

When you are the people of God such as Israel or even the church, there will be times when proud and arrogant people will verbally run you into the ground, both as an individual and as a group. They will mock God's people and make arrogant snide remarks against them and fill their soul with a great amount of grief and pain. They may appear to win, and God's people may appear to lose, but in the end those arrogant contemptible people will lose.

This kind of thing has happened to all of God's people whether O.T. or N.T. It happened to Abel who was killed by an arrogant Cain. It happened to Joseph who was sold as a slave. It happened to Moses who was opposed by the Egyptians and by the Israelites. It happened to Elijah who was so depressed that he crawled under a tree and later into a cave and wanted to die. It happened to the nation Israel, who was mocked by nations from the Egyptians to the Romans. It happened to Jesus Christ, who was arrogantly mocked in every way possible including mockery while hanging on the cross. The message was "Let us see you save yourself." Frankly, He was the only One who didn't need saving. Had He saved Himself, we are the people who would not have been saved.

When these kinds of things happen, there is nothing you can do, in and of yourself, to stop the arrogant madness. But there is something you can do. **What you can do is pray.** God stands ready to intervene and give special grace to His people, who are being mocked when they cry out to Him for help. What we learn here is this:

WHEN WE FIND THAT WE ARE HURTING AND HUMILIATED BECAUSE PROUD AND ARROGANT PEOPLE ARE MAKING LIFE DIFFICULT FOR US, THERE IS SPECIAL GRACE THAT GOD WILL GIVE IF HIS PEOPLE WILL PRAY AND ASK HIM FOR HELP.

This thesis is one that is one that will be necessary for Israel to understand during the Tribulation. This is a Psalm of Ascent. It is a Psalm that looks forward to the time when the people can ascend to the Temple to worship God. Before that happens, the Antichrist, the most arrogant person to ever come into existence, will make life miserable for Israel and she will need to "look up" and "cry out" to God.

Before we take a walk through the Psalm, we may observe that the key Hebrew word that is used in this Psalm is the word "gracious." It is used three times in four verses (v. 2, 3, 3). This is a very unique word. It is a word that means to be gracious to someone in the sense of not only having pity on their helpless and hopeless condition, but also inclining and leaning your favor and blessings toward the object of your grace (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 292-293).

When the writer asks God to "be gracious" to him and to us, he is asking God to look specifically at what the proud and arrogant people are doing and so pity His own people that He would favor them and bless them and make them the object of His grace.

When God's people discover that they are the object of proud and arrogant contempt and when they discover that they have been humiliated and ridiculed, there is a special grace blessing that awaits one who goes to God and prays. That is the emphasis of the Psalm.

There are two main stanzas that comprise this Psalm:

STANZA #1 – The humiliated believer looks to the heavenly God for His grace. **123:1-2**

We may remember that in Psalm 121:1, the writer lifted up his eyes to the mountains. In this Psalm he lifts them way above the mountains. He lifts His eyes to the God who made the heaven and earth (121:2) and sits on His throne above all.

Notice carefully how God is described in **verse 1**, He is “enthroned in the heavens.” This portrait of God is one that is designed to teach us that God is High and Holy who reigns with awesome power from the highest position possible. God is the sovereign ruler of the universe. One who appeals to God is one who appeals to the Highest court and highest judge in existence.

This is important to see how this begins because no one will ever get anywhere in their relationship with God until they realize that God is the great, high, holy, heavenly God. There is none like Him and there is none above Him and until we are willing to acknowledge this reality, we will get nowhere.

There are people who want to quibble about the sovereign greatness of God and they want to quibble about the sovereign power of God. Many think man's will can overtake God's will. People who think like this will never move God to do anything. God moves to people who recognize His greatness and His majesty.

The exciting thing to realize is that when we pray to God, we are appealing to the ultimate power. Almighty God is very interested in the affairs of His people. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without God's notice, then we may be certain that God is very concerned about His people.

When we are being threatened or we are afraid or we are intimidated or ridiculed or mocked, just remember that you have the ability to appeal to the highest court in the universe, the throne of God. If you will pray, you can expect that God will move and answer and grant you His special grace and blessing.

