**Help from the Lord**

*Psalm 121*

**Introduction**

1. The provision of salvation comes with a warning about losing it – **Hebrews 3:12; 12:15**
2. However, this is not a discouraging notion that is intended to give the impression that salvation is impossible – **Matthew 19:26** (EMPHASIS – “with God”)
3. The scripture is filled with examples and assertions of confidence – **2 Timothy 4:7-8**
4. The confidence ultimately comes from a faith in God’s promise to keep us – **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Jude 24**
5. Jesus promised that no outward force or person would be able to take us away from Him, and destroy our salvation – **John 10:28-29**
   1. We know this does not confirm the false doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.
   2. Jesus’ promise must harmonize with the entire Bible which has an abundance of passages showing the possibility of apostasy.
6. **Psalm 121** is an incredibly comforting scripture which manifests the protective help of God. If the God who is the subject of this Psalm is who we turn to for our aid our salvation is certain.
7. Psalm 121
8. The Source of Help **(vv. 1-2)**
   1. ***“to the hills”*** – **Psalm 125:2** (mountains of Jerusalem); **Daniel 6:10** (Daniel prayed toward Jerusalem)
   2. ***“from the Lord”*** – i.e. Jehovah.
      1. Dwelling in Jerusalem – **Psalm 132:13-18** – where blessings are found for His people (**vv. 17-18** – to provide the Messiah).
      2. Creator – infinite power to help.
9. Perpetual Help **(vv. 3-4)**
   1. **(v. 3a)** – He will keep you planted.
   2. **(v. 3b)** – this protection and strength is always available.
      1. **(v. 4)** – He never sleeps.
      2. There will not be a time where God is unavailable for His people. (**cf. 1 Kings 18:27** – Elijah mocking prophets of Baal.)
10. Protective Help **(vv. 5-6)**
    1. ***“keeper”*** – šâmar; a primitive root; properly, to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard (Strong)
    2. **(vv. 5b-6a)** – protective shade from the damaging rays of the sun. (Protection all day.)
    3. **(v. 6b)** – protection against the perils of night. (Perhaps cold – **Genesis 31:40** – Jacob to Laban about serving for his daughters). (Protection even through the night.)
    4. His protection is at all times, and in all circumstances (climates).
11. Preservative Help **(vv. 7-8)**
    1. **(v. 7)** – ALL evil – when evil threatens, the Lord will preserve His people in their state of safety.
    2. **(v. 8)** – In every station of life – ***“going out and your coming in”*** – always preservation from the corrupting influences of the evil world.
       1. FOREVERMORE – so, throughout life on into eternity.
    3. “In connection with this the thought is natural, that the life of him who stands under the so universal and unbounded protection of eternal love can suffer no injury.” (Keil and Delitzsch)
12. While the Psalm would certainly have a physical application to it, think more on the spiritual. God is our help, protection, preservation from evil spiritually.
13. The fact of God’s protective help is comforting. However, it is that which must be sought (**cf. Psalm 121:1**). Something which provides protection may not be successful if the subject of protection does not understand the “how” of the protection. How does God help us, to preserve us blameless, to keep us from being snatched from His hand? HOW DOES GOD KEEP US SAVED?
14. Help from the Lord
15. Revelation
    1. **Psalm 119:105** – the word guides us.
       1. **Psalm 119:11** – if we keep it in us, we will remain pure – i.e. in a blameless, saved state. Avoid sin.
    2. Written revelation:
       1. **Romans 1:16-17** – gospel saves as it reveals the “righteousness of God.”
          1. **Romans 10:1-4** – requires knowledge of a plan, doctrine.
          2. **Romans 10:16** – Israel did not obey the gospel.
          3. So God, by the gospel, is telling us how to be righteous before Him.
       2. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – it is sufficient for all facets of the spiritual journey.
       3. **John 8:31-32** – personal adherence is the activating agent of the saving power of God’s word.
          1. It is powerless when unapplied.
       4. **1 John 3:7-9** – those who practice it are of God – as long as you are applying God’s word you are in a saved state.
          1. **(v. 9)** – “cannot sin” – i.e. if the seed is in him.
          2. **1 John 3:4** – sin is lawlessness.
             1. *Anomia* – (a) negative, (nomia) law – without law.
             2. When one is without God’s law – it is not in him – then he is in sin.
          3. How can God keep us in a saved state? – by His word remaining in us.
       5. This is a fundamental understanding. However, some balk at the idea of being able to execute our part. Can we truly abide by the standard, and keep God’s word in us? Or is lawlessness an unavoidable thing?
    3. Bodily revelation (Jesus):
       1. **John 1:14** – word became flesh.
       2. **Colossians 2:9-10** – fullness of God bodily – complete in Him.
       3. **Hebrews 4:15** – He lived above sin.
          1. **We have sinned** – **Romans 3:23**
          2. **But Jesus’ example as a man as we are proves that not sinning is always a choice within our ability to make**.
       4. Can we be like Jesus?
          1. **1 Corinthians 11:1** – we are told to imitate Him.
             1. Why are we told this if we can’t imitate Him?
          2. **1 John 2:6** – walk just as He walked.
          3. **Ephesians 4:13** – mature to the standard of Christ.
       5. God gave Jesus as the perfect example to follow.
       6. God says we can and must be like Jesus – this ensures our spiritual preservation in blamelessness.
          1. Knowing we can is one of the greatest ways God is seeking to help us – **Philippians 4:13**
16. Prayer
    1. **Psalm 50:15** – call on Him when in trouble for deliverance.
    2. **James 5:16** – it avails much.
       1. Prayer is a powerful tool at our disposal.
       2. Given by God to keep us saved.
    3. “Did you think to pray?” (Hymn)
