

Psalms of the Degrees

Celebrating Triumph Over Trouble Through Trust in God

Psalm 121 - Trusting in God's Help When in Trouble

REVIEW: The Psalms of the Degrees are fifteen Psalms, 120 through 134, compiled by King Hezekiah to commemorate when God healed him from a terminal disease, added fifteen years to his life, delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrians, and performed the miracle of the degrees as a sign He would fulfill what He had promised (2 Kings 20:1-11 & Isaiah 38: 1-8). In Isaiah 38: 20 Hezekiah proclaimed, *The Lord will surely save me; so we will play MY SONGS on stringed instruments all of the days of our life at the house of the Lord.* Hezekiah arranged the songs in five groups of three Psalms, with the first Psalm in each trio speaking of trouble; the second, trust in God; and the third, triumph for God's deliverance.

Last Sunday we examined Psalm 120 ("When Trouble Invades Your Life"), which refers to the trouble of the Assyrian invasion of Judah. The Psalm focuses on the emotions trouble evokes:

1. You feel the anxiety of impending doom (vs. 1).
2. You feel demoralized by the lies of the enemy (vs. 2-4).
3. You feel stressed out, as you long for peace which cannot be found (vs. 5-7).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO PSALM 121: Psalm 121 shifts from the trouble created by the Assyrian invasion to the trust Hezekiah placed in God. Humanly speaking the situation was as desperate as could be imagined. The dreaded Assyrian army had overthrown every city in Judah with Jerusalem being the last hold out. Hezekiah in a moment of weakness tried to appease the Assyrians by giving them all the silver and gold from the temple & king's treasuries, but quickly learned you cannot appease evil, you must overcome it. The Assyrians first engaged in a war of words, directed at Hezekiah, to cause Jerusalem to surrender through fear and intimidation. The Assyrian king then sent a letter to Hezekiah which was a direct attack on God Himself (2 Kings 19: 10-13). Hezekiah takes the letter into the temple spreads it before the Lord & puts his trust in God alone to deliver (2 Kings 19: 14-19). Isaiah, the prophet, then sent a message to Hezekiah that God has heard his prayer and will deliver Jerusalem (2 Kings 19: 20-34).

1. WHEN TROUBLE INVADES YOUR LIFE PLACE YOUR TRUST IN THE LORD WHO MADE HEAVEN & EARTH.

I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from whence shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven & earth (vs. 1-2).

And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, "O Lord, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, Thou art the God, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven & earth."

2 Kings 19: 15

- If my help comes from the Lord Who made heaven and earth, is there any **TROUBLE** too difficult He cannot overcome?
- If my help comes from the Lord Who made heaven and earth, is there any **ENEMY** too powerful He cannot defeat?
- If my help comes from the Lord Who made heaven and earth, is there any **NEED** too great He cannot meet?

2. WHEN TROUBLE INVADES YOUR LIFE PLACE YOUR TRUST IN THE LORD WHO WILL KEEP YOU.

- The Lord will keep you from **FALLING**.

He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep (vs. 3-4).

- The Lord will guard you when the **ENEMY ATTACKS**.

The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night (VS. 5-6).

- The Lord will protect you from being spiritually harmed by **EVIL**.

The Lord will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever (vs. 7-8).

TWO CLOSING LESSONS:

- The prayer of faith makes a **DIFFERENCE**.

Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard you. **2 Kings 19: 20b**

- The chief purpose in prayer is for God to be **EXALTED** in the answer.

And now, O Lord our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou alone, O Lord, art God.

2 Kings 19: 19