

Psalms for the Soul

Protection

Jim Hoffman

Our approach.

1. ***Psalms that tell us of MERCY. (Psalm 123)***
2. ***Psalms that tell of God's PROTECTION. (Psalm 121)***
3. ***Psalms that tell us of PRAYER. (Psalm 3)***
4. ***Psalms that tell of God's BLESSING. (Psalm 1)***
5. ***Psalms that tell us about LOVE. (Psalm 36)***
6. ***Psalms that tell us God's MAJESTY. (Psalm 97)***
7. ***Psalms that tell us of PEACE. (Psalm 120)***
8. ***Psalms that tell of God's WORD. (Psalm 119)***
9. ***Psalms that tell of the MESSIAH. (Psalm 110)***
10. ***Psalms that tell of WORSHIP. (Psalm 89)***
11. ***Psalms that tell of PRAISE. (Psalm 145)***

Psalm 120

- ***1 I call on the Lord in my distress, and he answers me. 2 Save me, O Lord, from lying lips and from deceitful tongues. 3 What will he do to you, and what more besides, O deceitful tongue? 4 He will punish you with a warrior's sharp arrows, with burning coals of the broom tree. 5 Woe to me that I dwell in Meshech, that I live among the tents of Kedar! 6 Too long have I lived among those who hate peace. 7 I am a man of peace; but when I speak, they are for war.***
NIV

Psalm 120

- *Psalm 120 has the psalmist looking around because of all of the evil in the world.*
- *Psalm 121 has the psalmist looking up to where his help comes from.*
- *Psalm 122 has the psalmist standing in the presence of the Lord where he has a different perspective.*

Psalm 121

Author Unknown

- *It is one of 15 psalms that are known as 'songs of ascents' or sometimes 'songs of degrees'.*
- *They may have been sung as the Israelites journeyed out of Babylonian captivity or perhaps any time they made a pilgrimage 'up' to Jerusalem.*
- *We are confident that they are intended to keep our eyes ever looking up.*

Psalm 121

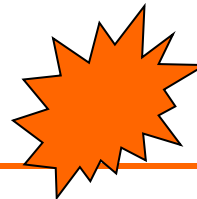
Author Unknown

- ***This psalm is unusual in at least one respect; there are two voices in it.***
- ***One is the voice of the pilgrim and the other is the voice of blessing.***
- ***From a musical standpoint, it would lend itself well to a duet or one group answering the other as they traveled and sang..***

Psalm 121

Author Unknown

- ***Another way to look at the psalm is to see how it applies to a spiritual journey of any kind.***
- ***The person on the journey has concerns for his safety. (where does my help come from?)***
- ***The psalm's message is that God is to be trusted with our care as we march towards Him.***



Ps 121:1-2

I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. NIV

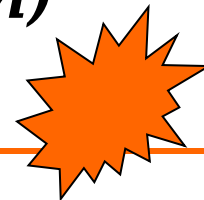
- ***Remember that the pilgrim is traveling ‘up’ to Jerusalem so as he marches on his eyes are always looking towards the city on the hill.***
- ***And as he travels along there is concern for his safety. (remember how the good Samaritan became the good Samaritan?)***
- ***There is always some danger in any journey and a spiritual journey always has opposition.***



Ps 121:1-2

I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. NIV

- ***Because we live in a fallen world there is reason to have concerns for our safety at times.***
- ***No where in the Bible are we taught that because we are Christians that we are immune to the dangers around us.***
- ***We should not be fearful, but there are reasons for us to be alert to dangers in this life. (to do otherwise makes one a poor steward of what God has given)***



Ps 121:1-2

I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. NIV

- ***Where do we go for help to life's problems? (financial, physical, relational, spiritual)***
- ***Prov 21:31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But deliverance is of the LORD. NKJV***
- ***There are some things we can and should do to help protect ourselves, but ultimately our safety is in God's hands.***




Ps 121:1-2

I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. NIV

- ***The psalmist decides that it is better to look to the maker and owner of the hills than to the hills themselves even if the holy city is on the hill.***
- ***This is somewhat like looking to the ‘church’ organization instead of looking to God himself for our protection.***
- ***The church is the greatest organism ever seen on this earth, but it too has its limits, while God has none.***

Ps 121:3-4

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. NIV

- ***God is never indifferent to his people.*** 
- ***For God to be caught napping when there are so many of his servants in great danger would be hard to fathom.***
- ***He is always alert, always engaged, and always watching over his children even if it's for no other reason than to keep them from slipping.***

