

Psalm 134 is the last of the Psalm of Ascents. What that means is it is the final Psalm that was specifically written for the purpose of proclaiming ascent truth as one ascends up to worship God at the Festivals in Jerusalem. These are millennial songs. These are the songs that people will sing when they ascend up to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple when Jesus Christ is reigning on earth.

So this is the final Psalm to end the series. Now this final Psalm is addressed primarily to the priests. It anticipates a time when there is no cessation whatsoever in the praise and worship of God at the Temple. In other words, during the Millennium the Temple will be a place of constant worship day and night.

This particular Psalm is like a doxology that is to be sung when gathering together to worship God. The point of the final Psalm is this:

THE FINAL ASCENT PSALM IS A CALL FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TO BLESS GOD AND A CALL FOR GOD TO BLESS HIS PEOPLE.

Now the ascent series started in Psalm 120 and the focus was on crying to the Lord in trouble. The series ends with a focus on blessing and praising the Lord. So the Psalms have ascended from the trouble of the people to the majesty of God and the perpetual worship of God.

There are only two Psalms that begin with the word "behold," Psalm 133 and 134. The first Psalm spoke of looking at the amazing unity of the gathering together of the family of God. This Psalm speaks of looking at God and worshipping God and the privilege of having a relationship with Him.

By using the word "behold," the writer means "look" at this. Think about this. Meditate on this (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 215). In other words, look at this Psalm and take notice of what it is saying. This is important. This apparently is something God takes note of when His people gather to worship.

Now it is clear that the key word of the Psalm is "bless." It occurs three times in three verses. This particular Hebrew word carries with it the idea of literally bending one's knees before God in an attitude of reverence, which adores God and celebrates and praises the greatness of God and then asks for His blessings (*Ibid.*, p. 142).

Real worship and praise of God is based on proper deep thinking about God. This kind of praise is not some light, fluffy, shallow, emotional hype. One day when God's people gather to worship God, they will all be thinking very seriously about what they are doing and thinking. There will never be any thought of trying to bring God down to our level; but we should raise our level to exalt Him. God wants us meditating on the theme of gathering together into His presence to worship Him.

Think for a moment of the concept Psalms presents about God:

- 1) His sovereignty rules over all—Ps. 103:19
- 2) God is in heaven and He does whatever He pleases—Ps. 115:3
- 3) Whatever the Lord pleases, He does in heaven and in earth—Ps. 135:6

This is the concept we need when we gather to worship God.

There are seven key messages that are presented in this Psalm:

Message #1 - God's people are to bless the Lord. **134:1a**

This is important because it is not just the leadership who are called to do this; this is a challenge to all of God's people. To actually bless God, one must acknowledge who He is and what He is. It is the expectation of God that when His people gather together they will honor and worship Him and reverence Him.

As we just said, the idea of blessing the Lord is the idea of praising God and worshipping God while reverently thinking with attitudes that are accurate about God. Public worship should be about exalting God. This really should be part of the reason we go to public worship. We go to praise Him for who He is and all He has done.

So many people go to church for what they can get. In some respects that is a good thing. It is good to go to church with the idea that I am going to be fed God's Word and fellowship with God's people. But there should also be a sense in which God's people gather to praise and worship Him. That is what this Psalm stresses.

Message #2 - All servants of God are to bless the Lord. **134:1b**

There is no ethnic, racial or gender bias in this. There is no age discrimination here—all servants of God are called to gather to worship God.

I am in favor of having things for children—but there is nothing that will ever replace putting your child next to you in a sanctuary of people of all ages and letting him experience true, reverent worship. When you make that child sit quietly beside you in a church service, you are raising the level of that child's concept of God. All servants are to bless the LORD.

It always has been and always will be true that the servants of the Lord are in the best position to bless the Lord. They are the ones who know God. They are the ones who are sensitive to the Word and will of God and they are the people in a position to bless the Lord.

