

## Psalm 120

Psalm 120 is a lament. This is a particular kind of Psalm in which the author expresses his grief or sorrow over some situation or circumstance. In this case, the lament is offered in a very unique context. It is clear from the Psalm that the author lives amongst the Gentiles, exiled from the land and people of God, and that his belief in God is opposed by those who don't desire peace with God and God's people. The context of the Psalm then is understood as that of crying out to God for His Divine intervention and comfort. There are three components of the Psalm that are especially instructive for us as we attempt to glean from this brief chapter.

1. The right response to grief
  - a. First we see the introduction of the Psalm which is incredibly helpful and insightful
  - b. Notice the phrase... "in my distress, I called upon the Lord"
    - i. Now, we don't know how long it may have taken for the author to call but it is incredibly important for us to recognize that this is the pattern for all believers
    - ii. If you are like me, calling upon the Lord is too often a last resort
    - iii. It is far too regular for me to try to fix things myself and, only when I have exhausted any other option, do I bow the knee in desperate prayer
  - c. Instead, the Psalm shows us that our reaction to difficulty should be crying out for help
    - i. This brings God glory as He is the exalted need in our lives
    - ii. This breeds humility in us as we consider our inadequacy
    - iii. It also demonstrates the right response to those who are looking
2. The right belief in times of opposition
  - a. There are two convictions that are closely related in our passage
    - i. The first is the conviction that God answers prayer
      1. Notice here that the Psalmist tells us that he both called on God AND that God answered Him
        - a. There is some disagreement here as to what that answer was as it is clear that the distress has not gone away
        - b. It is possible that the answer was "wait"
        - c. It is equally true that God had answered
        - d. Folks, God answers prayer! It may not be what we want when we want but He hears His children and responds
    - ii. The second belief expressed is that God is the deliverer
      1. Notice here that the Psalmist still cries out for deliverance
      2. He has not been lifted from his circumstance but this doesn't change his prayer
      3. Instead, the Psalmist knows that God answers prayer, and this inspires his fervent cries for help
      4. Do you believe this?

3. The right desire for fellowship
  - a. Finally, I find it fascinating that the lament centers around the people that the Psalmist lives amongst
  - b. Verse 5 says “woe to me that I sojourn in Meshech (a Gentile people near the black sea) that I dwell among the tents of Kedar (a people who dwelt in the Arabian desert).”
  - c. Isn’t it interesting that a major problem in this man’s life is his company?
    - i. He is around people who don’t believe
    - ii. Presumably, his heart’s desire is to be around those who do believe
  - d. As a consequence of his fellow citizen’s unbelief, they don’t see what he sees and they don’t want what he wants
    - i. While the author wants peace, the lost people want bloodshed
    - ii. While the author cries out to the One True God, his fellow citizens have no regard for Him
  - e. One lesson we can take from this is that we are blessed to dwell amongst God’s people
  - f. What a blessing we have to be able to come into this church and worship with those who want what we want
  - g. What a joy to be with like-minded men and women who help us seek and serve the Risen Lord
  - h. Furthermore, we see that this blessing should be appreciated and Psalms like this one remind us that life is far more difficult for those who don’t have such a blessing