

Elevating the Focus

“I will lift up my eyes to the hills....From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber.” (Psalm 121:1-3)

This is the second of 15 “Songs of Ascents by Degrees”. The first marked the beginning of the pilgrimage in the darkened tents of Kedar in Meshech, weary with a land of lies, deceit, slander, and war...longing for peace. The singer has called upon the Lord in his distress and has been heard.

When God hears our prayer, there is usually in His response an immediate direction for us, something for us to do. The singer tells us what he is resolved to do: He will lift up his eyes. A very small thing but something that will require effort and resolve. Up to now they have been focused far too low. They have been transfixed on his problems: The liars, the slanderers, the haters and the hateful. Also on his own lying tongue, the bondage of his own sins. We will never make any progress until our field of vision is raised above these.

What shall he lift his eyes to behold? This is where this Psalm has always been a puzzle to me as I read it in the A.V. “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help”. What sort of help can he expect from the hills? Certainly he does not expect those mounds of rock and dirt to rescue him. Does he expect the Calvary to come charging out of them? The problem is in the punctuation (not in the Hebrew autographs). The NKJ version properly ends the statement after “hills”, and begins another sentence with the question, “From whence comes my help?” The answer? My help comes from the Lord. Who is “The Lord”? The Lord is He who made heaven and earth. Where can I see Him? You cannot see Him. How, then, may we know He exists, and how may we know He is competent to be our Helper and Deliverer? Take a good look at the hills! The God who cannot be seen has given us abundant testimony of Himself by what can be seen. *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse”* (Romans 1:20).

The invisible attributes of God, among which we will find abundant ground for our confidence in Him as our Savior, Deliverer and Preserver are mutely yet deafeningly testified in those hills. Their heights, massiveness, rugged grandeur testify of the might of their Creator. They are fixed, steadfast and sure. They stand exactly where they have been ordered by the Almighty, unmoved, unshaken by awesome storms raging over all the earth throughout all the millenniums. He who created the hills is also our Creator. If they, nothing but dirt and rock, are not moved by any force or influence in the universe, how much more shall our feet be fixed? We who are made in His own image, and set to glorify Him forever and ever?

“Yes,” doubt and unbelief may answer, “but we have minds and wills. Is it not possible that we will mess up and fall from His favor?” He who keeps Israel will not allow your foot to slip, to be ensnared, to deviate, yea He will not allow you to mess up! How can I be sure? Take another look at the hills. They may indeed pass away but he who trusts in God abides forever. —C. M.