

God Saves Us From All Our Troubles



SABBATH—JANUARY 20

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Psalm 139:1–18; Psalm 40:1–3; Psalm 17:7–9; 1 Corinthians 10:1–4; Psalm 114; Psalm 3:4.

The Lord “rides on the clouds” (Psalm 68:4, ERV), the same as if the clouds were horses.

MEMORY VERSE: “Pray to the LORD, and he will hear you. He will save you from all your troubles” (Psalm 34:17, ERV).

THE BOOK OF PSALMS tells us many times that the Lord is King. He made the skies and the earth. He keeps everything going. This same powerful God is also our personal Savior. He wants to have a close relationship with His people.

The Lord is always with His people and with everything He made in heaven and on earth (Psalm 73:23, 25). “The Lord has set [put] his throne in heaven” (Psalm 103:19, ICB). He “rides on the clouds” (Psalm 68:4, ERV), the same as if the clouds were horses. “The Lord is close to everyone who prays to him, to all who truly [really mean it when they] pray to him” (Psalm 145:18, ICB). The Book of Psalms tells us that the Lord is the living God. He saves people who ask Him for help (Psalm 55:16–22). The Book of Psalms was written to the living God, who hears and answers prayers. That’s why the Book of Psalms means so much to its readers.

God invites us to have a close relationship with Him. What will our answer be to God’s invitation? We must want a life of faith in God with all our hearts. We must obey His commandments. God won’t accept anything less than our faith and obedience. The history of Israel shows us this important Bible truth.

**YOU SAW MY BONES GROW INSIDE
MY MOTHER'S BODY (Psalm 139)**

Read Psalm 139:1–18. How does this poem show us that God is powerful (verses 1–6)? How does this poem show us that God's Spirit is with us everywhere we go (verses 7–12)? What word pictures does this poem use to show us that God is good (verses 13–18)? Psalm 139 shows us that God is mighty and strong to save. What does this Bible truth teach us about God and His promises?

Do you want to help someone but don't know how? Or maybe someone tried to help you. But this person didn't understand what you really needed. God knows everything we need. He knows everything that is happening in our lives right now. So, God always knows how best to help us. That's why we can trust God's promises to help and save us.

God knows everything about the poet who wrote Psalm 139. God sees the poet before he is born when he is inside his mother's body. His mother's body can't hide him from God (Psalm 139:13, 15)! God knows when we do things (Psalm 139:2). God knows everything we think and feel (Psalm 139:2, 4). God also knows where we are and everything we do at all times (Psalm 139:3). God's wonderful knowledge about us is part of His close relationship with His people. He knows everything about us because He made us. God takes very good care of us. His care for us shows us how much He knows about us.

Don't be scared of God because He knows everything about you. Be happy that He knows everything and continues to love you. Run to the arms of Jesus and accept what He did for you at the cross. When we have faith in Jesus, God will save us with His mercy and accept us (Romans 3:5, 21).

Can anything separate us from God? Can the grave? Or can the night hide us from Him (Psalm 139:8, 11, 12)? The grave and the dark are not places where the Lord lives (Psalm 56:13). These word pictures show us an important Bible truth. God can go anywhere He wants in heaven or on earth. God is not part of the stars and skies, as some believe. He made them. As the One who made everything and keeps it going (Hebrews 1:3), God can go anywhere He wants.

God knows all about us. So, He can help us and make us new. This Bible truth fills the heart of the poet with trust and praise. The poet wants God to look into his heart and show him his sins. Then God can remove anything from the poet's life that separates him from God.



**God sees the poet
before he is born
when he is inside
his mother's body.**

TRUSTING IN GOD'S CARE (Psalm 40:1–3)

Read Psalm 40:1–3; Psalm 50:15; Psalm 55:22; and Psalm 121. How does God show us each day that He cares for us?

The Bible shows us that the Lord is the Living God who saves the ones who pray to Him for help. In Psalm 16, a poet says, “I always remember that the LORD is with me” (Psalm 16:8, ERV). So, the poet trusts God and asks Him for help (Psalm 7:1; Psalm 9:10). The Lord will hear the poet when he is in “deep trouble” and cries to God (Psalm 130:1, 2). God has the strength to change anything. He can solve every problem. So, the poet always has hope that God will save him.

