


# Psalm Sundays

**Text**  
**Psalm 121**

**Topic**  
**The writer of Psalm 121 is promised God's protection now and forevermore**

**Title**  
***Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"***

---

 gives you the option, before you add the item to your cart. "Add a protection plan."

I'm always uncertain if I should buy a separate protection plan for a new device or appliance. I find it extremely stressful.

Some years ago I bought a protection plan for a cell phone. I don't want to disparage the company by mentioning them by name, but it rhymes with 'horizon.' My phone went on the fritz. Good thing I had purchased the protection plan. It guaranteed me a replacement phone.

1 of 12  
Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"



When it came in the mail, I quickly learned that 'replacement' did not mean 'new.' It was a previously owned, much used, Motorola flip phone. It broke coming out of the box.

The car I'm driving now, that Toyota CHR with all the rear-window decals, has a three-year factory warranty. It's a lease, so I will turn it in at the end of three years. In stereotypical behavior, the salesman added an extended five year warranty to the invoice. When I caught it, he said, "O, sorry; I don't know what I was thinking." I do. (I did get the undercoating).

There is a Hebrew word, *shaw-mar*, used six times in Psalm 121. You might miss the repetition because different Bible's have chosen quite a few English words to translate it, e.g., "keep," "protect," "guard," "keep watch," "preserve," and "watch over."

The NKJV, for instance, translates it using three English words, "keep," "keeper," and "preserve," even though it is the same Hebrew word.

If you read Psalm 121 with a single translation of the word, let's use "protect," it sounds like this: "... He who protects you... He who protects Israel... The LORD is your Protector... The LORD shall protect you from all evil; He shall protect your soul... The LORD shall protect your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore."

### **Psalm 121 celebrates Israel's divine protection plan.**

It's a lifetime warranty. In fact, as we will see, it is a promise of eternal, "forevermore" protection to the believer.

2 of 12

Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"



I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Your Protection Plan Is Guaranteed**, and **#2 Your Protection Plan Is Grace**.

## **#1 - Your Protection Plan Is Guaranteed (v1-2)**

Psalms 120 through 134 are the Psalms of Ascent. They were sung as the Israelites travelled from all over the land to ascend to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem to attend the three major annual feasts.

Travel was mostly on foot. Jesus, for example, for most of His earthly life would have traveled one-hundred fifty miles round trip, at a speed of roughly 18mph, to attend the feasts of Unleavened Bread (Passover), Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

Travel was dangerous. The Parable of the Good Samaritan highlights one of the dangers - from robbers. A travelln' man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He encountered a band of robbers. They robbed him, beat him, and left him for dead.

You should immediately raise your hand and ask, "If the LORD has promised to *protect* a believer, how is it that the man could be robbed, beaten, and left for dead?"

Regarding His protecting His followers, Jesus prayed for us in the Gospel of John. He said to His Father, "While I was with them in the world, I **kept** them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have **kept**... I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world... I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should **keep** them from the evil one... As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John 17:12-22).

3 of 12

Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"



Jesus' understanding of divine protection of "keeping" us - does not exclude being left in a hostile world ruled by "the evil one," who goes about like a ravenous lion seeking whom he may devour.

Jesus told His followers, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world **you will have tribulation;** but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (16:33).

Jesus' guarantee of protection is not a promise you will be free from trouble. In fact, He promises that you will encounter lots of trouble. Jesus protects you in and through your trouble.

When the apostle Paul was first saved, he was told how much he must suffer for the sake of the Gospel. Man, did he suffer; but he declared that no suffering could separate him from the love of Jesus. The Lord kept him... Protected him.

I think of Jesus' words to Paul as something unique, because he would have such a profound ministry. But, really, Jesus spoke those same words, in a different fashion, **to every believer,** when He said **we** would have tribulation in this world.

We live in the church age when God is glorified in our weakness. He keeps us in and through terrible troubles. The world sees a deep and abiding love.

Psa 121:1 A Song of Ascents. I will lift up my eyes to the hills - From whence comes my help?

As a child, I would anticipate that one spot on the freeway from which you could excitedly see the Matterhorn from the car.

4 of 12

Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"



At some point, the road weary traveler to the Temple could lift his head and excitedly see the city on the hill.

“From whence comes my help” seems more of a rhetorical than actual question. Of course your help will come from the Lord.

Simba told Zazu, “I laugh in the face of danger.” We look our dangers in the face, and remind them, “From whence comes my help.”

Psa 121:2 My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

Why appeal to creation? For sure, it shows God’s raw power. If He can speak the universe into existence, He can help us.

There is something more than power; there is providence. This is a reminder that God has always had a plan for creation. He created the universe... The earth... The Garden of Eden on the earth... So that we would be loved by Him.

Because love requires choice, God gave the angels, and Adam and Eve, free will to disobey Him.

Creation was ruined by that disobedience; but God immediately promised He would redeem both creation and mankind.

We would return to His original plan to love Him freely, only in the end with a sanctified free will incapable of sin.

God’s plan is guaranteed by both His power and His providence. We see it being fulfilled, and provided for, in the progressive revelation in the Bible. The



plan was for God to come to earth as a man to pay the penalty for our sins by dying on the Cross. And that is precisely what unfolds on the Bible's pages.

A plan like that - it requires time. As we wait for its completion, evil has reigned over the earth, over the hearts of men. God protects us in this world of turmoil and tribulation in order to represent His love to sinners.

**T**he number one argument people have against God is that, if He is all-loving and all-powerful, why does He allow suffering? And terrible suffering at that. You hear it all the time in media. Usually the believer has no response, or a weak one, like, "God works in mysterious ways."

