

Psalm 121

This is a song of praise that was used by the Hebrew people at their annual feast in Jerusalem. Three times a year the Israelites living outside of Jerusalem would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices. They would climb the mountain to the temple of God.

This psalm tells how the Jewish people turned to God for help and salvation. One woman kept a copy of this psalm hanging on her bedroom wall. Everyone has troubles and can learn this psalm to help as they walk their own pilgrimage of life today.

What does this psalm say to us today? The first thing is to notice the question in verse 1. A person looks up at the mountains and asks, "Where does my help come from?" Someone else answers the question, "My help comes from the Lord."

Pilgrims had to climb a mountain, going up, up, up. Mountains can be dangerous. Thieves hid in the mountains and attacked travelers. They would beat and rob them. Your foot might slip and you would fall down and break bones. You might get too hot and not find water. This pilgrim is frightened.

In the old days of Israel there were many pagan gods. Some were Baal, the storm god or the sun god or the moon god. No help comes from them! Help only comes from the one God who made the sun and moon and earth.

This message gives hope and courage to the pilgrim. He/she can remember that the God who made the mountains is with her.

The next answer tells the pilgrim that God will not let her foot slip. She does not need to fear.

Why does the psalm say that God will not sleep? It's because the pagan gods loved to sleep. When their people cried for help, they did not answer. They couldn't hear because they were snoring! So there is a big difference between the sleeping pagan gods and the true God of Israel.

Maybe the pilgrim was afraid of the hot sun and moon. What is the answer to the fear? God will be a shade for you. He will protect you. Why is she so afraid? The culture said the sun god could kill you. The moon god could make you crazy.

God can keep you from all evil. Pilgrims that have trouble are thinking about all the bad things that can happen to them. But this psalm reminds us to find courage in the truth that God is with us.

This is true for us today also. Remember that God is with us in our troubles, every day, every coming and going.