

SONG: "Standing on the Promises"

<https://youtu.be/hPjkmM3F1kw>

SONG: "Redeemed"

<https://youtu.be/2sM-p1bdOTg>

Song: "We'll Understand It Better By and By"

<https://youtu.be/xlvk0DBWoGg>

Psalm 130 is another of the "Songs of Degrees," or Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120—134). Traditionally, they are assumed to be pilgrim psalms, songs Israelites sang on their way "up" to Jerusalem from their cities and villages for the three required feasts of Deuteronomy 16:16 (Jerusalem is located on the high central ridge of Israel, and traveling there from anywhere meant "going up"). Other scholars suggest the fifteen Songs of Degrees correspond to the fifteen steps (the word "degrees" is translated "steps" eleven times in the Old Testament, and it has the idea of "going up") of the Temple the Levites ascended in their approach to worship.

From the Court of the Women to the Court of Israel

(<http://www.templemount.org/missler/image21.gif>). They suggest the Levites would sing/recite one psalm per step. The problem is we simply do not know whether there were indeed fifteen steps there or not. Some Jewish sources indicate there were two phases of "going up," steps 1-10 and then steps 11-15 (if you are interested in bizarre Jewish explanations, you might look at this link.

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/429856/jewish/The-Fifteen-Steps.htm).

The Songs of Ascents do not all carry the superscription "a song of Degrees of David" (Pss. 122:1; 124:1; 131:1; 133:1). They seem to be arranged in a specific pattern. I have listed them below so you can visually see the arrangement.

120, 121: Anonymous

122: David

123: Anonymous

124: David

125-126: Anonymous

127: Solomon

128-130 Anonymous

131: David

132: Anonymous

133: David

134: Anonymous

There are two sets of seven psalms centered around a central psalm, which is either *by* or *for* Solomon. Each set of seven contains two psalms specifically said to be “of David.” Some older scholars suggest the fifteen songs of degrees were compiled by Hezekiah (he himself being the author of the anonymous psalms) in thanksgiving to God for extending his life “fifteen years” (Isa. 38:5). Hezekiah supposedly wrote ten of the psalms himself (in remembrance of the sun’s going backwards ten degrees on the sundial, cf. 2 Kings 20:9-11) and added five songs from an already-existing psalmbook containing psalms by David and Solomon (Phillips, *Exploring Psalms, Volume 2*, p. 428). Three divisions have been suggested for these psalms, with *trouble, trust, and triumph* as their respective themes. (Trouble—120, 123, 126, 129, 132; Trust—121, 124, 127, 130, 133; Triumph—122, 125, 128, 131, 134.)

Psalm 130 begins with the description of the situation in which the psalmist (I believe it could have been David, despite scholarly suggestions) found himself: “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD” (vs. 1). Note the One addressed, “LORD” in all capital letters, indicating the covenant name for God, Jehovah, the Self-existing One. Eight times in the psalm David addresses the Lord, six times by this name, and two times by “Lord” (vss. 3, 6), *Adonai*, the word that means “master” or controller of one’s life. When David uses Jehovah (“LORD”) he is calling on God as

the One who made and keeps His covenant with Israel and with David (read 2 Samuel 7:1-18 to better understand the Davidic covenant). God promised, and David believed and counted on God's promise.

"Depths" (Ps. 130:1) is what we think it means—the really deep places in life in which we sometimes find ourselves. The root of the word means to sink down; it is also translated "abyss." The word was used literally and figuratively. David was at a really low point in life. What did he do? "I cried unto thee, O LORD." "Cried" was often used of a personal meeting another person, but here most likely refers to seeking God in intense prayer. It is personal: "to thee." A lot of people talk about "the Man upstairs," but this is not David's relationship to God, nor is it that of the believer in Jesus Christ. We have an intimate fellowship with the living God, the Master and Creator of the Universe, the One who spoke everything from nothing. (Think about that kind of power when you doubt the efficacy of prayer, cf. Eph. 3:20-21).

In verse 2 of Psalm 130, we have the initial petition: "Lord" (here it is *Adonai*, "master," the word of a servant) "hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications." David came in humility, asking his master to listen to his request. He knew if God only heard, his problem would be taken care of. That is implicit trust. "Attentive" indicates the activity of hearing, emphasizing paying close attention.

Next David considered possible hindrance to prayer, sin (cf. Ps. 66:18). He acknowledges his own nature and behavior as sinful, by saying if God were to "mark iniquities," no one would be able to stand. "Mark iniquities" translates two Hebrew words that signify watch over or keeping (283 times in the King James) a record (assumed) of perversities, twistedness, or depravity. David knew his own sin and sinfulness. He knew sin was and is universal: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:2-3). We need to tell people the bad news (we're all guilty before God) before they understand how good the good news is. We all avoid the

look in the mirror in which we see our own failings and inadequacies. David spoke of “perversities” or “twistednesses,” plural. David came to God openly acknowledging himself to be guilty. The answer to the question “Who shall stand” (Ps. 130:3) is No one.