Ps 121:3-4

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. NIV

- ***It is incredibly important for us to know that He cares when we are hurting.***
- ***1 Peter 5:6-7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. NKJV***
- ***We are invited to cast all of the things that divide our minds and keep us from trusting Him onto Him.***

Ps 121:5-6

The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. NIV

- ***Why would I want my right hand to be shaded?***
- ***Perhaps the psalmist is speaking of the things that God gives us to do. What he asks us to do he will help us to do.***
- ***He is protecting us as we serve him and his protection is from the heat, cold, and all of the other elements of life. (We are shaded from many of the evil elements of our world)***

Ps 121:5-6

The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. NIV

- ***Even though we are shaded from much of life's harmful elements, we are not completely out of their reach.***
- ***It would not be good for us to be so insulated from life that we would forget what the struggles of it are like.***
- ***Shade gives us a cool place to rest and to escape from the world's heat for awhile but does not isolate us completely from the elements.***



Ps 121:5-6

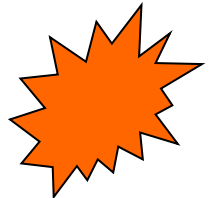
The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. NIV

- ***So what does the psalmist have in mind when he uses the ‘sun by day’ and ‘the moon by night’.***
- ***What he probably had in mind was what we would call ‘24/7’ today.***
- ***It’s another way of saying that God’s care for us takes no breaks. (aren’t parents always on call?)***

Ps 121:7-8

7 The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life; 8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. NIV

- ***God is certainly able to protect all people, from all things, all the time.***
- ***The question is not ‘can he?’, but rather ‘will he?’.***
- ***We have no such blanket promise in scripture, and there is a mountain of evidence from real life that he does not offer us blanket protection from all harm.***




Ps 121:7-8

7 The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life; 8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. NIV

- ***Among the instances where God does not always protect us would be:***
 - ***When he chastens us***
 - ***When his glory matters more***
 - ***When we are reaping what we have sown***

Ps 121:7-8

7 The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life; 8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. NIV

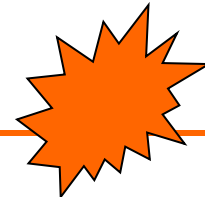
- ***I do believe that we can make a powerful argument that God will ultimately preserve his children no matter what befalls them.*** 
- ***However, bad things do happen to good people so perhaps the argument should be framed as 'God will see us home to where there will be no crying, no tears, no pain, and no danger'.***
- ***No 'cop out', just the truth.***

His Methods of Protection

- ***The common sense we were born with.***
- ***Sometimes he sends human help.***
- ***Sometimes he changes circumstances.***
- ***Sometimes he sends an angel.***
- ***Sometimes it's his presence. (Proverbs 28:1)***

What if harm does come your way?

- ***All that we have said to this point notwithstanding, there is a fact of life that must be dealt with Sometimes awful things happen to God's people.***
- ***The challenge for us at such times is to try to reconcile all of the promises for protection to the realities of life.***
- ***Some, like Job's friends, make it quite easy; "it must be your fault!". (if you need an answer for everything then I recommend this approach)***

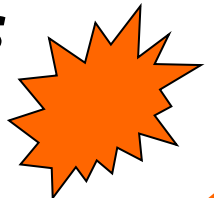


What if harm does come your way?

- ***However, just as with Job, sometimes it is not our fault, but rather the plan of God.***
- ***Since we cannot see the beginning from the end as God can, we are left with only one viable option; trust him.***
- ***To take the position that temporal problems are some sort of indictment of God's protecting power places an undue importance upon what happens in this life.***

What if harm does come your way?

- ***In Job's case, where it was never about anything that Job did, we see that God made good on his promises.***
- ***When the testing is over, he ends up with double what he had before, even children if we count the 10 that went to heaven in chapter one.***
- ***Maybe our problem is that we sometimes confuse the eternal and the temporal.***



God's Protection

- ***Ps 32:7 You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. NIV (hope)***
- ***Ps 40:11 Do not withhold your mercy from me, O Lord; may your love and your truth always protect me. NIV (the word of God helps to keep us from evil)***

God's Protection

- ***Ps 18:29 With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall. NIV (there is nothing we cannot do with his help)***
- ***Ps 69:3 I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God. NIV (a great place to be, no where to turn, but to God)***

God's Protection

- ***Ps 46:1-3 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. NIV (the enemy's bluster is no match for the peace of God)***

God's Protection, Can we count on it?

The answer is yes, we can count on his protection. Our problem is usually one of trust or an inflated sense of the importance of the physical. God will protect us from all harm, but it will be in his time using his methods. Sometimes we like his timing and methods and sometimes we feel abandoned. In either case, we will ultimately agree with what he does.

What do you think?