

## Psalm 103 Continued

**Psalm 103:11 "For as the heaven is high above the earth, [so] great is his mercy toward them that fear him."**

Which is the greatest distance known, or can be conceived of. The space between the heaven and the earth is seemingly almost infinite. And nothing can more illustrate the mercy of God, which reaches to the heavens, and is in heaven. Though this is but a faint representation of the largeness and abundance of it, and which indeed is boundless and infinite.

"So great is his mercy towards them that fear him": Or, his mercy hath prevailed over them that fear him. As the waters of the flood prevailed upon the earth, and reached and overflowed the highest hills (Gen. 7:18). So abundant and superabundant is the grace of God over them that "fear" him. Which character is given, not as being the cause of their obtaining mercy, but as descriptive of the persons that partake of it. On whom it has such an effect, as to cause them to fear the Lord, and his goodness. And is mentioned to prevent obstinate and presumptuous sinners expecting it, or trusting to it.

This is saying that the mercies of God toward man are so great there is no way we can measure them. We do know the scientists have not been able to find the end of the universe, so that makes this Scripture doubly beautiful. It means we will never be able to find the end of God's mercies either.

**Psalm 103:12 "As far as the east is from the west, [so] far hath he removed our transgressions from us."**

As far as possible; as far as we can imagine. These are the points in our apprehension most distant from each other, and as we can conceive nothing beyond them. So the meaning is, that we cannot imagine our sins could be more effectually removed than they are. The literal meaning of the Hebrew is, "like the distance of the east from the west" or, "like its being far."

"So far hath he removed our transgressions from us": That is, he has put them entirely away. They are so removed that they cannot affect us anymore. We are safe from all condemnation for our sins, as if they had not been committed at all (compare the notes at Isaiah 43:25; and Isa. 44:22).

How wonderful it is to know that our sins are so far away that we cannot get there from here. This means if we started looking for them, they would always be as far as the east is from the west. I heard a lady say in her testimony, that she did not know how far the east is from the west, but she knew she could not get there from here. Not only have they been removed from us, but they have been done away with. Our sins (forgiven ones), died on the cross.

**Psalm 103:13 "Like as a father pitieth [his] children, [so] the LORD pitieth them that fear him."**

When in any affliction, disorder, or distress: The Lord stands in the relation of a Father to his people. They are his children by adopting grace, through the covenant of grace with them. By a sovereign act of his own will he puts them among the children, predestinates them to the adoption of children. And sends his Son to redeem them, that they might receive it, and his Spirit to bear witness to their spirits, that they are his children. And towards these he has all the affections of a tender parent. "As a father": Unlike the pagan gods, who are apathetic or hostile.

"So the Lord pitieth them that fear him": Not with a servile fear, which is unsuitable to the relation of children. But with reverence and godly fear, with a fear of him and his goodness, and on account of that; a filial fear, such a reverence as children should have of a father. And this character belongs to all the saints of all nations, Jews or Gentiles. And seems to be here given a purpose to include all; and that the divine pity and compassion might not be thought to be restrained to any particular nation. And, as the fruit of his tender mercy, he looks upon his children in their lost estate, and brings them out of it. He provides assistance and support in times of hardship and distress them under all their temptations. He sympathizes with them under all their afflictions: being full of compassion, he forgives their iniquities. And in the most tender manner receives them when they have backslidden, and heals their backslidings.

The pity shown here is so much greater than that of man for man. The pity mentioned here is the pity that a Father has for His son. We are sons of the Father, if we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Romans 8:15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

John 1:12 "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:"

These 2 Scriptures above leave no doubt at all, that those who fear God are His children. There is no wonder that He pities us as His children, we are His children.

**Psalm 103:14 "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we [are] dust."**

"Dust": Physically speaking, as Adam was created of dust (Gen. 2:7), so mankind at death decomposes back into dust (Gen. 3:19).

Since we are His creation, He would know exactly how we were constructed. In the creation act, He made man from the dust of the earth. He is very well aware of our earthliness.

