

Psalms 123:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

Analysis

The source of contempt is identified: 'Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.' The word 'soul' (nephesh) represents the whole person - the mockery has penetrated deeply, affecting emotions, thoughts, and will. Two groups oppress: 'those that are at ease' (comfortable, prosperous, secure in their position) and 'the proud' (arrogant, self-exalting). The 'at ease' represent those who mock from positions of comfort, undisturbed by the suffering they observe or cause. The 'proud' actively exalt themselves while despising others. Both groups share self-sufficiency - they need neither God nor others. Their contempt flows from supposing themselves superior. The doubled description ('scorning' and 'contempt') emphasizes the relentlessness of mockery. The psalm ends without resolution, mirroring the incomplete nature of vindication in this age. The abrupt ending drives the worshiper upward toward God, the only source of relief.

Historical Context

Israel's history included periods of oppression by proud, comfortable enemies - Assyria, Babylon, Edom, and other nations that mocked God's people and God Himself. The prophets repeatedly addressed this contempt (Zephaniah 2:8-10). The pattern continues in Christian experience - believers face mockery from those comfortable in sin and proud in self-sufficiency.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Why are 'those at ease' and 'the proud' particularly contemptuous toward God's people?
2. How does contempt from comfortable, proud people affect believers differently than other forms of opposition?
3. What does this psalm teach about how to handle mockery and scorn?
4. How did Jesus face contempt from both comfortable religious leaders and proud Roman authorities?
5. In what ways might believers inadvertently become 'at ease' and 'proud,' showing contempt toward others?

Interlinear Text

רַבָּת	שָׂבָעָה	לָהּ	נַפְשֵׁנוּ	הַלְעַג
is exceedingly	filled	H0	Our soul	with the scorning
H7227	H7646		H5315	H3933
הַשְׂאֵנָה יִם	וְעִם	בְּזֵד	לְגֵי יוֹנִים:	
of those that are at ease	and with the contempt		H1349	
H7600	H937			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:51 (Parallel theme): The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.

Job 12:5 (Parallel theme): He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.

Isaiah 32:9 (Parallel theme): Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.

Isaiah 32:11 (Parallel theme): Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.

Acts 17:32 (Parallel theme): And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

Acts 26:24 (Parallel theme): And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

Job 16:4 (Parallel theme): I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

Jeremiah 48:11 (Parallel theme): Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.

Jeremiah 48:29 (Parallel theme): We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart.

1 Corinthians 4:13 (Parallel theme): Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.