

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm One Hundred And Twenty - Facing Verbal Abuse That Plays Long, Harmful Mindgames With Its Victim (Psalm 120:1-7)

I. Introduction

- A. There are times when the believer must relate to parties that use **deceit in verbally abusing**, and that over a **long** period of time with the **intent** of controlling the innocent by manipulating his viewpoint. Such a challenge can be formidable if the abusive party is good at deceiving, for if the victim **believes** the error, he can become very depressed and go into a deep spiral of self-destruction.
- B. One of the pilgrim psalms, or a psalm of "ascents" that was sung as pilgrims to the temple made their **ascent** to the hills of Jerusalem deals with this problem with very insightful advice as follows:

II. Facing Verbal Abuse That Plays Long, Harmful Mindgames With Its Victim, Psalm 120:1-7.

- A. The psalmist reports that God answers his prayer made out of his narrow straits of distress, Ps. 120:1.
- B. Then he describes that prayer in verses 2-7 with a big lesson on handling long-term verbal abuse that plays mindgames with him as it intends to control him and destroy him by making him adopt errant views, 2-7:
 1. The psalmist's prayer was for deliverance for his entire life principle of body, mind and spirit (**nephesh**) as he faced those who lied and used deceit in their words spoken to him, Ps. 120:2.
 2. This state had existed over the **long-term**, Ps. 120:6a, and the psalmist's **exposure** to such **relentless, erroneous** input had led to his tending to **believe** the erroneous ideas to his own destruction, 120:6b.
 3. The psalmist likened his experience to living among the hostile, wicked peoples of Meshech and Kedar, known national and evil opponents of the people of Israel, Ps. 120:5:
 - a. Ezekiel 38:3 predicts a divine prophecy against the people of Meshech, the forefathers of the southern Russians. This prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39 predicts Russia's latter day invasion of Israel to take spoil, and of God's wrathful supernatural vengeance against these invaders in the form of military in-fighting, disease and a lethal rain of hailstones, fire and brimstone (38:21-23).
 - b. Similarly, Isaiah 21:13-17 predicts God's destruction of Kedar in Arabia for its refusing to give basic necessities of water and bread to Jews who fled their invaders. This refusal of helping people with such basic needs in the Middle Eastern nations is still seen today as a gross breach of ethics.
 - c. Thus, the psalmist's enemies with whom he had to relate on a **continual** basis were as heartless and harmful as these wicked peoples of Meshech and Kedar.
 4. Besides, the psalmist had repeatedly tried to speak **peace** with such opponents to **end** the crisis only to find that his opponents used his speaking opportunity to make **war** for him, Ps. 120:7!
 5. Thus, the evil of the psalmist's opponents would be judged by God in response to his prayer, 120:3-4:
 - a. Those with deceitful tongues would be punished with the weapons of a warrior's sharp arrows, arrows that were **able** and **meant to destroy** as vengeance for the destruction of the psalmist, 3-4a.
 - b. The burning coals of the broom tree would burn these deceivers, meaning their punishment would be very **painful** in its destructive divine vengeance, Ps. 120:3, 4b.

Lesson: When one **TRIES to GET ALONG** with verbally abusive people who use deceit over a long-term period to play controlling mindgames with him that are very destructive, and his effort is only met with destructive **OPPOSITION** from the abusers, the believer can pray to God for help and rely upon **HIM** for evening the score, and expect God to deal out punishment that is **MEANT to DESTROY** and cause **JUST reciprocal PAIN**, cf. Rom. 12:19-21.

Application: (1) Though it is wrong for **US** to take vengeance on our opponents, we must neither get so **COOPERATIVE** in seeking peace with them that we **FALL** for their **ERRANT VIEWS** that lead to our **HARM**: God expects us to live in **TRUTH**, and wants us to know that He will **PUNISH** destructively deceptive, verbally abusive opponents. (2) When we feel deep anger or consternation at being verbally abused by another's deceitful mindgames, we are not to **BURY** our anger in the name of peace, but protect our sense of right and wrong in taking our concerns to God in prayer!