

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith CXIII: Praising God For His Condescending Goodness To His Servants (Psalm 113:1-9)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. Pagan man saw himself as a slave to the gods who struggled against one another for supremacy, the order of the universe itself at stake, an insecure, troubling life, B. K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 1974, p. 57-65).
- B. Psalm 113:1-9 in great contrast presents Israel's sole, sovereign God as condescending in gracious goodness to the lowliest of His servants, a refreshing contrast to pagan theology, so we view the psalm for our edification:

#### **II. Praising God For His Condescending Goodness To His Servants, Psalm 113:1-9.**

- A. The verse numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1076), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system for this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 113:1-9 (as follows):
  - 1. "Praise Jahweh. Praise, O servants of Jahweh, praise the name of Jahweh," Psalm 113:1.
  - 2. "Let the name of Jahweh be praised, both now and evermore," Psalm 113:2.
  - 3. "From the rising of the sun unto the place where it sets, the name of Jahweh is to be praised," Psalm 113:3.
  - 4. "Jahweh is exalted over all the nations, His glory above the heavens," Psalm 113:4.
  - 5. "Who is like Jahweh, our Elohim, the One Who sits enthroned on high," Psalm 113:5.
  - 6. "Who stoops down, makes Himself low [condescends] (*shapel*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 1050) to look on the heavens and on the earth?" (Psalm 113:6)
  - 7. "He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;" (Psalm 113:7)
  - 8. "He seats them with princes, with the princes of their people," Psalm 113:8.
  - 9. "He causes the barren [woman] to settle [get married and settle down; *yashab*, Ibid., p. 442-443; Hiphil = causative] in a house [as a married woman] as the joyful mother of sons. Praise Jahweh," Psalm 113:9.
- C. We consider significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
  - 1. The psalmist calls his listeners to praise Jahweh and His **name**, what reflects God's "character, qualities, attributes and essence," Zon. Pict. Ency. Bible, v. Four, p. 364. The central element of God's character, qualities, attributes or essence presented in this psalm is His **condescending grace**: though God is exalted over the nations, His glory above the heavens as He sits enthroned above them (v. 4-5), He stoops down not only to look on the heavens and the earth beneath Him, but to elevate the poor and to lift the needy up from the ash heap that they might sit with the princes of their people, v. 6-8. The words in verses 6-8 recall Hannah's psalm in 1 Samuel 2:8, a psalm of praise upon becoming the mother of Samuel to end her barrenness when God graciously condescended to hear her prayer for a son, 1 Samuel 1:1-2:10.
  - 2. This observation also leads us to the psalm's climax in verse 9: in view of Ancient Near Eastern culture, verse 9 illustrates God's condescending grace in its loftiest form: (a) a woman without sons was much less respected than one who bore a son to contribute toward extending the lineage of the head of the household. (b) However, God causes the (i) barren (ii) woman (iii) to be settled in a home as a married woman (cf. the Hebrew wording in Nehemiah 13:23 et al. where "settles in a home" is an expression meaning to marry a woman, Ibid., p. 443) and then (iv) causes her to bear children, (v) sons in particular who can carry on the lineage of the head of household, (vi) what produces great joy in this woman. The Sole, Almighty, Sovereign God's condescension from His lofty position far above the heavens and the earth even to observe and consider so as to minister effectively to the weakest and lowliest of people down where man lives on earth, people like the barren woman, testifies to His great **grace!**

***Lesson:*** *Though God as Sole, Sovereign Creator of the vast universe must condescend even to look at the heavens and the earth, nevertheless graciously stoops far down to notice the plight of the weakest and least significant parties in human cultures on the earth to lift them up to positions of great joy and honor to the glory of His grace. Accordingly, we owe praise to this infinitely Benevolent God as a witness to the lost world that does not know Him.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we praise God for His condescending grace to us and to all of God's servants. (2) If we find ourselves in a situation where we experience affliction due to lowliness in comparison to others around us, may we like Hannah of old pray to the Lord, asking for His help, expecting Him to treat us graciously as we serve Him as did Hannah. (3) May we in turn follow God's example to be gracious to very needy, lowly people around us!*