



## Today's Quick Word Psalm 102:12

*By Bruce Christian*

**PSALM 102:12** *But you, O LORD, sit enthroned for ever; your renown endures through all generations.*

This psalm, like many others, has a decisive turning point, introduced by the phrase, 'But you, O LORD, ...'. The psalmist (probably David, since Psalms 101 and 103 are attributed to him) has been pouring out his heart and soul to his God. His deep distress has even been affecting his physical well-being and he is at his wit's end. From a human perspective there is no hope.

But in the midst of all this he remembers WHO HIS GOD IS: the LORD who rules over everything he has made; the LORD who has made specific covenant promises and who has always proved himself to be faithful to them and compassionate to his

chosen people; the LORD whom he knows as his Shepherd (Psalm 23); the LORD who 'laid the foundations of the earth' and who never changes (verses 25, 27); the LORD who will still be there when everything else has worn out and disappeared (verse 26).

Does the phrase, 'But you, O LORD, ...', have a key place in your thinking? It is easy for us to be professing Christians and yet in practice to be no different from secular humanists! Psalm 102 tells us it is OK to experience spiritually dry and depressing, even despairing, times (as we often do); but it does not give us permission to stop short of crying out in the midst of our distress, "but you, O LORD ..."

## Today's Quick Word 1 Kings 17:13-14

*By Bruce Christian*

**1 KINGS 17:13-14** *Elijah said to [the widow of Zarephath], "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.'"*

The way we react to the account of the different ways God cared for Elijah in 1 Kings 17 is a good 'measure' of our 'theology'. Is the 'God' we believe in limited to only being able to operate within OUR 'laws' of physics and chemistry, or is he a divine, supernatural, sovereign Being of unlimited power and knowledge - a God who can perform miracles outside these 'laws'?

The God of the Bible, who is the Creator of the whole Universe, normally runs his Universe in a methodical, predictable way. This is very helpful for us, because it allows us, as his image-bearers, to use our God-given brains to formulate very useful scientific laws. But if the 'God' we invent is limited to what we allow him to do according to OUR 'laws', OUR understanding, then we have reversed the roles. We become his 'creator', instead of he ours! And he is no longer the One True God who has

revealed himself so clearly in Creation (cf Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:19-20), in the Bible (cf Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17), and, ultimately, in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (cf Psalm 19:12-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; etc, etc.).

When we 'create' 'God' in OUR image (as do all other religions) we are only repeating what Adam & Eve did in the Garden of Eden: deciding all the 'rules' and 'parameters' for life for ourselves, instead of listening humbly and obediently to God's Word - and we are now all living with the mess that got us into! It is much more convenient for us to be 'in charge' - we can manipulate the facts, the rules, and the definition of 'right' and 'wrong', to suit our own perceived needs and desires - and the consequences are horrendous, as we see in our own society and throughout our world today.

Letting God BE God, on the other hand, and taking him at HIS Word, 'allowing' him to keep filling a jar of flour and a jug of oil, without demanding an explanation of how he does it within the confines of OUR 'science', is not always 'convenient' (especially when his Written Word exposes our sin!), but it is the most liberating and fulfilling thing we can do! Is your 'God' too small?

## Today's Quick Word 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5, 9b

*By Bruce Christian*

**1 THESSALONIANS 1:4-5, 9B** *For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. ... for [churches in other places] report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ...*

It is good for us, today, to reflect deeply on what the Apostle Paul is writing to the believers in Thessalonica. It is easy for us to become discouraged in our present circumstances as we face the seemingly impossible task of convincing people of the truths of the Gospel and their need to respond to these truths in REPENTANCE and FAITH. The powerful militant forces at work in our educational institutions and in the media have little trouble in turning our humanistic, materialistic, pleasure-seeking, self-serving society against these eternal truths, and any attempt to 'modify' them, to make them more 'acceptable', only blunts their cutting edge and robs them of their power.

Might I suggest that the situation was not much different 2,000

years ago - because the natural sinful condition of Man's heart hasn't changed. Their 'idols' may have taken a different form from ours, but they were just as powerful and addictive.

What kept Paul faithful and optimistic in the face of all this is that the work of salvation is GOD's work, and that he was only an instrument in God's hands. God, the Father, CHOOSES those who are his, and God, the Holy Spirit, works powerfully, graciously and irresistibly to bring those whom the Father has chosen (and for whom God, the Son, has died - Ephesians 1:3-12) to repentance-and-faith. With these truths embedded in our minds we can stand against the indoctrinating efforts of the forces at work against us, and we, too, can be very optimistic and unashamed about the Gospel "because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." (Romans 1:16). Therefore, let us, like Paul, say "Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16).