

Psalm 120:1-7

In a land of deceit and lies

[[A Song of degrees or ascent.]]

We come to this Psalm written with the next 14 books as part of worship where Jewish pilgrims would chant as they travelled to Israel and would hike 2500ft ascending to Jerusalem.

They would take three times a year, where they would partake of the festival of Tabernacles, Passover, and Pentecost, you can read these in Deuteronomy 16:16.

4 of these 15 books were written by David and 1 by David's son Solomon. It is uncertain who wrote the rest of these chapters.

This Psalm 120 is the start of the journey, as the journey progresses it gets better for them until they reach the temple in chapters 132,133 and 134.

Let's look at 3 aspects of these verses: -

1. Deliverance from lying and deceitful people. v1-4
2. Dwelling in a place of hate. v5-6
3. Diplomatic being a Peace maker. v7

You will notice that the whole narrative of this Psalm is all about the speaking tongue where this person the psalmist in this community is living in a hostile place, where words are vicious in their language.

1. Deliverance from lying and deceitful people. v1-4

In our first 4 verses we read the psalmist is in distress, he has had enough, and he cries to the Lord to be delivered from people around him, who are lying giving false information.

Also, a deceitful tongue is causing him to believe something false that isn't the truth. He can see all this misinformation and has had enough!

Do you suffer from people lying and being deceitful to you? It can be oppressive at times, and therefore the psalmist is crying out to the Lord.

All around us in we see lying and deceit as part of normal culture, we see it high up with our politicians with tyrannical behaviours.

Also, with the mainstream news, you can't believe a word they say, as Donald Trump says it is all FAKE news.

You could be in a relationship where is it repressive with a partner being a liar and being dishonest, maybe both just being bad as each other causing a deeper toxic life together.

To illustrate this, in Psalm 52: 1-4, it corresponds with the historical events in 1 Samuel 21 and 22. 1 Sam 21:2.

It tells of the time of David lied to Ahimelech where he told him that he was ordered by the King to visit on business, but this was a time when David was fleeing Saul the king!

This might have been a small lie, but it had big consequences, where 85 priests, the people of the city of Nob were massacred.

Now! Doeg the Edomite was being deceitful, listening into the conversation between David and Ahimelech.

Then later we read that Doeg, he is speaking to Saul and said that David went to Ahimelech for food and for the sword that he killed Goliath with (which was true). But Doeg said that David had Ahimelech consult with God for him.

This made Saul very suspicious that David and Ahimelech, were conspiring against him.

Also, Doeg was an Edomite, they were enemies of Israel but somehow Saul found favour in Doeg who worked for him as a herdsman.

But this was an opportune time for Doeg causing treachery and deceit in slaughtering the priesthood and break the ties of God and Israel.

In the future when David became king, he installed Abiathar as new High Priest.

So, you can see that lying and deceit from these different characters in this Psalm 52 and 1 Samuel, it was cruel, and really messed up.

Let's go back to our passage.

In **verses 3 and 4**, **verse 3** is a rhetorical question, making a point. In **verse 4** is the answer to the question.

3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

I think he is murmuring to himself here, or is he being bold and addressing the people, he might get into trouble.

In **verse 3** he is saying in a way, "what will your lying lips and deceitful tongue cause you? What are you going to get from it? "

Verse 4 The evil people are going to get God's judgment in which the coals of the Juniper or Broom tree, will be attached to sharp arrows and fired back at the evil people where they will reap what they have sown with the consequences of lying and deceit.

The broom tree is a sort of shrub that grows high enough to give shade, like with Elijah. The charcoals of burning wood keep hot and retain heat which makes them a great firewood fuel to warm up around a campfire or a fire pit at home.

2. Dwelling in a place of hate. v5-6

The psalmist was so unlucky the place he lives is a place of hate. Being hated isn't nice, even if you're a good enough person, people will always find a fault. Sometimes people misunderstand you or your circumstances, it can be even the way you look or being a vulnerable person or even have a hidden disability like autism.

But the psalmist is saying here in **verses 5 and 6**

5 Woe is me, that I dwell in Mesech, [that] I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.

The psalmist is still bemoaning, he is so discontented, he either lives in Mesech or Kedar but can't be in the two places at once, maybe he visited them on some journeys.

Let look!

Mesech was a nation North of Israel today it could be part of modern-day Turkey but investigating in Genesis 10:2 and Ezekiel 27:13 they were a descendant of Noah's son Japheth who were merchants and traded in slavery and vessels of brass in markets.

Kedar was in the northern Arabian desert, Southeast of Israel, Kedar named after the son of Ishmael who were powerful Arabs, we read of them in Jeremiah 49:28 when judgment came on them as well as Hazar.

Do you or have you lamented of where you live? It can be tough; we need to know that God knows every lying tongue or deceitful action against us and eventually in God timing these people will pay for their actions.

Matthew 5:11-12 says "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great [is] your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

But more importantly when we endure these times, it strips us back to bare bones!

- It keeps our eyes on heavenly rewards instead of earthy rewards.

3. Diplomatic being a Peace maker, preventing war. v7

Lastly let's look at this last verse: -

7 I [am for] peace: but when I speak, they [are] for war.

The psalmist here has relationship with the false lying accusers, he seems to try and communicate peace, but the accusers are too far gone for any help and want war!

This devotional hasn't been very encouraging and for the Psalmist it wasn't either. So, what can we learn from this.

Let's look at this closely and find something reassuring to take home with.

Verse 7 says I [am for] peace: As we read through this Psalm we see the Psalmist personality, he is a person who loves the Lord, he longs to be in Jerusalem to be at the temple, partaking of the festivals but also to have fellowship with likeminded believers.

But he is trying to be a peacemaker it is natural for us as believers to find a solution in life issues to bring peace through witness and prayer.

A verse from the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5** can give us some help **Matthew 5:9 Blessed [are] the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.** This is the first mention in the NT of peace, spoken by Jesus and ultimately, He is the only real peacemaker as it says in **Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven.**

Just like the Psalmist, before he could become a peacemaker between himself and the people, there must be peace between him and God. This was through sacrifice and burnt offering where animal blood was drained and then sprinkled around the alter. Which was needed for repentance to atone for sins.

For us that peace, is through the blood of Jesus, His sacrificial work on the cross, once for all, atoning for our sins through this we have been reconciled to God, through forgiveness of sins when we repent and are born again.

Where it says in **Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**

So, we are Christ's ambassadors in **2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** We have such an important role being commissioned with the message of reconciliation to the world, telling them to come or come back to a relationship with God.