

The God Who Is There

¹I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven.
²As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of the maid look to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us mercy. – Psalm 123:1, 2

The circumstance of this psalm is unclear. The only real clue comes from the psalmist himself. Some arrogant enemy is not only threatening the people of God, but is doing so with a contemptuous scorn.

⁴We have endured much ridicule from the proud,
much contempt from the arrogant. – verse 4

The threat was bad enough, but the accompanying scorn was galling. When the psalmist hungered for answers and relief from the imminent threat, he knew that he must lift up his eyes and pursue the God enthroned in heaven. How contrary this is to the counsel of this age that tells us to look deeply inside of ourselves for answers and remedies. There's no truth inside of you to be found. One Old Testament prophet observed: "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). If you look inside yourself, you'll only affirm your own flawed instincts, nothing more. Likewise, this call to look to God is quite different from other modern advice to turn to god "whatever you perceive him or her to be." The God the psalmist addressed is a Person. He is looking to Someone Who objectively exists in that He has made Himself known.

The psalmist sings, "our eyes look to the LORD our God." Whenever the word "LORD" appears this way (in all upper case letters), what is represented is God's covenant name, *YAHWEH*. This is not the God who is in the sea, wind, trees or skies. That's the New Age god, which is nothing more than the pantheism of eastern cultures – the idea that god is in everything, which reduces him to nothing in particular and strips him of the uniqueness of his holy Personhood. Spurgeon deftly called pantheism "atheism with a fig leaf." Nature does reveal God in that its order testifies to a Creator, but nature is not God. The God Who reveals Himself in creation is high above creation. That is a distinction that desperately needs to be communicated as moderns look anywhere and everywhere for truth.

To look to *YAHWEH* is to look to the God Who not only revealed Himself in His Creation, but Who also made Himself known by revelation - in the Law of Moses, by the utterances of the prophets, and most completely, in Jesus Christ. Revelation is not the subjective feelings inside of us, but the Word of God made known to us. Truth is discovered when the Holy Spirit convicts a man in harmony with God's revealed Word. When a man is seeking truth, he must look to the God Who has made truth known, not to the belly gods of his own senses. The psalmist sets his eyes on *YAHWEH*, the Creator, Who has made Himself known and has decreed absolute right and wrong.

The psalmist likens us to servants who look to the hand of our master or mistress. In ancient eastern cultures, a servant was summoned, not by calling, but by clapping. To make his wishes known, the master gestured without speaking a word. Whether out of the fear of a servant for a cruel master or out of his attentive love and devotion for a kind master, the servant would wait in the corner, arms folded across his chest, eyes riveted to the master, waiting for his next cue. In this particular instance, the psalmist is in distress. Even so, he patiently waits and watches, for whatever relief is to come must come from his master's hand and in his master's time.

This is a lovely picture of the relationship that ought to exist between God and His servants. We recoil by nature at every notion of servitude, but God is a perfect Master. We know His heart. We know His mind. We know His will. There is nothing for an attentive servant to fear except to miss His cues by not immersing himself in prayer and in obedience to His Word. This passage teaches us the reason why we often feel that God is not making His wishes known to us clearly. We do not see ourselves as slaves. A servant lives humbly and dependently in the intimate presence of a personal God, waiting on Him for answers and for relief.

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