

# The Psalms of Ascents

## A JOURNEY OF FAITH



# Introducing Psalms of Ascents

- Psalms 120–134.
- Eugene H. Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980). [See Notes.]
- Experiences or areas of life that require a significant investment of time in order to bring them to fruition and/or full appreciation?

# Reading Psalm 120

## 1 Cántico dos degraus

**Na minha angústia clamei ao  
SENHOR,  
e me ouviu.**

## 2 SENHOR, livra a minha alma dos lábios mentirosos e da língua enganadora.



# Reading Psalm 120

- 3 Que te será dado, ou que te será  
acrescentado,  
língua enganadora?
- 4 Flechas agudas do poderoso,  
com brasas vivas de zimbro.



# Reading Psalm 120

- 5 Ai de mim, que peregrino em  
Meseque,  
e habito nas tendas de Quedar.
- 6 A minha alma bastante tempo habitou  
com os que detestam a paz.
- 7 Pacífico sou, mas quando eu falo  
já eles procuram a guerra.



# Reading Psalm 121

## 1 Cántico dos degraus

Levantarei os meus olhos para os  
montes,  
de onde vem o meu socorro.

## 2 O meu socorro vem do SENHOR que fez o céu e a terra.



# Reading Psalm 121

- 3 Não deixará vacilar o teu pé;  
aquele que te guarda não  
tosquenejará.
- 4 Eis que não tosquenejará nem  
dormirá  
o guarda de Israel.



# Reading Psalm 121

- 5 O SENHOR é quem te guarda;  
o SENHOR é a tua sombra à tua  
direita.
- 6 O sol não te molestará de dia  
nem a lua de noite.



# Reading Psalm 121

- 7 O SENHOR te guardará de todo o mal;  
guardará a tua alma.
- 8 O SENHOR guardará a tua entrada e a tua saída,  
desde agora e para sempre.



# Praying Psalms of Ascents



- Lord, preserve me from those who attack me with their words. [120:2–3]
- Praise God, He is my Helper, my Deliverer, my Keeper, and my Guardian. [121]
- O Father, bring lasting peace to Jerusalem. [122:6]
- Give me Your grace, O Lord. [123:2–3]
- Praise God, He is our Helper. [124]

# Understanding Psalms of Ascents

- Psalm heading (“Song of ascents”)?
- Luther: refers to a higher key in which musicians were to play and sing them, or increasing volume.
- Sun drawing back 10 degrees on the sundial when God granted Hezekiah a 15-year extension of life.



# Isaiah 38:20

“The LORD will surely save me;  
So we will play **my songs** on stringed  
instruments  
All *the days of our life at the house of*  
*the LORD.*”



# Understanding Psalms of Ascents

- Poetic steplike parallelism.



# Psalm 120

- 2 SENHOR, livra a minha alma dos lábios mentirosos e da língua enganadora.
- 3 Que te será dado, ou que te será acrescentado,  
língua enganadora?



# Psalm 120

- 5 Ai de mim, que peregrino em  
Meseque,  
e **habito** nas tendas de Quedar.
- 6 A minha alma bastante tempo **habitou**  
com os que detestam a **paz**.
- 7 **Pacífico** sou, mas quando eu falo  
já eles procuram a guerra.



# Understanding Psalms of Ascents

- The exiles' return to Judah from Babylon (cf. Ezra 7:9, “For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon”).
- 15 Hebrew words of the Aaronic benediction in Numbers 6:24–26.



# Numbers 6:24–26

24 <sup>1</sup>O-SENHOR <sup>2</sup>te-abençoe, <sup>3</sup>e-te-guarda;

25 <sup>4</sup>O-SENHOR <sup>5</sup>faça <sup>6</sup>resplandecer-o-seu  
<sup>7</sup>rosto-sobre-ti,  
<sup>8</sup>e-tenha-misericórdia-de-ti;

26 <sup>9</sup>O-SENHOR <sup>10</sup>sobre-ti <sup>11</sup>levante  
<sup>12</sup>o-seu-rosto,  
<sup>13,14</sup>e-te-dê <sup>15</sup>a-paz.



# **Understanding Psalms of Ascents**

- Levites sang the fifteen songs of ascent on the fifteen steps leading from the Temple's Court of the Women to the Court of the Israelites.





# Understanding Psalms of Ascents

- Pilgrims to the annual festivals in Jerusalem sang these psalms as they ascended to Jerusalem and the Temple.



# **Exodus 23**

**14 “Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.**

**15 “You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.**



# Exodus 23

16 “Also you *shall observe* the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors *from* what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in *the fruit of* your labors from the field.

