

Thought for Today: April 7, 2008

Psalm 113 (NASB)

**Praise the LORD!
Praise, O servants of the LORD,
Praise the name of the LORD.
Blessed be the name of the LORD
From this time forth and forever.
From the rising of the sun to its setting
The name of the LORD is to be praised.
The LORD is high above all nations;
His glory is above the heavens.**

**Who is like the LORD our God,
Who is enthroned on high,
Who humbles Himself to behold
The things that are in heaven and in the earth?
He raises the poor from the dust
And lifts the needy from the ash heap,
To make them sit with princes,
With the princes of His people.
He makes the barren woman abide in the house
As a joyful mother of children.
Praise the LORD!**

Who in their right mind would do these kinds of things? If you had a place amongst the elite, why would you bother with the common? The mythological gods of the ancient Near East—those worshipped by Israel's neighbors—were touted as being wholly above the world and its inhabitants. They were gods, and humans were inferior beings whose only value was in what they could offer the gods in terms of sacrifice and praise. The gods did not pursue relationships with peons for the peons' sake. The God of Israel, however, humbled Himself to take part in the affairs of humanity in all its frailties and unworthiness. That's worthy of praise!

Now, consider the things that God chooses to do once He gets involved in the lives of people. This magnificent, glorious, eternal God turns things inside out and upside down. We wouldn't expect the elite to raise up the poor, the needy, and the barren, would we? That seems to go against our nature, some would say. But what Christians need to notice is that it is God's nature to humble Himself while lifting up the humble. It is God's nature to change lives for the better. It's God's nature to do more than is expected in order to assist those people who are forgotten and unable to overcome on their own. Why would a God who is so high and lifted up choose to come down so low and lift up others? The fact is that He does. That's worthy of praise!

We all are blessed to be served by a Lord who is worthy of eternal praise. But let's not make the mistake of being simple, selfish consumers. Let's praise God with our lips and also with our hands. If He can stoop down to the dust and the ash heap, then let's join Him. Let's go get our hands dirty, too.

Praise the LORD!
Patrick Barber