

**December 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Triumphant Tuesday and Wisdom Wednesday**

**Bible Study (Psalm 120)**

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The first part of **John 1:14** in the **MSG** states it this way, ***The WORD became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.*** His name is **JESUS!** Jesus was more than a babe in a manger, He was God robed in flesh. Notice, he was NOT prophesied to be “God the Son with us!” the translation of Immanuel means “God with us” (**Matt 1:23 AMP**); he was NOT called “the everlasting Son” but “the everlasting Father” (**Isaiah 9:6 AMP**) reads, ***“For to us a Child shall be born, to us a Son shall be giving; And the government shall be upon His shoulder, And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

**Hebrews 2:16-18 MSG** puts it this way; ***“It’s obvious, of course, that he didn’t go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us, children of Abraham. That’s why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people’s sins, he would have already experienced it all himself—all the pain, all the testing—and would be able to help where help was needed.***

## **Introduction**

Psalm 120 is the beginning of a selective group of 15 Psalms (range is from Psalms 120 to Psalm 134) they are titled “A song of Ascents” they actually have several other titles, such as: Gradual Psalms, Pilgrim Festival Songs, The Stairs of the Temple Songs, The Step Songs, The Progression Songs, The Procession from Babylon Songs and Songs of Degrees (depending what Bible you are using, the title will be the same for each of these Psalm within this range of Psalms 120-134).

Some scholars think that the word ascent can be referred to as steps or a pilgrimage ascent, it is their thought that the Psalms can represent the fifteen steps leading up to the temple in Jerusalem.

The 15 Psalms was sung during the Jews pilgrimage to Zion (Jerusalem) to worship. These pilgrimages took place three times annually. The annual feasts are known as; Passover in the spring; the Feast of Pentecost in the summer and the Feast of Tabernacle, that took place in the fall at harvest time.

What treacherous roads they had to travel. Images of the roads traveled are on the following page. It is believed to be a stone road on which the Jews would make their Jerusalem pilgrimage. There were many different roads that was carved through for the journey to Jerusalem. There were also hills and valleys and mountain terrain (images on following pages) that the worshipers would have to travel over.



Image of road



Image of road



Images of hills and valleys



Image of mountain terrain

For those traveling from Galilee, the journey could take five to seven days (if the shorter route was taken). The shortest route if traveling from Galilee would have been through Samaria, this route would have passed the city of Nazareth and several other cities, this route would take five to seven days; many Jews would have avoided this route even though it was shorter, this area was high risk; there's violence between the Galilean and Samaritans; for safety reason they took the longer route; which made their journey so much longer. It is mentioned in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of John that Jesus and his disciples did travel this route. ***John 4:4 KJV, "And he must needs go through Samaria."***

Viewing the map on the next page, should give you some ideal of the distances traveled; depending on the location of the cities that the worshipers traveled from. The journey was difficult and dangerous; however, despite these difficult challenges, the pilgrimage was considered a sacred duty and an opportunity for spiritual renewal.



The word Ascent means, to move upward. Jerusalem is located about 2,500 feet above sea level and so no matter what directions you would be journeying from, you would be headed upward; going “up” to Jerusalem. This is the reason they’re called Psalms of Ascent, because they were sung by people literally going “up” to Jerusalem.

The Psalms themselves have an upward motion; Psalm 120 begin with the believer crying out to God and Psalm 134 end with believers offering up praise to God in the temple courts. It was stated that the Psalms have been arranged in a sequence that reflects the feelings of the travelers. Jesus would have sung these songs with his family as they made their way up to Jerusalem, reference of their journey can be found in 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Luke verses 42-47.

While reading through the chapters of these 15 Psalms, you may recognize several scriptures in these psalms from popular songs and hymns.

It is stated that King David authored 4 of the Psalms (122,124,131,133), Solomon was credited with 1 (127) and the remaining 10 are unknown.

With regards to Psalm 120, the author is unknown. The psalmist is lamenting in this Psalm to the Lord about lying lips and deceit; while in route to one of the three festivals. When we find ourselves in distress and/or disappointment of any kind, we have three responsibilities to fulfill if our burdens are to become blessings, we must:

Pray – 1-2

Trust God – 3-4

Patiently Endure – 5-7

This will be the outline for Psalm 120. There are 7 verses of Psalm 120 AMP.

