



# MINISTRY OF THE WORD

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## The Impetus for the Worship of God The Songs of Ascents

Psalm 120<sup>1</sup>

Most of you know the story of Lot. As Abraham's nephew, he accompanied the patriarch as God led them from Babylon to Haran and then to Palestine. After a brief trip to Egypt where Abraham and his family acquired significant wealth, God brought them to the place where Abraham first "called on the Lord by name" (Genesis 12:8),

between Bethel and Ai. Here, Abraham's and Lot's servants got into a fight over water (Genesis 13). Accordingly, we read this account:

Genesis 13:8-11, "Then Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me: if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.' And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere- *this was* before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah- like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other."

With this, Lot moved his family to Sodom and Gomorrah which we know was a godless place filled with immoral men who sought to defile the two angels sent by God to visit Lot (cf. Genesis 19:4-5)!

Now while Genesis doesn't tell us the impact that this wicked place had on Lot, Peter does:

=2 Pet. 2:7b-8, "...righteous Lot [was] oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day with *their* lawless deeds)."

Speaking of Lot, Randy Steele wrote:

Although there were times in his own life when he was selfish, weak and materialistic, the culture with its unrestrained immorality and outrageous lifestyle spiritually beat him down. His chosen society violated 'both the conviction of conscience and the commandment of God' (MacArthur, 2005, p. 91). As though this were not enough, the unrighteousness of others with whom he lived 'tormented' ('tortured') him in his redeemed condition. The lawlessness of his neighbors and the spiritually unprincipled way they went about their lives took its toll on Lot; it spiritually oppressed his soul. (Steele, 2014)

Do you know something of this torment? This oppression? This torture? How could we not?! King David did.

Psalm 63:1b, "O God... my soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee, in a dry and weary land where there is no water."

The context of this Psalm is NOT ultimately a desert BUT that of moral compromise and decay (cf. Psalms 61 & 62). Accordingly, David himself was tormented by the world in

which he lived. And I reference this because of the impact this had on his life.

Psalm 63:1a, 2, "O God, Thou art my God; I shall seek Thee earnestly; My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee... Thus I have beheld Thee in the sanctuary, to see Thy power and Thy glory."

Because of the fallen world in which he lived, David longed to be with the Lord, in His house! The more he experienced the wretchedness of his world, the more he longed to fellowship with his Savior. Derek Kidner wrote of Psalm 63:

The longing of these verses is not the groping of a stranger, feeling his way towards God, but the eagerness of a friend, almost of a lover, to be in touch with the one he holds dear. (Kidner, 2009, p. 242)

Not surprisingly, this is where the Songs of Ascents begins!

1. God's people living in a fallen world,
2. Tormented by what they see and hear,
3. Which impelled them to long for the presence of the Lord. That is Psalm 120.<sup>2</sup>

Now, as this Psalm is poetry — which was intended to be taken as a whole — we don't get to the basis and so the reason the Psalmist is alarmed until the end of the Psalm. While that makes for great poetry, it doesn't make for great teaching.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, we are going to begin at verse 5 and The Burden.

The Burden, vv. 5-6.

Psalm 120:5, "Woe<sup>4</sup> is me [this is a strong self-malediction], for I sojourn in Meshech, for I dwell among the tents of Kedar!"<sup>5</sup>

It is clear from this that the Psalmist is NOT being literal; he could NOT live both in Meshech and Kedar at the same time.<sup>6</sup> See, according to the historian Herodotus, Meshech<sup>7,8</sup> referenced a people who lived in northern Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey close to the Black Sea.

And from Genesis 25:13 we know that Kedar<sup>9,10</sup> was the son of Ishmael who settled in the Arabian desert.<sup>11</sup> Because these two groups geographically were so far apart, we take this as a general reference to the Diaspora. Like the hundreds of thousands of Jews scattered across the ancient world, the Psalmist here begins his Pilgrimage living in a foreign land.

Yet there is more here. For as these places were *FAR* from Israel, we understand that they represented locations *FAR* from Jerusalem, God's worship, and so the Lord Himself. Yet, and this is the point, *even here* the Lord was able to be accessed, served, and

worshipped by His people. That being said, dwelling in these places did have its impact upon the child of God.

Psalm 120:6, “Too long has my soul had its dwelling with those who hate peace.”