Psalm 121 celebrates God's strength. God can save us because He is strong. The poem promises us that God “will not let you fall. Your Protector [the One who watches over you] will not fall asleep” (Psalm 121:3, ERV). Because the Lord is Israel's Protector, He is always ready to save His children (Psalm 121:3, 4).

“The Lord protects you [the same] as the shade protects you from the sun” (Psalm 121:5, 6, ICB). This word picture helps us remember “the tall cloud” in the Book of Exodus (Exodus 13:21, 22). The Lord used the tall cloud to lead His people in the desert to the Promised Land. In the same way, the Lord continues to lead His people to safety.

As we saw already in Psalm 121:5, the Lord protects and “watches over you” (NLV). The Lord is strong. He is ready to act to help His people (Psalm 74:11; Psalm 89:13). The Lord is close to His people and blesses them with His favor (Psalm 16:8; Psalm 109:31; Psalm 110:5).

In Psalm 121:6–8, we learn that God will protect His people from every danger. God will keep His children safe from all evil. “The sun” and “the moon” cannot hurt them (verse 6, ERV). God will keep His children safe when they travel from their homes and when they come back. These word pictures help us to understand that God cares for us very much. He always works hard to take care of us.

What do all these promises from Psalm 121 teach us about the faith of the poet who wrote it? The poet trusted in God's loving care. So, we should trust God, too.

What are some ways you can learn more about God's care for you? Also, what can you do to allow God to work in you and for you?



Your Protector [the One who watches over you] will not fall asleep” (Psalm 121:3, ERV).

A SHELTER IN TIMES OF TROUBLE (Psalm 17:7–9)

What does the poet do in times of trouble? Read Psalm 17:7–9; Psalm 31:1–3; and Psalm 91:2–7 for the answer.

The poet suffers many troubles. During his hard times, the poet goes to the Lord for help. The Lord is the same as a safe home. The Lord will help us during every hard time. Trust is a choice. When we trust God, we choose to accept Him as Lord over our lives in every experience we have. If we can trust God during the hard times, we can trust Him at all times.

In Psalm 91, the poet tells us: “I will say about the LORD, ‘He is my place of safety. He is like [the same as] a fort [castle; a safe place] to me. He is my God. I trust in him’ ” (Psalm 91:2, NlrV). The poet’s past experience with God makes his faith strong now and for the future. The poet names God “the Most High God” and “the Mighty One” (Psalm 91:1, NlrV). The poet knows that no one is as strong or powerful as his God.

In Psalm 91, the poet also tells us about the peace and safety that God gives us. We can go to God for rest and “safety” (Psalm 91:1, ICB). He will protect us. The Lord is the same as a “fort [castle]” (Psalm 91:2, NlrV). He is the same as a “safe and strong place” (NlV) to hide. We can run to Him when we are in trouble. The Lord “will cover you like a bird spreading its wings over its babies” (Psalm 91:4, ERV). And “under His wings you will be safe” (Psalm 91:4, NlV). The Lord is also the same as “a strong wall” (Psalm 91:4, NlV). In Bible times, forts, mother birds, and strong walls were word pictures for safety or a safe place.

Read Psalm 17:8 and Matthew 23:37. What word picture is used in these verses? What does this word picture teach us?

The poet asks God to “hide me in the shadow of your wings” (Psalm 17:8, ERV; Psalm 57:1; Psalm 63:7). This word picture shows us a mother bird protecting her babies. This word picture helps us feel safe. The Bible compares God to an eagle who protects its young (Exodus 19:4) and to a hen who hides her chicks under her wings (Matthew 23:37).

When bad things happen, we have a hard time believing that God is with us. But how do we know that He is there?



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THE ONE WHO PROTECTS AND SAVES US (1 Corinthians 10:1–4)

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–4. What does Paul say in these verses about the Exodus story? Paul uses the Exodus story to teach us a spiritual lesson. What is that lesson?