Yet the fact that all are equally sinners before God does not preclude the possibility of fellowship through “forgiveness” (vs. 4). The Hebrew text does not contain the words “there is,” but simply says, “But with thee forgiveness.” “Forgiveness” is a word “used in Scripture solely of God” (Kaiser, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 626). It is “used of God’s offer of pardon and forgiveness to the sinner. Never does this word in any of its forms refer to people forgiving each other.” Kaiser further pointed out, “The experience of forgiveness in the OT was personally efficacious, although objectively the basis and ground of that forgiveness awaited the death of Christ.” Compare Romans 3:25: “Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” God showed He was righteous in forgiving sin in the Old Testament era by the death of Christ. Forgiveness was not merely declaratory; it was based on what God knew He was going to do—offer His Son as the satisfaction (“propitiation”) “for sins that are past.” God looked *forward* to the cross in forgiving sin in the Old Testament. Today He looks *backward* to the cross in forgiving sin.

“Forgiveness with thee” (Ps. 130:4)—what an amazing and astounding reality. Kaiser observed, “So exciting was the openness of this offer of forgiveness that Isaiah (55:7) featured it as the heart of his invitation to salvation.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (vss. 7-9). David knew the forgiving heart of God for he had experienced it. Gill observed forgiveness is “with God only; not with angels, nor any of the sons of men; and which flows from his

grace and mercy, through the blood of His Son.” “That thou mayest be feared” (Ps. 130:4) “may sound a strange outcome of forgiveness. In reality it confirms the true sense of the ‘fear of the Lord’ in the Old Testament, dispelling any doubt that it means reverence and implies relationship. Servile fear would have been diminished, not increased, by forgiveness” (Kidner, *Psalms 73—150*, p. 446). Gill noted, “Were it not for pardon, and the hope of it, men would be desperate; and, having no hope, would resolve upon taking their swing at sin, ... was there no forgiveness of sin, there would be no more fear of God among men than there is among devils, for whom there is no forgiveness; there might be dread and trembling, as among them, but no godly fear.”

After stating his situation and his reasons, David reported his solid foundation of faith: “I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope” (Ps. 130:5). “Wait” both times translates a word meaning to wait, look for, hope, or expect. I think of Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.” The Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, used the word *upomeno*, properly translated to remain under, or patient endurance. The Jewish translators into Greek read that meaning into “wait.” “Wait” thus has the idea of patiently enduring whatever circumstances come, knowing God will act. “In his word do I hope” (Ps. 130:5) brings in the additional idea of God’s written promises. David knew what God had promised him and he would “hope” in what God had revealed. “Hope” carries the idea of “tarrying” and “confident expectation.” The LXX (Septuagint) translates is nineteen times with *elpizo*, the same Greek word used in Hebrew 11:1, “hoped for” (Gilchrist, *TWOT*, Vol. 1, p. 375).

Consider the promises of God for a moment. Hebrews 11:1 places them in two categories, “things hoped for” and “things not seen.” Some of God’s promises involve things yet *future* (a new body, a new home, a completely transformed nature); some of God’s promises involve *present* realities that are not visible to the natural eye (forgiveness of sin, salvation in all its blessing and glory, a new standing with God). God’s promises are so vast and so numerous. David wrote in Psalm 139:17-18: “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! *If* I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.”

The idea is that David fell asleep counting God's thoughts toward him. Verse 6 says, "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*" God's Word is a warranty that will never be broken, a guarantee that will never be voided, a promise that will never be withdrawn because of unforeseen circumstances.

In verse 6, David reiterated his trust in God: "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." Note that "waiteth" is in italics, meaning it was picked up from verse 5, echoing and expanding the previous thoughts. David compared his waiting to that of a watchman who looks for his guard duty to end at dawn. Kidner helpfully pointed out, "In picturing the *watchmen* he chooses as his simile a hope that will not fail. Night may seem endless, but morning is certain and its time determined" (p. 446). Dawn is so predictable we have charts and tables that can tell us *exactly* when dawn will arrive. With the advent of the internet, countless websites we can access tell us when dawn will come at any point on the globe. Sunrise April 1 in Oklahoma City will occur at 7:15 AM and at 7:14 AM on April 2. (<https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/usa/oklahoma-city?month=4&year=2020>)

There is also an intensity David evoked by using the imagery of the watchman. The watchman stands on the wall waiting and watching. You can almost see the signs of dawn begin to peek over the desert to the east, gradually brightening the horizon. The watchman knows dawn is coming. His waiting is over.

