

**Psalms of the Degrees (Psalms 120-134)
Celebrating Triumph Over Trouble Through Trust in God**

**Psalm 123
Looking Up to the Lord
When You've Had More Than Enough Trouble Down Here**

*To You I lift up my eyes,
O You who are enthroned in the heavens!*

*2 Behold, as the eyes of servants
look to the hand of their master,
As the eyes of a maidservant
to the hand of her mistress,
So our eyes look to the Lord our God,
till He has mercy upon us.*

*3 Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
for we have had more than enough of contempt.*

*4 Our soul has had more than enough
of the scorn of those who are at ease,
of the contempt of the proud.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The fifteen “Psalms of the Degrees” are arranged in five groups of three psalms with the first psalm in each trio speaking of trouble, the second trust in God, the third triumph. Psalm 123 is the first psalm in the second trio, and is a prayer for God’s mercy, prayed by God’s child who is suffering constant scorn and contempt from unbelievers. Scorn carries the meaning of scoffing, mocking, deriding, laughing at. Contempt is an arrogant, condescending attitude that considers something worthless and manifest itself in verbal ridicule, persecution, or mistreatment. In the historical setting it is referring to the unrelenting scorn and contempt spewed out by the arrogant Assyrian King against King Hezekiah’s faith in God. The goal of the scorn and contempt was to cause King Hezekiah to lose confidence in God to the point of giving up hope in God’s deliverance and surrendering to the Assyrians.

Thus says the king (of Assyria): “Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of my hand. Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord by saying, ‘The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’” 2 Kings 18: 29-30

So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered?’” 2 Kings 19: 9-11

When we find ourselves overwhelmed by the attacks of the world or the burdens of life's trials; when we've had enough and do not believe we can take it anymore, where do we turn for help? Psalm 123 gives three answers to that question.

1. WE LOOK BY FAITH TO GOD'S THRONE

To you I lift up my eyes, O You who are enthroned in the heavens! Psalm 123: 1

And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, O Lord, the God of Israel, who art enthroned above all the cherubim, Thou art the God, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth. 2 Kings 19: 15

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Hebrews 12: 1

...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12: 2

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. Hebrews 12: 3-4

- “While God is not the author of evil and He never prompts or condones sin, nothing occurs without His sovereign oversight. Others may choose to do evil deeds and God's people may suffer in the short term, but He will transform the evil intentions of evil people into opportunities for the enrichment of those in His care.” Chuck Swindoll
- Faith does not look to Jesus to make the race easy, but to give ENDURANCE TO FINISH THE RACE when you feel like giving up. Endurance is continuing to run despite personal handicaps, condition of the track, or storms of life.

2. WE LOOK BY FAITH TO GOD'S HAND

Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till He has mercy upon us. Psalm 123: 2

- Look to God's hand for DIRECTION (Psalm 139: 10)
- Look to God's hand for PROVISION (Psalm 145: 14-16)
- Look to God's hand for PROTECTION (Psalm 138: 7-8)

3. WE LOOK BY FAITH TO GOD'S MERCY

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud. Psalm 123: 3-4

- Lift your eyes above the world's contempt to look to the one who RULES the world and you will find the grace to OVERCOME the world.