

## ***“The Lord our Protector”***

Psalm 121 is a psalm about trusting in God’s providential care. It is a travel Psalm. In fact many families read this Psalm out loud together before going on a trip. Because The Lord is our protector the ultimate protector

Psalm 121 teaches us three big truths about God’s help and care for you; His Protection.

- 1) The Lord is your helper.
- 2) The Lord is your protector. And then finally,
- 3) The LORD will keep you from all harm.

Let’s look at all three of these as we learn to put our trust in God’s care for our lives.

Number 1: The Lord is your helper (1-2)

First of all, the Lord is your helper. Look at verses 1-2: “I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.” (Psalm 121:1-2) These are beautiful verses of Scripture that have brought much comfort to God’s people over the years. I know many of you have quoted these verses in times of need. And they tell us several things about God and the help that he provides.

In verse one the psalmist asks “Where does my help come from?” And in verse two we get the answer: “My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.” (Psalm 121:2) Where does your help come from? Your help comes from the Maker of heaven and earth. God not only made the mountains. He made everything!

What is the source of your help? Psalm 121 tells us it is the Maker of heaven and earth. That’s the first truth we learn from this psalm. The Creator is your helper.

**Number 2:** the Lord is your protector. Look at verses 3-6: “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. 5 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.” (Psalm 121:3-6) These verses teach us that God is not only the creator of the world but the protector of Israel. And he is your protector as well!

The key word in these next verses is the word “watches.” It comes from the Hebrew word “shamar” which means “to watch over, to guard or to protect.” This word shows up six times in verses 3-8. (In the NIV it is translated as “watches over” five times and then also translated as “keep” in verse 7.) If you are in Christ, then he who watches over Israel watches over your life as well. The God of Israel is your protector. He is your body guard. And here in verses 3-6 the psalmist tells us some of the various ways that God watches over you.

But our God is always awake. He never falls asleep on the watch – Not God! He never dozes or nods off. He never even gets distracted. You can pray to him at any time and he always focuses on you and hears you.

And because God never slumbers nor sleeps – that means that you can! Because God is awake, you can sleep. It's like a child who can't sleep until their parent promises to stay by their bedside. Then the child trustfully falls asleep knowing their parent is there to watch over them. It's the same way with God. It doesn't matter what problem you're dealing with, you can leave it in God's hands and go to sleep at night knowing that God never slumbers nor sleeps and he will take care of it. He will take care of you.

The Lord is your shade at your right hand. That means God accompanies you every step of the way. He is close beside you.

God protects you from accidents. He never slumbers nor sleeps. He is close beside you. And then fourthly, he protects you at all times. Look at verse 6: "The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night." (Psalm 121:6)

The Hebrew language often uses pairs of opposite words to signify totality (called a "merism"). In other words the phrase using the opposites includes both extremes and everything in between. So when we read that the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night, what this is really saying is that God protects you at all times – both day and night and everything in between. God is present to help you with every problem in your life. The God of Israel is your protector.

Number 3: The LORD will keep you from all harm (7-8)

The Creator is your helper. The God of Israel is your protector. And then finally, the LORD will keep you from all harm. Look at verses 7-8: "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." (Psalm 121:7-8)

Verses 1-6 were all in the present tense, describing what God does for you. Now in verses 7-8 we are given promises for the future, telling us what God will do for you. And in these verses the psalm moves from giving specific examples to one overriding general principle. The LORD will keep you from all harm.

And there are several things we learn from these verses.

**First of all**, God watches over every aspect of your life. That's what verse 7 says: "The LORD will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life." (Psalm 121:7) The word "harm" here is a word that can mean "harm or evil." Jesus taught us to pray something similar in the Lord's Prayer where we ask our heavenly Father: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (Matthew 6:13)

God watches over every aspect of your life. God doesn't say you will never have problems, but he promises to be with you in your problems, and to turn all your problems to good.

Once again these verses do not teach us that you will never have problems or trouble in your life, but rather that evil will never win out, that nothing can thwart God's purpose for your life, that nothing can separate you from God's love for you in Christ.

God is for you, and therefore no evil, no permanent harm can befall the believer in Christ. You can trust in God's divine care, because God watches over every aspect of your life.

And then **secondly** in these verses, God watches over every transition in your life. Look at verse 8: "The LORD will watch over your coming and going." (Psalm 121:8) This is one of the verses that devout Jews recite when they leave or enter their homes. "The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." (Psalm 121:8)

It's usually the transitions in life that trip us up, isn't it? Once we are safe in our routines things usually go pretty smoothly, but it's the in-between times – the commute, the move, the change of jobs, the change of health, the change of relationships – it's in the in-between times that we usually struggle.

And then we have the wonderful promise at the end of verse 8: "The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." (Psalm 121:8) God is watching over you now, and he will continue to watch over you forever. Both of those promises are encouraging! If you had to choose one or the other, which would you choose? Now or forevermore? It's a tough choice. But praise God you don't have to choose. They are both true for the believer in Christ!

The Creator is your helper. The God of Israel is your protector. The LORD will keep you from all harm. And so we move from God as Creator of heaven and earth, to God as protector of Israel, to God as your personal Lord and Savior who protects you from all evil and harm.

CONCLUSION: We are on a journey to God, and Psalm 121 is a wonderful song for the journey. The Maker of heaven and earth watches over every aspect of your life. He protects you from all harm. There are no accidents for those who belong to God.

And that means you do not need to worry or to be afraid of anything. Nothing can happen to you without God's knowledge. Nothing can harm you under his protective care. Even the worst things that happen to you – whether illness, loss or even death – all these things take place under God's divine care. God is for you, not against you. He is committed to your good, and you can trust him in all things.

<LET US PRAY>

"Dear God,

Thank you for your reminders that you are surely with us. Thank you that you watch over our coming and going, and that you neither slumber nor sleep. Thank you for your constant care, that you are our help and strength in the daily battles that we face. Thank you that you are our Protector and Defender against the schemes of the enemy and the evil that tries to overtake us. We believe that no weapon

formed against us will prosper in this life, because you are always greater, and our lives are hidden with Christ. We are safe with You. We choose today to keep our eyes off our problems, and fixed solely on you. We choose to look up, for you alone are our Hope. Amen.