



Background on Psalms

- Largest book in the Bible (chapters)
- Written 2,500 to 3,500 years ago
- By and for Ancient Near Eastern people (the Israelites)
- Genre of Psalms
 - Poetry, songs
 - Different genres or themes: hymns, lament, thanksgiving, remembrance, confidence, wisdom, kingship

Confidence psalms

- Trust in God's goodness and power
- Assured content rather than specific structure
- Example: Psalm 23
- Presence of God through all conditions

The Songs of Ascent

- Psalms 120-134
- What are the songs of ascent?
 - "Ascents" – steps of the temple
- Composed for Solomon's dedication of the temple
- Sung by worshippers walking up the road to Jerusalem

Content of Psalm 121

- vv.1-2 contains a confession of trust by an individual
- vv. 3-8 contains the response by the priest or worship officiant

God as “help”

- the Hebrew word: ‘ēzer
- God gives aid and strength, protection for the widows and orphans, and made it possible for the Hebrews to get to the Promised Land
- In Psalm 121 – confidence that God will provide help

Content of Psalm 121

- Mountain
- v.2: “maker of heaven and earth”
- vv.3-8: all the ways God is our help and guard
 - Guard: central theme
- v.5: “The Lord watches (šāmar) over you...”

Content of Psalm 121

- Word pairs:
 - V.2 Maker of heaven and earth
 - Vv.6-7 by day and by night
 - Vv.6-7 sun and moon
 - V. 8 your coming and going
 - V. 8: now and forevermore

Content of Psalm 121

- Within our day to day lives we need to keep our eyes on God
 - v.8: “the Lord will watch over your coming and going...”
 - Consistent diligence needed
- To sum up: this is a psalm of confidence with the central theme of God as our guard and protector, our help not only in times of trouble but in the day to day realities of life, and we must simply keep our eyes on him.

What can we glean from this psalm?

- A shared worship experience along the journey - a shared learning/ understanding of God
- We live in this “already but not yet” time

What can we glean from this psalm?

- How do we express confidence and enter into the message of Psalm 121 if we are not exactly feeling confident?
 - Some are confident, and we need to hear that confidence
 - Confidence in God can be grown
 - Mark 9:24: “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

In closing...

- Participate in and recognize the significance of a shared worship experience - community
- Be encouraged by the confident and reassuring theme and learn from those who are confident
- Grow in our confidence in God
- Keeping our eyes fixed on God is a work of diligence