

You and I don't realize the luxury we enjoy when it comes to going to church. We leave our secure homes and we get into our secure vehicles and we drive to church. If it is cold, we turn on our heaters. If it is hot, we turn on the air conditioning. If it is raining, we turn on our windshield wipers. If it is night, we turn on our lights. Really, when it comes to us going to church, we have it made.

It was not that way for the people of Israel when the Psalms were written. They would travel to Jerusalem several times a year to offer their sacrifices and to worship God. That trip to Jerusalem was not easy. They could not just jump in a vehicle and drive. They either came by foot, by donkey, by mule or horse. They traveled through tough country. In fact, they traveled through dangerous country. In the mountains and hills surrounding Jerusalem, there were dangerous animals and dangerous people. There were moments when God's people became afraid as they traveled and it was in one of those moments when this Psalm was written.

Life can be threatening and intimidating at times even for one who loves the Lord. The life of a believer is not lived in a beautiful garden park; we live in a scary world and we are in war. But when we keep our faith in God and our focus on God, we may be certain God will watch over us and protect us.

Now as we look down through this Psalm we cannot help but notice that six times in these eight verses we see the Hebrew word "shamir," which in English is translated "keep" (v. 3, 4, 5, 7, 7, 8). The word actually means to keep in the sense of keeping something safe by watching it and guarding it. In fact, one writer said this Psalm is a Psalm that teaches "Yahweh is My Guardian." Mr. John Phillips called this Psalm "Safe in the arms of Jesus" (*Psalms*, Vol. 2, p. 434).

What we see in this Psalm is this:

AS GOD'S PEOPLE TRAVEL THROUGH LIFE, THEY CAN TRUST IN THE FACT THAT THE GOD WHO CREATED THEM AND SAVED THEM IS THE GOD WHO WILL GUARD THEM.

Now there is no question that this Psalm is for all of God's people, but we specifically may note it has significant application to Israel (v. 4). This Psalm will have some key application to Israel during the Tribulation. But it also has application to us now.

Now as we look down through this Psalm, there some key things to remember when we find ourselves in dangerous and threatening situations. There are ten realizations we need:

REALIZATION #1 – We must realize that our help comes from the LORD. 121:1-2

Those who are not right with God do not even begin to think like this. They do not look up in times of trouble and they do not look to the Lord.

Now when people were on their way to Jerusalem to worship God, everywhere they looked, they could see the hills and the mountains. It does not matter if you approach Jerusalem from the north, south, east or west; to get there you must go up and over hills and mountains.

Now in those mountains are dangerous things. There were robbers and thugs. There were dangerous predator animals and of course there was always the danger of the weather. Weather can change quickly on you. As the writer looked at those mountains, he wondered who would help him; who would protect him. He certainly did not think the mountains were going to protect him, because what was in those mountains was a threat to him. So he was not specifically looking to the mountains for help, but we learn where he is looking in **verse 2**.

He immediately realized that God who made the heaven and earth would help him. In other words, the God who created us would watch out for us.

God could help him and God would help him. We have trouble in life, but God will help us in and through the troubles.

REALIZATION #2 – We must realize that God will not allow our foot to slip. **121:3a**

Another way to view this is that God will enable His people to stand firm. When the writer says that God will “not allow your foot to slip,” he is referring to the fact that there will be times when God’s people will find themselves in slippery situations. It is very easy for us to slip. God knows that. He knows how easy it is for us to slip. But He will not let us slip away from our relationship with Him. He will not let us fall. He will keep us standing.

REALIZATION #3 – We must realize that God does not sleep. **121:3b**

Not only is it easy for us to slip, it is also easy for us to sleep. God does not sleep. God never dozes off in caring for His people. God is always awake and alert in watching out for His people. Even when we don’t see or sense danger, He is on the alert, watching out for us. God never closes His eyes to our situation.

Night time is a threat to us, but not to God. He is not sleeping. He is always on the alert.

I read a story of a Captain of a ship who had his family on board and one night a serious squall broke out at sea and the people on the ship were very fearful. The captain’s little eight-year-old daughter was on board and she woke up because of all the commotion. She got up and said, “Is Daddy running this ship?” The people who knew her said, “Yes.” She said okay, then I am going back to bed.

REALIZATION #4 – We must realize that God always guards Israel. **121:4**

God wants all to know that He is always watching out for and keeping Israel. No one will ever be able to annihilate Israel. It does not matter what the threat or who the threat.

The One guarding Israel is God and God does not ever slumber or sleep when it comes to protecting and preserving her.

Now the greatest threat that will ever come against Israel will be the Antichrist in the Tribulation who for 3 ½ years will try to exterminate every single Jew worldwide. He will not succeed. He will not be able to do it. God will protect Israel and He will preserve her.

Just recently I received a letter that was a threat and in the letter they said that they were tired of my rantings and ravings that are pro-Israel. Well God is pro-Israel and just watch what happens to those who hate Israel.

REALIZATION #5 – We must realize that the LORD is our keeper. **121:5a**

We never know from where the next attack will come. We can be attacked from various people, various places and various angles. It is good to know that when those attacks come, God is our keeper. We may be weak but He is strong. We may be ignorant, but He is Omniscient.

God is the One who keeps us from danger, destruction and sin. He is the keeper of our salvation.

REALIZATION #6 – We must realize that the LORD is our shade. **121:5b**

People traveled sometimes by the light of the moon at night and also during the heat of the day in the day time. God is promising to be the keeper of His people no matter the place or the time.

The image of God being our shade is one that means that God is the one who comforts us and is right there with us providing for us relief from the scorching heat of the sun.

During the Tribulation, God will scorch the world with the sun and finding fresh water to drink will be very difficult. In fact, finding any break from the heat will be difficult (Rev. 16:8-12). During that time God will provide for Israel and will protect His people. He will comfort them and He will shade them.

REALIZATION #7 – We must realize that the LORD will not smite us. **121:6**

Now it is clear to me that this is a reference to when God is using the sun and the moon for judgment purposes to smite the world. We know that during the Tribulation, God is literally going to do things with the sun and the moon in pouring out a ferocious judgment on this God-mocking, Christ-rejecting world.

What God is promising His people here is that He will not ever smite His people. Even when He is pouring out judgment on the rest of the world, He will not smite His people. He will protect them, provide for them and preserve them.

REALIZATION #8 – We must realize that the LORD will protect us. **121:7a**

Now notice what God promises to His people here—He will protect you from “all evil.” The Apostle Peter would say that we are “kept by the power of God” (I Pet. 1:5).

Now what does this mean? It means that God will keep our soul from falling into evil. We do not keep ourselves from this; God is the One who does this. If it were left to us, we would plunge headlong into evil.

REALIZATION #9 – We must realize that the LORD will keep us. **121:7b**

Now carefully observe what God is keeping, our soul. Our flesh has failed but not our soul. We may be attacked physically or mentally. We may lose a job, a bank account, a home or our health, but we will never lose our soul and our relationship with God. Why? Because He protects it.

REALIZATION #10 – We must realize that the LORD will guard us. **121:8**

Now look at this amazing promise. God says I will guard my people in life and guard them forever.

As we journey through life we travel this way and that way. We go in and go out. We go to various places but no matter where we are, God guards us. In all of our active life, we are protected by God.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

- 1) When surrounded by trouble, look above the trouble and look up to God.**
- 2) Realize that God is the One who will guard us, keep us and protect us.**