

God's nature:

God's nature can easily be seen and understood throughout scripture, however, this essay will test to see if every single verse of 'Psalm 121' displays and provides an understanding of God's nature. This will be done through analysis of each verse separately and a general summarisation will be made for each verse in the psalm. The hypothesis this essay has is that each verse in this psalm will display a character trait of God and provide a deeper understanding of His nature. A conclusion will be made once the verses have been individually analysed and generally summarised. The conclusion will include whether the hypothesis this essay assumes is correct or incorrect. Jacobson (2020) recited his friend's summary on 'Psalm 121' saying that the psalm "speaks words of promise about God's providence and protection on life's journey". This too will be tested in this essay.

Verse one of the psalm is "I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from?" (Guzik, 2020). This verse displays God's supreme authority and highness (ibid). The mountain being used to display the greatness and bigness of God is fitting as it hints at His majesty in comparison to ourselves (Hauser, 2023). We human beings are limited in our abilities, therefore, placing our faith in the One who created all things and is much larger in abilities than all human beings combined is not only humbling, but it also provided great security in His presence (ibid). Alongside the security His greatness provides, He also is our help (ibid). Verse three delves deeper into what ways He helps us, while verse two reaffirms He is our help.

Verse two is "My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of Heaven and earth" (Guzik, 2020). This verse verifies that God is our help and we can trust in Him as He created all things (Donovan, 2023). Him being the Creator reassures us of His sovereignty, consequently reminding us of how we can trust Him to be our help (ibid). Being reminded of His sovereignty also reminds us of our limited abilities being human (Hauser, 2023). Because of this reminder, we are reminded of how we need the Creator of all things in order to help us better our situations (ibid). Additionally, knowing our help comes from the Creator of the world, a supernatural confidence overcomes us (Guzik, 2020). It reminds us that we do not need to trust in ourselves, but in the Creator who is able to do all good things if He is willing, relieving copious amounts of stress, leading to better mental health.

Verse three also provides great mental relief as it provides an example of how God is our help (Guzik, 2020). The verse is "He will not let your foot slip – he who watches over you will not slumber;" (ibid). This reminds us of His diligence in His work and devotion to us. God never sleeps but focuses on watching over us closely (Hauser, 2023). This reminds us of how He always protects us always and His never sleeping is a way in which He helps us (Guzik 2020). His help is our protection, thus His protection being His demonstration of His nature. His nature being rooted in love is demonstrated through His protecting us day and night.

Similarly, verse four hints at similar traits of God. Verse four is "Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Guzik, 2020). God's fatherly nature is demonstrated through this verse as Israel is classed as His children throughout the Bible, thus making Him a father (Kauser, 2023). Essentially, the followers of Jesus are classed as Israel, thus the children of God. When relationships with God are questioned and studied the fatherly nature of God is a key factor in the relationship between Christians and God (ibid). As a father watches over their children, so does the Lord watch over His children, Israel, ensuring we are kept safe and that we do not fall into trouble.

Verse five follows on demonstrating the fatherly nature of God. The verse goes “The LORD watches over you – the LORD is your shade at your right hand;”(Guzik, 2020). Although God’s fatherly nature is depicted here, His nearness to us is also depicted here (Donovan, 2023). As the shade of our hand swiftly follows our hands, so God follows His children to protect them (ibid). He remains close to us to protect us (ibid). His protective nature, alongside His fatherly nature demonstrates how God is our help. He remains close to us, He protects us and He provides us security in His fatherly arms.

The security His fatherly arms bring us is displayed once again in verse six. “The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night”, verse six evidently demonstrates God’s sovereignty, reminding us of Him being the Creator (Guzik, 2020). God can and will protect us from all things, we need not fear because He will defend us and protect us (Donovan, 2023). This is a key aspect to His nature also as God is protective and defensive over His children and this is displayed throughout the gospel (ibid). God has used His Son to protect us from the consequences of our own sin and defended us from any power evil has over us (Guzik, 2020). Additionally, God can control the sun and moon, therefore if we are on the right side of God, He will protect us from all possible problems which may arise naturally and unnaturally, evidencing His divine nature once again.

Just as God will protect us from even the sun and moon harming us, He will protect us from all harm if we trust in Him and this is displayed and evidenced in verse seven. “The LORD will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life;”, verse seven displays the loving, caring, protective, defensive and helpful nature of God regarding His children (Guzik, 2020). This verse demonstrates how God helps us. He watches over our lives to protect us (ibid). He protects us from all harm and His protection shows how He helps us (Kauser, 2023). He keeps us safe, secure and content in Him, helping us have peace of mind, spirit, body, heart and soul (ibid). Having peace and security enables us to live a life making wiser decisions as we don’t respond based on our emotions (ibid). Consequently, God is glorified by this and His wise nature is displayed through us.

God is wise natured and verse eight evidences this also as it says “The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore” (ibid). God’s wisdom is shown through His watching over our coming and going as He understands the nature of mankind (Donovan, 2023). Only true wisdom understands that we require constant protection, constant protection from external factors, but also internal factors such as our sinful hearts (ibid). Mankind is reliant on God to walk in a more holy way of life as our tendencies are to walk towards sin (Kauser, 2023). This therefore evidences that humans require God in their lives to walk in a holier way, thus God’s wisdom to watch over us constantly (ibid). He understands we require Him constantly otherwise we will easily fall into sin.

To summarise, the hypothesis made in the beginning of the essay has been proven accurate. Each verse in ‘Psalm 121’ has been proven to display a character trait of God and provide a deeper understanding of His nature. Additionally, Jacobson’s friend’s summary of ‘Psalm 121’, which is that the psalm “speaks words of promise about God’s providence and protection on life’s journey”, has been proven accurate also. God’s nature has been greatly displayed through this psalm. To clarify, God’s nature is love, thus He helps because He loves us. Because He loves us, He helps, because He helps us, He protects and defends us.

References:

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/second-sunday-in-lent/commentary-on-psalm-121-6>

<https://sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/psalm-121-commentary/>

<https://www.sarahjhauser.com/blog/learning-to-trust-god-who-keeps-us>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-121/>