Read Psalm 114. What does this poem tell us about the time God made His people free from Egypt?

Psalm 114 is a beautiful poem about how God helped His people escape from Egypt. In the Old and New Testaments, Bible writers used this experience as a word picture to show us how God saves His people. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–4, Paul sees the whole story in the Book of Exodus as a word picture for how Jesus Christ saves us from sin.

Psalm 114 also shows us that because God made everything, He controls nature. God's control over nature was how He saved His people from Egypt. The sea, the Jordan River, the mountains, and the hills are word pictures for nature and human powers. These powers tried to stop Israel on their way to the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 1:44; Joshua 3:14–17). But God is in control of nature and all human powers.

The same is true today. God's children in all times and in all places are on their way to the Promised Land in heaven. The way there is filled with danger. The Book of Psalms encourages us to look away from the danger of the hills to the One who made the earth (Psalm 121:1).

Where else do we see the message of Psalm 114? We see it in the story of Jesus at sea when He commands the storm to be still (Matthew 8:23–27). Later, Jesus tells the church to be brave because He won the fight against sin. Because Jesus won, He controls the earth (John 16:33).

The Lord is very powerful. This Bible truth should cause the whole earth to “shake” in front of the Lord (Psalm 114:7). The word “shake” is a word picture. How should we understand this word? Does “shake” mean that we should be afraid of God? Of course not! The word “shake” shows us we should worship the Lord. (Read Psalm 96:9 and Psalm 99:1 for some more examples that help explain this idea.) With God on our side, we don't need to be afraid of anything!

What spiritual dangers do we need to avoid? How can we trust in the Lord to save us?



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HELP FROM GOD’S TEMPLE IN HEAVEN (Psalm 3:4)

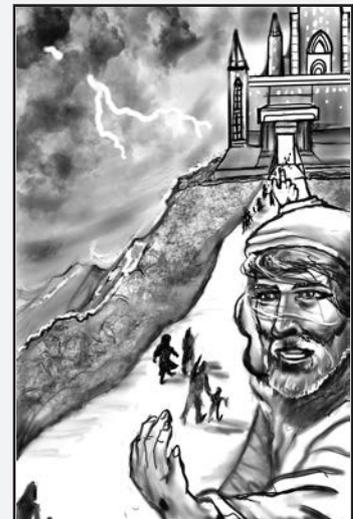
Where does our help come from? Read Psalm 3:4; Psalm 14:7; Psalm 20:1–3; Psalm 27:5; Psalm 36:8; Psalm 61:4; and Psalm 68:5, 35 for the answer.

God’s temple is a place of safety and help. God’s temple gives shelter to people who are in trouble. From His temple, God helps the orphans and widows. He also gives strength to His people. We read, “God appeared from Zion, the city of perfect beauty” (Psalm 50:2, ERV). Zion is a word picture for God’s temple. God blesses His people from Zion (Psalm 84:4; Psalm 128:5; Psalm 134:3).

God’s temple is the safest place on earth. Why is God’s temple the safest place to be? Because God Himself is there. In the same way, the high hill named Zion is better than any other mountain because God Himself is there (Psalm 68:15, 16; Isaiah 2:2).

“Jesus, our high priest [spiritual leader], is able to [can] understand our weaknesses. When Jesus lived on earth, he was tempted [put to the test] in every way. He was tempted in the same ways we are tempted, but he never sinned. With Jesus as our high priest, we can feel free to come before God’s throne where there is grace [mercy, forgiveness, and power over sin]. There we receive [get] mercy and kindness [loving-favor] to help us when we need it” (Hebrews 4:15, 16, ERV). How do these verses say the same thing the Book of Psalms says about God’s temple?

God’s temple is holy. The Book of Psalms teaches us that all people are sinners. We are not worthy of God’s favor or blessings. God saves us from sin because of His mercy (Psalm 143:2, 9–12). We can’t earn God’s forgiveness or mercy with our good behavior. We must confess our sins and accept God’s mercy first. Then we can ask God to save us. God’s temple shows us that only Jesus can save us.



