

**Psalms of the Degrees (Psalms 120-134)
Celebrating Triumph Over Trouble Through Trust in God**

Psalm 124 - If God Is For Us, Who Can Be Against Us?

*1 "Had it not been the Lord who was on our side,"
Let Israel now say,
2 "Had it not been the Lord who was on our side
When men rose up against us,
3 Then they would have swallowed us alive,
When their anger was kindled against us;
4 Then the waters would have engulfed us,
The stream would have swept over our soul;
5 Then the raging waters would have swept over our soul."
6 Blessed be the Lord,
Who has not given us to be torn by their teeth.
7 Our soul has escaped as a bird out of the snare of the trapper;
The snare is broken and we have escaped.
8 Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: Psalm 124 is one of four Psalms written by King David and selected by King Hezekiah to be part of the Psalms of the Degrees. As emphasized in previous messages, King Hezekiah arranged the fifteen Psalms of the Degrees into five trios, with the first psalm in each trio speaking of TROUBLE, the second TRUST in God, and the third TRIUMPH. Psalm 124 is the second psalm in the second trio which praises God for deliverance and acknowledges absolute dependence in God alone. When David wrote the psalm he was probably speaking of God's deliverance from the Philistines shortly after he became king. Hezekiah borrowed David's psalm because it not only expressed Hezekiah's gratitude to the Lord for His miraculous deliverance from the Assyrian invasion, but also declared Hezekiah's confidence in the Lord for all future times of trial.

An interesting observation is the statement in verse 7, "*Our soul has escaped as a bird out of the snare of the trapper.*" The British Museum in London contains King Sennacherib's own written record of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem where he boasts he shut Hezekiah in his royal city "like a caged bird" and that Hezekiah "was overwhelmed by the fear of the brightness of my lordship." He of course does not record God's destruction of his army and Hezekiah's escape from the cage. Psalm 124 is the testimony of believers who found themselves "trapped," but then, not by their own doing, "*the snare has been broken*" (v. 7b). If "*our help is in the name of the Lord Who made heaven and earth* (v. 8)," how could He be defeated by a bird catcher's snare?"

When trapped by God's enemies or life's trials with no way of escape, what are you to do?

1. Place your DEPENDENCE in God alone because He is for you.

"Had it not been the Lord who was on our side," Let Israel now say, "Had it not been the Lord who was on our side When men rose up against us...(vs. 1-2) More accurate translation: Had it not been Jehovah! He was for us, oh let Israel say! Had it not been Jehovah! He who was for us when men rose against us...

If the Lord had not been my help, My soul would soon have dwelt in the abode of silence. If I should say, "My foot has slipped," Your lovingkindness, O Lord, will hold me up. When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul. Psalm 94: 17-19

2. Trust God to protect you from the EVIL intentions of the enemy and to turn it for your spiritual GOOD.

Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their anger was kindled against us; Then the waters would have engulfed us, The stream would have swept over our soul; Then the raging waters would have swept over our soul" (vs. 3-5).

Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, In the Lord, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? Ps. 56: 9

3. Praise God for His DELIVERANCE.

Blessed be the Lord, Who has not given us to be torn by their teeth. Our soul has escaped as a bird out of the snare of the trapper; The snare is broken and we have escaped (vs. 6-7).

The Lord is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me? The Lord is for me among those who help me; Therefore I will look with satisfaction on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. Ps. 118: 7-8

4. Rest in the Creator who is your PRESERVER.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth (v. 8).

*My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121: 2
Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, "O Lord, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth...Now, O Lord our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O Lord, are God." 2 Kings 19: 15 & 19*