Genesis 2:7 "And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Perhaps, one of the reasons for God being so patient with mankind is because God realizes man's connection with the dust of the earth. In the flesh man is not much, it is only when God gave us new life in Jesus Christ that man became something. Through Adam and Eve, we were all flesh

and headed for an eternity in hell. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we received a birth in our spirit. This gave us new life in Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:45 "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit."

Verses 15-18: How short is man's life, and uncertain! The flower of the garden is commonly more choice, and will last the longer, for being sheltered by the garden-wall, and the gardener's care. But the flower of the field, to which life is here compared, is not only withering in itself, but exposed to the cold blasts, and liable to be cropped and trod on by the beasts of the field. Such is man. God considers this, and pities him; let him consider it himself. God's mercy is better than life, for it will outlive it. His righteousness, the truth of his promise, shall be unto children's children, who tread in the footsteps of their forefathers' piety. Then shall mercy be preserved to them.

Verses 15-16: Life is like the "flower of the field" that grows up one day and is gone the next (Isa. 40:6-8; James 1:10-11).

"Days ... as grass": Man's life is short and transitory.

**Psalm 103:15 "[As for] man, his days [are] as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth."**

He himself is like the grass which springs out of the earth; continues on it for a time, and then drops into it. The continuance of the grass is very short, it flourishes in the morning, is cut down at evening, and withers (see Psalm 90:5). As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; which denotes the goodness of man. And describes him in his best estate, as possessed of health, riches, honor, and all the gifts and endowments of nature. And yet, with all these, is only like a field flower, exposed to every wind, liable to be cropped by every hand, and to be trampled upon by the beasts of the field. And therefore flourishes not long: so very precarious and uncertain is man in his most flourishing circumstances (see Isa. 40:6).

This life on this earth is like a vapor, here today and gone tomorrow. It has been likened to smoke, which vanishes away.

Psalms 90:10 "The days of our years [are] threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength [they be] fourscore years, yet [is] their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

We are very much like a flower that buds in the spring, blooms in the summer and dies in the fall. The season of man on this earth is very short. Grass is like the flower. It sprouts up in spring, blooms and then is cut down and dies. If this life were all there is to life, it would be of no real pleasure. The day we are born, we begin the dying process.

**Psalm 103:16 "For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."**

A stormy wind, as the Targum, which tears it up by its roots, or blows off the flower, and it is seen no more. Or a blighting easterly wind, which, blowing on it, shrivels it up, and it dies at once. Such a one as blasted the seven ears of corn in Pharaoh's dream (Gen. 41:23). Or any impetuous, drying, and noxious wind. And so when the east wind of adversity passes over a man, his riches, and honor, and estate, are presently gone. Or some bodily distemper, which takes away health, strength, and beauty, and impairs the mind. And especially death, which removes at once into another world.

"And the place thereof shall know it no more": The place where the flower grew shall know it no more; or it shall be seen no more in it. So man, when he dies, though he is not annihilated, he is somewhere. He is in another world, either of happiness or woe; yet he is not in this world, in the house and family, in the station and business he was. He is no longer known nor seen among men on earth (see Job 7:10).

The place that we once lived is soon taken over by another and we are soon forgotten. Once the body of man has returned to the dust it can be blown away with just a small wind. Life is like that. We only pass this way once; we must do the very best with our life while we are here. It is too soon gone. I hear so many people say, I wish I had done more with my life while I had the chance. Tomorrow is too late.

Verses 17-18: "The mercy of the LORD": Those who appeal to God's mercy by proper fear (verse 17), and obedience (verse 18), will overcome the shortness of physical life with eternal life (Luke 1:50 quotes Psalm 103:17).

**Psalm 103:17 "But the mercy of the LORD [is] from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;"**

But though we quickly decay and perish, yet God's mercy to us doth not die with us. But as it was from eternity exercised in gracious purposes, so it will be continued unto eternity in that future and endless life.

