

PRAYING PSALM 120

“In my distress I cried to the Lord, and He heard me... I am for peace; But when I speak, they are for war” (Psalm 120:1, 7).

Psalms 120 to 134 are psalms of degrees (or ascents). It is believed they were designed to be sung by pilgrims traveling to three yearly feasts at Jerusalem: Passover (spring), Pentecost (summer), and Tabernacles (fall). The Hebrew word for ascents (degrees) means to go up. All the roads to Jerusalem literally went uphill. Three themes are repeated: (1) Afflictions Israel experienced at the hands of other nations, (2) The gracious way God cared for and protected His people, (3) The blessing of being in Jerusalem. J. Sidlow Baxter believes these fifteen psalms related to Hezekiah and the degrees on the sundial where the shadow went back ten degrees (or steps) as a sign that fifteen years were to be added to Hezekiah's life. This is recorded in II Kings 20:8-11. The truth is we aren't told specifically, and neither do we know what the psalms of degree refer to.

Psalm 120 is a prayer for protection. It begins with distress and concludes with war. 1. SUPPLICATION (1-2). A prayer for deliverance from lying lips. 2. RETRIBUTION (3-4). A prayer that in times their enemies will be punished. 3. LAMENTATION (5-7). A cry that when he was for peace, his enemies were for war.

When people lie about you all you can do is ask the Lord to clear your name. It may take time, but if you remain faithful and keep your words between you and the Lord, He will vindicate you. When you feel like getting even, wait for God to deal with your accusers. When you want peace and others won't hear of it, you have no choice to turn to God and pray for your enemies. That is what Jesus said to do.