## **Pray**

***Vs 1 In my trouble I cried to the LORD, And He answered me.***

***Vs 2 Rescue my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, And from a deceitful tongue.***

***Philippians 4:6 NLT – Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.***

The psalmist knows the best thing to do is to cry out to the Lord for deliverance from these lying lips and a deceitful tongue. The psalmist knows his God to be faithful in answering his prayers in times past. ***(Ps 18:6 MSG) A hostile world! I call to God, I cry to God to help me. From his palace he hears my call; my cry brings me right into his presence-a private audience! (Ps 34:17-18) The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.***

***The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.***

Ponder a few questions:

**What do we do when we are in trouble?**

**Do we worry?**

**Do we complain?**

**Do we take it out on others?**

If we are going to walk this Christian journey with God, prayer to our Father in heaven will need to be front and center, it's through our daily communication with God, that we receive our daily instructions, give us this day our daily bread/instructions; no matter how small or what we might consider large in our everyday lives; ask God to lead us in all areas of our daily lives.

I remember some years ago, I was going through something, I was alone but not alone, brokenhearted, my spirit was crushed and I remember saying in that moment **"Lord Help Me" Lord Help me!** I had to get past that, "but they" syndrome, stop looking and listening to what other people thought they knew and focus on what God was molding me for, focus on what God knows of me. I had to stop resisting His molding. God does not force us to be what He wants us to be, but He invites us to be what He designed us to be. It was about a week later, things began to change, the atmosphere began to shift in my favor, **Hebrew 4:16 MSG** said ***"Now that we know what we have – Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God-let's not let it slip through our fingers. We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all-all but sin. So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help.***

*Yes, I prayed, but I wasn't trusting God, I wasn't patiently enduring I admit, I worried, I complained, yes, I would some time take it out on others, but remember I said I was alone but not alone. The Lord was standing there all along waiting for me to let go and let Him. We say we're waiting on God but the truth is God is waiting for us.*

One more question: Have you ever been lied to, lied on? It is painful, it hurts, it is meant to get your attention; lies are designed to damage your reputation. But guess what, it is a distraction designed by Satan.

Satan will not hesitate to use those closest to us, family or friends; you wouldn't be surprised of being mistreated by a foe, but family member or friends?

When we experience hurt from those closest to us, some choose not to speak on it; those family and friends hurts are among those unspoken requests that we raise our hands on, during prayer calls or small group prayer sessions.

Don't be naïve! There's a spiritual war going on, and we better stay ready to fight. **Ephesians 6:11 AMP** states, ***“Put on the full armor of God, (for his precepts are like the splendid armor of a heavily-armed soldier), so that you may be able to (successfully) stand up against all the schemes and the strategies and the deceits of the devil.***

Lies are powerful whenever they are accepted as truth. They have the power to hinder us from doing God's will, alter our perception of others, and who we are in Christ.

Satan uses anything (phone, text, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), anyone that allows themselves to be used of him to do his bidding. This is why it is imperative that we stay in the face of God.

When we are slandered, what a blessing it is that the Lord knows us, because God takes no time for lies, but He will hear our prayers against the lies.

***Lying lips are extremely disgusting to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight. (Proverbs 12:22 AMP)***

***Desperate, I throw myself on you: you are my God! Hour by hour I place my days in your hand, safe from the hands out to get me. Warm me, your servant, with a smile; save me because you love me. Don't embarrass me by not showing up; I've given you plenty of notice. Embarrass the wicked, stand them up, leave them stupidly shaking their heads as they drift down to hell. Gag those loudmouthed liars who heckle me, your follower, with jeers and catcalls. (Psalms 31:18) reading from the MSG it's including verses 14-18***

**Jeer** to laugh or shout insults



**Catcalls** are loud noises made to show disapproval

To look at this from another angle; regarding lies and slander – there might be some grain of truth to what is being said within the lie or slander, if so, if there is anyone on this earth that is without spot or wrinkle (sin) **cast the first stone (John 8:7)**. To take it an even further step; You say that God is transforming you, can't God transform your brother and sister as well?

