

Bless the LORD for All His Benefits

Psalm 103:1-18

This is the beginning of an investigation of not one, but two psalms. The previous lesson made us consider our soul and its knowledge and pursuit of the LORD (*“Lift Up Your Soul”* – Psalm 25:1-22). We are now considering how we can / how we should bless the LORD with all our soul. **Psalm 103 and Psalm 104 are united by the phrase, “Bless the LORD, O my soul.”** See Psalm 103:1-2,22; 104:1,35.

Psalm 103 gets our attention to focus on *“All His benefits.”* This psalm then starts a **crescendo** that brings our attention to focus on the universal majesty, honor, holiness, and sovereignty of the Lord. The glory of the LORD is not just seen in what He does for us. The glory of the LORD is also seen in who the LORD is – His essence, character, and being. We are not just His pets, being fed and groomed by Him. We were made in His image and for a higher purpose – “To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever” (Westminster Shorter Catechism). Man’s fall into sin has degraded us and caused us to fall short of our intended purpose (Romans 3:23). Redemption through Christ is how God restores us to our higher purpose (I Peter 3:18; II Corinthians 3:18). The fulfilment of that purpose should begin now, not sometime later in heaven (John 14:23; 17:13-23). The **crescendo** can be seen starting in Psalm 103:19 and proceeds through all of Psalm 104.

Psalm 103:1-2 – Bless the LORD for All His Benefits

“An ungrateful man is like a hog under a tree eating acorns, but never looking up to see where they come from.” (Timothy Dexter). Let us rise above the hog’s example and lift up our head to acknowledge the oak tree of God’s gracious providence. As you are lifting up your soul to the LORD (Psalm 25:1) make sure to bless Him for all of His benefits that you receive (Psalm 103:1-2 cp. Philippians 4:4-8; Colossians 3:15-17).

Why do we bless the Lord?

- He is the blessed (happy) God (I Timothy 1:11 cp. I Timothy 6:15). A joyful environment surrounds Him (Psalm 100:1-2; Zephaniah 3:17).
- He is the blessing God (Psalm 3:8; Psalm 145:9; Proverbs 10:22). He deserves our gratitude.
- We were created/designed to bless God – “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”

How do we bless the Lord?

- Think about how we bless people:
 - We help them, give things to them.
 - We seek to please them.
 - We wish them well, pray for them.
 - We speak well to them and of them. We recommend them to others.

- God doesn't need us, but He wants us. God doesn't need our help, or our prayers and good wishes, but He wants our fellowship, loyalty and service.
- God wants us to thank Him, to remember that we need him, to pray to Him.
- God wants us to show our love to Him, to please Him, to obey Him.
- God wants us to speak well of Him, to glorify & honor Him, to give Him a good reputation!
- **"Bless"** (Hebrew) means *"To kneel, to praise and thank, to salute, to greatly honor."*
- See Psalm 34:1-3 – The spirit of blessing grows and multiplies among others!

Psalm 103:3-18 – What are His benefits?

In Psalm 103:3, forgiveness of sins is mentioned first – Our relationship to Him is a priority. It will affect the way we function and prosper in this life and in the world to come. The healing of diseases not only has the implications of earthly temporal help, but also of the final state of perfection that Christ has obtained for us. See Isaiah 53:4-6; Revelation 21:1-5.

- Psalm 103:3 – Forgiveness (Note Ephesians 1:6-8; Romans 6:23 cp. Romans 8:28-32)
- Psalm 103:3 – Health and healing now – as well as a future glorified body
- Psalm 103:4 – Protection
- Psalm 103:4 – Lovingkindness & tender mercy
- Psalm 103:5 – Provision of our daily needs
- Psalm 103:6 – Deliverance from the wicked
- Psalm 103:7 – Revelation of Himself to us (Note Proverbs 2:1-9; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 7:7-8)
- Psalm 103:8-14 – Fatherly love, mercy, grace, patience, compassion
- Psalm 103:15-18 – Faithfulness to His covenant / His promise – See Psalm 145:8-21; Isaiah 40:1-11 (cp. I Peter 1:18-25); Romans 4:1-25; (cp. Hebrews 6:13-20; Titus 1:2); Ephesians 1:12-14.

As I become **aware of myself, that I have a soul / that I am a soul**, I now look to the LORD **with** my soul. God is not a mere academic subject for my mind. He is not a mere intellectual, philosophic, or scientific topic. All that is within me needs God and should include God (Psalm 103:1; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 22:36-38; Mark 12:28-34; Romans 11:33 – 12:2).

The next thing is to begin to **look at God as having a soul / as being a soul**. Acknowledging God's benefits and being thankful is essential. But we must go on to pursue that for which God saved us (Romans 8:28-29; Philippians 3:10-15; I John 3:1-3). As man can know his fellow man by the mutual spirit that they have in common, so the spiritually regenerate soul (born again) can intimately know the soul of God and be transformed (I Corinthians 2:9-16; II Corinthians 3:18; 5:14-17; II Peter 1:2-4). This pursuit of God is to be our real vocation in life (Ephesians 3:14-19; 4:1-6; 5:1-2,8-21; II Peter 3:18). Psalm 103:19 – 104:25 will help us take the next step of our vocation.