



OVERVIEW

About:

Psalm 130 is the 11th "song of ascents" (Psalms 120–134). Known as *De Profundis*, from the opening words of the Latin translation.

Outline:

Fear, the cross of the old man (v.1–4)
Hope, the life of the new man (v. 5–8)

St. Augustine on Psalm 130 (paraphrased):

Just as Jonah cried to God from the depths of the ocean in the whale's belly, so also we cry out to God from the depths of our sin, confident that our prayer, like Jonah's, will reach the ears of God (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VIII:613).

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Around the Word BIBLE STUDY

Lententide, 2015

The Penitential Psalms Psalm 130

PSALM 130

A Song of Ascents

¹Out | of the depths*

I cry to you, | O LORD!

²O Lord, | hear my voice!*

**Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for | mercy!**

³If you, O LORD, should mark in- | iquities,*

O Lord, | who could stand?

⁴But with you there is for- | giveness,*
that you | may be feared.

⁵I wait for the LORD, my | soul waits,*

and in his | word I hope;

⁶my soul waits for the Lord

**more than watchmen for the | morning,*
more than watchmen for the | morning.**

⁷O Israel, hope in the LORD!

For with the LORD there is | steadfast love,*

and with him is plentiful re- | demption.

⁸And he will redeem | Israel*

from all his in- | iquities.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit.**

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

v. 1: "Out of the depths I cry to you"

The Hebrew word for "depths" (מַעְמַקִּים) occurs

four other times in the Old Testament, each time in a context where there is imminent danger from water (Psalm 69:2, 14; Isaiah 51:10; Ezekiel 27:34).

What danger threatens to destroy the psalmist here in this psalm? Consider especially verse 3.

Compare also 1 Corinthians 10:1–14. What example has Israel set for us in the Old Testament?

All suffer from the burdensome effects of sin, but it is possible remain ignorant of the source of our suffering and even become numb to it. What is the danger of willfully and deliberately persisting in sin and refusing to repent? See Romans 1:24, 28; compare also Matthew 13:10–17.

What was responsible for the people's spiritual blindness in Matthew 13:15 (i.e., who closed their

eyes)? How does God respond to such blindness and hardness of heart? See Isaiah 6:10. With what does Mark 16:14 associate hardness of heart?

How does an awareness of one's sin affect the righteous? Consider the psalmist's disposition in verse 3. Compare also the following passages in the other six penitential psalms: 6:3; 32:3–4; 38:3–8; 51:8; 102:4; 143:4.

See Psalm 69:20, and then compare this passage to what Jesus says about those who mourn in Matthew 5:4. Does God leave those who mourn comfortless? What does this tell you about the state of the psalmist's faith in Psalm 69:20?

See also Matthew 11:28. There is a difference between godly contrition (sorrow over sin) and despair (unbelief; cf. Matthew 27:5). Which of these do we find in Psalm 69:20? What about Judas? Did Jesus die for his sins? See John 1:29. Would God have forgiven Judas has he repented? See 1 John 1:9.

What does Psalm 19:12 teach about our ability to grasp the full extent of our iniquity? Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

That God does not reveal to us the full extent of our sin is evidence of His mercy. "This hereditary sin is so deep [and horrible] a corruption of nature that no reason can understand it, but it must be [learned and] believed from the revelation of the Scriptures, Ps. 51:5; Rom. 6:12ff.; Ex. 33:3; Gen 3:7ff.," (*Smalcald Articles* III:I, 3).