Lost people are in no position to worship God and bless the Lord. Lost people can go to church. They can sing hymns. They can sing in a choir. They can give money. They can do good works and they can listen to messages, but they are not in any position to worship the Lord.

Now we may notice that “all” servants are challenged to bless the Lord. The Apostle Paul identified himself as a servant of God, and also a servant of the church of God (II Cor. 12:4). So this challenge is for all who go to church. They have a responsibility to worship God.

Message #3 - All priests who work the night shift are to bless the Lord. **134:1c**

There were priest who were responsible to praise the Lord even if they were on the night crew. According to I Chronicles 23:28-32, there were Levitical priests who had the responsibility to carry out their ministries at night, during the evening hours.

There were priests assigned to work the all night shift at the Temple. It was often a lonely job because most of the people weren't there at night. But they still could worship God and bless God for their responsibility. In fact, they had the responsibility to do that.

People who are leaders have the responsibility to worship God, even if they are not in the mainstream of the public eye.

There are people who do not feel important or significant. They don't have limelight responsibilities at church, but the one thing that one can always do and the one thing one has the responsibility to do is bless the Lord.

Now I am no legalist, but I do believe there is something to be said for people being able to gather Sunday morning and Sunday evening to worship God. On the first day of the week, people should be able to go to church to worship and sing and hear God's Word and truth proclaimed in the morning and evening.

Just a week ago, I received a call wondering if we had services on Sunday night because it was Labor Day weekend. This person could not find a church to worship God in the evening hour. How sad that is.

Message #4 - God's people are to lift up their hands to the sanctuary and bless the LORD. **134:2**

The lifting up of one's hands was a symbolic gesture that was closely connected to offering prayers and sacred praise to the Lord. In Psalms it meant three things in the book of Psalms:

- 1) It was symbolic for one being a person of prayer—Ps. 28:2
- 2) It was symbolic for being a person of praise—Ps. 63:4
- 3) It was symbolic for being a person of blessing—Lev. 9:22

The hands of a priest were to be holy and dedicated to sacred things and consecrated to the Lord. When God's people gather to bless the Lord they need to be prayerful and praiseful and they need to be clean.

This is the way the church should be. It should be a place of prayer and praise and a place where God's Word and God's Person are exalted.

We are the sanctuary of God today and we are all priests unto the Lord. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and we are to be people who pray to God and who praise God.

Message #5 - God is able to bless His people. **134:3a**

At the beginning of this Psalm the people were told to bless the Lord and as they do they learn that God is able to bless them. As we obey and bless the Lord, He is able to mercifully bless us.

We are to worship God with the idea that God is able to bless His people. Notice the pronoun “you.” It is a singular pronoun. **God is able to bless you as an individual.** God is able to bless His people.

One who gathers together at corporate worship with the idea of praising God is one who stands in a position for God to bless him.

Here is the context of this. When God’s people gather together to worship God carefully and reverently and they are meditating on truth that God has revealed in His Word, they are in a position to ask for God’s blessings.

You are in no position to ask God to bless you at the ultimate level if you are sitting home away from the sacred worship of God.

Message #6 - God is able to bless His people from Zion. **134:3b**

God is able to bless His people in Zion. Zion refers to Israel, Jerusalem and the place where the Temple sits.

God is able to bless His people out of Zion, which means He is able to bless His people who live in Israel, in Jerusalem and are worshipping at His Temple.

This is an amazing point. God is able to take the nation Israel to her land, to her city and to her Temple and pour out His blessings on them.

Message #7 - God is the Sovereign God who made heaven and earth. **134:3c**

Now someone might say the idea that God could bless Israel in Jerusalem is a far-fetched pipe dream. Well this is the God who made the heaven and earth. He spoke them into existence and He can speak His blessings into existence.

We are talking about worshipping the Great Creator.

When we gather to worship God, praise God and reverence God with a serious mind that wants to understand the Word of God, we are setting the stage for the blessings of God. That is clearly taught in Psalm 134.