       1. “Ere you left your room this morning, Did you think to pray? In the name of Christ, our Savior, Did you sue for loving favor As a shield today?”
       2. “Oh, how praying rests the weary! Prayer will change the night to day. So, when life gets dark and dreary, Don’t forget to pray.”
       3. “When your heart was filled with anger, Did you think to pray? Did you plead for grace, my brother, That you might forgive another Who had crossed your way?”
       4. “When sore trials came upon you, Did you think to pray? When your soul was full of sorrow, Balm of Gilead did you borrow At the gates of day?”
    4. Enduring trials – **James 1:2-5**
    5. Overcoming anxiety/worry – **Philippians 4:6-7**
    6. Overcoming temptation:
       1. Offered escape – **1 Corinthians 10:13**
       2. We must be on the lookout for that escape.
       3. Prayer will reveal it, and protect us from temptation.
       4. Jesus – **Matthew 26:36** – in His greatest hour of trial – **Luke 22:44; Hebrews 5:7-8** (heard, and given strength to endure)
       5. Jesus to the disciples:
          1. **Matthew 6:9, 13** – do not lead us into…
          2. **Matthew 26:40-41** – watch and pray…lest you enter into…
          3. Temptation will come – don’t enter into it – i.e. open the door temptation offers, into sin.
          4. Watch and pray – **Colossians 4:2** (vigilant); **Ephesians 6:18** (watchful)
17. A Sacrifice of Perpetual Validity
    1. **1 John 2:1-2** – told not to sin (zero tolerance), but there is provision for forgiveness if we do fall short.
       1. Propitiation – *hilasmos* – appeasement necessitated by sin (BDAG).
          1. I.e. through Christ’s death God’s wrath coming from sin is appeased.
          2. **Romans 3:23-26** – propitiation by Christ’s blood accessed (**Romans 5:2**) by faith – ***“through faith”***
          3. John is writing to those who have accessed the blood of Christ through faith and are delivered from the wrath of God.
          4. Yet, He speaks of Christ as the current propitiation for them – ***“is”*** – verb, present, active.
             1. ***“if we sin”*** – we are not to sin, but IF…
             2. How are we to be found right with God? HE REMAINS AS THE APPEASEMENT OF GOD’S WRATH THROUGH HIS SACRIFICE.
             3. I.e. if we sin, when we meet the conditions of God, He looks again on Jesus’ sacrifice and forgives us.
    2. **Hebrews 10:10** – sanctified through the offering of Jesus.
       1. ***“once for all”*** – *ephapax* – (*epi*) intensifying prefix, (*hapax*) “’once for all,’ of what is of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition” (VINE)
       2. This does not mean that sin is of no consequence, BUT THAT THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE FOR THE TAKING AWAY OF SIN.
    3. **Hebrews 7:23-25** – able to save to the uttermost.
       1. He is continually active before the throne on our behalf…
       2. …to appeal to His sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins.
    4. **1 John 1:7, 9** – if we confess our trespasses He is faithful and just to forgive.
       1. This is on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ – blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.
       2. Same logical connection made as – **Acts 2:38; Matthew 26:28**
18. Longsuffering
    1. **2 Peter 3:15** – longsuffering is our salvation.
       1. Longsuffering – *makro*s, “long*,” thumos*, “temper” (VINE)
          1. (1) state of remaining tranquil while awaiting an outcome; (2) state of being able to bear up under provocation (BDAG)
          2. (1) – context of a man showing patience in trial.
          3. (2) – context of God not possessing a “short fuse” with our transgressions.
          4. However, both seem to be applicable to the use of “longsuffering” in context.
       2. **(vv. 5-7)** – scoffers who are suggesting God is not coming in judgment and destruction.
       3. **(vv. 8-9)** – God’s delay is not slackness, but an expression of His desire for men to be saved.
          1. (2) – He bears up under the provocation of man’s sin because He doesn’t wish for them to perish. (Doesn’t mean punishment will not come – **2 Peter 2:3**)
       4. **(vv. 14-15, 17-18)** – use your time (provided by God’s longsuffering) to be in a place of peace, purity, and blamelessness – grow.
          1. (1) – He is calm as He lovingly and patiently waits for us to mature, that we are ready for the judgment whenever it comes.
    2. The whole point of the longsuffering of God is to give us time:
       1. To repent – **Luke 13:1-5** (no sin is acceptable/tolerated – every sin must be turned away from); **Romans 2:4** (goodness of God’s longsuffering is for us to turn away, not continue in our sin)
          1. We must not question God’s provision for salvation.
          2. He is JUST, and grants EVERYONE the time needed to repent.
          3. The question is whether we are using that time to repent, and get further away from sin. 🡪
       2. To grow – **2 Peter 3:18**
          1. Put to death members – **Colossians 3:5-7**
             1. Speaking to those who are already Christians.
             2. Sin is habitual – **Romans 6:19** (grows upon itself); **Ephesians 2:3** (habitual nature)
             3. Growth in Christ over time causes these habits to die.
          2. Is there a particular sin you struggle with?
             1. God is faithful to forgive you if you fall short.
             2. God is also faithful to see that, through Christ, you overcome such where it is no longer a constant struggle.
             3. EX: **James 3:1-2** – sins of the tongue – those who have overcome such are mature.
          3. This requires our cooperation with God – **Philippians 2:12-13** – He is seeking to work with us through His longsuffering.

**Conclusion**

1. Thank God for His continual help as we fight the spiritual battle.
2. We must never forget that our help comes from the Lord, and is perpetually available.
3. There is never a reason to sin. There is never an excuse.
4. Rather, God is always providing for a way to salvation – we must be looking, and take advantage of His immeasurable help.