praised for redeeming David’s “physical life” (*hayyim*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 313) from destruction in his life-threatening experiences in life, Psalm 103:4.

- C. The Lord was to be praised for satisfying David's desires with good (figurative) "ornaments" ('*adiy*, Ibid., p. 725-726), namely, material blessings in general, so that his youth was renewed like the eagles', Psalm 103:5.
- D. God was to be praised for executing "righteousness" (*sedeqah*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 842) and "justice" (*mishpat*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 1048-1049) for all the "oppressed" ('*ashaq*, Ibid., p. 798), v. 6.
- E. David noted that these divine provisions in his era were not new, for God had made them known to Moses and Israel in the nation's previous history because God was timelessly faithful to His people, Psalm 103:7.
- F. At Psalm 103:19, David added that God had established His throne in the heavens so that His kingdom ruled over all, that God is sovereign over creation and is able to perform these ministries for those who revere Him.

Lesson: *God is to be greatly praised by all creation for His deliverances from problems for all who revere Him. Those deliverances include His gracious pardoning of their sins to protect them from God's own punishment, His delivering them from death, His delivering them from decline by satisfying their desires with good things that edify them, God's executing righteousness and justice for them, His faithfulness in ministering these ways for them and His sovereignty over the universe to be able to achieve all of these blessings for them.*

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) *Since we Christians today are not under the Mosaic Covenant as was David who wrote Psalm 103 (cf. Romans 7:1-6), we apply the psalm's truths in ways that are directed by the apostolic writings as we revere the Lord and walk in His Biblical paths.*

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

We apply Psalm 103:1-22 through the directives of the apostolic writings of the New Testament relative to the issues of concern mentioned in our sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) On **all** the issues (at the **international, national, institutional, and academic** levels), (a) **Psalm 103:4** claims that God redeems a believer's earthly life from the grave. (b) Then, **Psalm 103: 5, 6, 7, and 19** calls us to trust God's oversight to meet our needs, to satisfy our desires and to minister righteousness and justice for us consistently in his sovereignty. (c) Applying these truths in **our dispensation** of the **Church** under **apostolic authority**, though we do not know God's plan on the lifespan of any believer in today's Church era (John 21:21-23), nor are we today promised a bountiful physical and material life like the godly were under the Mosaic Covenant (2 Corinthians 6:1-10), we **do** know from the **Apostle John's** writing at Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 that a mini-Great Tribulation period was predicted for our era of Church History, what would include today's world, cultural and political problems, and Daniel 9:26b predicted war and desolations for Jerusalem from the A. D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem and its temple down to Christ's Second Coming to set up His future earthly Kingdom. Thus, we should not be troubled over the existence of today's world problems. (c) However, Christ **did promise** to be **with** us until the **rapture** to **help** us **believers heed His Great Commission** to **disciple** the **nations** (Matthew 28:20; John F. Walvoord, *Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come*, 1974, p. 244). Thus, in view of today's many world problems, the **most blessed life** for a **believer** to live **now** is for him to use his spiritual gift to serve God in a local Biblical church in discipling people for Christ.

(2) On the **national** level issues **in particular**, the **Apostle Paul** in Hebrews 13:5-6 calls us to be content with what we have and can afford that God might meet our material needs, and to apply 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 to work as independently as possible to meet our material needs and to maintain a good testimony before the world.

(3) On the **institutional** level issues **in particular**, the **Apostle Paul** in 2 Timothy 3:13-4:5 calls us to heed and proclaim Scripture in churches to avoid deception and the retreat from truth that was foretold for Church History!

(4) On the **academic** level issues **in particular**, the **Apostle Paul** (a) in 2 Timothy 3:1-9 calls us to avoid people who were foretold to arise in Church History [like destructive demonstrators] who are self-centered, lovers of money, arrogant, proud, verbally abusive, disobedient to parents, unthankful, profane, lacking love for relatives, irreconcilable, slanderous, lacking self-control, untamed, despisers of good people, traitorous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasure more than God, having a false spirituality while denying its power, controlling, always learning but unable to acknowledge the truth, and opposing God's servants by trying to discredit them. (b) To fill the relationship vacuum created by avoiding such people, 2 Timothy 2:22 calls us to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace "in companionship with" (*meta*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 734; Abbott-Smith, *A Man. Grk. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1968, p. 286) those who call on God with a pure heart. We need to focus on spiritual fellowship with other upright believers.

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 apply Psalm 103:1-22 through the directives of the apostolic writings by revering the Lord so as to walk in His Biblical paths of life for blessing in the current world.