

Central Evangelical Church

Home Bible Studies

The Psalms of Ascent: Study 1

During the next 5 weeks, we will be looking at **Psalms 120-134** which are generally agreed to be songs sung by God's people in the Bible during their pilgrimages up to Jerusalem to celebrate the major festivals. We have much to sing about as Christians and we must always be seeking new and fresh ways of expanding our vocabulary of praise. What were the people of God singing about 2500 years ago? Let us find out together.

Psalm 120

In this Psalm, the Psalmist is aware of the 'aggro' of the world around him. He knows that God will vindicate him. A good reason then to 'get away from it all' and embark on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to be with God and His people.

- What causes the distress mentioned in **v.1**?
- What can still cause distress for us as Christians today? Do you find that you are helped when, like the Psalmist, you join up with fellow Christians at church to celebrate God?
- The Psalmist was being misrepresented. Has that ever happened to you? Is it always easy to correct false impressions/ facts about ourselves or our family?
- Who ultimately will sort things out for us, according to this Psalm? **v.4**

Psalm 121

Although not all the Psalms in this group are chronological, i.e. they jump about a bit on the journey up to Jerusalem, in this Psalm the pilgrim is well on his way to the Holy City.

- Either the hills of **v.1** stand for something **positive**, like God's power in Creation/ the hills around Jerusalem, or something **negative**, like the idolatrous 'high places' of **2 Kings 12:3** etc. or just sources of danger and challenge. Whichever the interpretation, where does the true help of the Psalmist come from? **v.2**
- God does not say: 'Good, that's you saved; see you in (x) years in Heaven, your Heavenly Jerusalem' How often in the Psalm are we told that God is 'watching over' us in our pilgrimage to our Heavenly Jerusalem?
- Sunstroke in **v.6** is a rational fear. What kind of fear is 'moon stroke'? (See also **v.6**). Are all our fears rational? Discuss some of them. Who in this Psalm promises to shelter us from all our fears and foes?
- Our 'coming and going' in **v.8** means the twists and turns of every day life. Do we always commit our daily lives to Him in detail? Should we?

Psalm 122

In this Psalm, the pilgrim arrives in Jerusalem (or he anticipates that moment.)

- The city looks peaceful and secure. How does **v.3** bear this out?
- The Psalmist prays that the security of the appearance of the city should be matched by security inside. How is this reflected in **v.6- 8**?
- Has Jerusalem known peace during the last 2500 years? Check it out with Google.
- How could Jerusalem have received lasting peace? **Luke 19: 42-44**
- We, as Christian, are marching to Zion, our Jerusalem from above. What does **Rev. 21:2, Rev 21:10/11** and **Rev 21:22-27** say about the New Jerusalem? Are you looking forward to arriving at the Holy City? Why? What hymns tell us about the New Jerusalem? Do you fancy singing one of them together!!!! Go on!!