

PSALMS

Chapter 125

The LORD Surrounds His People

A Song of Ascents.

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. 2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. 3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong. 4 Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts! 5 But those who turn aside to their crooked ways the LORD will lead away with evildoers! Peace be upon Israel!

Ps 125 Possibly written at the time of Nehemiah, following the exile. The mountains surrounding Jerusalem (v 2) are reminders of the lasting apportionment of the land and the promise that God will be gracious to the righteous.

Format: Vv 1–3, security of Zion; vv 4–5, prayer for goodness. (TLSB)

The 125th psalm is a psalm of thanks. It gives thanks that God will not forever tolerate the power of the ungodly teachers and officials over those who truly believe, teach, and hope in him. Therefore, the Christian need not be weary and for that reason fall away from the Word, but he would give all blessings to those who hope in him.

However, God will cut off and throw out the faithless with their crooked ways—the master as well as the student. We have seen and experienced this also in our own time among the rebellious spirits. (Reading the Psalms with Luther)

Israel's peace: in testimony, prayer and benediction. The psalm is most likely postexilic and was probably spoken in the temple liturgy by a Levite. – One way in which God provides security for his people is by giving them good leader. (PBC)

125:1–2 The solid security of God's people. (CSB)

125:1 *Those who trust in the LORD.* God's "people" (v. 2) are also characterized as "the righteous" (v. 3) and "those who are good," "who are upright in heart" (v. 4). (CSB)

like Mount Zion. In their security (see Ps 46; 48). (CSB)

The mountains and the city are immovable due to God's protection (cf 46; 48; 128:5; 132:13–17). (TLSB)

125:2 *mountains surround Jerusalem.* Though Jerusalem is not surrounded by a ring of peaks, the city is located in what OT writers called a mountainous region. (CSB)

The hills encompassing Jerusalem are like sentinels, reminders of God's watchfulness. (TLSB)

so the LORD surrounds his people. As surely, as substantially and as immovably (see 2Ki 6:17; Zec 2:5). (CSB)

125:3 Wicked rulers, whether by example or by oppression, tend to corrupt even the righteous, but the Lord will preserve his people also from this corrosive threat. (CSB)

scepter of wickedness. Probably referring to Persian rule (see Ne 9:36–37) and its invidious underlings, such as those Nehemiah had to contend with (see Ne 2:19; 4:1–3, 7–8; 6:1–14, 17–19; 13:7–8, 28). (CSB)

The scepter is the symbol of authority. The evil rule over Jerusalem, following the exile, will not continue forever. (TLSB)

land allotted to the righteous. The promised land (see 78:55). (CSB)

Allotment of the land (Jsh 18–19) was God’s directive, which will displace the temporary reign of foreign kings. (TLSB)

125:4–5 To each according as he is and does—that is God’s way (see 18:25–27); thus the confident prayer (v. 4) and the equally confident assertion (v. 5). (CSB)

This section speaks of one means by which the Lord provides security for his people: he gives them good leaders. (PBC)

125:4 *do good, O Lord, to those who are good* – God has promised to bless the upright and to turn against the evil (cf Ps 1). Although God needs no reminder, His people need to remember Him as the source of this goodness. (TLSB)

125:5 *Peace be upon Israel.* Perhaps a concise form of the priestly benediction (Nu 6:24–26). (CSB)

The final resolution of the matter rests with the Lord. (PBC)

Ps 125 God’s blessing transforms us into mountains surrounding His dwelling place. We are built on His Word as an unchanging rock, and we become pillars by His grace. • Make us upright in heart, Lord, that we might be preserved before You. Amen. (TLSB)