

Opening Illustration:

Inside the Text:

- **A Song of Ascents.**
 - **Connected to Psalm 121-134**
 - **Connected to Psalm 119:176**
 - **Connected to Psalm 107-150**

Book 5: Psalms of Ascent (15 in all starting with 120; 4 written by David and one by Solomon; 10 unknown authorship (Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:8-11); song by the children of Israel as they ascended to the temple to worship;

G. Campbell Morgan suggests the following outline:

Psalm 120-121 – In the far country

Psalm 122-123 – The Start of the Journey

Psalm 124-125 – The Journey

Psalm 126-131 – Approaching the City

- 126 – Joy and Repentance
- 127 – Family Strength
- 128 – Family Responsibility
- 129 – A Backward Look
- 130 – Humility and Confidence
- 131 – Rest in God's Will

Psalm 132-The Entrance

Psalm 133-134 – The City and Worship

Psalm 120 is classified as a cry of distress when surrounded by wicked men. Note its connection with Psalm 119:176. The psalmist compared himself to a helpless sheep who had gone astray (intentionally or unintentionally) from the protection of the shepherd and the flock. Psalm 120 provides names for two distinct regions in the Middle East: Meshech and Kedar (vs. 5) [show a map].

- Perhaps the psalmist is helping the reader connect with what it was like to live among non-Jewish heathen who hate God and love violence or fellow Israelites who have rejected the one true God and embraced violence.
- Some have suggested that the psalmist was referring to the lies and slander experienced by the Jews returning from the Exile with Nehemiah (Neh. 2:10, 19; 4:1 [7], 6:1) from the neighboring Samaritans.
- At the very least, I believe these two places demonstrates the extreme distance God's people would come to worship God in Jerusalem. Psalm 120 is a perfect picture of a pilgrim who has begun his journey to the temple.

- A Psalm of hope:
 - What to do when you feel **isolated** from God's people, **ineffective** in your current context, and **unable to convince** those around you to pursue peace?

Solution:

- Cry out to God in prayer. (1-2)
 - Leave the results in His capable hands. (3-4)
 - Nurture your longing for something better. (5-6)
 - Keep promoting peace amidst conflict. (7) [don't adjust it, tweak it, soften it...]
- I. Cry out to God in prayer. (1-2)
- He was desperate. (1) – distressed... I cried
 - i. David knew distress. (Ps. 18:6; 30:7-8; 50:15; 107:13; 116:3-4; 118:5)
 - ii. Hezekiah knew distress. (Is. 37:3, 4, 14; 38:2-5)
 - iii. Jonah knew distress. (Jonah 2:2)
 - iv. Jesus knew distress. (Luke 22:44; Heb. 5:7)
 - He was dependent. (2) – deliver my soul
 - i. From lying lips – **falsehood, deliberately misrepresent the truth, fraud**
 1. Malicious witnesses asking things that I do not know (Ps. 35:11)
 2. The words of a liar are like sharp razors plotting destruction; loving evil more than truth; seeking to devour another (Ps. 52:2-4)
 - ii. From a deceitful tongue – **a letting down or relaxing of the hands; negligent with the truth; treacherous**
 1. Wicked and deceitful who aggressively attack the righteous (Ps. 109:1-2)
 2. Violent men who plan evil things in their hearts and stir up war continually. They are full of venom and sharp-tongues like a serpent (reminds me of Satan) (Ps. 140:1-3)
 3. Religious leaders looking for false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death. They were grasping for ways to manipulate the men to share false testimonies and sentence Jesus to death (Matt. 26:59-62).
- II. Leave the results in His capable hands. (3-4)
- He was disturbed. (3) – asking a question
 - i. **What shall be given to you – to cause to receive... a phrase used when wishing something for another**
 - ii. **What shall be done to you – to add, to increase, to continue to do anything**
 - iii. You deceitful tongue:
 1. Swords in their mouths (Ps. 59:7; Prov. 12:18)
 2. Scorching fire (Prov. 16:27)

3. The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels (Prov. 18:8)
4. Both death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21)
5. a small fire set on fire by hell; unable to be tamed; a restless evil; full of deadly poison (James 3:5-8)
6. a lying tongue is a sign of unbelief (Jer. 9:2, 3, 6; Rev. 21:8)

- He was self-assured. (4) – because of God’s covenant to Israel (Lev. 26, Deut. 28)
 - i. a warrior’s sharp arrows (As sharp arrows of the mighty man, with coals of juniper.)
 - ii. with glowing coals of the broom tree (a broom tree is strong and burns the longest thus bringing longer pain)

III. Nurture your longing for something better. (5-7)

- He felt disconnected from God’s people. (5)
 - i. Woe to me...
 1. I am not where I want to be right now!
 - a. Meshech (Asia Minor – NW of Jerusalem)
 - b. Kedar (Arabian Desert – SE of Jerusalem)
- He felt discouraged about the lack of progress. (6)
 - i. Too long...
 1. I am not making the difference I intended!

IV. Keep promoting peace amidst conflict. (7)

- Only God can bring lasting peace. (Phil. 4:7 & 10)

Application:

- **Reflect on the longings of your own heart.**
- Do you desire to connect with God’s people?
- Are you willing to allow God to define success?
- Are you currently taking a stand for peace?

The Journey of Integrity

- Cry out to God in prayer. (1-2)
- Leave the results in His capable hands. (3-4)
- Nurture your longing for something better. (5-6)
- Keep promoting peace amidst conflict. (7)

Application:

- **Cast your burdens on the Lord.**

- Use Nehemiah 1 as your guide (ACTS)

- A – Adoration
- C – Confession
- T – Thanksgiving
- S - Supplication

- Pray

- P - Praise
- R -Repent
- A - Ask
- Y - Yield

- **Guard your tongue.**

- Meditate on James 3:5-12

- **Be known as a person of peace.**

- Seek peace and pursue it. (Psalm 34:14; Is. 26:3-4; Rom. 5:1)

Psalm 34:14

Turn away from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

Isaiah 26:3-4

³You keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you.

⁴Trust in the LORD forever,
for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we^[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Pray for peace around you. (Num. 6:24-26; Jer. 29:7)**

Numbers 6:24-26

²⁴The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶the LORD lift up his countenance^[a] upon you and give you peace.

Jeremiah 29:7

⁷But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

- o **Live peaceably with all men. (Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14)**

Romans 12:18

¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

- o **Proclaim peace to those around you. (Is. 52:7)**

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."