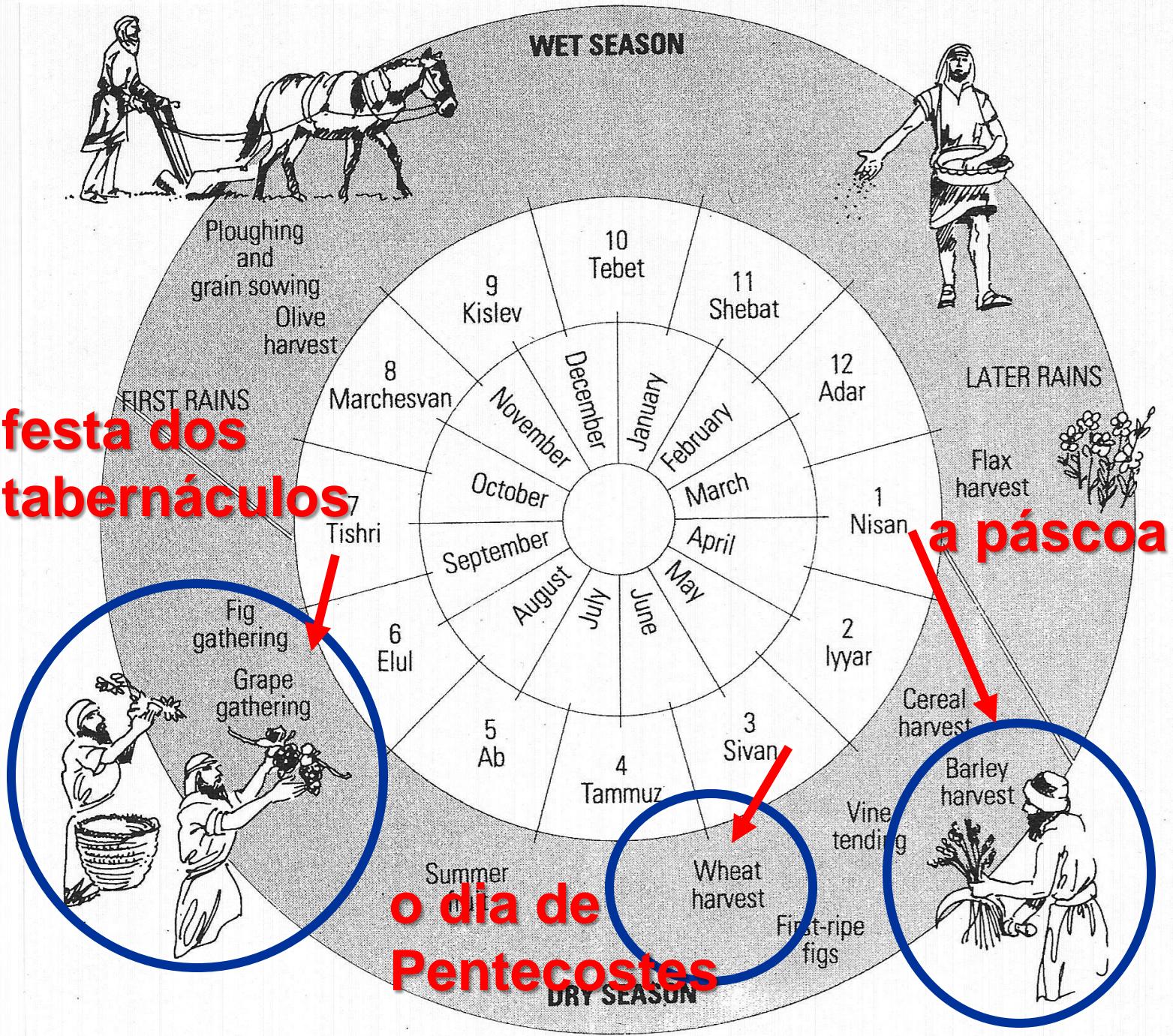
17 “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.”



# **Deuteronomy 16:16**

**Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.**





# **Understanding Psalms of Ascents**

- **1/3 of Psalms of Ascents include a reference to authorship (David in 122, 124, 131, and 133; and Solomon in 127).**



# **Understanding Psalms of Ascents**

- **Common elements shared by the Psalms of Ascents:**
  - Brevity.
  - Preoccupation with Zion, Jerusalem, and the Temple.
  - Frequent references to Israel.
  - Focus on the topic of blessing.



# **Understanding Psalms of Ascents**

- **Chart in Notes.**
- **Organization of the Psalms of Ascents into triads:**
  - 1st     = Trouble or Problem
  - 2nd     = Trust or Power
  - 3rd     = Triumph or Protection



# Preaching/Teaching Psalms of Ascents

- True worship and service require a lasting commitment to spiritual disciplines.
- Triumph over troubles comes when we trust God alone.