David concludes by pointing a larger circle, in this case, God's chosen people, "Israel" (Ps. 130:7) to "hope in the LORD," again using the covenant name for the God of Israel, the name of the One who gave His promises to Israel and to David. "Hope" here is the same word used in verse 5, *yachal*, and carries once more the idea of confident expectation, as it did there. This time, however, David turned his own decision and commitment ("in his word do I hope") into a call to his nation to "hope." He grounded that call in the character of God: "with the LORD there is mercy." This in some ways echoes verse 4, "forgiveness with thee." With God. God with us. Emmanuel. That's something to think about. "Mercy" (vs. 7) is the Hebrew word for grace, goodness, lovingkindness, and faithfulness. It appears in God's own revelation of His name, His character, which He pronounced to Moses in Exodus 34:7, "keeping mercy for

thousands.” That is who God is. God is merciful. If he were not, no one could stand (vs. 3).

David continues to remind his people who God is and what He is like: “With him is plenteous redemption” (Ps. 130:7). “Plenteous redemption” is the translation we retain today from the Coverdale Bible, the first complete Modern English version of the Bible, done in 1535 by Myles Coverdale. I have included Coverdale’s translation of Psalm 130 in case you want to read it. The King James drew heavily from Coverdale.

Psalm 130

1 Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord
Lord, hear my voice.
2 O let thine ears consider well
the voice of my complaint.
3 If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss
O Lord, who may abide it?
4 For there is mercy with thee
therefore shalt thou be feared.
5 I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for him
in his word is my trust.
6 My soul fleeth unto the Lord
before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.
7 O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy
and with him is plenteous redemption.
8 And he shall redeem Israel
from all his sins.

“Plenteous” means “multiplied, increased, more numerous.” Paul echoed this in Romans 5:20: “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” “Did much more abound” is an understated rendering of the original text, which uses the word *uperperisseuo*.

Robertson noted, *perisseuo* is the superlative and adding *uper* (we get “hyper” from this same root) “goes the superlative one better.” One of my Greek professors translated it, “Over-overflowed.” “Plenteous mercy” is God’s oversupply of grace for our need.

“Redemption” carries the idea of the “transfer of ownership from one to another through payment of a price” (Coker, *TWOT*, Vol. 2, p. 716). It speaks of redemption by payment of a ransom. “The NT as well as the OT sees redemption, or salvation, in terms of the total human situation. . . . The resurrection is God’s ultimate redemption of man.”

David added a final reminder: “And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (Ps. 130:8). This is a resounding statement of faith as well as a prophecy. Romans 11:26 tells us, “So all Israel shall be saved.” They are God’s Ancient People, though temporarily laid aside and blinded in part, but one day, perhaps very soon, God will conclude His work in the life of His Chosen People.

Psalm 130:8 is a guarantee to Israel of God’s ultimate salvation. “He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

We look at the nation of Israel and think, How could they have missed Messiah, given all the promises and prophecies God gave? How could they fail to believe? Yet how often do we fail to see the hand of God in our own lives, His blessings and chastisements? Right now the world is suffering a pandemic the likes of which it has not seen in over one hundred years. I realized sometime yesterday morning that our dear church, those who have gone before us, went through the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918. The church was barely five years old when that devastating plague hit. They endured. They came through. They shared their faith and their fellowship. Can we do any less?

May God weld us together more solidly and help us to encourage each other and our friends and family in these frightful times. May we say with David, “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.... I wait for the LORD.... In his word do I hope.”

Song: “There Is a Savior”

<https://youtu.be/6MnA9rgQqW4>

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Doctors nurses healthcare providers—safety

President and leaders—coronavirus response

Connie and Gary Adams's great nephew Cody—car accident

Beverly Beardain—health

Bill Harris—continued recuperation

J.R. Hill—infection

Billye Murrell—recuperation hip replacement

Pastor and staff—wisdom

Glenda Anderson

Quinn Bradley—grandson of Larry and Lana Bradley

Friend of Larry Bradley Jerry Wright health

Delores Castleberry—health

Shirley Craig—health

Dee Buckmier—health

Lloyd and Joan Dickerson—health

Maddy Frieden friend of Claudia

Glen Girgus—leukemia

Deneice Gordon's sister—cancer

Mark Handley's son & Mark's brother Tracy & wife

J R Hill—rehab/strength

Danny Imhoff—health

Kimberlin family needs

Bill Long's nephew's son—health/more chemo

Chris McEver—well being

Sheila Noble—unspoken

Becca Rocco's sister in law Kathy Ketter—bile duct cancer

Barbara Runyan and family: needs

Shirley Smith—health

Mitzi & Clarence Warstler—health/strength

Paul Whatley's nephew (sister Michelle's son)