"Upon them that fear him": See before on (Psalm 103:11). His righteousness; either his faithfulness, or (that this branch may answer to the former), his mercy or benignity. This word being frequently used in both these senses, as hath been proved before. But it is here called righteousness, to intimate that God's kindness to the posterity of his people is not only an act of his goodness, but also a discharge of his obligation under which he put himself to them, as elsewhere (so Exodus 20:6). To which this place seems to relate. Hence it is called mercy to Abraham and truth to Jacob (Micah 7:20).

"And his righteousness unto children's children": God's "righteousness" is his everlasting justice, by which he gives to men according to their just deserts.

Even though the Lord does not have grandchildren, He does bless the children of His children. We know that Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was the father of Jacob. God looks kindly upon the children of those who follow Him. One of the best examples of that in the entire Bible, is the fact that Noah's 3 sons were spared, because Noah found grace in the sight of the LORD. I suppose one reason the blessing goes down from one generation to the other is, because the righteous teach their children and grandchildren the ways of God.

**Psalm 103:18 "To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."**

The covenant of grace, which is peculiarly the Lord's covenant, as distinct from man's. And which he keeps himself, and is ever mindful of it. This he makes known to his people at conversion; his secret is with them, and he shows them his covenant. The blessings and promises of it; their interest in them, and in himself, as their covenant God. Which they "observe", as the word here used signifies. And observing it, they lay hold upon it by faith, as belonging to them. And laying hold upon it, they "keep" it as their own, and keep it fast, and will not part with their interest in it for all the world.

"And to those that remember his commandments to do them": Some read them and hear them, but forget them, at least to do them. These are like a man that beholds his face in a glass, and forgets what manner of man he is; so James compares one that is a forgetful hearer, and not a doer of the word (James 1:23). The commandments of God are best remembered, so as to be done, when he puts his laws into the minds of men, and writes them in their hearts. And puts his Spirit within them, to cause them to walk in his statutes, and do them (Jer. 31:34).

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he [is] God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;"

This is speaking of the Abrahamic covenant. There is no end to the blessings that are received by those of all ages who make Him Savior and Lord.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The promise here, is the same as the Abrahamic covenant. We must continue to walk in the salvation that Jesus provided for each of us. To be Christ's, means that we are totally His. He is our Lord. We keep His covenant, because it is our desire to please Him. This does not just mean the ten commandments. It means that our total desire is to please Him in all that we do.

Verses 19-22: He who made all, rules all, and both by a word of power. He disposes all persons and things to his own glory. There is a world of holy angels who are ever praising him. Let all his works praise him. Such would have been our constant delight, if we had not been fallen creatures. Such it will in a measure become, if we are born of God. Such it will be forever in

heaven. Nor can we be perfectly happy till we can take unwearied pleasure in perfect obedience to the will of our God. And let the feeling of each redeemed heart be, Bless the Lord, O my soul.

**Psalm 103:19 "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all."**

“His throne in the heavens”: From everlasting to everlasting God has always ruled over all things (compare Psalms 11:4; 47:1-9; 148:8-13). This universal kingdom is to be distinguished from God’s mediatorial kingdom on earth.

The word that was translated prepared here, means to set up. Jesus even now, is seated in heavenly places at the right hand of the Father. He is at the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2 "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Acts 7:49 "Heaven [is] my throne, and earth [is] my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what [is] the place of my rest?"

We have gone into the fact over and over, that the LORD Jesus Christ was the Creator of all the heavens, as well as the earth and everything and everyone. This kingdom spoken of here, has been set up from the foundation of the earth. He is not just Lord of the earth, but the heavens as well.

Philippians 2:9-10 "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:" "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"

He is even now preparing a place for you and me in the heavenlies with Him. He has never stopped being ruler over all of His creation. He is and was, Supreme ruler of His creation. (In John chapter 1), it tells us exactly what His creation was.

John 1:3 "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Verses 20-21: “His angels ... His hosts”: Unfallen, righteous angels who serve God night and day (compare Psalm 148:2; Rev. 5:11-13).

**Psalm 103:20 "Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word."**

Which, though glorious creatures, are but his ministers and messengers, as the word signifies. And inviting the angels to bless God, he quickens men to the same duty, as having more

dependence upon God, and, obligation to him. That excel in strength; of which see evidence (2 Kings 19:35). You are freed from the unaccountable and infirmities of mankind.

