

## • Psalm 124: God Is on Your side.

A SONG OF ASCENTS, OF DAVID

<sup>1</sup> If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—  
let Israel now say—

<sup>2</sup> if it had not been the Lord who was on our side  
when people rose up against us,

<sup>3</sup> then they would have swallowed us up alive,  
when their anger was kindled against us;

<sup>4</sup> then the flood would have swept us away,  
the torrent would have gone over us;

<sup>5</sup> then over us would have gone  
the raging waters.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed be the Lord,  
who has not given us  
as prey to their teeth!

<sup>7</sup> We have escaped like a bird  
from the snare of the fowlers;  
the snare is broken,  
and we have escaped!

<sup>8</sup> Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.

The point of Ps 124 is simple: when the floods sweep over us, God is our helper.

What motivates his help? Twice this Psalm tells us that God is “on our side.” David’s point is that, because God was on his side, God helped him, and the

floods did not destroy him.

What does it mean to have God on your side?

It means that God is your defender/advocate

It means that God is your cheer leader/champion.

It means that God is your coach. He fervently seeks your success.

It means that God is your encourager.

It means that God will be your Helper. Vs 8 *“Our help is in the name of the Lord who made Heaven and earth.”*

Why is God on our side? First, God is not on our side because we are good.

God is on our side despite the fact that we are not good.

No, God is on our side to make us good.

Psalm 124 breaks down into two sections. 1<sup>st</sup> Three Problems and 2<sup>nd</sup> The Helper

- **Three Problems**

1<sup>st</sup> the flood, 2<sup>nd</sup> the teeth, 3<sup>rd</sup> the trap.

- **2-5 The Floods**

- 2 if it had not been the Lord who was on our side  
when people rose up against us,
- 3 then they would have swallowed us up alive,  
when their anger was kindled against us;
- 4 then the flood would have swept us away,  
the torrent would have gone over us;
- 5 then over us would have gone  
the raging waters.

This text describes an unknown “people” rising up against David.

It describes them as a “floods” or “torrents.” They threaten to “sweep God’s people away.”

David refers to them as “the raging waters” that “would have gone over us.”

Think of a tidal wave or a Tsunami. Verse 2 calls the waters a “people who rose up against us.”

As we have seen in the last two weeks, the Bible frequently refers to hostile nations as flood waters.

Isaiah 28:2 “Behold, the Lord has one who is mighty and strong; like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest, like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters, [Assyria] casts down to the earth with his hand.”

Was David describing a time when the Philistines attacked, and God gave him victory?

We don’t know, but either way, although a hostile nation has arisen against him, God is on David’s side. God is his helper.

- **6 The Teeth**

6 Blessed be the Lord,  
who has not given us  
as prey to their teeth!

The description is graphic. God’s people are like prey caught in a wild animal’s teeth.” Think of God delivering Daniel in the Lion’s Den.

Think of Christians, eaten by Lions in the Roman Colosseum.

Think about Ps 44:11, quoted by Paul in Romans 8.

“You have made us like sheep for slaughter and have scattered us among the nations.”

- **7 The Trap**

Then, in vs. 7, David also describes himself and the people following him, as birds caught in a trap.

7 We have escaped like a bird  
from the snare of the fowlers;  
the snare is broken,  
and we have escaped!

Was David referring to times when he defended his flock from the bear and the lion with nothing but a sling and a staff? (1 Sam 17:34).

Was he thinking of the time that God delivered him from the giant, Goliath? 1 Sam 17

Was he thinking of all the times Saul tried to kill him with his spear?

Was he thinking about the time he hid in the cave of Adullam, and Saul came in to relieve himself? 1 Sam 22

Was he thinking about the time the Amalekites raided Ziklag, capturing David's wives and children, but God delivered them? 1 Sam 30

At any rate, David described the enemies that God delivered him from as floods, teeth, and traps.

- ***The Helper***

The Psalm says two things about God. He is on our side, and He is our "helper."

- **1-5 God is On our side**

1 If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—

let Israel now say—

- <sup>2</sup> if it had not been the Lord who was on our side  
when people rose up against us,

God is on our side.

Do we take this seriously? Do you really believe this?

The next question is why? Is God is on our side because of grace or works?

Again, God is not on your side because you are good enough.

No, God is on your side despite the complete lack of saving goodness.

Rather *God is on your side to motivate goodness.*

How do we know that God is on our side? God is for us.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

He proves that he is for us by constantly interceding for us. The Holy Spirit intercedes.

“Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Romans 8:26).

The Son of God intercedes.

“Christ Jesus...who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (Romans 8:34).

Last, God is also “On our side” simply because that is his nature.

Exodus 34:6–7 “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, **7** keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...”

To survive the relational floods/waters/tsunamis/traps/teeth you must be deeply rooted in this truth: God is on your side.

Colossians 2:6–7 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him...

Anecdote: Trying to pull up the baby Ponderosa Pines in my field.

In the parable of the Sower, the word of the kingdom is a seed planted in rocky soil, but it doesn't survive persecution. Why? It is not properly rooted (Mark 4:17).

The first reason David can say that God is his Helper is that God is on his side.

- **8 God Is our Helper**

<sup>8</sup> Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.

Because God is on your side, he is always there to help! It's a recurrent theme.

Psalm 121:1-2 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

And the One who is present to help is the Creator of all things.

Both of these texts emphasize the truth that our Helper is totally sovereign and omnipotent.

- ***Three Applications***

First, Sink your spiritual roots into this truth.

When the floods/torrents/raging waters come, you need to be deeply rooted in the truth that he is on your side. When people come against you, you will need assurance that He is your helper.

### Anecdote: Napa Valley

A wizened foreman was working among the vines. Since wine producing vines have always fascinated me, I decided to ask him a few questions.

“How old do these vines get?” I inquired.

“Oh, some can live 80 to 100 years, but they reach peak productivity at about thirty to fifty years.” “In fact,” he continued, “The flavor doesn’t fully concentrate in the grapes until they advance in years. That’s when we get our best wine”

We discussed root diseases and the history of Napa Valley. Then, for some reason that I don’t remember, he said, “In fact, the tap root of some vines can go down thirty to forty feet, deep enough to reach the water table and become self-irrigating.”

So how does this apply to us? What kinds of floods, teeth, or traps will to attempt to unroot us?

They might mean persecution—the loss of a job.

They might mean financial problems.

They might mean cancellation from YouTube or Twitter.

They might mean the State takes your children away.

They might mean the death of a spouse, parent, or child.

They might mean war.

They might mean imprisonment.

They might mean family rejection.

Luke 12:51-53 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against

daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

The question is this: are you so deeply convinced that God is on your side—that God is your Helper, that floods, the teeth, and the traps cannot uproot you?

First application? Rootedness.

Second, Walk by faith. Your feelings about how God views you are irrelevant. We walk by faith not sight. Weak, immature Christians live by their feelings.

Mature Christians live by faith.

Third, Put this Psalm in the context of the rest of the Bible. God on your side doesn't always mean problem solved, easy life.

Sometimes it means deliverance. At other times, even though God is on your side and he is helping, the problem doesn't go away. In either case God is still on your side. In either case he is your Helper.

Here is an example: In Acts 12 Herod persecutes the church. He beheads James.

Then Herod imprisons Peter. The church prays. But in this case, God sends an angel to supernaturally free Peter from prison.

Here's a second example: In Christ's letters to the seven churches of Asia, he tells the church at Smyrna that they are being slandered by the synagogue of Satan. Then—

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).



Then Christ turns around and tells the church at Philadelphia the same thing, that they are also afflicted by the Synagogue of Satan, but—

Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth (Rev. 3:9-10).

God was on James side. God was on Peter's side. God was on the side of the church at Smyrna. God was on the side of the church at Philadelphia. In all these cases he was their Helper.

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In conclusion, how can you be sure that God is on your side? How can you deeply root yourself in the truth that he is your Helper?

Not because you are good. Christ is the enemy of sinners. You don't deserve to have God on your side. You don't deserve to have God as your Helper. He only helps the righteous.

But God so earnestly wanted to be your Helper, God so earnestly wanted to be on your side, that his Son descended from heaven and took on human flesh.

Jesus lived a perfect life. He alone merited God's help. He alone deserved to have God on his side. Then he went to the cross. He took your sin upon himself. When he did that God did the right thing. He rejected his Son in your place. "My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me?"

God rejected his Son so that he could accept you and me.

When you believe the Good News, your faith unites you with Christ. Since Christ received the rejection that you and I deserve, Justice has been satisfied. Your sins have been punished.

The cross is the measure of how badly God wants to be on your side, how badly he wants to be your eternal Helper.

The cross is why Paul wrote, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* It is why David could boast that God was on his side, that God was his Helper. It is the sole reason that we can do the same.