

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Psalm 124

A PSALM OF ASCENTS, OF DAVID

Our Help is in the Name of the Lord!

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Introduction

- A psalm of ascents
- It is song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem

Primary message: A praise for rescue from enemies

Praise for the LORD's protective power and care

It is the LORD alone who is the defense of His people

- The key to the psalm is the word "IF"

"IF IT HAD NOT BEEN"

- We are used to using the word

"IF I COULD . . ."

"IF ONLY THIS WERE . . ."

"IF ONLY THEY WOULD . . ."

"IF I HAD . . ."

- The psalmist is thinking of GOD . . . and the enormous difference it has made that He is on their side!
- Relevant to David!
- Relevant to us!
- Relevant because GOD perseveres

Psalm 124

¹ "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side," Let Israel now say— ² "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, When men rose up against us, ³ Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their wrath was kindled against us; ⁴ Then the waters would have overwhelmed us, The stream would have gone over our soul; ⁵ Then the swollen waters Would have gone over our soul." ⁶ Blessed *be* the Lord, Who has not given us *as* prey to their teeth. ⁷ Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; The snare is broken, and we have escaped. ⁸ Our help *is* in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth

- It is a well-known song sung by pilgrims
- Speaks of a deliverance
- Israel was delivered many times
- Most likely deliverance from Babylon captivity
- What they are really saying

This GOD we are going to worship is a very great GOD indeed!

Five images of what it would be like 'IF' they did not have the LORD

1. An animal swallowing its prey

NLT ³ They would have swallowed us alive in their burning anger

- The enemy is fierce . . . ruthless
- Like the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8) – we would have been swallowed up had it not been for our GOD!

- Surely if the LORD had not been on our side to protect us we would have been eaten alive already

2. A flood submerging its victims

NLT 4 The waters would have engulfed us; overwhelmed us

- Floods are common in Israel – they are life-threatening – they show no mercy
- Surely if the LORD had not been on our side to provide us a solid foundation we would have been buried under the rising floodwaters

3. A torrent rushes over everything

NLT 5 Yes, the raging waters of their fury would have overwhelmed our very lives

- People are helpless when water rages – it shows no mercy – it slams people against anything in its path
- Sometimes life feels like that!
- Surely if it had not been for the LORD's strong and mighty hand . . . we would have been swept off our feet and dashed against the rocks
- But praise the LORD He has set our feet upon the rock

4. An animal ripping its prey apart with its teeth

NLT 6 Praise the Lord, who did not let their teeth tear us apart!

- Like a vulture on a carcass – had it not been for the LORD we would have been torn apart – helpless to prevent annihilation
- Like Daniel – the psalmist sees that the Living GOD has rescued him from death
- Had the LORD not been on our side the enemy would have been torn to pieces

5. A bird tangled in a trap

NLT 7 We escaped like a bird from a hunter's trap. The trap is broken, and we are free!

- To fall into a snare is a frightening thing – once trapped inevitably the trapper will come
- Had the LORD not been on our side there would have been no escape
- Entangled . . . as we are . . . we are helpless – but praise GOD He can set us free

These images represent external / physical trouble

The application could be quite literal

But there is a spiritual application

- It is about sin . . . and sin's effect on us
- Simple terms . . . IF Jesus had not died in our place, taking our punishment on Himself, we would be under GOD's wrath we would suffer for our sins forever
- But instead we live

Romans 8:1

NLT 8 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus

- Condemnation = blame
- BUT . . . WHAT IF GOD hadn't intervened?
- We would face eternal separation from GOD
- Like the disciples . . . it is possible to get on the wrong path

Luke 22:31-32

NLT 31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. 32 But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to Me again, strengthen your brothers."

- Jesus did not call Peter by his new name 'rock'
- Jesus called him by his former name . . . calling attention to his weakness
- Peter thinks he is strong to stand by Jesus
- But when the time of testing came he did not
- Praise GOD Jesus stood by Peter – later re-commissioned him for service
- What if GOD did not preserve us?
- It would all be for nothing
- Our lives would be without meaning

Eternal application

- Death is symbolized an all the images

An animal swallowing its prey

A flood submerging its victims

A torrent rushes over everything

An animal ripping its prey apart with its teeth

A bird tangled in a trap

- But what if GOD did not preserve us from death?
- We stand on the border of death all the time
- But GOD promises to walk with us through the deep waters

- More than that He promises us victory in His Son

1 Corinthians 15:55-56

NLT ⁵⁴ Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. ⁵⁷ But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Jesus has delivered us from the power of death
- He has delivered us from the power death has over us
- He willingly sacrificed Himself on the Cross

⁷ Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; The snare is broken, and we have escaped

The last portion of the psalm is a declaration of thanks to GOD for His deliverance

- Thank you LORD

⁸Our help *is* in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth

- IF You had not been on our side . . . we would have perished
- But You are on our side . . . therefore we thank You

DEVELOP THIS BIBLICAL WAY OF THINKING INTO OUR LIVES EACH DAY
. . . WE MUST NEVER TAKE HIS PROTECTION FOR GRANTED

- If GOD weren't protecting us we would perish immediately
- Our help is in the name of the LORD
- Others offer help . . . but they do not have what we need
- Only the LORD is adequate for us in our weakness
 - Omniscient – He always knows what we need
 - Omnipresent – therefore He is always there when we need Him
 - Omnipotent – He can do what needs to be done
- Our help is in Him
- As feeble workers (unprofitable servants) GOD can still bless the work of our hands and make it of lasting value if we do it genuinely from the heart

MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION: HOW DOES HAVING THE LORD ON YOUR SIDE AFFECT THE WAY THAT YOU LIVE?

- Do you honour Him?
- Do you seek to be in the center of His will?
- Do you seek to obedient?
- Are you willing to be repentant?

ACID TRUTH

- Jesus Christ is the One who delivers us from everything that aim to harm
 - Wild animals
 - Torrents
 - Floods
 - Even the tempters snare
- Isaiah 64:8
- Jeremiah 18