This is a packed statement as it reflects the struggle of the genuine child of God living in a fallen world. It reflects a heart burdened by its surroundings. What specifically was “burdening” the Psalmist here? Consider the statements made in this Psalm. Notice:

Psalm 120:1a, “In my trouble...”: **צָרָה** (*tsarah*); the word refers to any state or place that is narrow, confining, or restricted. It speaks of being hampered, hemmed in, and so unable to function fully.

### The Thai Cave Rescue

In 2018 the story of the thirteen Thai soccer players and coach who got trapped in a cave due to the torrential rains which filled their exit route. The men who led the recovery had led previous expeditions deep within the earth. The footage of those expeditions was brutal, it was from thousands of feet below the earth, struggling through openings where they had to hold their head side-ways to get through, and all this was with millions of tons of earth above them.

Watching the footage produced in me all manner of dread, apprehension, sick feelings and so much more. And that is the connotation of the word used in this verse for “trouble.” In fact, its opposite is used in Psalm 118.

Psalm 118:5, “From my distress I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a large place.”

This is the exact opposite of the restriction and confines that “trouble” can place us in. So, in the diaspora God’s people felt confined and restricted. They weren’t able to be who they truly were — for their culture, its people, its mores, and its times restricted them — hemmed them in! In what way did it do this? Notice the descriptive statement made in verse 2.

Psalm 102:2, “Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue.”<sup>12,13,14,15</sup>

On the surface, you might respond to this with a sense of incredulity, “Really? That’s your problem?! People around you are lying? Try losing a loved one? How about ill health? How about severe persecution?”

If that is your thought, you have missed the Burden. The deceit here is NOT a co-worker

who lies OR a family member, BUT an entire culture, and so worldview, which NOT ONLY lies BUT is based on lies!<sup>16</sup> Eugene Peterson in his seminal work on the Songs of Ascents, put it this way:

The lies are impeccably factual. They contain no errors. There are no distortions or falsified data. But they are lies all the same, because they claim to tell us who we are and omit everything about our origin in God and our destiny in God. They talk about the world without telling us that God made it. They tell us about our bodies without telling us that they are temples of the Holy Spirit. They instruct us in love without telling us about the God who loves us and gave himself for us... Rescue me from the lies of advertisers who claim to know what I need and what I desire, from the lies of entertainers who promise a cheap way to joy, from the lies of politicians who pretend to instruct me in power and morality, from the lies of psychologists who offer to shape my behavior and my morals so that I will live long, happily and successfully, from the lies of religionists who ‘heal the wounds of this people lightly,’ from the lips of moralists who pretend to promote me to the office of captain of my fate, from the lies of pastors who ‘leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men’ (Mark. 7:8). Rescue me from the person who tells me of life and omits Christ, who is wise in the ways of the world and ignores the movement of the Spirit. (Peterson, 2000, pp. 23, 27-28)<sup>17</sup>

Now, what is the impact of this fallen world — crafted by “the father of lies” (John 8:44)- upon the life of the genuine child of God? All-out war!

Psalm 120:7, “I am *for* peace, but when I speak, they are for war.”<sup>18</sup>

It is one thing to live in a world founded and built upon lies. Yet it quite another to stand up in that world and proclaim the truth. When that happens, what do you get? Hostility, persecution, difficulty, distress, and even martyrdom. Recall Christ’s warning.

Matthew 24:9-10, “...they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by ALL nations on account of My name. And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another.”

This is why Paul could say so definitively that persecution awaits all Christians:

2 Timothy 3:12, “And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

That was and is the burden of a believer living in a world built upon lies and deceit!<sup>19</sup> On the surface of our society, the call is “*Peace and Safety*” (1 Thessalonians 5:3).<sup>20</sup> But to all who are “not conformed to this present world” the result will be *Warfare and Peril*!

This raises the question, “How do you live in such a world without losing your mind? Your way? Or your cool?” That brings us to the recourse.

### The Recourse, vv. 1-2.

Psalm 120:1, “In my trouble I cried to the Lord,<sup>21</sup> and He answered me.”

This is a loaded verse as it tells us two things. First, in response to the deceit of his day, the Psalmist “cried to the Lord.” In other words, he went to the Lord in prayer! *THAT IS HOW YOU SURVIVE IN A WORLD BUILT ON DECEIT!* Prayer is NOT given to us by God as a means to get what we want from Him, BUT a means of communion, fellowship, and so expressed dependence upon Him. As such, it truly is THE first response when we are “sore oppressed.”

