

Psalm 132-134

A pattern discovered (Psalms of Ascent:120-134)¹

- Difficulty – a situation of difficulty
- Deliverance – focuses on God’s power to keep
- Delight – the security in Zion and its God

Note: Authorship is found in each of the 5 groupings of 3 Psalms... (*122, 124, 127, 131, 133)

Psalm 120-122 –

- 120 – Difficulty: the unkind words of ungodly people
- 121 – Deliverance from the Lord (I looked to the hills...)
- *122 – Security in Zion (Let us go to the house of the Lord...)

Psalm 123-125 –

- 123 – Difficulty: the ill and unjust treatment of people (contempt through scorn and pride) (3-4)
- *124 – Deliverance from the Lord
- 125 – Security in Zion (1)

Psalm 126-128 –

- 126 – Difficulty: I AM EXPERIENCING SPIRITUAL APATHY! (4)
- *127 – Deliverance from the Lord (He builds the house.)
- 128 – Security in Zion (5)

Psalm 129-131

- 129 – Difficulty: Expect affliction to come.
- 130 – Deliverance: Cry out to God for mercy.
- *131 – Delight: Quiet your heart in God alone.

This final triad of psalms of the Great Ascent is unlike most of the preceding groups in that all three psalms centered in Zion. There is no Zionward movement as in the first two triads, nor a ‘nearer my God, to thee’ movement as in the third and fourth. These are psalms of ‘home at last’! The last three Psalms do have movement: from the establishment, **the distinctive city** (Psalm 132), to **the heaven-blessed fellowship** of the gathered family (133), to **the ultimate reality of worshippers** in Yahweh’s presence (134).¹

Illustration: Making a surprise trip to Greenville with Heather and our four kids in our rusty, manual transmission, Ford Astro Van 😊 Sweet memories! Probably led to Kirk and Heidi offering to fly us to Greenville as a surprise on the following year.

- I. **Blessing for Zion (Psalm 132) – The Dwelling Place of God**
- II. **Blessing in Zion (Psalm 133) – A Place of Unity and Prosperity**
- III. **Blessing from Zion (Psalm 134) – The Center for White-hot worship**

- I. **Blessing for Zion (Psalm 132) – The Dwelling Place of God**

¹ Alec Motyer, Psalms by the Day: A New Devotional Translation. (page 385)

A. The center of Psalm 132 is a hunger for God's presence.

1. Key word: "place" (5) "dwelling place" (7 & 13), "resting place" (8 & 14), and "dwell" (14).
2. The song calls for followers of God to seek the joy that comes from dwelling with God and God dwelling with you. (Christmas story - Immanuel: God with us!)

B. The structure of Psalm 132 hangs on two prayers and two vows.

1. Israel prays two prayers (vs. 1 and vs. 8)
 - **Remember, O Lord**, in David's favor, all the hardship he endured...
 - David's desire to build a temple. (1-5; 2 Samuel 7:1-17; I Chron. 22:6-14)
 - David's attempt to relocate the ark of the covenant. (6; 2 Sam. 6:5-11)
 - The region of Ephrathah [Bethlehem] (Gen. 35:19; 1 Sam. 17:12)
 - The fields of Jaar [the house of Abinadab where the ark of the Lord resided for 20 years] (1 Sam. 7:1)
 - The reflection of the pilgrims to desire to dwell in God's presence (7)
 - **Arise, O Lord**, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might... (8-10)
 - **Make your permanent dwelling with us!** (Illustration: The promise made to King David to build a dynasty through his descendants) **Go to your resting place. You and the ark of your might.** (8-9)
 - Let your priests be clothed with righteousness. (9; Zechariah 3:8 & 6:12)
 - Let your saints shout for joy. (9)
 - **Fulfill your promises to us!** (10)
 - For the sake of your servant David do not turn away the face of your anointed (10; 1 Kings 1:39 - seen in Solomon's appointment as David's successor)
2. Each prayer is followed by a vow
 - Vow one: David made a vow to God (2-7)
 - David promised to build a house for God to dwell in. (2-5)
 - He experienced a change of direction from God. (1 Chronicles 22)
 - David attempted to relocate the ark of the covenant to be closer to God. (6-7)
 - Vow two: God made a vow to David (11-18)
 - The promise of a descendant from David will sit on the throne: both conditional (like our satisfaction/sanctification) (11-12).
 - The selection of Zion as God's choice location to dwell in (13-14). He chose Zion as His resting place [recall the story of David's census and the purchase of a threshing floor from Araunah the Jebusite to appease God's wrath with a sacrifice (2 Samuel 24:18-25)]
 - The abiding blessing on the poor (15), on the priests (16a), on the average person (16b).
 - A strong and just leader for the kingdom – through KING JESUS (17).
 - A sovereign leader who brings the nations into submission to His reign (18; Rev. 20 and Psalm 2)

