

# Psalm 121

## Help from the Lord, Israel's watchman

(The Lutheran Study Bible, pages 972–973)

### Look

In Psalm 120 the pilgrim begins his journey surrounded by enemies. In Psalm 133 he finishes his journey surrounded by his brothers and sisters in the faith. The psalms in between these two are arranged in pairs. This psalm speaks of God's help. Its companion, Psalm 132, also speaks of God's help. He is our Keeper, especially when we are surrounded by uncertainties.

Verse 1        *"To the hills"*—The hills were dangerous, providing homes for robbers and wild animals, as well as places of idolatry. Is the psalmist looking to the hills in fear? But the hills also symbolized strength and safety. Is the psalmist looking to the hills for help?

### Ponder

1. In verse 1, the psalmist asks, "From where does my help come?" How does he answer the question in verse 2?
2. Verses 3 and 4 tell us that God does not sleep. Read 1 Kings 18:20-40. Note especially verse 27. What does it mean for you that God does not need to be awakened but always hears our prayers?
3. What comfort do verses 5–7 give us, especially in what seems like uncertain times?
4. Count the number of times that "keep" or "keeper" occur in vv. 4-8. The Hebrew carries the sense of guarding, watching over, observing. A keeper in biblical times was one who stood guard at the city gates or watched from the walls to guard against the enemy. How does the Lord watch over and—by extension—protect you?
5. Most often we ask the Lord to watch over our "coming and going." The Hebrew, however, reverses the words: "your going out and your coming in" (verse 8). Can you tell why? (Hint: Consider that, in the context of this psalm, the people were in the presence of God at the temple in Jerusalem.)

### Apply

6. Historically, the words "watch over your going out and your coming in" (verse 8) were used in the Baptismal liturgy. How is this phrase appropriate in the context of your Baptism?
7. Today, the Lord makes His presence known to us in His Word. In these coronavirus days, that Word comes to us in some non-traditional ways like the live streaming of services. What else can you do to increase your time in the presence of God through His Word?
8. Is it helpful to you to describe your life as a pilgrimage?

*The Lord promises to watch over us at all times. And with the almighty Maker of heaven and earth watching over us, what do we have to fear?*