

121 IN 2021

Where do you turn in times of trouble? Or times of tranquility? The Christian knows to open the written-down Word of God, which speaks His truth and grace to every life situation. As you enter 2021, consider the message of Psalm 121 for God's perspective on your new year.

Psalm 121 remains a favorite passage of life's travelers today. It recounts God's presence as His people journey with His continuous care. It is one of the "psalms of ascent" sung by Israelite pilgrims on their way to their place of worship on the temple mount in the holy city.

1- MY HELPER - The psalmist writes, "*I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.*" Hills dominate the horizon in Israel, especially on the way up to Jerusalem, journeying to keep holy festivals.

Lifting up thoughts of the LORD soon lifts up heavy hearts too. Reciting Scriptures would help pass the time on the trek, and help focus their minds on the One whom they worship, their ever-present helper. The hills represent not only their destination, but the various dangers they may encounter. This word-picture still speaks to God's worshipers today.

God reveals Himself in the Bible as unique in the universe. He is not a mere god, an idol, an invention of humans worshiped by pagans in the hills. He is Maker of the hills, of heaven and earth, the LORD, Jehovah, Yahweh, the great I AM, all-sufficient, all-knowing, all-powerful.

2- MY KEEPER - verses 3-4 remind, "*He will not let your foot be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*" The LORD is not only creator but caretaker. He watches over, keeping guard, even through tricky terrain.

The LORD is always aware of every moment, past, present, future. He knows every need of His created ones. He does not need to be awakened or reminded. We pray to Him, not to inform Him of our needs, but to conform our thinking to His, to direct our thoughts to His purposes.

Every step you take on your journey through life, God knows it altogether. Not only for you as an individual, but for all of His chosen people everywhere. He promises never to leave you.

3- MY PROVIDER - verses 5-6 declare, "*The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.*" The central phrase is "*The LORD is your keeper*" and 'keep' occurs six times, as the key thought of the passage. God Himself attends carefully to every need of His people, day and night.

Shade provides protection, and is also a metaphor in several Scriptures, similar to "*shadow of Your wings.*" Desert travelers often journeyed at night for cooler conditions, despite dangers of the dark. Every moment, 24/7, God knows your needs. In His sovereign providence, worshipers can be sure of His care, in His holy omniscience, omnipotence, and unfailing love.

4- MY PROTECTOR - verses 7-8 proclaim, "*The LORD will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.*" The perils of life's journeys never surprise the LORD, who knows all things.

Scripture presents Him as the Savior and Deliverer, the ever-present protector. He will see you safely through any trouble you may encounter. "*Going out and coming in*" preserves your early days, latter days, and everywhere between. Trusting the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation assures His overseeing your earthly journey of life, and your eternal protection.

5- MY LORD AND GOD - Just reading Psalm 121 brings a sense of calm, centering your heart, mind, and will on trusting the Almighty One who never stops caring for you. Are you anxious? Troubled? Seeking peace? Wisdom? Strength? The LORD is full of grace for your every need. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have the indwelling Holy Spirit and God's enabling power.

Reading the Bible every day conveys God's grace for your daily needs. Not fumbling for some convenient verse, but a commitment to read what God has written for you. About 15 minutes per day will take you through the entire Bible in a year. Reading and audio plans are at ESV.org, Ligonier.org, Crossway.org, and other sources. It's said that a Proverb a day will make you wise, and a Psalm a day will make you holy. But daily intake of Scriptures will make you "*wise unto salvation*" and "*thoroughly equip you*" as you journey through life with the LORD! □