Now there are two metaphorical descriptions that the writer gives concerning the attitude he has while waiting for the Sovereign God of all creation to answer:

Metaphorical Attitude #1 - The writer waits on God as a servant waits on his master. **123:2a**

A servant was totally dependent on his master for just about everything. His master proved for him, protected him and promoted him. The servant depended on his master for just about everything.

The reference to “the hand of the master” refers to hand signals that a master would make to a servant for various things. So a servant would quietly stand in the shadows waiting for the master to signal that he was needed.

One writer describes this: “In the East orders are rarely given to an attendant in words, but commonly by signs. These are often so slight as to escape notice unless the eyes of the servants are kept fixed on the master or mistress. When waiting upon his master, the servant stands upon the farthest edge of the raised platform, having left his shoes at the door; his hands are folded, and rest upon the center of his girdle; and he watches closely every movement of his master, prompt to attend to all his wants, which are expressed by a nod or a sign. He fills his pipe and hands him his coffee; he sets his food before him, and it is his special duty to ‘pour water on his hands’ to wash. Should he happen to be missing when wanted, his master will summon him by clapping his hands so effectively that the sound is heard throughout the house, especially as the doors and windows generally stand open.”

The point is, as the servant of God waits for God to answer, he needs to stay focused and attentive to the will of God, which of course is revealed in the Word of God.

Metaphorical Attitude #2 - The writer waits on God as a maid waits on her mistress. **123:2b**

Just as a servant was focused on his master, so a maid was focused on her mistress. A mistress provided for her, protected her and promoted her. The maid served the mistress but the mistress sustained the maid.

Now obviously the first metaphor pertains to a man and the second pertains to a woman. What this tells us is that both men and women of God will have times when they are depressed, mocked and ridiculed. Both men and women of God have the right to cry out to the Sovereign God who is enthroned in the heaven.

As they cry out to God, they need to stay focused on obeying Him and doing His will. Both men and women are admonished to continually look to the Lord for help.

Now the end of **verse 2** is critical. Men and women of God are to stay focused on God’s praying to God “until He is gracious to us.” In other words, when we find ourselves in difficult situations and circumstances, we need to keep looking to God until He intervenes and answers that request. We need to keep praying and we need to keep focused on doing His will.

There is no situation that is too difficult for God. God teaches His men and women about prayer. He wants us approaching Him at His throne. When we are being attacked by proud and arrogant people, we need to stay focused on God and His Word and stay focused on praying.

STANZA #2 – The humiliated believer cries out to God for His grace. **123:3-4**

There is not much difficulty in ascertaining what the believer is praying about. He is praying about God's grace. This word "gracious" is the word that means he is asking God to take notice of the helpless and hurting and humiliating things that he is experiencing and inclining His power and favor toward them.

Now there are three reasons why the believer cries out for grace:

Reason #1 - Because God's people are greatly filled with contempt. **123:3b**

Carefully observe that two times we read the adverb "greatly" (**3b, 4a**). This particular word refers to something that is vast and very large (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 753). That word "contempt" is one that means to be despised and trampled (*Ibid.*, p. 107).

When the writer combines the words "greatly filled with contempt" what he means is that God's people were being trampled down and despised at a vast level.

We know during the Tribulation this will occur at a large level, the likes of which has never been seen in history.

Reason #2 - Because God's people have souls that are filled with scoffing. **123:4a**

The description here is that God's people are being mocked at a very unusual level by those who seem to have a life of ease.

If we use the metaphors in this Psalm, we could say that the majority of God's people were servants and maids and the majority of scoffers were living a life of prosperity and ease.

When God's people are surrounded by this, it does weigh and wear on the soul.

Reason #3 - Because God's people are attacked by those proud. **123:4b**

Proud and arrogant people make life miserable for God's people. They think in ways that are high and mighty. When God's people find themselves surrounded by people who mock them and mock God, what they can do is go to the Throne of God in prayer and pray.

SOME LESSONS:

- 1) Every man and woman of God will be ridiculed by someone at some time.**
- 2) Keep your focus intensely on God.**
- 3) Pray for God's grace and stay focused until God grants you His grace.**