Light and Life Class

April 28, 2019

Psalm 120

A. Notes

1. a “song of ascents” (*shir hamaalōt*); Psalms 120-134

B. How does the psalmist describe the land in which he is now living?

1. v. 5: as Meschech (Ezekiel 32:36; 38:2-3; 39:1) and Kedar (Isaiah 21:16-17; 42:11)

2. vv. 2-3: as a land of lying lips and deceitful tongues

a. cf. James 3:1-12

b. Why should God’s people hate lies and deceit so much?

i. see Psalm 12:6; Proverbs 30:5; Titus 1:2; etc.

3. vv. 6-7: as a land of people who hate *shalom* (“peace”) and who are thus “for war”

C. How does the psalmist respond to living in such a sinful land?

1. vv. 1-2: He prays for deliverance from the sinful people of the land based on God’s past answers to his prayer.

a. an illustration of such a prayer

b. What forms might deliverance take?

2. v. 5: He feels the spiritual danger of living in this land.

a. three options

i. flee

ii. stay and fight

iii. seek help for the fight through a pilgrimage to Jerusalem

3. vv. 3-4: He warns wrongdoers of the land frankly and honestly about the judgment to come for their sin.

a. Note the psalmist has a distinct worldview.

b. The psalmist seems to be describing the punishment in v. 4 as an operation of the biblical principle called *lex talionis* (the “law of retribution”). See Psalm 64:3, which describes harmful speech as being like a sword and arrows. For the *lex talionis* see Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:19-20.

4. v. 7: He remains steadfastly in favor of *shalom*.

a. cf. Jeremiah 29:7

D. How do you and I apply this Psalm 120, living in the land in which we live in the 21st century?