



Lesson #1: Suffering from Slander (Psalm 120)

By the time we get to the Psalms in Scripture there are two competing realities:

1. **There is the fact of God's** _____
2. **There is the folly of man's** _____

Eventually those two realities lead to one central question: Is God going to keep his promises and do what he said? Enter the "Psalms of _____." These two realities and this one question form the background to that section of 15 Psalms that appears three-quarters of the way through the book (120-134).

Psalm 120 starts the journey with the psalmist in distress about his situation. Put simply, the psalmist finds himself where he doesn't want to be. He is a sojourner, unsettled, and being _____ by those around him. Children are often heard to say, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words may never hurt me." That is a _____. Words hurt us deeply. Proverbs tells us that "_____ and _____ are in the power of the tongue" (18:21) and in 2018 that Proverb could be no less true. Man's words really hurt.

This psalm is meant to be sung by those who are hurting from slander. In it we learn that **God desires you to be released from the pain of slander.**

_____ TO GOD WHEN YOU ARE WRONGFULLY SLANDERED (120:1-2)

The psalmist learns to lean on the Lord in times of trouble and so the Psalms of Ascent begin with a call to _____.

- A. Our best defense is _____ and not _____ (v. 1)**
When the psalmist finds himself wrongfully slandered he runs to God and the reason why is simple and yet so remarkable. God is _____ and _____ hears you when you pray.
- B. Our best defense is _____ and not _____ (v. 2)**
The psalmist begins with a simple fact – God is real. He then asks God to deliver him from specific trouble that he faces, which in this case is slander. I'm sure in the midst of these slanderous words the psalmist was tempted to attack back with some of his own. But here we learn a lesson from his example. Instead of attacking back, the psalmist _____. This is a hard lesson to learn. Waging war on our _____ is far more beneficial than entering into a war of words.

_____ ON GOD WHEN YOU ARE WRONGFULLY SLANDERED (120:3-4)

The second application to this psalm is this: know that God will _____ the wicked.

- A. God's judgement on the slanderer is _____**
When speaking of the slanderer, C.H. Spurgeon would say: "The law of retaliation can hardly meet the case, since none can _____ the _____. ... But what will God do with lying tongues? He has uttered his most terrible threats against them, and he will terribly execute them in due time. "
- B. God's justness on the slanderer is _____**
We learn from Psalm 120 that this judgement is severe.
1. **The arrow speaks of the _____ of this judgement**
 2. **The coals speak of the _____ of this judgement**
- These verses in Psalm 120 are both a warning to the wicked and a reassurance to the righteous that God is just and he will punish every sin – including the sin of slander.

_____ GOD WHEN YOU ARE WRONGFULLY SLANDERED (120:5-7)

As we come to the end of this text a _____ is reaffirmed for those being slandered.

- A. Be _____ (v. 5)**
The logical meaning of this text is seen as we understand "Mesekh" and "Kednar" in the Old Testament.
- "Mesekh" – Was the son of Jephthah (Genesis 10). The reputation of this people was that of _____.
 - "Kednar" – Was the son of Ishmael. Ishmael was not the son of promise and would go out as a _____ man.
- These names are used typically in this psalm. This psalmist is making the point: "Woe is me for I live in the midst of a culture filled with _____ people who are _____ men wanting to do harm."
- B. Be _____ to peace (v. 6-7)**
As the psalmist closes he reviews his situation honestly. He knows that he is surrounded by those who would rather not live in peace but he says that he is committed to it. Jesus said, "Blessed are the _____ for they will be called the Sons of God" (Matthew 5:9)

Concluding Thoughts

Psalm 120 starts us on the journey in the "Psalms of Ascent." The Psalm reminds us how our feet ought to move on this path. Samuel Cox in his book *The Pilgrim Psalms – An Exposition of the Songs of Degrees* said, "It is hardly an exaggeration that _____ of the miseries of human life spring from the reckless, malignant use of the _____." Will you run to, rely on, and remember God when you are wrongfully slandered?