



PILGRIM SONGS:

✠ THE PSALMS OF ASCENT ✠



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

1 In my distress I called to the LORD,
and he answered me.

2 Deliver me, O LORD,
from lying lips,
from a deceitful tongue.



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

- 3 What shall be given to you,
and what more shall be done to you,
you deceitful tongue?
- 4 A warrior's sharp arrows,
with glowing coals of the broom tree!



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

5 Woe to me, that I sojourn in Meshech,
that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!

6 Too long have I had my dwelling
among those who hate peace.

7 I am for peace,
but when I speak, they are for war!



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

This Ascent happened 3xs a year:

1. The Feast of *PASSOVER* (*Spring*)
2. The Feast of *PENTECOST* (*Summer*)
3. The Feast of *TABERNACLES* (*Fall*)



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The Feast of Passover was commemorating the Hebrews' liberation from slavery in Egypt and the "passing over" of the forces of destruction, or the sparing of the firstborn of the Israelites, when the Lord "smote the land of Egypt" on the eve of the Exodus. Passover lasts 7 days and on these seven days, all leaven, whether in bread or other mixture, is prohibited, and only unleavened bread, called matzo, may be eaten. There's a celebration Seder(meal) as well as a retelling of the Exodus story.



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The Feast of Pentecost (Shavuot) was primarily a thanksgiving for the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, but it was later associated with a remembrance of the Law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The church's transformation of the Jewish feast to a Christian festival was thus related to the belief that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus was the firstfruits of a new dispensation that fulfilled and succeeded the old dispensation of the Law.



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The Feast of Tabernacles (sukkot means "booths") Throughout the holiday, Jews observe this time by building and dwelling in temporary shelters, just like the Hebrew people did while wandering in the desert. This joyous celebration is a reminder of God's deliverance, protection, provision, and faithfulness.



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These Festivals were a reminder that they were a PEOPLE

REDEEMED

COMMANDED

BLESSED

This practice was a very tangible understanding
that our lives are a faith journey



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

Paul Tournier, in *A Place for You*, describes the experience of being in between—between the time we leave home and arrive at our destination; between the time we leave adolescence and arrive at adulthood; between the time we leave doubt and arrive at faith. It is like the time when a trapeze artist lets go the bar and hangs in midair, ready to catch another support: it is a time of danger, of expectation, of uncertainty, of excitement, of extraordinary aliveness.



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Christians will recognize how appropriately these psalms may be sung between the times: between the time we leave the world's environment and arrive at the Spirit's assembly; between the time we leave sin and arrive at holiness; between the time we leave home on Sunday morning and arrive in church with the company of God's people; between the time we leave the works of the law and arrive at justification by faith. They are songs of transition, brief hymns that provide courage, support and inner direction for getting us to where God is leading us in Jesus Christ.



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Isaiah 2:3 The Message

"Come, let's climb God's Mountain, go to the House of the God of Jacob. He'll show us the way he works so we can live the way we're made."



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This Psalm is a psalm of lament and symbol of repentance as the people of Israel would leave everyday life and move towards the city of God for festival worship.

This would start the beginning of the in between; the leaving and arriving served as a journey to shape perspective and prepare hearts for worship, community, celebration and hope to be a sent people.



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

Assurance of Answered

Prayer v 1

[1] In my distress I called to the LORD,

and he answered me.

Prayer for Help v 2-4

The Lord sees and will respond

[2] Deliver me, O LORD,

from lying lips,

from a deceitful tongue.



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Prayer for Help v 2-4

He is speaking of a deserved
justice and an uprooting in
order to end these lies and
deceitful tongues

[3] What shall be given to you,
and what more shall be done to you,
you deceitful tongue?

[4] A warrior's sharp arrows,
with glowing coals of
the broom tree!



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

Expression of desperation v 5

He is saying that his enemies
are no better than hostile
barbarians

[5] Woe to me, that I
sojourn in Meshech,
that I dwell among
the tents of Kedar!



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

Longing for peace v 6-7

[6] Too long have

"Enough is enough"

I had my dwelling

among those who hate peace.

This world HATES peace!

The Psalmist is longing for

both external and internal

peace on his journey.

[7] I am for peace,

but when I speak,

they are for war!



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

3 purposes of practice

1. It was for the dispersed Israelite making way from afar.
It was also for other Israelites to remember their
brother and sister in prayer.



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3 purposes of practice

2. The singers can deepen their appreciation and gratitude for the sanctuary, to which they have ready access (until the Romans destroy it in AD 70).



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

3 purposes of practice

3. It should reinforce among the faithful their place among the Gentiles as ambassadors of God's peace—a peace that one day will rule the earth under the leadership of the Messiah, who will remove all conflict among mankind (Isa. 11:1–10). The psalm can also serve these purposes for Jews in the dispersion, giving them a yearning for the rites of the sanctuary.



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NOW WHAT?

Our hope is that we are regularly in his word as a reminder of who he is and what he has done and who he has made us to be.

That we would see our gathering to worship as our “Ascent to Jerusalem” and sent out into the world to point others to Him.



A Song of Ascents: Psalm 120

John 17:14-19

[14] I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

[15] I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. [16] They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [17] Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. [18] As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. [19] And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.



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John 17:20-23

[20] “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, [21] that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. [22] The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, [23] I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.



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John 17:24-26

[24] Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

[25] O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. [26] I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”





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