

Series: Psalms

Title: I Am For Peace

Text: Ps 120: 1-7

Date: March 21, 2024

Place: SGBC, NJ

**Psalm 120: 1: «A Song of degrees.» In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me. 2: Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, *and* from a deceitful tongue. 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. 5: Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, *that* I dwell in the tents of Kedar! 6: My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. 7: I *am for* peace: but when I speak, they *are* for war.**

This is the first of the "Song of degrees"--the ascension psalms. These were songs the children of Israel sang as they travelled up to the house of the Lord for the annual feasts

In these songs, we hear the heart of our Lord Jesus as he made his pilgrimage through this world. Secondly, we hear the heart of God's saints as we make our pilgrimage through this world on our way to God's heavenly house. Also, we hear the attitude of God's saints toward God's house in public worship week in and week out.

In this first psalm of degrees, the saints are leaving their home to travel to the Lord's house--they have been among unregenerate sinners in the world--they are distressed. The last psalm of degrees--they are leaving God's house travelling back home--they are strengthened and rejoicing. That is how it is with us--we spend all week among the world--we leave our homes distressed. We come and hear a word from our Savior and leave rejoicing, strengthened by the Lord's grace

## HEAR OUR SAVIOR

**Psalm 120: 7: I *am for* peace: but when I speak, they *are* for war.**

The Lord Jesus is the King of Salem, King of Peace. Paul called him "the God of peace" in Romans 15. The Son of God took the nature of his elect to make peace between us and God we offended. God declared through Isaiah that Christ would accomplish peace between God and his people.

Isaiah 32:17: And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

For God's elect, peace with God came at a great price: it took Christ laying down his life to make justice and peace shake hands in harmony.

Psalm 85:10...righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*

Colossians 1:20: And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself [his elect] by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

Through the preaching of the gospel, when the Spirit regenerates us, Christ gives his redeemed peace with God in the new heart--and peace with our brethren in the new heart.

Ephesians 2:14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; 15: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; 16: And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Romans 5: 1: Therefore being justified by faith [by Christ's faithfulness through faith he has given us], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Christ keeps peace in the hearts of his saints.

John 14:27: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Our peace is in Christ alone, through faith--"peace in believing"--

John 16:33: These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Sinner, if you would have peace with God then God says take hold of Christ by faith.

Isaiah 27:5...let him take hold of my Strength, *that* he [Christ] may make peace with me; *and* he [Christ] shall make peace with me. [on the believer's behalf]

## THEY ARE FOR WAR

**Psalm 120: 5: Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, *that* I dwell in the tents of Kedar! 6: My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. 7: I *am for* peace: but when I speak, they *are* for war.**

Unregenerate sinners, especially religious unregenerate sinners, are for war.

Christ walked this earth preaching peace--the gospel of Christ is the gospel of peace, "*I am for peace...*"

Acts 10:36: The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Romans 10: 15:...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

But while Christ sojourned through this earth, he said, "*Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*" Mesech descended from Noah's son Japheth: they were barbarians. Kedar was a son of Ishmael--Arabians--they dwelt in black tents--which symbolizes a depraved heart. They represent all depraved sinners and all false, antichrist, freewill-works religion. As Paul said in Romans 8, every carnal heart is enmity against God. Fallen, unregenerate sinners will not, cannot, subject themselves to the gospel of Christ.

2 Corinthians 2: 14: the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

That is why Christ told us...

Matthew 10:34: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

The whole time Christ sojourned in this earth, unregenerate, religious sinners opposed him--"*My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.*" Imagine if we knew men's hearts! The Lord Jesus knows men's hearts without them having to speak. When he told the man with palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Mark 2: 6...certain of the scribes...reason[ed] in their hearts, 7: Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8: And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

But they made it known by their words, too: they called him a child born of fornication, a glutton, a drunk; they charged him with sedition, with blasphemy against God and treason against the king. And all this while Christ came preaching peace!

But the gospel declares Christ alone makes peace! Christ alone made peace with God for his people. Christ alone gives his people a heart to be reconciled to God. Christ alone gives peace between brethren. UNREGENERATE MEN HATE THAT PEACE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT THE MAKERS OF PEACE.

Christ makes his saints peacemakers. The Holy Spirit descended upon Christ in the form of Dove--Christ teaches us to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Christ's people are compared to Olive trees, the olive branch being a symbol of peace. He teaches us "if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." We desire nothing more than peace with God, peace with brethren and peace with all men: "*I am for peace*".