We see it in Christ. When Christ was burdened, He prayed. Now this is odd if prayer simply is the means of changing things. Think of it: as God, Christ could have spoke a word and everything would have changed. So, why would He pray?

Well, as prayer in Scripture primarily is a means of fellowship, communion, and dependence upon God. This helps us understand why Christ prayed when He was burdened. The burden He felt as a man was alleviated as He communed with God! And this is the teaching found in Psalm 120. With a heart tormented and spiritually oppressed by the world in which he lived, the Psalmist “cried to the Lord.”<sup>22</sup> Yet there is another element to this verse....

The passage says, “And He answered me.” This speaks of the *unshwartzable* will of our Sovereign God. In this regard notice “The Lord” is in the emphatic position. While sore oppressed the only recourse we have is the Lord. That means the Psalmist did NOT, nor should we, turn to himself, a civil magistrate, or a friend when burdened. He knew that his only help was “the Lord” and so he prayed!

Furthermore consider, the Psalmist here is living as far from the Lord as possible in “Meshach” and “Kedar”! And yet, these places were NOT beyond the watchful eye and caring heart of God.

In this regard, I can’t help but wonder how much of the consternation of the Psalmist was the result of his own compromise in response to the temptations and deceit of his lying world! Yet, regardless of how far he felt from God on account of his sin or how far he was from Jerusalem on account of his geography, he could NOT remove Himself from the presence of God much less His Divine love, aide, support, and forgiveness!

This is such a glorious truth! With that we say that if in your burden (when it comes to the world around you) you have NOT YET collapsed into the arms of God via prayer, you are NOT yet burdened enough. If, on the other hand, you have, you can be confident

knowing that God receives you and delights in you regardless of your imperfections.

What was the Psalmist's request when he went to the Lord "in distress"?

Psalm 120:2, "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue."

This is his prayer (v. 1) which focused upon "deliverance" (**נָצַל** [natsal]).

Fundamentally, the word is used of being delivered or redeemed. However, it encompasses three elements — that of...

- Being "released" or "set free."
- "Breaking away" from the grasp or control of something.
- Being redeemed or ransomed.

Accordingly, the prayer of the Psalmist is this:

1. he and his family would be delivered from the lies and deceit of his culture, that
2. These lies would NOT impact him or his family personally, and
3. To the degree that they did, that their eyes would be opened to see the lie for what it was/is and so repent.

That is our recourse which is bolstered by our conviction.

The Conviction, vv. 3-4.

Psalm 120:3-4, "What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, you deceitful tongue? Sharp arrows of the warrior, with the *burning* coals of the broom tree."<sup>23</sup>

This verse does NOT reference the Psalmist or his tongue, BUT the end/telos of the fallen world in which he lived. For all who live in the lies of this fallen world (non-Christians), there is a terrifying fate awaiting them. For as they in their deceit have attacked God's people, God- our Warrior — in His righteousness will attack them. Notice the manner of God's attack.

- Sharp arrows of the warrior: this speaks of a verbal rebuke. In the Psalter, "sharp arrows" is a metaphor for the tongue (cf. Psalms 57:4; 64:3). And so, the judgment rendered to all who live and die in deceit is that of a strong rebuke- as in...

Matthew 7:22-23, "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart

from Me, you who practice lawlessness.””

- The burning coals of the broom tree: the broom tree was a plant which grew in the desert, growing as high as 12 feet. Its wood was incredibly hard (as it was a slow grower) and so burned long and hot. The imagery here is that of “the fire of judgment” that awaits the nonChristian upon their death...

As we read of their fate on the Last Day:

Revelation 20:14-15, “And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Knowing the fate that awaits all who love and hold to the lie, the Psalmist is bolstered in his resistance which created in him the “forbearing spirit” referenced in Philippians 4:5 - which naturally led to an evangelical appeal which ultimately and ironically is the cause of the burden with which we began.

#### The Consequent Service, v. 7.

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

It always amuses me to behold the response of the worldling to the fruit of our culture of lies and deceit. For example, when a shooting occurs or the miscarriage of justice is perceived, they

- Tweet.
- Make condemning statements on Instagram.
- Resort to Tiktok where they express their outrage and anger.
- Riot... protest... or pillage.

All of which might make them feel good about themselves BUT really is quite useless! Now, it is important that we understand that this is NOT what this text means by “peace”~ saying, “*Can’t we all just get along!*” Notice the language, “I am for peace, but when I speak.”

