

LESSON 10 – GOD’S SUSTAINING POWER

JUNE 7, 2020

Background Scripture: Psalm 121

Lesson Passage: Psalm 121:1-8 (KJV)

Introduction: Despite our best intentions, sometimes we fall asleep at our posts. It is very humbling, and very human. But that never happens with God. Our [Scripture](#) is a reassuring song about Him as guardian and protector of His children. The psalmist declares that God Who watches over us “will not slumber” (v. 3). And for emphasis, he repeats that truth in verse 4: He “will neither slumber nor sleep.” Can you even imagine? God never falls asleep at His post. He is always keeping watch over us. It’s not so much that He must do this, but rather that, out of His great love, He so chooses. That promise is something to sing about. The psalmist points out two wonderful reasons to joyfully praise God in song and in attitude: His saving work in our lives and His ongoing faithfulness toward us. In God’s choir, we each have a place to sing of the marvelous things He has done.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 121 (KJV)

1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. 8 The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Memory Verses: *1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth* (Psalm 121:1, 2) KJV

Topic Explored: “*God’s Sustaining Power*” ~ The author and circumstances of this Psalm are unknown. This song strikes a strong note of assurance in 4 stages that God is help and protection to keep both Israel and individual believers safe from harm—as a Helper, (1-2) Keeper, (3-4) Protector, (5-6); and Preserver. (7-8). This psalm is concerned with the uncertainties one faces on a pilgrimage journey. It moves naturally from the need for help (verses 1-2), to the promise of God’s protection (verses 3-8). The psalmist is looking at the hills and he raises the question: “From whence cometh my help?” Verses 2 is His immediate answer.

Lesson Focus: Psalm 121 (KJV)

Verses 1-2 ~ As the psalmist anticipates his journey through “the hills” to Jerusalem, a route filled with anxiety, he seeks for help, perhaps looking around and within, and then finally looks up. His “Help”, all help, comes from above. Both nature and a person’s very life are God’s handiwork; He has the power to aid His people.

The Psalmist is looking to the hills of Moriah and Zion, where the Ark of God, to the symbol of His presence, was located. He looked for assistance and deliverance; to the holy hill of the Lord, and to Him that dwells there (Psalm 3:2). The lifting up of the eyes is a prayer gesture (John 11:41); and is expressive of boldness and confidence in prayer, and of hope and expectation of help and salvation (Job 11:15). "From whence shall my help come?" Not from hills and

mountains; not from men, not from kings and princes, the great men of the earth, nor from the most powerful nations. But from the Lord (Psalm 121:2).

Sometimes, when we are in the valley of despair everything looks hopeless. This verse above is the answer, not only for the psalmist, but for all who are in trouble. In this life, we go through valleys, but we must always look up for help, and climb back up to the mountaintop. Do not keep looking downward in a cast down fashion, look up to the hills, for help is on the way.

At a time when trouble is everywhere you look; there is only one help for the psalmist, or for anyone else, who is surrounded with problems. Look up and rejoice, God will come to your rescue. "My help". The psalmist does not look to the creation, but rather the Creator for His help. The Creator, Who helps His people out of the hands of their enemies, and out of all their troubles and afflictions. And the help He gives is quick and present, suitable and seasonable, is sufficient. For what is it that He cannot do, He Who has made both them? He has promised to help them, and He is faithful that has promised. There is no doubt in the psalmist's statement. He does not say, *maybe* He will help me. He says my help continues to come from the Lord.

Verse 3 ~ The Lord keeps the feet of His saints from falling. He will not suffer them to be moved out of the spiritual estate in which they stand. Moved in some sense they may be, yet not "greatly moved"; their feet may be "almost" gone, and their steps "almost" slipped, and they will not perish (Psalm 62:2). He keeps every one of His sheep. He keeps them by His power. He preserves them by His grace, and He holds them with His right hand. Guides them by His counsel, keeps their feet from falling, and brings them safe to glory. And a watchful keeper He is. He does not so much as slumber; He keeps them night and day, lest any harm them (Isaiah 27:3).

Verse 4 ~ The living God is totally unlike the pagan gods. This does not only mean physical Israel, whom the presence of God was continually with on their way to the Promised Land. Spiritual Israel (Christians), are on a journey to their promised land (heaven). God is with His own every step of the way to make sure our journey is completed. The presence in the wilderness was the fire by night and the cloud by day. The presence with the believer, now, is the Holy Spirit which is our Comforter and our Guide. He will guide us to eternal life in heaven (our promised land).

Verses 5-6 ~ Traveling across the arid desert toward their city, the pilgrims' great danger was exposure to the elements, and particularly the heat. They could be scorched if they did not find "shade". "The Lord is thy shade". The Lord is as a shadow: as the shadow of a rock, a house, or a tree, in the intense rays of the burning sun (Isaiah 25:4). "By day ... by night": Around the clock protection. Day and night God is our Protector. The elements of nature would cooperate with the believer, and not be harmful to them. Just as the Spirit of God was with physical Israel, He will be with and protect spiritual Christians.

Verses 7-8 ~ God's care includes His limitless ability to "preserve" believers from "all evil" and extends both now and forevermore. Not from the *evil* of affliction. But from the dominion of sin and its power. Not from the tribulation in the world, but from the reproach or persecution—from the lusts and wickedness that are in the world. He will protect His children from the power and rage from the evil men and from the temptations of the evil one, Satan (John 17:12). He preserves His people, oftentimes from diseases and disasters, and from death, till their appointed time comes. Through this life and forever. This is the gracious assurance which is made to all who put

their trust in God. Nothing can happen to them here but what God shall see to be advantageous to their ultimate good and for His glory.

Evil may be all around you, but the LORD will build a hedge around you. If I belong to the Great Shepherd, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Let's talk about it. . .

1. When we are in the valley of despair, things look _____.
2. My help cometh from the _____.
6. What was the presence of God in the wilderness seen by the children of Israel? _____
7. What is the Presence with the believer now? _____
8. What is the shade mentioned in verse 5? _____

Making it personal:

- If you were to write the central message or key idea presented in Psalm 121, what would it be? What difference does that message make in your life as a believer?

Closing Prayer: *"Hear me, Lord, my plea is just; listen to my cry. Hear my prayer— it does not rise from deceitful lips. Let my vindication come from you; may your eyes see what is right. I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. Show me the wonders of your great love, You who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen!" (Psalm 17)*