

The Psalms
(Lesson 13)

Introduction:

1. 15 psalms (120-134) are called "Songs of Degrees" ["Songs of Ascents" -- ASV].
2. It seems that the Jews recited these particular psalms as they traveled to Jerusalem to observe their 3 main annual feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles).
 - a. Jerusalem was located on an elevated area.
 - b. When people traveled to Jerusalem, they "went up" [ascended] to it.
 - c. By reciting these psalms, the Jews would certainly be prepared to worship God when they arrived in Jerusalem.
3. In this lesson we are concentrating on the information revealed in Psalm 121.
4. The main theme of this psalm is: "The Lord Is the Keeper of Israel."
 - a. Verses 1-2 teach us that the Lord helps His followers.
 - b. We learn from vs.3-8 how the Lord helps His followers.

Discussion:

I. (vs.1-2) THE LORD HELPS HIS FOLLOWERS

- A. (vs.1) As God's people traveled toward Jerusalem and they saw the hills that surrounded the city, they could say, "*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.*"
- B. "*The hills*" are mentioned in vs.1, but God's people recognized Him as their helper (vs.2).
 1. When they saw the hills they knew they were approaching Jerusalem.
 2. The great temple where the Jews worshipped was located in Jerusalem.
 3. As the hills came into view, they were reminded of their relationship with God, and they were reminded that He was their helper.

II. WE LEARN FROM VS.3-8 HOW THE LORD HELPS HIS FOLLOWERS

- A. Keep in mind that some of the Jews had to travel great distances to Jerusalem.
 1. They would be especially grateful for the help that God gave them as they traveled.
 2. God helped them in 2 ways: He protected them, and He preserved them.
- B. (vs.3-6) God helps His followers by protecting them.
 1. (vs.3a) God protected the Jews by not allowing their feet to be moved.
 - a. Sure footing is essential to those who climb hills.
 - b. Palestine has a rough and rocky terrain, so sure footing was important to the Jews.
 2. (vs.3b-4) He protected the Jews continuously.
 - a. God does not slumber or sleep.
 - b. This indicates that He is always attentive to the needs of His children.
 3. (vs.5-6) His protection is given during the day as well as during the night.
 - a. There are hazards that we face during the day, and there are others we face at night.
 - b. The Lord is always on call.
- C. (vs.7-8) God helps His followers by preserving them.
 1. (vs.7) God preserves His followers from all evil.
 2. This principle is repeated many times (Psalm 31:23; 145:20).
 3. (vs.8) The Lord's ability to preserve is dependable (Psalm 125:1-2).

III. ALTHOUGH THIS PSALM WAS WRITTEN PRIMARILY FOR THE JEWS, THESE PRINCIPLES APPLY TO US

- A. The Lord stills helps His followers (Hebrews 4:16).
- B. He helps His followers by protecting and preserving us.
 1. He will protect us.
 - a. He will protect us so we can avoid stumbling (Jude 24).
 - b. He will protect us continuously (Hebrews 13:5b-6).
 2. God will also preserve us.
 - a. This does not mean that we will never have to face things that are unpleasant, but He will not allow us to be tried above what we are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 - b. The Lord's ability to preserve is dependable (1 Thessalonians 5:23).