- The word for “peace” is **שָׁלוֹם** (*shalom*). This is a covenant word which speaks of far more than a disposition or countenance of calmness. At its base it speaks of peace with God on account of pardoned sin...

Romans 5:1, “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- The word for “speak”, דָבַר (dabar)- this refers to more than the opening of one’s mouth and uttering sound. Rather, it refers to conversing, dialoguing, and so interacting with someone.

Together, it indicates that the Psalmist was doing far more than standing for peace in general, BUT working for it between God and man! In other words, we are talking here about cultural engagement! Randy Steele wrote of it this way:

The verb ‘to speak’ is a piel intensive in Hebrew meaning this is more than casual conversation. What causes men to speak with intensity? Politics will do it, sports too. But the context of this psalm would indicate conversation of a religious, spiritual nature. Few things elicit intensity of speech like religion! You do not have to say much about the God of peace before the fallen culture is ready for war. (Steele, 2014)

In response to the lies and deceit of his day, the Psalmist did far more than speak against the violence, hatred, rebellion, or deceit. RATHER, he endeavored to bring the gospel to those “darkened in their understanding” by which they were enslaved to Satan. That is why “when he spoke, [those around him] were for war”!

That is the message of the song God gave His people first to sing as they travelled as pilgrims from their homes in the diaspora to worship the Lord in Jerusalem.

And how important, as this delineated both:

- The importance of worship/communion as THE first response we must take when it comes to a heart tormented by the world in which we live.
- Our role/relationship with this world — that being workers for peace and so cultural engagement.

With that would you notice in closing that from this Psalm we conclude that acceptable worship is the overflow of honesty and so integrity.

John 4:24, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Recall, “worship in spirit” is NOT worshipping as redeemed individuals, saved by the blood of the Lamb. That is presupposed in this passage. RATHER, “worship in spirit” is the worship of integrity where we lay aside:

- Game playing,
- Worshipping because it is fun or inspiring,
- Phony-ness, and/or

- Play acting.

We work to express genuine appreciation for who God is and what He has done. We do NOT “forget about ourselves and concentrate on Him and worship Him” BUT bring our burdens to the Lord!

It is with this heart and mind that we begin our pilgrimage to worship — honesty/integrity before the Lord. See, when you are annoyed by the world, worship becomes an event designed to lift you up and inspire you to keep going. But when you are truly burdened by the world, worship becomes a refuge by which we bring our broken heart, struggles, cares, and concerns and lay them at the foot of the cross by which we genuinely take refuge in the Lord! Kingdom service in a fallen world involves the exposure of its lies and the desire to work for peace between God and man. There is no way around it, this will be controversial. This will make enemies. This will result in “tribulation”/pressure from the world. That being said this also involves the privilege of sharing with the world the person and work of a Being who is gloriously wonderful, transcendent, and yet “gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29)!

Listen to how Paul put it in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 5:11, “Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...”

The fear of the Lord speaks NOT of fright BUT of reverence. The more we come to know the glory/weightiness of the Lord- His...

- Holiness- which is as a burning fire.
- Steadfast Love — which never ceases.
- Compassion.
- Office as judge.
- His unchangeableness.

The more we will be burdened to persuade men that they might come to know the Lord as do we!

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## End Note(s)

<sup>1</sup> "Psalm 120 is classified as an individual lament, sung by a worshipper who is sojourning in a hostile land outside the security of the land of Israel (v. 5). The psalm-singer longs for well-being (šālōm), but is surrounded by lips of falsehood, deceitful tongues, and threats of war (vv. 2, 7). Psalm 120 is a fitting beginning of the pilgrimage Songs of the Ascents. Mays writes that the psalm puts the world from which the pilgrims come 'in sharpest contrast to the peace they desire and seek in coming to Zion.'" (Nancy L. deClasse-Walford (Author), 2014, p. 891)

<sup>2</sup> "At first glance, Psalm 120 seems a strange psalm with which to begin this series, or even have in it, since it does not mention Jerusalem or even contain the thought of going there. Still, it is appropriate in this context, for it begins with the feelings of homesick people settled in a strange land and thus sets the tone for the joyful upward journey reflected in the psalms that follow." (James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107–150: An Expositional Commentary*, p. 1070)

