

# THE PSALMS OF ASCENT

JOURNEYING WITH JESUS  
TO JERUSALEM

Part 15

## *“Psalm 134 & the Early Church of the Lord Jesus”*

27 April 2025

### Introduction

As we conclude our series on the ascents psalms we do well to reflect on this unique collection of writings. While these psalms can certainly be read individually, they have been intentionally compiled together and function as a cohesive unit. These psalms tell a collective story and were used particular ways in the life of Israel.

**Key Point:** The psalms of ascent teach us that joyful \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ can characterize us as we journey together through life.

### The Psalms of Ascent

“The Songs of Ascents share one name, one serene mood, one theology of blessing, one heart for Jerusalem and the king of David’s line, one common language, and one single story...” —David C. Mitchell

1. Taken together, these psalms tell the story of \_\_\_\_\_ journeying together to Jerusalem.

2. These psalms had a particular significance to the \_\_\_\_\_ worship of Israel.

\* *These psalms have some relationship to the yearly pilgrimages commanded of the people.*

\* *They were also likely used specifically as a part of the celebration of the Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles).*

“...the Songs of Ascents title is...a word-play. At the Feast of Sukkot, the Levites ascended the fifteen steps of the temple, singing one Song of Ascents on each step. But these songs also describe a pilgrim going up to worship at that same feast. And so the Levites, in their singing ascent from the lower to the upper court, enacted the very story they sang. Singing in the persona of pilgrims ascending to worship, they played out the double meaning of the ‘Ascents’ on the fifteen temple steps.” —David C. Mitchell

### **Psalm 134**

The ascent psalms conclude with a farewell blessing to the priests who are ministering in the temple and their response of blessing to the pilgrims who have come to Jerusalem.

- **The psalmist exhorts those who serve at the temple to bless & praise the Lord in their service. (vv. 1-2)**

Psa. 134:1-2—<sup>1</sup>Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord! <sup>2</sup>Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord!

⇒ The psalm begins with those who have come to Jerusalem calling upon the \_\_\_\_\_ to bless the Lord.  
*“you servants of the Lord”* *“who stand by night in the house of the Lord!”*

“...the priests were to be in the sanctuary...to proclaim God’s faithful love in the morning and evening. Their service was to be day and night; they were to give thanks morning and evening, and the musicians were to play morning and evening.”

—Alan P. Ross

⇒ Their praise and service to the Lord was not merely in word, but also in \_\_\_\_\_.  
*“Lift up your hands to the holy place”*

- **The psalmist records the response of blessing for the people. (v. 3)**

Psa. 134:3—May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth.

⇒ The response shows the close relationship between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

*"May the Lord bless you from Zion"*

⇒ The true \_\_\_\_\_ of the blessing is emphasized in the reference to God as Creator.

*"he who made heaven and earth."*

**Key Point:** The psalm depicts the \_\_\_\_\_ of worship that should characterize the lives of God's people.

*Day & Night*

*Vertical*

*Horizontal*

"Literally, [Psa. 134] is the doxological finale of the collection, but it is also a summons, an invocation, for how the rest of life should be lived. Having ascended to Zion to bless the God of Israel, the pilgrims are now sent back out bearing the blessing of their God along their journey of life." —Bradley C. Gregory

### **Parallel: "The Early Church of the Lord Jesus" — Acts 2:42-47**

**Background:** Peter's Pentecost sermon and the resulting mass conversions were evidence that Jesus was Messiah and had ascended to the place of all authority and power and had poured out the promised Holy Spirit. In the weeks and months that followed, the early church set the example for what it means for believers worship together in light of these blessings.

1. The practices of the early church set the \_\_\_\_\_ for gathered Christian worship.
2. In this unique time in the history of the church, the Lord blessed them with many attesting \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The response of the people to God's blessings was to \_\_\_\_\_ one another to meet various needs.
4. Fellowship and \_\_\_\_\_ were central to their life as the believing community.
5. The Lord blessed their genuine worship of Him by \_\_\_\_\_ to their number and giving them favor among their neighbors.