The answer is this: God allows *suffering* because He is *longsuffering*, not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to eternal life in a relationship with Jesus. His longsuffering waits.

Maybe it waits for you?

Mean time, God's protection of the believer is guaranteed. It doesn't mean you won't be robbed on the road homeward. It means that, like Job, you will say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

Or like my favorite trio from the Old Testament - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. When threatened with being executed in the fiery furnace, they said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).

6 of 12

Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"



They saw no contradiction in God's protection one way or the other. It was win-win either way.

## #2 - Your Protection Plan Is Grace (v3-8)

We defer to folks who are experts in their field. Their knowledge and experience put things into proper perspective.

Pretty much every A-list Bible character is an expert in tribulations and sufferings. A great summary statement is found in the chapter in the Bible that we fondly refer to as *The Hall of Faith* - Hebrews 11.

Heb 11:33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Heb 11:34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Heb 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Heb 11:36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

Heb 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented -

Heb 11:38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth.

7 of 12

Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"



Admittedly, the idea that being “sawn in two” is protection sounds like a hard sell. But that’s because we limit our appreciation of Heaven in favor of earth. It’s a natural thing to do; but we are of the supernatural.

Psa 121:3 He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber.

Psa 121:4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Notice the change of speaker. The remaining verses are spoken to the traveler. They are a lyrical, poetic way of describing the Lord’s protection along the road home. Meant for the pilgrim headed for Jerusalem, true. But not without application for us, pilgrims headed for the New Jerusalem.

On earth, Jesus slept in the storm. The disciples freaked. They awoke Him, and He quieted wind and waves. No need to awaken Jesus anymore.

(I might mention that the disciples were in no real danger in the storm. They ought to have slept as well).

You are Job One with Jesus. He began a good work in you, and He will be faithful to complete it.

“He will not allow your foot to be moved.”

We read this, and the following promises, and conclude that the road will be well maintained, clearly marked, and without danger. We’ve seen that is not true in the life of a believer.





Over all of these promises I would write the famous quote from Iron Mike Tyson, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." Your plan needs to be tested and proven.

I can't be certain God is faithful to keep me from stumbling unless I encounter a stumbling block in my path. It is theoretical until I get spiritually punched.

Those of us in Christ love to quote First Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*."

It presumes we will have trouble. It promises God's grace is sufficient in our trouble.

Psa 121:5 The LORD *is* your keeper; The LORD *is* your shade at your right hand.

Psa 121:6 The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night.

The "sun" I can understand because we live in the Central Valley. How can the "moon" strike us?

An Israelite would immediately understand the reference. In their wilderness journey, God manifested Himself to Israel as a pillar of cloud by day, and as a pillar of fire by night. The Holy Spirit takes that reality and applies in to each Jew individually. God will similarly be with each of them.

Jesus said He would never leave us; never for a sake us. *Then He left!* But He didn't leave us alone. He gave us the Promise of the Father, the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

9 of 12

Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"



We tend to think of God the Holy Spirit as a spiritual battery that can diminish in power over time. He is a Person - the third Person of the triune God. While it's true that we can experience refreshing of the Holy Spirit, He is always at max power in us.

In the Book of Acts, we read, "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (4:31). It almost sounds like a prayer to be refilled. They prayed this after Peter and John were used by God to heal a lame beggar; after being arrested; after being warned by the Jewish leaders to quit talking about Jesus.

Seems like they were pretty "full" of the Holy Spirit already. They didn't exhaust Him.

You old comic book fans will remember the JSA - the Justice Society of America. They were the precursors to the Justice League.

The JSA had guys like Dr. Mid-Nite, Spectre, the Atom, Starman, and Black Canary. They also had Hourman. A scientist, Rex Tyler (his alter ego) developed a pill, Miraclo, which gave him superhuman strength - but only for one hour.

The power of the Holy Spirit isn't a formula. Devotions and spiritual disciplines are necessary for a disciple to grow. But they aren't a formula to increase the Holy Spirit. You always have the Spirit at full strength.

Our relationship to God the Holy Spirit needs to switch from *begging* for Him to *believing* Him.

10 of 12

Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"



Psa 121:7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul.

“Soul” is better translated as “life.” The simple yet profound truth is that, because of Jesus, Satan, sin, and death are defeated.

The apostle Paul understood this when he said, “For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (Philippians 1:21).

The martyrs understand this as they go calmly to their horrific deaths.

We have victory over these evils, but you can only experience it when one of them punches you in the mouth.

We who are in Christ will one day be resurrected or rapture and forever be in the likeness of our Lord

Psa 121:8 The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.

Great words of comfort for someone almost to the Temple facing a return journey.

Albert Barnes points out the eternal when he writes:

*Through this life **and for ever**. This is the gracious assurance which is made to all who put their trust in God. At home and abroad; in the house, in the field, and by the way; on the land and on the ocean; in their native country and in climes remote; on earth, in the grave, and in the eternal world, they are always safe. No evil that will endanger their salvation can befall them; nothing can*

11 of 12

Psalm 121

“Quoth the Writer “Forevermore”



*happen to them here but what God shall see to be conducive to their ultimate good; and in the heavenly world they shall be safe forever from every kind of evil, for in that world there will be no sin, and consequently no need of discipline to prepare them for the future.*

In a nutshell, a Christian always has grace sufficient for the journey. You don't need some extended warranty in terms of a program recommended by the latest book, or video series. You need to realize who, and what, you are, and will become.

**F**orevermore. It is a one-word key that unlocks the wisdom of God with regards to our journey. If I'm thinking "forevermore," *I will live my life now as a "forevermore."*

12 of 12

Psalm 121

"Quoth the Writer "Forevermore"

