

THE PSALMS OF ASCENT

JOURNEYING WITH JESUS
TO JERUSALEM

Part 2

"Psalm 121 & the Calming of the Storm"

12 January 2025

Introduction: *Living in Wonder*

"When scholars speak of the world as "disenchanted," they mean that in modern times, with the advance of science and secularism, people no longer perceive the presence of spiritual things as they once did. Even many Christians, though professing belief in God and in a transcendent realm, have come to regard the faith as primarily a source of morals and ethics, and an impetus for social change."

"...true enchantment is simply living within the confident belief that there is deep meaning to life, meaning that exists in a world independent of ourselves...The point cannot be overstated: the world is not what we think it is. It is so much weirder. It is so much darker. It is so much brighter and more beautiful."
—Rod Dreher, Living in Wonder

The Psalms of Ascent (120-134) take worshippers on a journey together to the place of God's presence. For this reason they have for millennia had an important place in both Jewish and Christian worship practices. These psalms recognize that the world we live in is filled with God's glory and that His people are privileged to know this and respond rightly to it.

Key Point: Believers can live with confidence in the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, who _____ us as we journey together through life.

Psalm 121

The ascent psalms continue with the Israelite who has been living in a foreign land leaving for Jerusalem. As he ascends towards the city, he looks to the LORD for protection, raising his eyes to the mountains which are in view for him.

- **As the psalmist journeys to Jerusalem, he looks to the _____ that surround him as he considers the LORD's care for him. (v. 1-2)**

Psa. 121:1-2—¹I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? ²My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

"help" — 'ēzer — help, succour (used of one who helps or assists in times of distress).

⇒ Hills and mountains had both positive and negative connotations.

⇒ The answer to his question is found in the fact that the LORD is the _____ of all things.

- **In response, multiple statements are made that _____ the psalmist's confidence in the LORD.**

Psa. 121:3-4—³He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. ⁴Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

⇒ The LORD's presence is continually _____ His people to help them along their journey.

⇒ His watch-care is never interrupted by the need for sleep.

Psa. 121:5-6—⁵The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. ⁶The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

"keep" — šāmar—to keep, guard, keep watch over

⇒ The imagery of day and night is further employed to emphasize the His continual care for His people.

"sun...day"

"moon...night"

Psa. 121:7-8—⁷ *The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.* ⁸*The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.*

⇒ The culminating promise has both _____ and _____ implications.

⇒ The imagery is that of a _____ journey.

“going out and...coming in”

Key Point: As we journey through life, we should continually _____ one another in the truth of God’s presence with us and care for us.

Gospel Parallel: “The Calming of the Storm” — Matt. 4:35-41

1. At this point in Jesus’ ministry the disciples should have been assured of God’s presence with them based on the _____ He had performed and His confidence in the face of opposition.

Signs:

Opposition:

2. Although the journey they were taking that night would have been somewhat _____, the possibility of danger was well-known.

3. There is a significant contrast between the _____ that they were experiencing and what Jesus was doing in the midst of them.

“a great windstorm”

“he was asleep in the stern”

4. His confidence in the Lord contrasts sharply with their own lack of _____.

“He rebuked the wind and the sea...and there was great calm.”

5. The disciples’ fear was initially _____, but was rightly ordered once they had seen Jesus calm the storm.

“they were filled with great fear”

Key Point: The Lord Jesus’ could _____ confidently in the midst of trouble knowing that His Father in heaven neither slumbers nor sleeps as we watches over His people.

Concluding Thoughts

1. True confidence as a believer does not arise from ourselves, but is found in looking _____ and relying _____ the Lord Jesus.

Heb. 12:1-2—¹*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,* ²*looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

2. The God who is the originator of our journey through life will see us through until the _____.

Phil. 3:6— *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

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⇒ The culminating promise has both **temporal** and **eternal** implications.

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Key Point: As we journey through life, we should continually **exhort** one another in the truth of God’s presence with us and care for us.

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Signs:

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