God’s temple gives shelter to people who are in trouble.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Night of Wrestling,” pages 195–203, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. What can we learn from Jacob’s experience with the Angel about prayer and trusting in God?

The Book of Psalms makes our faith in God strong. God will never fail His people who trust Him with their lives. God is their “place” of safety. “God will do mighty things for the ones who trust in Him. The reason why some of His people are weak is because they trust their own wisdom. They don’t give the Lord a chance to help them. God will help His believing children in every emergency if they will trust Him fully and obey Him in faith.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 493, adapted.

Sometimes, we have trouble believing in the wonderful promises in the Book of Psalms. Our troubles and suffering cause us to doubt that God will help us. When times are hard, we must trust in God’s mercy.

Also, at times, some people don’t really understand God’s promises. We must not put God to the test as Satan did. Satan tried to get Jesus to believe that Psalm 91:11, 12 promised something that God did not promise at all. Jesus’ answer to Satan shows us that trusting in God is not the same thing as putting God to the test (Matthew 4:5–7). Trusting in God is faith. Putting God to the test is a sin. So, we must not ask God to do something that goes against His plan or against the Bible.

“How do we get success as Christians? Does our skill or education give us success? Or do we win success with our riches or because we are popular? The way we win is to go to God in faith. We must trust in God’s strength to help us. Then we will have success.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 203, adapted.



“God will help His believing children in every emergency if they will trust Him fully and obey Him in faith.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How do we trust God when things go wrong? Why do bad things happen to God’s people when we have so many wonderful promises about God’s protection?
- ② How can we trust in God with all our hearts all the time? (Read Psalm 91:14; Psalm 143:8, 10; and Psalm 145:18–20.) What can cause us to lose faith? Why is trust in God in good times so important for learning to trust Him in bad times, too?

PRAYER ANSWERED IN PERTH

Margaret and her husband, Levana, sat in their living room in Perth, Australia. The night before, they came home from a visit with her father in Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea is about 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometers) away from the city of Perth.

Margaret was thinking about her father's words to her at the airport yesterday. After Father prayed with her, he said, "Margaret, Jesus is coming back very soon. When you arrive at your home in Perth, my God will be at your door the next day."

Not far from Levana and Margaret's home, a Bible worker named Jo Laing prayed with several friends at a Seventh-day Adventist Church. Jo and her friends prayed for God to lead them in their work that day. Then they went out into the local neighborhood to sell books about the Bible and health.

A few hours later, Jo knocked on the door of Levana and Margaret's home. Levana opened the door. He looked at the book that Jo showed him. But he wasn't really interested in it. Then Jo gave him a copy of Ellen White's *The Great Controversy* and started to tell Levana about the book. Levana looked at several pages. Then he asked his wife to come to the door.

Levana asked Margaret, "Do we have this book?"

Margaret said that they did have the book. She turned to Jo and explained that she used to be a Seventh-day Adventist.

Margaret told Jo, "We just came home from Papua New Guinea last night. The last thing my dad said to me was that he would pray for God to show up at my house."

That day in Perth was hot. The temperature outside was 109.5 degrees Fahrenheit (43 degrees Celsius). But Jo got goosebumps on her arms when she heard Margaret's story. Then Jo and Margaret smiled at each other. The two women were amazed at how God answered the prayer of Margaret's father.

Margaret said, "What if I came to your church and shared this story?"

Jo said, "That's a wonderful idea."

A few weeks later, Margaret stood with tears in her eyes at Bickley Seventh-day Adventist Church. Margaret told the church members about how God searched for her, the same as a lost lamb. When God found her, He brought her back to church.

God used a woman named Jo, with a copy of *The Great Controversy*, to answer a father's prayer in Papua New Guinea.

Join the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its plan to share *The Great Controversy*, worldwide, in 2023 and 2024. Visit greatcontroversyproject.org for more information or ask your local pastor.

INSIDE
Story
by JOE PEOLA



God searched for Margaret,
the same as a lost lamb.