

**Thought for Today: May 30, 2008**

**Psalm 121 (NASB)**

**I lift up my eyes to the mountains;  
From where shall my help come?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
Who made heaven and earth.  
He will not allow your foot to slip;  
He who keeps you will not slumber.  
Behold, He who keeps Israel  
Will neither slumber nor sleep.**

**The LORD is your keeper;  
The LORD is your shade on your right hand.  
The sun will not smite you by day,  
Nor the moon by night.  
The LORD will protect you from all evil;  
He will keep your soul.  
The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in  
From this time forth and forever.**

This is called a "Song of Ascents." It is thought that Psalms 120-134 were used by religious pilgrims as they traveled to Jerusalem each year for the sacred festivals and feasts. At times, these journeys could be hazardous, so it is easy for us to envision a song like this being sung to one another for encouragement and reassurance that God would keep the travelers safe.

You probably already know that the temple in Jerusalem sat atop Mount Zion. As travelers approached the great temple of God, they would surely look up to that mountain top and wonder in awe at the presence of God. Even the pagans believed that the gods were to be sought in the high, high places. It was not uncommon to believe that the gods lived up on the mountain peaks. But the Hebrew people—at least the one who wrote this psalm—had a more profound awareness of God than the pagans.

The God that the Hebrews worshipped and that we continue to serve today does not reside either on a mountain top or in a temple. This psalmist was aware that God's power was not limited to Jerusalem. God's power was not limited to either the day or the night. God's power did not ebb and flow, did not turn on and off, did not take a vacation or a nap. God was and is always present with His people. Our help still comes from the almighty God who created all things.

Our journeys can be long and hazardous. We may get distressed or confused. Where do we look when we look for God? Do we have a quiet place we run to? Do we wait for special days or congregational gatherings to experience God's love and power? Maybe some of us think that God works that way—that He's only available at certain times and in certain places. But God is always present with us. His nearness cannot be overstated. At this very moment, even as you read these words, the Lord your God is with you. And He is here to guide and protect His people.

With eyes uplifted,  
Patrick Barber