Why does God want you to grow in an awareness of your sin? See Romans 5:20. Can your sin ever exceed the righteousness of Christ? See 1 John 3:20.

v. 3: "If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities"
What is the problem with attempting to cover up our iniquity so as to give us the appearance of righteousness? See Psalm 14:1–3. Should we be concerned with how we appear in the eyes of

others? How should we regard ourselves? See Psalm 51:3–5. Whose evaluation of us is the only one that matters? See Psalm 6:1.

v. 4: “But with You there is forgiveness”

What false statement about God is presented in verse 3, and if this were true, what would the consequence be? What true statement about God is presented in verse 4, and what is the result of this? Why would it be problematic if God entered into judgment with us, according to Psalm 143:2? What does Exodus 33:19 teach us about God and how we stand in relation to Him?

v 5: “I wait for the Lord”

See God’s promises to Abram in Genesis 12:1–3, and note how emphatically God reaffirms His promise in Genesis 15:1–5. Notice that God does not fulfill His promise immediately. When Abram and Sarai continue childless, how do they take matters into their own hands? See Genesis 16:1–4. How is the sin of Abram and Adam similar? Compare

especially Genesis 16:2 and 3:17. How did the sin of Adam and Abram affect their marriages? See Genesis 3:16; 16:5 (and also 21:8–14). What is God’s will for marriage? See Genesis 2:24, noting especially the number of people involved, and also 1 Corinthians 7:10–11.



Luther: “Now there are some who want to set the goal, appoint the hour and measure, and prescribe to God how they are to be helped. And if they do not experience this, they despair; or, if possible, they seek help elsewhere. These do not tarry and wait for the Lord. God is supposed to wait for them, be ready at once, and help exactly as they themselves have designed. Those who wait for the Lord, however, ask for mercy, but they leave it to God’s gracious will when, how, where, and by what means He helps them. They have no doubt about His aid, but they do not give it a name. They let God christen and name it, even if it is delayed immeasurably long,” (AE 14:192).

Compare Luther’s comments with Matthew 6:10. How does our Lord embody this? See Matthew 26:42.

See Romans 2:7–8. What reward is promised to the patient in verse 7? See Romans 2:7. What fate will the self-seeking meet, according to verse 8?

What promise is given to the crushed and brokenhearted in Psalm 34:18?

Luther: “For God deals strangely with His children. He blesses them with contradictory and disharmonious things, for hope and despair are opposites. Yet His children must hope in despair; for fear is nothing else than the beginning of despair, and hope is the beginning of recovery. And these two things, direct opposites by nature, must be in us, because in us two natures are opposed to

each other, the old man and the new man. The old man must fear, despair, and perish; the new man must hope, be raised up and stand. Both of these are in one person and even in one handiwork at the same time,” (LW 14:191).

See Romans 7:7–23. What brings fear and death to the old man? If the law of God is good (Romans 7:12), why does it bring death (Romans 7:10)? See Romans 7:11.

v. 6: “more than watchmen for the morning”

The word “watchman” here in verse 6 is comes from the same verb in verse 3, where we learn that the Lord does not “watch for” (שמר) (ESV: “mark”) iniquities. If the Lord does not look upon our iniquities, how does He look upon us? See Psalm 17:8; Numbers 6:24–26. How is the possible, according to 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 5:25–27. Our gaze is therefore fixed upon what, according to Hebrews 12:1–2 and Psalm 121:1–2?

In what sense is the Christian a “watchman”, according to Matthew 24:42?

v. 7: “O Israel, hope in the Lord!”

Who is Israel? See Genesis 32:28. Why is the mention of “Israel” significant, especially in a psalm which emphasizes the importance of waiting for the Lord/persevering in faith? See Genesis 32:24–28. How does the Canaanite woman from Matthew 15:21–28 also serve as an example in this regard?

v. 7: “And with Him is plenteous redemption”

There is an important difference between “knowing” and “feeling”. How does Scripture describe the feelings of the righteous in the following texts? Psalm 22:1; 38:1–3, 7; Luke 23:39–41.

How do we know that God will keep His promises, especially when we consider our unworthiness and those times when we feel forsaken by God? See 2 Corinthians 1:18–20.

How does Hebrews 11:1 define faith? How is this definition of faith particularly helpful during times of suffering? What potential danger can abundance and prosperity pose to faith? See Deuteronomy 8:1–20?

Is the Lord’s redemption limited to the forgiveness of sins, or does redemption involve more than just forgiveness? See Psalm 25:22; Romans 8:18–23. Is salvation only about “going to heaven”, or is there more to it than just that? See Philippians 2:12–16.

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