

MB - 5/15/66 am.

God Our Helper and Our Keeper  
Psalm 121

Intro: This Psalm is in the fifth and last book (107-150) into which the Psalms are divided. It is one of 15 Psalms of Degrees (120-134).

No one knows why these Psalms are so named, but certain observations are suggestive of possible answers:

(1) These Psalms deal with Jerusalem, the sanctuary, and the presence of God.

(2) There are Degrees, or Steps (as it can also be translated) or progress to be noted: In Psa. 120, the Psalmist is among his enemies; in Psa 121 his mind goes to the hills of Israel, or possibly of Jerusalem; in Psa. 122 he is in the gates, going toward "the house of the Lord", et. al.

It is interesting to read <sup>all</sup> of the 15 with this in mind.

This gives special significance to Psalm 121. Do we have the exile in Babylon contemplating the possibility of the journey home, back to God, and to the land?

Why were the people of God in exile?  
Because of disobedience and sin.

Is there hope for return, for restoration to divine favor?

Every phrase of this Psalm is worth noting in order to get our answer to these questions.

Note in the Psalm that vv. 1, 2 are in the first person: "I..." Vv. 3-8 are in the third person. In vv. 3-8 he speaks poetically to himself!

## I. A threefold look, and a prayer (vv. 1-3).

### A. The threefold look (vv. 1, 2).

1. At the goal he desires: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (v. 1a).

It is not that he could see the hills, but they were visible to his mind's eye. They were in his thoughts.

Like the prodigal son who feeding swine, nevertheless saw home and saw his father (Luke 15).

Cf. the significance of the hills (Psl. 125:2). He wanted to go back to the hills of Jerusalem - and to God!

2. The resources he possesses: a question - "From whence cometh my help?" (v. 1b)

A most needed lesson

all self-sufficiency is gone.

The Psalmist's experiences had made him see his own helplessness. Though he wanted to return, the obstacles were too great.

3. The hope he expresses (v. 2).

How good when we see the invisible God! The most hopeless situation is flooded with light when He is brought into the picture.

Jehovah, the unchanging  
Covenant-keeping God — the  
Creator.

B. The prayer (v.3). It is though the Psalmist prays for himself. It can read:

"May he not suffer thy foot to be moved; may he that keepeth thee not slumber" — all the while speaking of himself in prayer.

He is concerned about two things:

- (1) His own walk.
- (2) The Lord's ability to stay awake.

What if he slipped and fell? (note the spiritual significance to this!) It was his walk that had been the problem. And it is important to see that his walk would bring him back to Jerusalem.

Martyn Lloyd Jones says in his book, *Trial of Faith* (Psa. 73)

that the Psalms are rich because the Psalmists not only tell us what they experienced, but they describe their reactions.

Note Psa 73:20. Have you ever felt like God must be asleep?

Where did Elijah learn the suggestion he gave to the prophets of Baal: "Peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked" (1 K. 18:27). Could this have not arisen out of Elijah's own experience with his own God.

What if you started to pray, and suddenly an angel appeared, and said, "Sh! Don't pray now. God is sleeping!" What panic this would bring!

If God does go to sleep, I can assume we would all slip and fall.

But what is the answer?

## II. The confirmation of the Psalmist's faith (vv. 4-8).

What is stated as a prayer in v. 3 is now stated as a fact.

A. First, one thing that can never happen (v. 4). "Behold" - gives added strength

to the confirmation  
 "Slumber" - to fall into sleep  
 from weariness; "sleep" - an existence  
 of alternating between awaking +  
 sleeping. <sup>(Delitzsch III, 273)</sup> GOD NEVER CLOSES HIS  
 EYES TO THE NEEDS OF HIS PEOPLE.

Cf. Jacob's experience in Gen 28: 10-15.

B. Secondly, the personal application  
 (v. 5). What is true with regard  
 to the nation in v. 4 applies to  
 each individual in the nation  
 according to v. 5.

"Thy keeper" } as "my shepherd" in  
 "Thy shield" } Psa. 23:1.

"Shield" is described in v. 6; "keeper"  
 in vv. 7, 8.

C. Thirdly, the certain promises  
 (vv. 6-8).

1. Re: days + nights, smiting. Cf.  
 Psa. 91: 5, 6.

It can mean the literal effect  
 of the sun + moon on the smiting  
 that days + nights make possible.

There are dangers peculiar to  
 each time. Cf. Isa. 27:3, "I  
 will keep it night + day."

Cf. Psa 139:12, "The darkness and  
 the light are both alike to thee."  
 Also Job 29:2, 3.

2. Re: evil. Cf. Joseph in Gen. 50:20.  
 Also Rom. 8:28, 35-39; 2 Tim 4:18.

3. Re: the soul (v. 1b). This is linked with the first statement of the verse. The "soul" is the life, "both inwardly and outwardly" (Delitzsch, III, 274). Sin, error, despondency, pride, from the world the flesh, + the devil, for God - are some of the ways in which Spurgeon mentions that we need our souls, ourselves kept (III, 16).

All that  
men do, i.e.,  
his children.

4. "Going out... coming in". Cf. Dent. 28:6; <sup>31:2</sup> "God guarantees the completion of that which is started. Cf. Phil. 1:6.

Adoniram Judson once said, "He has not led me so tenderly thus far to forsake me at the very gate of heaven" (Spurgeon's Treasury, III, 24).

It is a keeping which is "from this time forth, and ever for evermore."

Concl: I wonder if I am talking to someone who can only remember what the blessing of God used to be, who may feel that God is asleep, that the lost ground can never be regained? What hope there is here!

God is your help, + God is your keeper. He is Jehovah, the Creator, and nothing you can possibly be concerned about has been excluded from His Psalm.