

PSALM 121

My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
(PSALM 121:2)

STRUCTURE

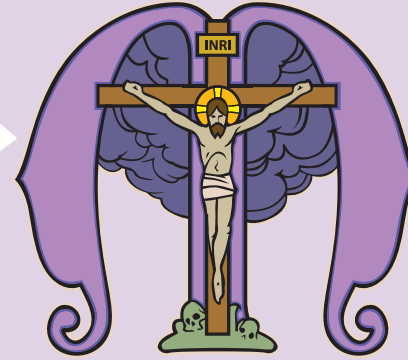
- v. 1-2** Help comes from the Lord.
- v. 3-4** The Lord's constant watchfulness; He does not slumber.
- v. 5-6** The Lord's protecting shade.
- v. 7-8** The Lord guards and keeps His people forever.

AT A GLANCE

- PART OF A WHOLE** One of the *Psalms of Ascent* (120–134).
- DIG DEEPER** Note the general progression of the psalm from the truth of the Lord as helper to increased promises of God's work all the way to eternity.
- "KEEP/KEEPER"** Used six times. The first three speak of God's present work, while the last three promise what He will continue to do.
- THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR** The Lord as the giver of shade and a guardian at night is a common image throughout Scripture (PSALM 91:5; ISAIAH 4:6, 25:4 AND 49:10; REV. 7:16).

CHRIST IS HERE

Christ's promise to be with His baptized disciples unto the end of the age (MATT. 28:20) gives the confidence described in Psalm 121, as He is the helper and keeper of his church.



PSALM 121

My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
(PSALM 121:2)

STRUCTURE

- v. 1-2** Help comes from the Lord.
- v. 3-4** The Lord's constant watchfulness; He does not slumber.
- v. 5-6** The Lord's protecting shade.
- v. 7-8** The Lord guards and keeps His people forever.

AT A GLANCE

- PART OF A WHOLE** One of the *Psalms of Ascent* (120–134).
- DIG DEEPER** Note the general progression of the psalm from the truth of the Lord as helper to increased promises of God's work all the way to eternity.
- "KEEP/KEEPER"** Used six times. The first three speak of God's present work, while the last three promise what He will continue to do.
- THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR** The Lord as the giver of shade and a guardian at night is a common image throughout Scripture (PSALM 91:5; ISAIAH 4:6, 25:4 AND 49:10; REV. 7:16).

CHRIST IS HERE

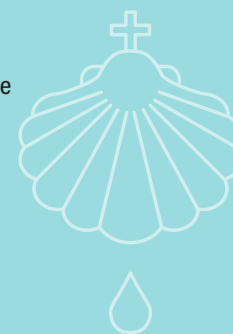
Christ's promise to be with His baptized disciples unto the end of the age (MATT. 28:20) gives the confidence described in Psalm 121, as He is the helper and keeper of his church.



As one of the Psalms of Ascent, this psalm may have been sung by pilgrims to Jerusalem as they drew near to the holy city. The first and final verses in particular call to mind the centrality of the Lord's presence on the Temple Mount and the longing to return to His presence throughout one's life. The psalmist begins by speaking in the first-person singular and then moves to speak in the second-person singular. However, this is not an individualistic psalm. The individual child of God has the confidence and promises given in the words of this psalm because of what God does for His holy people, as stated in verse 4. For the baptized member of the church, the assertions made about what God does and will continue to do are certain. This is what God does for His people; He pledges these things to them. As a part of the holy Church by baptism, the individual believer has these promises from God to all His people, made his very own possession. It is for this reason that the words of the final verse are used in the Liturgy of Holy Baptism.



As one of the Psalms of Ascent, this psalm may have been sung by pilgrims to Jerusalem as they drew near to the holy city. The first and final verses in particular call to mind the centrality of the Lord's presence on the Temple Mount and the longing to return to His presence throughout one's life. The psalmist begins by speaking in the first-person singular and then moves to speak in the second-person singular. However, this is not an individualistic psalm. The individual child of God has the confidence and promises given in the words of this psalm because of what God does for His holy people, as stated in verse 4. For the baptized member of the church, the assertions made about what God does and will continue to do are certain. This is what God does for His people; He pledges these things to them. As a part of the holy Church by baptism, the individual believer has these promises from God to all His people, made his very own possession. It is for this reason that the words of the final verse are used in the Liturgy of Holy Baptism.



USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: v. 2a

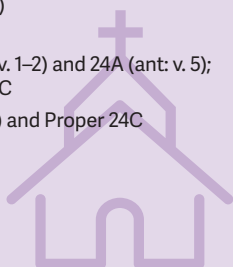
In the Daily Office: Mondays at Vespers

At the Divine Service: Psalm for St. Bartholomew (ant: v. 8)

One-Year:
Psalm for Lent 2 (ant: v. 1–2)

Three-Year:
Introit for Propers 8B (ant: v. 1–2) and 24A (ant: v. 5);
introit verses for Proper 28C

Psalm for Lent 2A (ant: v. 8) and Proper 24C
(ant: v. 1–2)



SPIRITUAL CARE

- Before going to church.
- For comfort when tempted or under duress.
- At Baptism, confirmation or death.
- When suffering from depression.
- When saying goodbye to a loved one.



USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: v. 2a

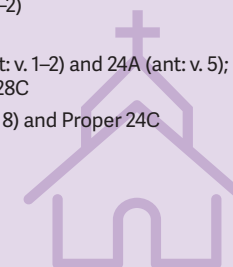
In the Daily Office: Mondays at Vespers

At the Divine Service: Psalm for St. Bartholomew (ant: v. 8)

One-Year:
Psalm for Lent 2 (ant: v. 1–2)

Three-Year:
Introit for Propers 8B (ant: v. 1–2) and 24A (ant: v. 5);
introit verses for Proper 28C

Psalm for Lent 2A (ant: v. 8) and Proper 24C
(ant: v. 1–2)



SPIRITUAL CARE

- Before going to church.
- For comfort when tempted or under duress.
- At Baptism, confirmation or death.
- When suffering from depression.
- When saying goodbye to a loved one.



PSALM

121

PSALM PRAYER

O Lord God, our help and protection, You neither slumber nor sleep. Keep us from all evil in this world so that we may not be overwhelmed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

© 2024 LCMS

This work may be reproduced by churches and schools for their own use in the study of the Scriptures. Commercial reproduction, or reproduction for sale, of any portion of this work or of the work as a whole, without the written permission of the copyright holder, is prohibited.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Psalm prayer by Ludolph of Saxony. Public domain, courtesy of Paul C. Stratman (acollectionofprayers.com).

PSALM

121

PSALM PRAYER

O Lord God, our help and protection, You neither slumber nor sleep. Keep us from all evil in this world so that we may not be overwhelmed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

© 2024 LCMS

This work may be reproduced by churches and schools for their own use in the study of the Scriptures. Commercial reproduction, or reproduction for sale, of any portion of this work or of the work as a whole, without the written permission of the copyright holder, is prohibited.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Psalm prayer by Ludolph of Saxony. Public domain, courtesy of Paul C. Stratman (acollectionofprayers.com).