

## Psalm 131

### Who Do I see in the Mirror?

This psalm is about having the accurate perspective on who I am and what my role is before the LORD. That does not seem that important at first glance. It is actually an enormous issue to my quality of life and contentment. Having the wrong perspective can lead to all kinds of problems. Knowing my place as a *servant of God* removes any envy, competitiveness, pettiness and disillusion. I was made to serve.

**Read Psalm 131:1** The Christian world view is different than the natural man's view of self. You may have seen the *You Tube* video series called *I Am Second*. It is an interesting series of short clips from different believers. I recommend that you watch them. Many of them are public figures who we may have heard of. They are usually about dramatic events leading them to major life changes.

These life-changing dramatic stories are about people who may or may not have already been Christians. God had to take them on a *life detour* to open their eyes to reality. We talk about Jesus being our *Lord and savior*. It's usually the other way around. He is our *savior* long before he is our *Lord*. In other words, we take a lot of *artistic license* to do things *our own way*, convinced that God is OK with it.

We all worship *the god of our self-will* before we make Jesus our Lord. We might try to convince ourselves that our desires and hopes are in line with God's will. It is better to see and own life according to God's reality. It is a lifelong process of small degrees to change all of that. We are positionally sanctified when we are saved. We are practically sanctified little by little.

King Saul and many other biblical figures went through *all of the outward motions* of being God's servant, but they never gave up the *steering wheel*. God does not want to be our co-pilot.

This verse describes how the psalmist does not have a *haughty* heart. The Hebrew word used here for *haughty* is H 1361. It means to soar above others or to exalt yourself. It is to see myself belonging in a place above the masses.

The word used here for *lofty eyes* is H 7311. It is to presume to be entitled to promote myself. How does all of this view of self square with what the bible says? It is actually the opposite.

*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a*

*price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*

### **The Natural Mind**

Here are a couple basic concepts that relate to our self-image. The way that we see ourselves and others is based on *how we want to see ourselves*. There are discrepancies between how we see ourselves and how others see us. We call those '*blind spots*'. It is natural to search for things that confirm our perceptions. We are all guilty, to some degree of *psychological projection*. That means that our undesirable attitudes and feelings are often assigned to others.... for making us unhappy. Well-adjusted people do not carry grudges forever. When you see road rage; it's not entirely about the offending driver.

People often refer to their *childhood*, upbringing, experiences or family clan as being character-defining. When we become *born-again* that all takes a back seat to our *new person in Christ*. My old life is only *a platform for the gospel* at best.

*For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:19-21)*

Being born again means that I no longer get to be *the hero of the story*; and that is ok. Personal offenses become somewhat irrelevant. Can I be happy with spiritual victories if I look like the loser? Can I be happy enough for the team? Retracing our steps to past failures can reveal God's invisible priceless work in myself and others.

I had a cattle feed business partnership that had many aggravating and irritating aspects associated with it. I can look back on that nine-year chapter of my life two different ways. I can look at it as frustrating. I can also look back and see God's fruit. My partner got saved, as did his wife, and his parents, and some of his in laws as well. We also got very involved in the LA food ministry and an Imperial Valley Christ-based drug rehab. We did weekly outreaches with former gang members who needed a platform to share their testimony. We intended on changing them; but we were changed even more. When that business was all done and closed down; the effects continued. It forced me to come back home; where I did a little home-schooling for our three kids and ministered to them as well. I began that business venture as *a businessman who happened to be a Christian*. I

ended up as *a Christian who happened to be a businessman*. At first, the ministry stuff was just *a little something extra*. In the end it was the highlight of each week. There is a big difference. In other words, the daily aggravations were not the main story. We have to be tuned into what God is doing. I need to facilitate that as *a number two*; and assume that all things are good for those who are called according to his purposes.

### Christian Maturity and Development

**Read Psalm 131:2** Our family relationships teach us spiritual things. It is difficult to teach spiritual things to carnal minds.

*the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14)*

*the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. (1 Corinthians 15:46)*

God is our heavenly father. Jesus is the only and precious son. Our family cares for us no matter what. The psalmist compares his faith to a weaned child around his mother.

In other words, the whining and complaining has stopped. He is taking responsibility for himself. To lose our composure before the LORD is an indication of a lack of trust in this situation.... or to misunderstand my role.

Christian maturity involves a number of things. First, we have to understand who God really is. To say that *we have to trust him* is an understatement. He is holding our atoms together. He keeps the universe in perfect orbit. How much more my world?

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:15-17)*

*in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged <sup>le</sup>our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Hebrews 1:2-3)*

Worrying about the future is almost ridiculous when you realize how much God controls everything. He even keeps Satan and his demons on a short leash.

