

### **Psalms 120:0 ¶ A Song of degrees.**

This psalm is the first of fifteen that bear this title. Commentators cannot with certainty explain the significance of this designation for this group of psalms. John Gill offers the following summary: “Some think it refers to the music of them, and that this is the name of the tune to which they were set; or the first word of a song according to which they were sung...or that they were sung with an higher voice, or an ascending note....Others are of opinion that the title of them respects the ascent of persons or places, at what time and where they were sung; either when the Israelites went up to Jerusalem, at the three solemn yearly feasts; or when the Jews came up from Babylon, mention being made in some of these psalms of their being in Babylon, and of their return from their captivity there....But the common opinion of the Jews, and which is embraced by many Christians...is that these are the songs sung by the Levites, on the fifteen steps, by which they went up from the court of the women to the court of the Israelites, or came down them; and on each step sung one of these psalms....”

### **Psalms 120:1 ¶ In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.**

The author of this psalm is crying out in prayer to the LORD during a time of great anguish and distress. “He heard me” is a statement that indicates his prayer was answered.

### **Psalms 120:2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.**

The prayer is short and to the point—Save me, O LORD, from the slander being spread about me by those with lying lips and deceitful tongues.

Can't help but think about these verses from James.

*James 3:6–8 “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell....But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”*

### **Psalms 120:3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?**

### **Psalms 120:4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.**

Though referencing the “false tongue,” it is obvious that the psalmist is talking about the person to whom it belongs. What will happen to the liar? He will be painfully punished.

Poole (quoted by Guzik): “**Coals of juniper**, which being kindled burn very fiercely, and retain their heat for a long time. And the psalmist may possibly express it in these words, to show, the suitableness of the punishment to the sin; as thy tongue shoots arrows, (for so calumnies are called, Psalm 57:4 and 64:3) and kindles coals, so thou shalt bring God’s arrows and coals kindled by the fire of his wrath upon thyself.”

**Psalms 120:5** ¶ **Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!**

**Psalms 120:6** **My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.**

**Psalms 120:7** **I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.**

It seems that the psalmist is far away from home in the land of Mesech, staying among the descendants of Kedar.

Eerdman’s Dictionary: “Ps. 120:5 mentions Meshech in parallelism with Kedar as a far-off, militaristic people. Gen. 10:2 associates Meshech with Tubal and Javan. In Ezekiel they are linked as trading partners with Tyre (Ezek. 27:13), and Meshech and Tubal are incorporated into the kingdom of Magog, ruled by Gog (38:2; 39:1). The kingdom and its king serve as symbols of any future enemies who would attack the Jews back in their homeland.”

The psalmist describes these people as hating peace, and it’s obvious he doesn’t enjoy living among them. There is no explanation why he is there.

Basically, this is how I feel about living in our world today. I am for peace, but they are promoting wickedness all around me. I know I am certainly looking forward to the LORD coming to take us out of this evil world and home to heaven! I can hardly wait until the LORD takes His throne in Jerusalem, and we are able to witness His righteous rule.