**Psalms 51:10 TPT, *Keep creating in me a clean heart. Fill me with pure thoughts and holy desires, ready to please you.***

**2 Corinthians 3:18 AMP, *And we all, with unveiled face, continually seeing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are progressively being transformed into His image from (one degree of) glory to (even more) glory, which comes from the Lord, (who is) the Spirit.***

**Ecclesiastes 7:20 NLT, *Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins.***

***The prayer has been prayed, Help Me Lord! Rescue my Soul! now comes the Trust.***

### **Trust God**

***Vs 3 What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, You deceitful tongue?***

***Vs 4 Sharp arrows of the warrior, With the burning coals of the broom tree.***

**Deuteronomy 32:35 MSG – Don't you realize that I have my shelves well stocked, locked behind iron doors? I'm in charge of vengeance and payback, just waiting for them to slip up; and the day of their doom is just around the corner, sudden and swift and sure.**

***Remember when you were a child and you'd run and tell on each other, thinking that, the one individual would get punished, but it didn't work out that way- everyone got punished; it's not that way with God, God knows all sides of any story that's told.***

*Not that the psalmist is teasing his persecutors, but he is giving them previews of coming attractions from the Lord; sharp arrows and burning coals of the broom tree.*

The psalmist knows that the Lord has heard his prayer; the psalmist is confident that God will punish his enemy. **Psalms 46:1 NLT, *God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.***

Reading verses 3 and 4 brings to my mind, **Galatians 6:7, “You reap what you sow, NLT states it this way; *You will always harvest what you plant.***

The Psalmist is confident that God will punish the enemy with their own weapon, but the consequences will be far worse. Their deceitful tongues will not be washed with soap; **No!** it will be cauterized with glowing coals of the broom tree. The root of a broom tree is used to produce burning charcoal, it is known for its intense heat and it ensures a long, hot fire.

***The tongue is a fire! It can be compared to the sum total of wickedness and is the most dangerous part of our human body. It corrupts the entire body and is a hellish flame! It releases a fire that can burn throughout the course of human existence. James 3:6 TPT***

God’s judgment is often compared to arrows, because they come from above, and bring swift and sudden destruction with them. **Deu 32:23 AMP, “I will heap misfortunes on them; I will spend My arrows on them.”**

***Yet if one does not repent, you will not relent to sharpen your shining sword. You have an arsenal of lethal weapons that you’ve prepared for them. You have bent and strung your bow, making your judgment-arrows shafts of burning fire.***

***Psalms 7:13 TPT***

***Don’t hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you’ve got it in you, get along with everybody. Don’t insist on getting even; that’s not for you to do. “I’ll do the judging,’ says God, I’ll take care of it.” Romans 12:17 MSG***

We have prayed and we are trusting God, now let us

**Patiently Endure**

***Vs 5 Woe to me, for I sojourn in Meshech,(Me chex) and I live among the tents of Kedar (among hostile people)!***

***Vs 6 Too long my soul has had its dwelling With those who hate peace.***

***Vs 7 I am for peace, but when I speak, They are for war.***

**Hebrew 13:14 TPT – For we have no city here on earth to be our permanent home, but we seek the city that is destined to come**

The psalmist is comparing his surroundings with those of barbaric territories such as Meshech and Kedar (psalmist is possibly referring Samaria and Ammonites(Am mo nite)).

Meshech was a barbaric race of people, they was located in the mountains region between the Black and Caspian Seas and Kedar was a tribe who lived in the north-west of Arabia. They dwelt in black hair-tents, which is a symbol of their dark skin.

The Samaritans were a mixed race, many of the people of Israel were led off to Assyria as captives, but some remained in the land and intermarried with foreigners planted there by the Assyrians. The half-Jewish, half-Gentile people came to be known as Samaritans; their relationship with the Jews were hostile. Ammonites are descendants of Lot and his younger daughter incestuous relationship (**Genesis chapter 19**).

The psalmist was living among people who was behaving like people who lived outside the covenant blessings of God; meaning they were acting like the unsaved.

