

# A SONG FOR THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

*Psalm 121* is one of the fifteen ‘Songs of Ascents’ (*Psalms 120 - 134*). **Ascent** means “going-up.”

It is thought that these 15 Psalms were sung by pilgrims as they **climbed up** toward Jerusalem on their way to attend one of the annual festivals (*cp. Psalm 122; Isaiah 30:29*).

The same Hebrew word for *ascents* is used as the Jews sang on their return from their exile in Babylon (*cp. Psalm 126; Ezra 7:9*).

The author of *Psalm 121* felt the threat of danger and uncertainty on his journey. But he assured himself in God that he had nothing to fear. **He sang about his Guardian and Protector.**

*Psalm 121:1-8 (esv)* “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? <sup>2</sup> **My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.** <sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved; He who **keeps** you will not slumber. <sup>4</sup> Behold, He who **keeps** Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. <sup>5</sup> The Lord is your **keeper**; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. <sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. <sup>7</sup> The Lord Will **keep** you from all evil; He will **keep** your life. <sup>8</sup> The Lord will **keep** your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”

## Two Key Phrases

### **The Lord is our Keeper and Guardian**

- *Your guardian will not fall asleep. (vs 3b)*
- *Indeed, the Guardian of Israel never rests or sleeps. (vs 4)*
- *The Lord is your guardian. ... (and) your shade (vs 5)*
- *The Lord guards you from every evil (vs 7a)*
- *He guards your life (vs 7b)*
- *The Lord guards you as you come and go (vs 8). (GW translation)*

**Hebrew** word for “keeper” – **shamar**.

A thorn hedge was planted on the **inside** of a sheepcote – it was an area enclosed by a wall to house and to protect sheep. Any wild beast leaping over the wall would be spiked by the thorns.

The Lord can be our Shepherd-Keeper but **only while we remain within the protecting walls of His will**.

**Within His walls of protection, we can experience His:**

**Comfort:** His protection and care are unwearying  
- (vs 3)

**Attention:** His vigilance is never relaxed - (vs 4)

**Acceptance:** He knows you and calls you by name - (vs 5a)

**Presence:** He is in the centre of each day - (vs 5b-6)

**Protection:** He provides pardon and deliverance - (vs 7)

**Companionship:** He walks with us in our coming and our going - (vs 8)

**Big Idea: God is our Keeper and Guardian, and He watches over us.**

## **The Lord is our Shade**

*Vs 5b-7 ...the Lord is your shade on your right hand. <sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. <sup>7</sup> The Lord will **keep** you from all evil; He will **keep** your life.*

If we stay under the shadow of God's will, He protects us - both day and night.

**Meaning: no one is nearer to us than the One who Keeps us.**

The "**right hand**" symbolises strength and favour in the Bible.

*Exodus 15:6 (nkjv) "Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces."*

*Psalm 98:1 (nkjv) Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvellous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.*

*Psalm 110:1 (niv) The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*

*Ephesians 1:19-21 (nkjv) ...what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power<sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,<sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

God provides us with His protection, power, and defence as we go about our lives within His will.

Scripture teaches us that God helps those who seek His help and refuge.

*Psalm 46:1 (niv) God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.*

*Psalm 121* is about trusting in God's care and protection.

This is a good way to think about living under God's shade - it is a place of protection.

*Romans 8* assures us that God is directly involved in our life and that He is for us, not against us.

**Romans 8:28** “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

**Romans 8:31** “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

**Romans 8:37-39** “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

These verses do not teach us that we will never have problems or trouble in our life, but rather that nothing can separate us from God’s love for us in Christ.

We are all on a journey following God, and *Psalm 121* is a wonderful song for the journey.

Learn to trust God in all things and look for the good in all the details of life. God cares for you, and He desires to help you.