

The Songs of Ascents: The Care of God, Pt. 2

Psalm 121

Study Notes for February 12, 2023

I. Introduction: The Care of God for His People (cf. Ps. 34:8; 116:5; Lam. 3:21-23; Rom. 2:4)

II. The Songs of Ascent: The Care of God, Ps. 120.

A. God's Care for His People Stated, vv. 3b, 4a, 5a, 7a & b, 8a.

שָׁמַר (šāmar)

1. It carries the idea of a personal care which watches over something to protect and preserve it, Gen. 2:15; 3:24...
2. It speaks of covenant fidelity which in God comes not on account of the actions of His people, but God's own Character, Deut. 7:9a; 9:6; 2 Tim. 2:13...

***Point:** The Care referenced in Ps. 121 speaks of a Covenant Commitment on the part of God by which He lavishes His love, kindness, protection, and care upon His people not on account of anything they do but on account of His Kindness alone!

B. God's Care Examined, vv. 1-6.

1. God's Care Results in Unthwartable Assistance, vv. 1-2.
2. God's Care Results in Constant Stability, vv. 3-4.
3. **God's Care Results in Personal Protection, vv. 5-6.**

Verse 5a

“Keeper” (שָׁמַר [šāmar])

Verse 5b

“Shade on your right hand”

A Pilgrimage to Jerusalem from the Perspective of a Child

It indicates that God's Care is Personalized/Intimate (cf. Ps. 23:4a)...

The “Shadow” of Death (1 Cor. 15:54-55)

Verse 6

A Merism (cf. Deut. 3:24b; 1 Cor. 3:21b- 22b)

***Point:** God Cares for His people fervently, intimately, unceasingly, and absolutely. That is the point of the first three stanzas of this song!

C. God's Care Applied, v. 7-8.

1. No Matter WHAT is Against Us, v. 7a.

“From All Evil”

רַע (ra) verses טוב (tov)- Deut. 30:15

***Point:** The focus of this promise is that in our pilgrimage to Jerusalem when we encounter bad things- illness, sickness, loss of any kind- we ultimately will not be defeated by them (cf. Is. 40:31)...

2. No Matter WHO We Are, v. 7b.

“Your Soul”

נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh)

***Point**

1. Whether weak or strong, timid or bold, full of faith or of little faith, the Lord will keep you!
2. Gloriously therefore, it is not our strong grip on grace that keeps us going, but God's strong grip on us!

Spurgeon wrote, “God is the sole keeper of the soul. Our soul is kept from the dominion of sin, the infection of error, the crush of despondency, the puffing up of pride; kept from the world, the flesh and the devil; kept for holier and greater things; kept in the love of God; kept unto the eternal kingdom and glory. What can harm a soul that is kept of the Lord?” (*The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150*, p. 16)

3. No Matter WHERE We are in Our Journey, v. 8a.

“Going Out and Your Coming In”

A Merism

“Going Out”- Prov. 22:15a; Is. 40:30.

“Coming In”- Is. 46:4.

4. No Matter WHATEVER ELSE Comes our Way, v. 8b.

“From this Time Forth and Forever”

The NT Equivalent of this text is Rom. 8:38-39...

***Where We Live:** From the first two Songs of Ascents we understand that in this world we are going to have tribulation (Jn. 16:33). So, what is our consolation?

Eugene Peterson wrote, “The Christian life is not a quiet escape to a garden where we can walk and talk uninterrupted with our Lord; nor a fantasy trip to a heavenly city where we can compare blue ribbons and gold medals with others who have made it to the winners' circle... The Christian life is going to God. In going to God Christians travel the same ground that everyone else walks on, breathe the same air, drink the same water, shop in the same stores, read the same newspapers, are citizens under the same governments, pay the same prices for groceries and gasoline, fear the same dangers, are subject to the same pressures, get the same distresses, are buried in the same ground. ¶ The difference is that each step we walk, each breath we breathe, we know we are preserved by God, we know we are accompanied by God, we know we are ruled by God; and therefore no matter what doubts we endure or what accidents we experience, the Lord will preserve us from evil, he will keep our life.” (*Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, pp. 44-45)