"That do his commandments": That live in a universal, constant, and perfect obedience to all God's commands, which the best of men through the infirmity of the flesh do frequently violate.

"Harkening unto the voice of his word": That diligently wait for God's commands or errands, and execute them with all cheerfulness and readiness.

Angels are ministering spirits. They do not minister what they choose. They are sent on special assignments by the LORD. They serve Him day and night. Part of their job is to continually praise Him. Angels have much more strength than mankind. In the book of Revelation, the letters to the 7 churches were addressed to the angel of the church. The point I am making is the important thing to being a ministering spirit in service of the Lord is in the statement, (that do His commandments). Even the minister in a specific church cannot be effective for the Lord unless the Spirit ministers through them. The Spirit will minister through them, if they (do His commandments). In our weakness, He is strong. Allow the Spirit of God to minister through you. OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS.

**Psalm 103:21 "Bless ye the LORD, all [ye] his hosts; [ye] ministers of his, that do his pleasure."**

Which some understand of the sun, moon, and stars, sometimes called the hosts of heaven; and who in their way bless and praise the Lord (see Psalm 148:2). Others, of the angels, as before; who are sometimes styled the heavenly host (Luke 2:13), and may be so called from their numbers, there being legions of them. And for their military employment, in guarding and protecting the saints, in encamping about them, and fighting for them.

"Ye ministers": This Hebrew word is commonly used of the highest and most honorable sort of servants.

"That do his pleasure": Whose constant business and delight it is to execute the will and commands of God.

Notice the possessive word (His). The hosts are His. Even the earth and the stars staying in perfect orbit, is because He commanded them to do that. If we do not His pleasure, we are not His ministers. Especially the ministers of this world and the angels in heaven should spend their time blessing Him, for He has done great things. The more I study His Word (Bible), the more I realize how He deserves our praise.

**Psalm 103:22 "Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul."**

"All His works": Refers to God's creation, which is also to His praise (compare Psalms 148-150, also 1 Chron. 29:10-13).

It seems so shallow to say, bless the LORD. How can man of so lowly estate bless the LORD? It is a particular pleasure to bless the LORD with everything that is within us. Just the act of blessing the LORD does something very special to the condition of our own soul. Not that we can give Him anything. It is the fact that we desire to give Him everything. Even the trees in the forest lift their branches up in praise. All of God's creation glorifies Him in some way. Let everything within us bless His Holy Name.

### Psalm 103 Continued Questions

1. The mercies of God to man are so great \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. What does the author think is doubly beautiful about the comparison in verse 11?
3. He has removed our transgressions how far away?
4. How does the LORD pity those who fear Him?
5. Why does He pity us as His children?
6. What did the Lord God form man out of?
7. In the flesh man is not much, when does he become something?
8. The first Adam was a living soul, what was the last Adam?
9. What are the days of man compared to in verse 15?
10. We are like a flower that \_\_\_\_\_ in the spring, \_\_\_\_\_ in the summer, and \_\_\_\_\_ in the fall.
11. When do we begin to die?
12. What will happen to the place we live now, after we die?
13. Do you have regrets about the way you have spent your life up until now?
14. What are you going to do about it?
15. The mercy of the Lord is from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
16. His righteousness extends unto \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Who is a very good example of the Lord blessing the children of one who followed Him?
18. What is a good logical reason why the blessings of God go down from one generation to another?



19. Who is the Lord God careful to keep covenant with?
20. What covenant is He speaking of?
21. Who prepared the Lord's throne in heaven?
22. When was it prepared?
23. Heaven is His \_\_\_\_\_, and earth is His \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Who will bow to Jesus?
25. What are angels?
26. Who sends angels on special assignments?
27. Who were the letters to the seven churches addressed to in Revelation?
28. What 3 words in verse 20 determine whether you are ministering what the Lord would have you to or not?
29. What possessive word is prominent in verse 21?
30. Let everything within us \_\_\_\_\_ His Holy Name.