Secondly, we have to see who we are. God considers us to be precious. He is committed to our well-being.

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:11-13)*

Once I know my place in this world, and who controls all of it, I can be at peace. I learn that *I am not driving*. I am on a guided tour of personal development.

### **Am I fighting my Neighbor and Circumstances...or Am I Resisting God?**

**Read Psalm 131: 3** This verse tells Israel to hope in God. Some things in the bible are specifically for Israel and the Jews. Others have universal application to all of God's people. The definition of the name *Israel* is a much deeper question if you go to the language that it comes from. It was first used when Jacob wrestled with God. Jacob represents natural man who is being transformed into a spiritual man. Jacob is wrestling with God, though he thinks that he is wrestling with Laban. The wrestler is being transformed into a prince. Isra-El is a two part word. El is an abbreviation for Elohim (God). Isra is a word play between wrestling or stubborn and to become recharged to a level of oversight.

#### **Etymology of the name Israel**

Judging from Genesis 32:28, the form ישראל (Israel) appears to be a **compilation of two elements**. The final one is the noun אל (**El**), the common abbreviation of **Elohim, meaning God:**

אל אלה

The second part of our name appears to be related to the verb שרה I (*sara*):

שרר

Root שרר (*sharar*) has to do with **rigidity resulting from the absorption and retention of liquids** (called turgor in plants), — and the ultimate effects thereof. The promise of **Jesus'**, that streams of living water would emerge from within (John 7:38), tells of a curing of social lymphedema, when

pools of stagnant wealth (whether fat, cash or data) are re-released into society to benefit all (for more on this, see our article on the noun δούλος, [doulos](#)).

Noun שר (*sar*) means **chief or ruler** (someone in whom a society's wealth is concentrated).

Noun שרירות (*sherirut*) describes firmness in a negative sense: stubbornness. Noun שר (*shor*) refers to the umbilical cord and noun שרה (*shera*) to a bracelet of some sort. Noun שריר (*sharir*) apparently denotes a sinew or muscle.

Mystery verb שרה (*sara*) is used only to describe what [Jacob](#) did with the Angel (Genesis 32:29 and Hosea 12:4). It's traditionally been translated as "**to wrestle**," but it obviously metaphorizes Israel's formation into a political unity based on the retention of knowledge and skills. Derived noun משרה (*misra*) literally means "**place or agent of שרה (*sara*)**." It occurs only in the famous prediction that "the *misra* will be **upon his shoulders**" (Isaiah 9:6).

Verb שרה (*shara*) means **to fill and release**. Noun משרה (*mishra*) denotes the juice of grapes. Noun שריה (*shirya*) denotes a kind of weapon and noun שריון (*shiryon*) or שרין (*shiryan*) describes body armor — the link between physical, political and intellectual rigidity is obvious (see Ephesians 6:14).

## ישר אשר

Verb ישר (*yashar*) means to be straight or level. Adjective ישר (*yashar*) means right or **upright**. Nouns ישר (*yosher*), ישרה (*yeshara*) and מישר (*meshar*) mean uprightness or straightness. Noun מישור (*mishor*) describes a level place or plain.

Verb אשר (*'ashar*) covers **a decisive progression or a setting right**, and is **often applied to describe happiness and prosperity** (*right on!*). This is not due to a curious coincidence but to the obvious correlation of righteousness and efficiency.

Nouns אשר (*'esher*), אשר (*'ashar*) and אשר (*'osher*) mean **happiness or blessedness**. Nouns אשור (*ashur*) and אשר (*ashur*) mean a step, a walk or a going. The noun תאשור (*te'ashur*) refers to a kind of tree (a happy tree? a progressing tree?).

### Israel meaning

Alfred Jones figures that the mysterious verb שרה might very well mean "**to be princely**," and assumes that the name Israel consists of a future form of this verb, which hence would mean to become princely. And so Jones interprets the name Israel with **He Will Be Prince With God**.

Our guess: Israel means **He Retains God**, or slightly more elaborate: **He Has Become A Receptacle In Which God Can Be Received And Retained**. This most primary Biblical concept was obviously revisited in the story of the manger in which the Word was received.

Pretty awesome name.

In summary, the name Israel can relate to a wilting plant in the heat of the day. God's influence is like life-giving water that the plant transpires. It loses its form and rigidity to stand upright. As the plant drinks in more than it loses, it becomes fuller and crisper and stronger. It has to do with drinking in more of God than we are losing. It also speaks of the strength that comes from engaging God in earnest continuously. In other words, *God's agents* (governors) on earth have to be full of the things of God to have the strength to rule over things that are contrary.