

Psalms 147:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Analysis

The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

This verse presents a fundamental reversal principle central to biblical theology. The Hebrew *me'odeid anavim* (מְעוֹדֵד עֲנָוִים) uses *anavim*—the humble, afflicted, oppressed—those who have learned dependence on God through suffering and who submit to His authority. God actively "lifts up" (*me'odeid*) the lowly, elevating them to honor and security.

The contrast is stark: while lifting the meek, Yahweh simultaneously "**casteth the wicked down to the ground**" (*mashpil resha'im adei-aretz*, מַשְׁפִּיל רָשָׁעִים עַד־אֶרֶץ). The verb *shaphal* means to humble, abase, or bring low—the opposite of exaltation. The wicked, who exalt themselves through pride and oppression, are brought down to the dust from which humanity came (Genesis 3:19).

This principle echoes throughout Scripture: Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2:7-8), Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:52-53), and Jesus's teaching that "whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). The ultimate demonstration is Christ Himself, who humbled Himself to death on a cross and therefore was exalted to the highest place (Philippians 2:5-11).

Historical Context

Post-exilic Israel consisted largely of the 'meek'—a remnant returned from exile, economically weak, politically powerless, surrounded by hostile neighbors. This psalm assured them that their God champions the lowly against the proud. Throughout Israel's history, God repeatedly demonstrated this pattern: choosing the younger over the elder (Jacob, Joseph, David), using the weak to shame the strong (Gideon, David versus Goliath), and preserving a faithful remnant when the powerful apostatized.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. In what areas of your life do you need God's lifting up, and what prevents you from embracing the meekness this requires?
2. How does our culture's emphasis on self-promotion and strength conflict with God's pattern of exalting the humble?
3. What does it mean to be 'meek' without being weak or passive in the face of injustice?

Interlinear Text

מְעוֹדֵד	עֲבֹלִים	יְהוָה	מִשְׁפָּל	רָשָׁעִים	עַדִּי	אֶרֶץ:
lifteth up	the meek	The LORD	down	the wicked	H5704	to the ground
H5749	H6035	H3068	H8213	H7563		H776

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 25:9 (Parallel theme): The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

James 4:10 (References Lord): Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

1 Peter 5:6 (Parallel theme): Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

1 Samuel 2:8 (References Lord): He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

Zephaniah 2:3 (References Lord): Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

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