But the gospel is the gospel of peace because it declares salvation and peace is of the Lord alone. The gospel leaves nothing in the sinners hand. All glory goes to our triune God. God the Father chose his people freely by grace. The GodMan redeemed us by grace. The Spirit of God regenerates us and preserves us by grace. The gospel declares salvation and peace is of the Lord beginning to end. This makes unregenerate men wage war against God's saints.

Galatians 4: 28: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29: But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

It has been so for God's saints in every generation and will be until Christ calls us home.

Matthew Henry said, "Though the people of God are, and study to be, a quiet people, yet it has been the common practice of their enemies to devise deceitful matters against them. All the hellish arts of malice and falsehood are made use of to render them odious or despicable; their words and actions are misconstrued, even that which they abhor is fathered upon them, laws are made to ensnare them (as they did Dan. vi. 4, &c.), and all to ruin them and root them out. Those that hated David thought scorn, like Haman, to lay hands on him alone, but contrived to involve all the religious people of the land in the same ruin with him."

William Huntington began one of his letters "*I AM for peace, a son of peace, and a preacher of the peace, but I find, go where I will, the devil forestals my market by aiming at war.*"

Spurgeon, "The Christian will long to be out of a world like this, where there is a Satanic rifleman behind every bush, a devilish archer behind every crag and where, oftentimes, while we are going along some quiet vale of life, all secluded and peaceful, the Archfiend comes behind us and we hear his flattering words and, all of a sudden, he gives a shrill call and from every side, tempters rage! We see every one of them armed to the teeth and with their arrows winged for flight and thirsty to destroy! And we wonder why we are brought into such a place, where all seemed so calm and secluded—but now we are surrounded by the enemy..."

Sometimes, Christ puts us in situations to show us that we cannot make peace in any others heart, to remind us peace is of Christ; only Christ is able to make peace in the heart!

## **DO WHAT OUR SAVIOR DID**

**Psalm 120: 1: In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me. 2: Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. 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.**

When reviled and slandered, the Spirit of Christ makes God's child do what our Savior did. In his distress my Lord cried unto the LORD our God. Christ teaches us that God our Father heard Christ and he hears his saints for the sake of Christ.

Hebrews 5:7: Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

I noticed something in the garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22: 41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42: Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. 43: And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44: And being in

an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

The strengthening did not take the trial away nor the suffering. It brought our Savior into communion with the Father so that he prayed more earnestly, casting himself upon the will of the Father. Christ did not take Paul's thorn away. Of course if he took away the cause of the suffering then we could bear up but it would be because the suffering is gone.

But Christ does something far better: he strengthens us in spirit, bringing us into closer communion with him, though the thorn be not removed. That is how our Savior shows us HIS GRACE, HIS STRENGTH AND POWER IS SUFFICIENT!

When reviled, due to our sin-nature, we try to vindicate ourselves so we revile back--but what has that ever accomplished for you? We get in our flesh, but in time, the Holy Spirit restrains us, so that we abandon all other means, and cast ourselves upon Christ alone in prayer.

Isaiah 26:20: Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, [into Christ] and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

Christ committed his cause to God who judges righteously--*"Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue."* It is not so much deliver my soul from the men who speak lies and deceit--they will be around us all our days--*but deliver my soul from the effects of their lies and deceit.* Two things: deliver my soul by making my brethren not believe the slander and deliver my soul from the distress and sorrow it causes in my own heart. God is able to do both: in our brethren and in our own hearts.

God our Father delivered our Savior from the slander of the Pharisees. Unregenerate men believed their slander against our Savior--unregenerate sinners still do today. But the Spirit of God works in the heart of Christ's redeemed so that none of his saints believe the slander the Pharisee's made against our Savior. Brethren, only Christ is able to do the same in our own hearts and in the hearts of our brethren. But let us ask him to deliver our soul as only he can, rather than trying to deliver ourselves.

When Shimei cursed David, David told his men, God sent him. Leave him alone. *It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day (2 Sam 16: 12).* The Lord did so in David's heart and in the hearts of David's brethren. None of his brethren believed the slander.

At last, God vindicated our Lord Jesus. God vindicated David. So God shall vindicate each of his saints--*"What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? [From God shall come] Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper."*

Matthew 12: 36: But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37: For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Brethren, the only way to overcome the enemy of our own sinful flesh, the devil, and every enemy of the cross is through the power and protection of Christ. He is our Savior in all points at all times.

Psalm 46:1: God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Like the children of Israel--if you came here distressed, I pray you go home strengthened and comforted by our Savior! Cast all your care on him for he careth for you.

**Amen!**