

Psalm 121
Guaranteed Security

Introduction: From book 5 of the Psalms, focusing on the conquest of the future Davidic King. It describes the rule of God's anointed king. This is also part of the Pilgrim Psalms or Song of Ascents (120-134).

Our culture is fixated on security: financial, insurance, physical, cybersecurity, Homeland security, home security, etc. We fear security breaches, we buy security cameras, and we perform security scans.

Superscription: *A Song of Ascents.*

1) Security is needed in times of concern—121:1-4

- a) **Observation:** ¹ *I will lift up my eyes to the mountains;*
 - i) Is he looking at some danger standing on the hill?
 - ii) He is simply pondering the hills that surround Jerusalem?
- b) **Legitimate question:** *From where shall my help [ezer] come?*
 - i) Real or imagined difficulties still demand an answer.
 - ii) James Hamilton writes: Yahweh can help in any way he chooses, and he has no shortage of imaginative solutions to the problems of his people. He can help them with water from rocks, sticks that sweeten bitter waters, jars of oil, enemy armies turning their swords on themselves, even the birth of babies, one baby in particular.
- c) **Answers to his question—121:2-4**
 - i) **Personally** (1st person)—121:2 [stated positively]
 - (1) The Self-existent One: ² *My help [ezer] comes from Yahweh,*
 - (a) How a wife reflects God's image—Gen. 2:18, 20
 - (2) The Creator of everything: *Who made [Qal ptc. asah] heaven and earth.*
 - (3) Allen Ross writes: The point is that if the LORD created everything, then he created the hills through which the pilgrim must walk; and whatever the LORD has created he can control.
 - (4) Alec Motyer writes: Nothing can happen outside his direction; every situation we face, every danger which threatens, is within his created realm.
 - ii) **Socially** (2nd person singular)—121:3 [stated negatively]
 - (1) Stability: ³ *He will not allow your foot to stumble;*
 - (2) Uninterrupted vigilance: *He who keeps [Qal ptc. shamar] you will not slumber.*
 - (a) shamar is used 6x in this Psalm. (vv. 3, 4, 5, 7 [2x], 8)
 - (b) Perhaps this is an echo of Num. 6:24-26.
 - iii) **Nationally** (3rd person)—121:4 [stated negatively]
 - (1) ⁴ *Behold, He who keeps [Qal ptc. shamar] Israel Will not slumber and will not sleep.*

- (a) Yahweh does not suffer from boredom, distraction, or indifference.
He cannot disregard His people. He is never inattentive.
- (2) Remember Elijah's mocking of Baal in 1 Kings 18:27.

2) Security is guaranteed—121:5-8 (reverts back to 2nd person singular)

- a) **In general**—121:5a ⁵ *Yahweh is your keeper* [Qal ptc. shamar];
 - i) Similar to the expression “Yahweh is my shepherd” (Ps. 23:1)
- b) **Specifically**—121:5b-8
 - i) **All-day vigilance:** Round the clock
 - (1) **Positive:** *Yahweh is your shade on your right hand.*
 - (a) Safety and refreshment
 - (b) Not from a distance but close by.
 - (2) **Negative:**
 - (a) Sun-stroke: ⁶ *The sun will not strike you by day,*
 - (b) Moon-stroke/lunatic: *Nor the moon by night* (when enemy attacks often come).
 - (i) False gods were assumed to go off-duty occasionally. Yahweh is consistently available and vigilant.
 - ii) **Spiritually:**
 - There is a shift in the verb aspect from participial to imperfect
 - This may be shifting the emphasis from the present to the future.
 - This may be shifting to more of a prayer, “May Yahweh ...”
 - (1) **Positive:** ⁷ *Yahweh will keep* [Qal impf. shamar] *you from all evil/calamity, bad, not good* [ra];
 - (2) **Positive:** *He will keep* [Qal impf. shamar] *your soul* [nephesh].
 - (a) Your soul is you in your essential, personal integrity. Everything that in any way makes the individual a unique person. (Alec Motyer)
 - iii) **Comprehensively:**
 - (1) **In every location:**
 - (a) **Positive:** ⁸ *Yahweh will keep* [Qal impf. shamar] *your going out and your coming in*
 - (i) Yahweh is with you everywhere, not only in Jerusalem.
 - (ii) Someone has said, God is not just a hideout, but a bodyguard.
 - (2) **At every time:**
 - (a) **Positive:** *From now until forever.*
 - (i) Yahweh is with you always, not just now and again.

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Let us confess our insecurities, demonstrated in our unnecessary baggage of worry, fretting, and anxiety.
 - i) God is perfectly aware of the dangers we face.
 - ii) God is committed to watching over His people.

- (1) Every threat, the whole person, in every activity, for all time (starting now) (Alec Motyer)
- iii) God is able to watch over His people. He doesn't simply have good intentions.
- b) Let us remember that this concept is reiterated in Rom. 8:37-39.