

**=Story Behind the Psalm=**

Psalm 120-124

**NOTE:** *These lessons are designed simply as a guideline. As a Sunday School teacher part of your job is to study the lesson and develop it for the pupils in your class according to their age and spiritual development.*

**Scripture:** Psalms 120-124

**AUTHORS:** Mainly David and Solomon

**The Story Behind the Psalms**

These are called "Psalms of ascension." They were basically travel Psalms. They were used specifically for the three annual feasts. As the Jews would march to Jerusalem for the feast, they would sing these Psalms of ascension. From anywhere in the promised land, it was always "up" to Jerusalem, for Jerusalem was the highest point in the land. So as the people would ascend to Jerusalem, they would sing these songs one after another.

When they arrived at Jerusalem, they would go to the temple. These Psalms were sung on the steps of the temple. Psalm 120 would be sung on the first step, Psalm 121 on the second step, etc. until each Psalm had been sung (there were 15 steps ascending to the temple). Since these were sung going up the steps, they were called "Psalms of ascension." As they are read it should be kept in mind that these were travelers going to the holy city for a feast. Read carefully Psalm 128 and imagine a great group of pilgrims journeying for a time of worship in the beloved city.

**The Way They Were Used by God's People**

Not only were they used for trips to the feasts and to Jerusalem, these were Psalms used for any journey. What a tremendous thing it would be for a Christian family to claim Psalm 128 as they leave on vacation or for a Christian businessman to claim its promises as he leaves for a business trip! In these days of advanced travel, these Psalms should be used over and over again as we journey to and fro.

**LESSON:**

Each of these Psalms has a main subject the Jews would sing about. These are all subjects worthy of lifting our voices unto God and ought to be regular themes of the heart.

**1. Psalm 120- The LORD is continually with us**

- a. Verse 1- the psalmist cried unto the LORD in time of distress. Distress signifies a position of emergency and unable to help yourself. In times like this the best (and sometimes only) place to turn is to the LORD.

- b. The main problem he was facing was the lies and slander of those around him. They were like sharp arrows and fire (James 3:6; Proverbs 26:18-22)
- c. Woe is me because I dwell in Mesech and Kedar. This was referring to the captivity in Babylon. When in the distress and captivity they tried to live peaceably but it never seemed to happen. Every time they wanted peace war seemed to prevail.

**2. Psalm 121-The LORD is my help**

- a. Verse one the psalmist is making a statement much like we would a question today. “Shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills?” Or, “From whence cometh my help?” He answers in verse 2, “My help cometh from the LORD”. Our help does not come from the high hills around us, our education, our financial status, or any other man; our help comes from the LORD. When everything else fails, the LORD will always come through.
- b. Notice all the areas of the LORD’s protection:
  - i. He will not allow you to be moved
  - ii. He will not slumber (or be unaware)
  - iii. He will protect you (keeper). He is your shadow (Psalm 91:1) or protector.
  - iv. He will preserve you.

**3. Psalm 122-The house of God is important in my life**

- a. We should be glad to go to church (1)
- b. Jerusalem was the place where the temple was.
- c. Notice within the walls of Jerusalem there was peace and prosperity (7). Church is where the Christian finds peace and prosperity.
- d. It is the House of God that motivates us to serve Him (9)

**4. Psalm 123-I desire to serve God**

- a. At this time they were afflicted because of those who were at ease (everything was going well in their life currently) and of the proud.
- b. Through this time of affliction they simply waited on God like a waiter would wait on a table. Constantly looking to fulfill the needs and desires of the LORD realizing their payday was coming.

**5. Psalm 124-God is on our side**

- a. If it were not for the LORD then we would no doubt have been consumed by our enemies. We today can give the LORD all the credit for our life. If it were not for the LORD we would not be saved, sober, clean, sane, have good families, and so many other things.

**Memory Verse:** *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Psalm 123:2*