

Summer Psalms
GOD OUR HELP
Tuesday, July 29
Reading: Psalm 121-124

Psalm 121:1 *I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot slip— He who watches over you will not slumber; 4 indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

Jerusalem stands at about 2500 feet above sea level, so from any direction you must “go up” to reach it. It lies in the shadow of several taller mountains – Olivet, Moriah, Zion, and Scopus. As the pilgrims travel toward their destination, they would see these mountains in the distance and their thoughts would turn to the reason for their journey. The next few psalms will answer the longing for peace of Psalm 120.

As he gazed on these majestic mountains, the author of Psalm 121 expresses the question: “Where does my help come from?” The answer comes quickly. He looks beyond the mountains to the One who made them – “My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth” (121:1-2). This title not only means that He is the Creator, but that God is Master over all His creation.

Six times the psalmist proclaims that God watches and keeps him (all translating the same Hebrew word *šāmar*). On our journey it is a comfort to know that God never sleeps. He is always present to keep us from slipping (121:3-4), to protect (121:5-6), and guide us on the path (121:7-8).

Psalm 122 pictures the pilgrims’ arrival at Jerusalem. They are standing in its gates and sing praises to the name of the Lord. They also pray that God’s peace would rest on the city and that it may prosper. Do we rejoice to go to the house of the Lord? Do we pray that our churches would be places where God’s peace and abundance will be displayed?

Psalm 123 repeats the psalmist’s faith as he lifts up his eyes to the Lord enthroned in heaven. His focus is on the proper attitude of those who follow God. We are His servants, His slaves. A slave does not focus on his own wants and desires but on what pleases his master. Our focus should not be on the situation around us but on the Lord who reigns over all. When we are surrounded by trouble do we look up to the Lord or look around and complain? God will show us His mercy if we patiently serve Him.

How can we be sure that God will show us mercy? Because He has done it in the past. Psalm 124 reminds us that “if God had not been on our side” we would have been defeated and swept away long ago. It closes where Psalm 121 began – “Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

May we be able to sing the words of Isaac Watts’ hymn written almost 300 years ago:

O God, our Help in ages past
Our Hope for years to come
Be Thou our Guide while life shall last
And our eternal Home!