

From Where Does My Help Come?; Psalm 121

I. Ascents

A. A psalm of ascents

1. In the Holy Temple courtyard, there was an ultra wide stairway that consisted of fifteen large, semi-circular steps that "ascended" into the inner section of the courtyard. The Levites, whose job it was to accompany the Temple service with song and instrumental music, would stand on these steps and sing these fifteen psalms.



2. These psalms were sung by the Jews when they would "ascend" to visit the Holy Temple three times annually for the festivals.



3. The Feast of Passover (Unleavened Bread), the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths

4. Deuteronomy 16:16–17; 16 “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.
 - B. All of the Psalms of Ascent are hopeful and over half of them cheerful
 - C. It is in Psalm 121 where we see just how God feels about us; how important we are to Him; How being “in Him” should be important to us
- II. Help
- A. My help comes from the Lord
 - B. “Help” - support, assistance and support in times of hardship and distress
 - C. It is very hard to quantify exactly what this help looks like
 - D. I read certain Scriptures in times of distress and they are very helpful in reminding me of who I am in relation to the Creator
 - E. But I cannot limit God’s “help” to my reading Scriptures
 - F. The King of Assyria sets out to overthrow Israel and ends up at the gates of Jerusalem in Judah
 1. 2 Kings 19:10–13
 2. Hezekiah responds by pleading to God
 3. 2 Kings 19:14–19



4. God Responds to Hezekiah with help (assistance and support in times of hardship and distress)
 5. 2 Kings 19:32–35
- G. Paul needs help on the way to Rome
1. Acts 27:13–20
 2. These are seasoned sailors that do this for a living, not hobbyists out for a weekend getaway
 3. God gives Paul a message of hope and of help

4. Acts 27:21–25
5. God provides the assistance and support in Paul's time of hardship and distress



III. Protection

- A. The LORD is your shade on your right hand
- B. "Shade" - shade cast by an object with clearly perceived boundaries; a metaphor for God's protection
- C. The Psalmist uses "Yahweh," the God of the Covenant
 1. Job 1:9–10; 9 Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.
 2. "A hedge" - has been added by the translators. There is no Hebrew word there
 3. "Have you not put around him and his house..."
 4. God is the unsaid object, "Have you not put *Yourself* around him and his house..."
 5. God has placed Himself around Job as his shade, protection.
 6. The writer of Job also uses "Yahweh"
 7. Job 1:13-22
 8. Who did this to Job? God or Satan?
 9. We often blame God for the things Satan has done
 10. God is our Protection, our Shade that covers us. He is our Hedge, not the cause of our tragedies!

- D. Israel cries out to God and God provides Moses and the plagues, rescuing His people from slavery



E. Paul's travels

1. Acts 14:19–20; 19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.
2. 2 Corinthians 11:23–27; 23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. 24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

F. Our God desires to be in our lives as much as He desires us to be in Him

1. Psalm 46:1; God is our refuge and strength, a very present (*or well proved*) help in trouble.
2. Psalm 145:18; The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
3. Deuteronomy 4:7; For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?
4. 1 Peter 2:9–10; 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- G. We (the church) are a great nation of God's people who can call upon and count God as our protection



IV. Life

- A. "He will keep your life"
- B. If we let Him
- C. Weak and wounded sinner, lost and left to die, O, raise your head for love is passing by
- D. Come to Jesus, come to Jesus, come to Jesus... and live! (Chris Rice, Untitled Hymn)
- E. Place your life in the hands of the only one who will keep it!