

PSALMS 129, 130, and 131

There is no definite occasion for the setting of Psalm 129, but it fits in well with the post-exilic character of the other psalms in this sections called *Songs of Ascents*, or *Songs of Degrees*. The nation of Israel even today is harassed by enemies bent on her destruction, but Yahweh is her defender, as he has always promised to be.

Psalm 129 **A Song of Ascents**

- 1 "Many times they have persecuted me from my youth up," let Israel now say,
- 2 "Many times they have persecuted me from my youth up;
yet they have not prevailed against me.
- 3 The plowers plowed upon my back; they lengthened their furrows."
- 4 YAHWEH is righteous; He has cut in two the cords of the wicked.
- 5 May all who hate Zion be put to shame and turned backward;
- 6 let them be like grass upon the housetops, which withers before it grows up;
- 7 with which the reaper does not fill his hand, or the binder of sheaves his bosom;
- 8 nor do those who pass by say, "The blessing of YAHWEH be upon you;
we bless you in the name of YAHWEH."

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Psalm 130 must be classified as a penitential psalm. How it fits in with this section of "pilgrim songs" is not easily ascertained. Yet it may be that it was sung on pilgrimages as a preparation for the festivals to be kept in Jerusalem.

Psalm 130 **A Song of Ascents**

- 1 Out of the depths I have cried to You, O YAHWEH.
- 2 Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.
- 3 If You, YAHWEH, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
- 4 But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.
- 5 I wait for YAHWEH, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope.
- 6 My soul *waits* for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning;
indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning.
- 7 O Israel, hope in YAHWEH; for with YAHWEH there is lovingkindness,
and with Him is abundant redemption.
- 8 And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

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Here is one of the shortest psalms to read but one of the longest to learn. Lowliness and humility are here seen in connection with a sanctified heart, a will subdued to the mind of Yahweh, and a hope that looks to him alone. Although it was penned during the time of David, it may possibly have been sung after the Israelites were released from Babylon and weaned from their idols.

Psalm 131
A Song of Ascents, of David

- 1 O YAHWEH, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty;
nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me.
- 2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul;
like a weaned child rests against his mother, my soul is like a weaned child within me.
- 3 O Israel, hope in YAHWEH from this time forth and forever.

PRAYER

Almighty God, to you belongs mercy and plenteous redemption. Be not extreme, we plead, to mark our sins, for it is impossible for man to abide the severity of your anger. Pardon us for the sake of Jesus our Messiah, and enable us to walk more worthy of our Christian calling. Remove from us all pride of heart, and awaken us from the lethargy of spiritual sloth. Let us not be puffed up with false conceits nor neglectful of those great duties you have given us to perform. By zeal and humility of spirit may we show forth our faith by our works, and at the last day receive that blessing which you have promised through your only and well-beloved son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.