<sup>3</sup> "In Psalm 120 the typical declarative praise order is altered to place the elements in reverse chronological order, beginning with the report of deliverance in v. 1, followed by the petition in vv. 2–4, and concluding with the complaint in vv. 5–7." (Dr. Daniel J. Estes, 2019, p. 443)

<sup>4</sup> "The introductory cry of v. 5 ('ōyād) is a word of doom expressing the psalmist's feeling of distress as he awaited the Lord's intervention." (Dr. Daniel J. Estes, 2019, p. 446)

<sup>5</sup> "Meshech and Kedar are so far apart (steppe-dwellers of the far north, Ezekiel 39:1f., and Arab neighbours of Israel to the south-east) that they can only be coupled here as a general term for the heathen. If the 'I' of the psalm is Israel personified, these two names will summarize the Gentile world, far and near, in which Israel is dispersed." (Kidner, 2009, p. 466)

<sup>6</sup> "...unless the text is emended, they must be taken as the psalmist's figurative names for the alien company he is in: as foreign as the remotest peoples, and as implacable as his Arab kinsmen (cf. Genesis 16:12; 25:13)." (Kidner, 2009, p. 467)

<sup>7</sup> "Meshech is mentioned by the historian Herodotus, who says that in his day the people of this name lived in the province of Pontus in northern Turkey. Later they pushed north and east of the Black Sea into the Caucasus, Kasakastan, and the Ukraine." (Boice, 2005, p. 1072)

<sup>8</sup> "Meshek is listed in Genesis 10:2 as one of the descendants of Japheth and is linked with Tubal and Javan. In Ezekiel 27:13, Meshek is mentioned as a trading partner with Tyre and in 38:2 and 39:1 as part of the kingdom of Magog. According to Josephus, Meshek was located in eastern Asia, in Cappadocia. Ezekiel 32:26 describes the people of Meshek as 'uncircumcised' ones who 'spread terror in the land of the living.'" (Nancy L. deClasse-Walford (Author), 2014, p. 893)

<sup>9</sup> "Kedar was a son of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13) and refers to a wild Arab tribe of the desert (Isaiah 21:16–17; Jeremiah 49:28–29)." (Boice, 2005, p. 1072)

<sup>10</sup> "Kedar is, according to Genesis 25:13, the second son of Ishmael, and in other places in the biblical text, his descendants (the Kedarites) are north Arabian Bedouin. Isaiah 21:16–17 describes the Kedarites as warriors with bows, whose glory is about to come to an end." (Nancy L. deClasse-Walford (Author), 2014, p. 893)

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Isaiah 21:16-17; Jeremiah 49:28-29.

<sup>12</sup> "In verse 3 the singers of this psalm seem to be speaking of a single individual, since they use the singular terms 'you' and 'O deceitful tongue,' but the circumstances have to be understood more broadly since the prayer of verse 2 is for God to save the singers from 'lying lips' and

'deceitful tongues' (plural)." (Boice, 2005, p. 1070)

<sup>13</sup> "Clifford suggests, 'Though "deceitful tongue" may refer to a specific calumny, it may also refer more generally to a society where mutual respect and truthfulness have disappeared (as in Pss 10:7; 12:1–4; 31:18).'" (Nancy L. deClaisse-Walford (Author), 2014, p. 892)

<sup>14</sup> "The organs of speech are cited many times in the Psalter as weapons of oppression and hurtfulness (5:9; 12:4; 50:19; 78:36; 109:2; 140:3). The word lip (*sāpâ*) occurs some twenty-eight times in the Psalter, and tongue (*lāšôn*) occurs some thirty-five times. In addition, in the book of Proverbs, the word 'lip' occurs at least thirty-eight times and 'tongue' nineteen times." (Nancy L. deClaisse-Walford (Author), 2014, pp. 893-894)

<sup>15</sup> "Lying lips and deceitful tongues are both merisms that represent the person who speaks what is false." (Dr. Daniel J. Estes, 2019, p. 445)

<sup>16</sup> "When people discover the real world, most get angry and fret like spoiled children, rather than recognizing the lie and turning from the lie to God's truth." (Boice, 2005, p. 1071)

<sup>17</sup> "While you may not have people specifically lying about you, many in the culture are lying to you. Many tell you about the origins of life without reference to God; they tell you about love without reference to God-centered covenant love; they speak of meaning and fulfillment, joy and peace, without God. We can identify with the frustrated pilgrim who constantly hears the voices of the godless." (J. Josh Smith, 2022, p. 188)

