

PSALM
120



Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips,
from a deceitful tongue.
(PSALM 120:2)

STRUCTURE

- v. 1-2** Prayer for deliverance from liars.
- v. 3-4** Poetic address to the tongues of the liars.
- v. 5-6** Lament over sin.
- v. 7** Prayer for peace.



AT A GLANCE

PART OF A WHOLE

One of the *Psalms of Ascent* (PSALMS 120–134)

MORE TO THE STORY

A broom tree is the same species under which Elijah rested when he had given up after fleeing from Jezebel (1 KINGS 19:4–5).

“MESHECH”

Associated with the descendants of Tubal-Cain and personified as evil in Ezekiel 27, 38 and 39. This may indicate Psalm 120 being one of the later psalms.

“KEDAR”

Pictured as both the object of God’s wrath (ISAIAH 21:16–17, JER. 49:28) and a symbol of peace and unity at the end of time (ISAIAH 42:11, 60:7).

CHRIST IS HERE

Much of this psalm should be read in the voice of a man lamenting sin in the world. The final verse can rightly be placed in the mouth of Jesus who is the Prince of Peace.



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The Songs of Ascents were to be prayed as a pilgrim began the trek up the mountain toward Jerusalem, the city of peace. Psalm 120 begins with the psalmist far from peace, under attack and seeking the Lord's deliverance. He is distressed by enemies who attack him with lies. He asks a rhetorical question: what does a false tongue deserve? If only arrows and fire would run the liars through! In addressing the tongues of the enemy, the psalmist foreshadows what James writes in chapter 3: that the tongue of sinful men is deceitful, prone to great destructive trouble. As he makes his way toward the Temple, the psalmist confesses that he is spiritually in Meshech (a place of godlessness), living in the tents of Kedar (the object of God's wrath time and time again). As if heeding the instruction and wisdom given in Psalm 119, he desires to escape these enemies to the city of peace, where the Lord's atonement is found. The Christian may learn from this psalm both the deadliness and division brought by loose and false lips, and that our Lord hears our laments, giving peace that this world cannot give.

USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: v. 1b

In the Daily Office: Mondays at Vespers; Vespers on Holy Thursday; Vespers for a Martyr

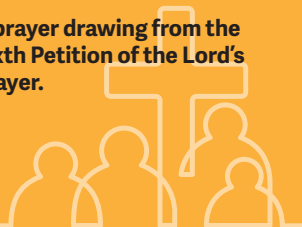
At the Divine Service:

One-Year:
Gradual for Trinity 2 (v. 1–2)



SPIRITUAL CARE

- Against false teachers.
- Lament for the damage done by lies.
- A cry for peace.
- When betrayed.
- A prayer drawing from the Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer.



PSALM PRAYER

PSALM
120

O God, You make all troubles light. Deliver the souls of Your faithful people from the lying lips and deceitful tongues of the wicked slanderers, that protected by Your spiritual help we may overcome all attacks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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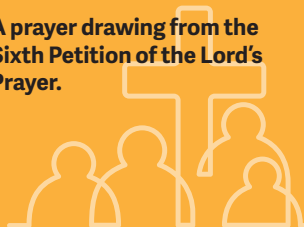
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