**Key Point:** While the life of the early church is primarily \_\_\_\_\_ rather than prescriptive, it shows us the relationships that exist between worship, fellowship, and blessing.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

1. The Psalms of Ascent serve to remind us that our lives are a journey that will \_\_\_\_\_ in God's presence.
2. The Psalms of Ascent illustrate for us the \_\_\_\_\_ of worship to the lives of God's people.
3. The Psalms of Ascent show us the importance of mutual \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as we journey together through life as God's worshipers.

*Col. 3:15-17—<sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

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**Key Point: The psalms of ascent teach us that joyful worship and fellowship can characterize us as we journey together through life.**

### The Psalms of Ascent

“The Songs of Ascents share one name, one serene mood, one theology of blessing, one heart for Jerusalem and the king of David’s line, one common language, and one single story...” —David C. Mitchell

1. Taken together, these psalms tell the story of pilgrims journeying together to Jerusalem.

2. These psalms had a particular significance to the corporate worship of Israel.

- \* *These psalms have some relationship to the yearly pilgrimages commanded of the people.*
- \* *They were also likely used specifically as a part of the celebration of the Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles).*

“...the Songs of Ascents title is...a word-play. At the Feast of Sukkot, the Levites ascended the fifteen steps of the temple, singing one Song of Ascents on each step. But these songs also describe a pilgrim going up to worship at that same feast. And so the Levites, in their singing ascent from the lower to the upper court, enacted the very story they sang. Singing in the persona of pilgrims ascending to worship, they played out the double meaning of the ‘Ascents’ on the fifteen temple steps.” —David C. Mitchell

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- ⇒ The psalm begins with those who have come to Jerusalem calling upon the priests to bless the Lord.  
*“you servants of the Lord”* *“who stand by night in the house of the Lord!”*

“...the priests were to be in the sanctuary...to proclaim God’s faithful love in the morning and evening. Their service was to be day and night; they were to give thanks morning and evening, and the musicians were to play morning and evening.”

—Alan P. Ross

- ⇒ Their praise and service to the Lord was not merely in word, but also in action.  
*“Lift up your hands to the holy place”*

- **The psalmist records the response of blessing for the people. (v. 3)**

Psa. 134:3—*May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth.*

⇒ The response shows the close relationship between **praise** and **blessing**.

*"May the Lord bless you from Zion"*

⇒ The true **source** of the blessing is emphasized in the reference to God as Creator.

*"he who made heaven and earth."*

**Key Point:** The psalm depicts the **rhythms** of worship that should characterize the lives of God's people.

*Day & Night*

*Vertical*

*Horizontal*

"Literally, [Psa. 134] is the doxological finale of the collection, but it is also a summons, an invocation, for how the rest of life should be lived. Having ascended to Zion to bless the God of Israel, the pilgrims are now sent back out bearing the blessing of their God along their journey of life." —Bradley C. Gregory

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1. The practices of the early church set the **pattern** for gathered Christian worship.
2. In this unique time in the history of the church, the Lord blessed them with many attesting **miracles**.
3. The response of the people to God's blessings was to **bless** one another to meet various needs.
4. Fellowship and **hospitality** were central to their life as the believing community.
5. The Lord blessed their genuine worship of Him by **adding** to their number and giving them favor among their neighbors.

**Key Point:** While the life of the early church is primarily **descriptive** rather than prescriptive, it shows us the relationships that exist between worship, fellowship, and blessing.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

1. The Psalms of Ascent serve to remind us that our lives are a journey that will **culminate** in God's presence.
2. The Psalms of Ascent illustrate for us the **centrality** of worship to the lives of God's people.
3. The Psalms of Ascent show us the importance of mutual **blessing** and **encouragement** as we journey together through life as God's worshippers.

*Col. 3:15-17—<sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*