<sup>18</sup> "Most people today want to think of themselves as peaceful and peace loving, but they are not. None of us are. On the contrary, we are warlike people, and the proof of it is in our fierce competition and fights with other people, and in our anger and grief when others are more successful than we are or are preferred over us. ¶ Nothing has more characterized the human race in history than war. One scholar observed that war is "man's chief legacy," meaning that it is the chief thing one generation passes to the next. Each of the treaties of history has been hailed by someone at some time as the road to a just and lasting disarmament—politicians are doing it today—but the ink had scarcely dried on most of these treaties when the guns began to sound for the next encounter. Gunpowder, tanks, airplanes, missiles, and nuclear weapons have been said to make war far too horrible to contemplate, but there is never a horror so great that someone will not use it to try to impose his will on other people. ¶ One of the earliest of all historical records, a Sumerian bas-relief sculpture from Babylon (c. 3000 B.C.), shows soldiers fighting in close order, wearing helmets and carrying shields. Wars fill the history of every ancient culture—Babylon, Syria, Assyria, Egypt, Phoenicia. The twenty-seven-year-long Peloponesian War destroyed Greece even at the height of the great civilization she had created as the fruit of Athens's Golden Age. Rome made war a way of life, but even she was eventually defeated and overrun by the barbarians. ¶ In the Middle Ages war ravaged Europe, culminating in the horrors of the Thirty Years War, which ended in 1648. The Encyclopedia Britannica lists 278 wars in the centuries between 1480 and the end of World War II. One hundred and thirty-five of these were international. Speaking of World War II, the Britannica says,

'Wars showed a slight tendency to decrease in length during the modern period, but in all other aspects they tended to increase in magnitude. There were more battles, more participants, larger forces, larger numbers of casualties, more extensive areas of occupation and mechanization resulting in much heavier economic costs. The costs of the Thirty Years War of the 17th century were very great. World War II, however, was greater in all these respects than any other war in history.'

Approximately thirty million people perished in World War I. People were horrified. But within a quarter of a century World War II was fought in the same amphitheater by the same parties and for much the same reasons. It resulted in the loss of sixty million lives while the costs quadrupled from an estimated \$340 billion to an estimated \$1 trillion. ¶ Since World War II there have been "at least 12 limited wars in the world, 39 political assassinations, 48 personal revolts, 74 rebellions for independence, 1162 social revolutions, either political, economic, racial, or religious," wrote U.S. News and World Report in the December 25, 1967, issue. By now the totals obviously need to be increased in every category." (Boice, 2005, pp. 1071-1072)

<sup>19</sup> "'His circumstance is variously described: "... the writer of Psalm cxx. is also 'as a sheep in the midst of wolves'"' (Keil, Delitzsch, 1978, p. 269). 'He did not feel at home amongst an ungodly people' (Gaebelein, 1991, p. 771). He was 'oppressed with adversity' (Calvin, 1984, p. 55). The Psalm 'voices very well the homesickness of those who have settled among strangers and

enemies' (Kidner, 1975, p. 430). 'The writer of Psalm 120 looked around him and came to the conclusion, "I just don't belong"- and he was right' (Motyer, 2009, p. 25)!'" (Steele, 2014)

<sup>20</sup> In fact, we are living at a time of fulfillment when this mantra has been proclaimed throughout the entire world over and over again, "Safe and Effective!"

<sup>21</sup> "By placing the words 'to the LORD' first, the psalmist emphasizes his main point, that Yahweh is the one to whom he turned in his need." (Dr. Daniel J. Estes, 2019, p. 444)

<sup>22</sup> "Take your mess to the Lord. Perhaps you have lost your job. Perhaps you have lost your dignity over something. Perhaps people are saying evil things to you or about you. Whatever the reason for your darkness, take it to the Lord. He answers our pleas. We can express our grief and desperation to him, and we can trust in his sovereignty to bring ultimate peace, even though we may only see a glimmer of it in this life." (J. Josh Smith, 2022, p. 189)

<sup>23</sup> "The form of the question may allude to a curse formula that occurs about a dozen times in the Hebrew Bible, often in an oath pledging truthfulness or the fulfillment of a pledge (cf. 1 Kings 2:23). By this means he places his cause into the Lord's hands rather than retaliating himself or seeking assistance elsewhere." (J. Josh Smith, 2022, p. 445)