C. The lessons from Psalm 132.

1. **Hunger for God's presence...** like David and the pilgrims who traveled to worship God during each of the feasts.
 - **David longed for your presence with us!**
 - **He endured hardship for God. (1; I Chron. 22:14)**
 - He collected supplies to build a temple (1-5; 1 Chron. 22:14)
 - He transported the ark to Jerusalem (6; 1 Sam. 7:1 & 2 Sam. 6)
 - **How much we long for your presence with us. (7)**
 - **The were willing to endure hardship for God. (1; I Chron. 22:14)**
 - We are willing to travel to you. (7a)
 - We are eager to bow before you. (7b)]
2. **Yield to God's will...** Even when you have the purest of motivations (David in desiring to build the temple and relocate the ARK), sometimes God says "NO."
 - God's presence is most evident in the midst of hardship and disappointment. (David not being allowed to build the physical temple. (1 Chron. 22:8). The tragedy of Uzzah's death when David attempted to move the ark (2 Sam. 6:5-11).
3. **Find confidence in God's promises...** God will never turn back on his promises. (11-18)
 - To provide a king – Jesus (11-12)
 - To establish a kingdom – The Millennial Kingdom (13-18; Revelation 20)
 - A Chosen Place (13-14): In Jerusalem (Zion)
 - A Promise of Prosperity (15-16): Among the citizens
 - A Guarantee of Peace (17-18): Among the nations

I. *Blessing for Zion (Psalm 132) – The Dwelling Place of God*

II. **Blessing in Zion (Psalm 133) – A Place of Unity and Prosperity**

A. **The goodness of unity. (1)**

B. **The description of unity. (2-3)**

- a. Anointing oil for the priest (Lev. 8:12)
 - i. Pouring down on Aaron's beard and shoulders.
 - ii. Pouring onto the breastplate containing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel.
- b. Dew covering the mountains
 - i. Coming down from Mount Hermon in the north onto Mount Zion
 - ii. The dew of Hermon was heavy
 - iii. The dew of Hermon symbolized that which is refreshing and invigorating.

Two distinct illustrations: first, the oil of consecration, pointing to unity as a sacred blessing from God, creating the priestly people Israel was meant to be (Exodus 19:6). The second deals with a miracle – Hermon's dew falling on Zion's hill. Hermon was the chief mountain of the north; Zion the chief mountain of the south. That they should be united in this way could only be an act of God: such, then, said David, is the unity of the family of God's people, a God-wrought miracle.²

III. **Blessing from Zion (Psalm 134) – The Center for White-hot worship**

- Note the "coming home" nature of this final psalm of ascents. Psalm 120 started in Meshek and Kedar. Psalm 134 is the conclusion of the journey!
- A. Worship involves leadership. (1-2; 1 Timothy 2:8-15)
 - a. All you (plural) servants of the Lord
 - b. Who stand by night in the house of the Lord (Lit. 'by nights' – every night or all night: referring to the importance of faithfulness from God's leaders... success is measured more by faithfulness than fruitfulness) All night could be connected to the Passover feast that was by nature a night festival.
 - c. Lift up your hands (1 Timothy 2:8) – an appropriate posture of worship in God's economy
 - d. To the holy place – could also be translated "in holiness" as more of a reference to Yahweh than a reference to lifting one's hands toward the temple. In either case, the object of worship is God not a building!
 - B. Worship includes partnership. (3)
 - a. May the Lord bless "you" (singular) in contrast with the second plural throughout the psalm. It is an "individualizing" singular. Compare with the singular in Numbers 6:24-27

²⁴The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

²⁷"So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."

The striking simplicity and simple beauty of Psalm 134 make it a supremely wonderful conclusion to the Songs of the Great Ascent. How easy it is to picture a family group reaching the city in the evening of their pilgrim

² Ibid, 388.

journey, with the youngsters clamoring to go straight to the Temple. Father is adamant, 'You've had a long enough day. Tomorrow will be soon enough.' But the youngsters are too canny for that, and know that mother will be a softer touch! 'Of course they want to see the Temple. Another late night won't hurt them.' And they arrive in time to see the entrance of the night-priests, to join in the greeting for their blessing, and they stay late enough to hear the blessing pronounced on each one of them – and all in the dark security of the city which has been their goal all along their pilgrim way. Would they not indeed feel that all the blessings and securities of the Maker of heaven and earth were indeed enfolding them in that sacred enclosure and in the soft darkness of that night? All his irresistible will as Creator, all his sovereign power, all his resources – and (coming out of Zion as its source) all the mercy and grace of his great salvation. All worship should be like that: a 'blessing' of Yahweh, a review of his character, his grace, his saving power, his providential care, the blood of the sacrifice he has provided and ordained; the rest he gives to his beloved as he welcomes us into his house and home. 'To behold the fair beauty of the LORD' (Ps. 27:4). Look again at Revelation 1. There were seven lamps. What were they illuminating with their complete light? The light was directed inward, to reveal the beauty and glories of the One 'in the midst of the lamp-stands.'³

Application:

- **Seek unity in your home, at school, at work and at PBC that is centered in the Gospel. (Colossians 3:12-15)**
 - Forgive as you have been forgiven. (Colossians 3:12-13)
 - Love as you have been loved. (Colossians 3:14)
 - Seek peace as you have received peace. (Colossians 3:15-17)
- **Ask God to help you know the difference between essential and non-essential issues. (Romans 15:1-7)**
 - In the essentials – unity.
 - In the non-essentials – liberty.
 - In all things – charity.
- **Make it your aim to engage in “white-hot worship” of the one true God. (John 4:23-24)**
 - If asked to lead, lead with grace and intentionality.
 - If being led, participate with sincerity.
- **Center your worship in the observation and application of God's Word. (John 17:17)**
 - We are commanded to preach the Word. (2 Timothy 4:2)
 - We are encouraged to read the Word. (I Timothy 4:13)
 - We are inspired to pray the Word. (Luke 1:46-55; I Samuel 2:1-10)
 - We are urged to sing the Word. (Colossians 3:16)
 - We are instructed how to see the Word. (Matthew 28:19 & I Corinthians 11:23-26)

³ Ibid., 389