***Jer. 9:2 MSG, “I wish my head were a well of water and my eyes fountains of tears so I could weep day and night for casualties among my dear, dear people. At times I wish I had a wilderness hut, a backwoods cabin; where I could get away from my people and never see them again. They’re a faithless, feckless bunch (meaning, lack of initiative or strength of character and irresponsible), a congregation of degenerates.***

***Jer. 9:6 MSG, “Their tongues shoot out lies like a bow shoots arrows-A mighty army of liars, the sworn enemies of truth. They advance from one evil to the next, ignorant of me.” God’s Decree. “Be wary of even longtime neighbors. Don’t even trust your grandmother! **Brother schemes against brother, like old cheating*****

**Jacob.** *Friend against friend spreads malicious gossip. Neighbors gyp(chip) neighbors, never telling the truth. They've trained their tongues to tell lies, and now they can't tell the truth. They pile wrong upon wrong, stack lie upon lie, and refuse to know me."* **God's Decree.**

So we ask ourselves, when we find that we're experiencing, lying lips, deceit, hostile situations; why am I in the midst of all of this, Treachery, those who hate peace and they prefer war?!!

**Philippians 1:28 NLT, "Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself.**

Look at Saul and David for a moment: Saul grew to hate and terrorize David because of his jealousy and insecurity, don't give up when people doubt you and - don't render evil for evil. (**I Samuel 18<sup>th</sup> chapter**).

**David patiently endured and became King.**

Look at Joseph and his brothers: Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, and the brothers lied to the father; what was the result of this treachery? Forgiveness and reconciliation. Joseph forgave them and reunited with them and he provided for his brothers and their offspring. (**read Genesis chapters 37-50**) Obstacles that are set before us aren't necessarily a bad thing. God can use them to grow us up in our faith and teach us how to depend on Him in our everyday lives. **James 1:3-4 MSG, "Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when test and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.** When we consider and honor the blood of Jesus that make our access to God possible, demons tremble, the angels snap to attention, and God Himself leans forward; the purpose that God has for my life, shall be.

What was the outcome of the injustice towards Joseph?

**Joseph patiently endured.**

**Joseph was promoted to second-in-command of Egypt by Pharaoh.**

Forgiveness – letting go of negative emotions such as anger, resentment, and bitterness toward the someone who has wronged you. It is a decision that does not require the other person to apologize or make amends.

Reconciliation – is the process of restoring a damaged relationship.

God is in control; God works good even through plots of treachery and lies.

**Psalm 21:11 NLT, *“Although they plot against you, their evil schemes will never succeed.***

**Psalm 10:2 NASB, *In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.***

Believers today not only live with unbelievers, same as the psalmist, but also live with professed believers who live like unbelievers. The believer continues to be a peacemaker and try to encourage family, friends, and neighbors to be peaceable and live according to what is pleasing to God but they are more intent on doing everything that is not of God. Some of the problems in families and churches are caused by professed Christians who do not have a real relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus provided the example of faith through his life on earth for us to follow. He showed us how to live a life pleasing to God. **Hebrews the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter** encourages us to remain grounded in our faith by following Jesus; ***“consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*** Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith serves as a reminder that we cannot rely on our own strength or efforts to achieve salvation. **Ephesian 2:8-9 NLT, *“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.***

Until God changes the unbelievers/unsaved, the dedicated believers must remain patiently enduring and prayerful.

Patiently Endure. This is the way Joseph dealt with his brothers in Canaan and his false accusers in Egypt. It is also the way David dealt with King Saul and the way Jesus dealt with His enemies (read **1 Peter 2:18-25**)

**18** *You who are slaves must submit to your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you – not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel.* **19** *For God is pleased when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment.* **20** *Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you.* **21** *For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.* **22** *He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone.* **23** *He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.* **24** *He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.* **25** *Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.*

In my conclusion, let me say that the psalmist felt like a stranger in a hostile land, as all Children of the Most High God does; being surrounded by people who love war and hate peace. Psalm 120 is instructing believers to pray and seek God's peace; because **John 14:27 TPT** tells us, *"I leave the gift of peace with you-my peace. Not the kind of fragile peace given by the world, but my perfect peace. Don't yield to fear or be troubled in your hearts-instead, be courageous!* We trust in our God's intervention and justice and we continue to patiently endure; because **Hebrew 13:14 NLT** reads, *"this world is not our permanent home, we are looking forward to a home yet to come; therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name."*  
The Word of the LORD.

Resources:

Bibles: MSG, AMP, KJV, NLT

Warren W Wiersbe Exposition Commentary

Life Application Study Bible

Enduring Word

Christianity.com

God in Flesh.Randall D. Hughes