

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

**Bereans Adult Bible Fellowship
Placerita Baptist Church
2009**

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Psalm 132 — Pilgrims in the Footsteps of the Ark of the Covenant

1.0 Introducing Psalm 132

- Appropriately, pilgrims sang Psalm 132 on their final approach to the sanctuary. This longest of the Psalms of Ascents focuses on the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem. Psalms 133 and 134 give attention to the unity of the worshipping community and the ministry of the sanctuary servants, respectively.
- In the Psalms of Ascents a group of three psalms comprises each of five sets. The first psalm in each set reveals a matter of distress (Ps 132), the second speaks of power that resolves it, and the third focuses on resultant security (see chart below). David had already resolved the problem identified by this psalm: the need for a permanent location for the ark of the covenant.

	I	II	III	IV	V
<i>Trouble – Problem</i>	Psalm 120 Anonymous	Psalm 123 Anonymous	Psalm 126 Anonymous Zion	Psalm 129 Anonymous <u>Israel</u> Zion Blessing	Psalm 132 Anonymous Zion Blessing
<i>Trust – Power</i>	Psalm 121 Anonymous <u>Israel</u>	Psalm 124 <i>David</i> <u>Israel</u>	Psalm 127 <i>Solomon</i> Blessing	Psalm 130 Anonymous <u>Israel</u>	Psalm 133 <i>David</i> Zion Blessing
<i>Triumph – Protection</i>	Psalm 122 <i>David</i> <u>Israel</u> Jerusalem “house of the LORD”	Psalm 125 Anonymous <u>Israel</u> Jerusalem Zion	Psalm 128 Anonymous <u>Israel</u> Jerusalem Zion Blessing	Psalm 131 <i>David</i> <u>Israel</u>	Psalm 134 Anonymous Zion “house of the LORD” Blessing

- The setting for this psalm is fairly explicit. It deals with bringing the ark of the

covenant into the city of Jerusalem (2 Sam 6).

- Theme of Psalm 132: *Joyful travelers reach their worship destination.*

2.0 Reading Psalm 132 (NAU)

132:1 A Song of Ascents.

Remember, O LORD, on David's behalf,

All his affliction;

132:2 How he swore to the LORD
And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob,

132:3 "Surely I will not enter my house,
Nor lie on my bed;

132:4 I will not give sleep to my eyes
Or slumber to my eyelids,

132:5 Until I find a place for the LORD,
A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

132:6 Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah,
We found it in the field of Jaar.

132:7 Let us go into His dwelling place;
Let us worship at His footstool.

132:8 Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place,
You and the ark of Your strength.

132:9 **Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness,**
And let Your godly ones sing for joy.

132:10 For the sake of David Your servant,
Do not turn away the face of Your anointed.

132:11 The LORD has sworn to David
A truth from which He will not turn back:
"Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne.

132:12 "If your sons will keep My covenant
And My testimony which I will teach them,
Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever."

132:13 For the LORD has chosen Zion;
He has desired it for His habitation.

132:14 "This is My resting place forever;
Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

132:15 "I will abundantly bless her provision;
I will satisfy her needy with bread.

132:16 **"Her priests also I will clothe with salvation,**
And her godly ones will sing aloud for joy.

132:17 "There I will cause the horn of David to spring forth;
I have prepared a lamp for Mine anointed.

132:18 "His enemies I will clothe with shame,
But upon himself his crown shall shine."

3.0 Understanding Psalm 132

3.1 Outline

- Psalm Heading (v. 1a)
- I. The Davidic Vow (vv. 1b–10)
 - A. David’s Intent (vv. 1–7)
 - B. David’s Invocation (vv. 8–10)
 - II. The Divine Vow (vv. 11–18)
 - A. The Davidic Covenant (vv. 11–12)
 - B. The Davidic Capital (vv. 13–16)
 - C. The Davidic King (vv. 17–18)



3.2 Notes

- v. 1 “on David's behalf”
 - The name of David frames both halves of the psalm (vv. 1, 10, 11, 17).
 - Two other psalms (24 and 68) also commemorate moving the ark to Jerusalem. Psalm 132 focuses on David’s role in the event.
- v. 1 “All his affliction”
 - David’s afflictions are most likely “his heart-searchings which he brought to his task; perhaps also his shock and distress at the death of Uzzah” — Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 449.
 - See 2 Samuel 6:6–11.
 - Cf. 1 Chronicles 22:14.
- v. 2 “How he swore . . . And vowed”
 - David did not fulfill this vow. Solomon fulfilled it with David’s arrangements and collection of materials.
 - See verse 11.
 - *What are possible reasons for an unfulfilled promise?*
- v. 2 “the Mighty One of Jacob”
 - This divine title appears only in this psalm, Genesis 49:24, Isaiah 49:26, and 60:16.
 - It is an ancient title tied back to Israel’s earliest history.
- v. 5 Cited by Stephen in Acts 7:46.
- v. 6 “we heard of it”
 - According to 1 Chronicles 13:3, David acknowledged Israel’s failure to seek the presence of the Lord at the ark of the covenant.
 - *What do we sometimes neglect that might impact us, our family, or our community?*
- v. 6 “in Ephrathah, . . . in the field of Jaar”
 - David was from Ephrathah (1 Sam 17:12). Rachel died there (Gen 35:19). See also Ruth 4:11 and Micah 5:2.

- Jaar = Kiriath-Jearim, which was 10 miles west of Jerusalem (see 1 Sam 6:21–7:2; 2 Sam 6:2; 1 Chron 13:5–6; 2 Chron 1:4).
- **v. 7** “His dwelling place; . . . His footstool”
 - The imagery depicts the Sovereign Lord’s relationship to the ark of the covenant — the location where He met with His people Israel.
 - See 1 Chronicles 28:2; Psalm 99:5; Lamentations 2:1. Compare Isaiah 66:1.
 - *What does this figure reveal about our worship?*
- **v. 8** “Arise, O LORD”
 - When the ark of the covenant set out from the Israelite camps in the wilderness, Moses recited this call (see Num 10:35).
 - Compare Psalms 3:7; 7:6; 9:19; 10:12; 17:13.
- **vv. 8–10** Quoted in 2 Chronicles 6:41–42
 - Since Solomon apparently cites Psalm 132, this demonstrates the early date of the psalm and that its author had to be either David or Solomon. Because of verse 10, Solomon is the most likely author.
- **v. 8** “Your resting place”
 - David desires to provide a permanent location for the ark of the covenant.
 - See verses 5 and 14.
 - *What do you desire to do in your service to God?*
- **vv. 9, 16** Refrain
 - “Godly ones” is phraseology peculiar to the Psalms.
 - There is no mention of the priests in 2 Samuel 6’s account of the moving of the ark of the covenant, but see 1 Chronicles 15:12.
 - For the figure of being clothed with righteousness or salvation, see Job 29:14; Isaiah 61:10; and Revelation 19:8.
 - For the godly shouting/singing with joy, see Psalm 149:5.
- **v. 11** “The LORD has sworn to David”
 - The first half of the psalm began with “Remember, O LORD, on David's behalf” (v. 1).
 - David had made an oath in verse 2; the LORD makes an oath in verses 11–12.
 - 2 Samuel 7:4–17 records the original statement of the LORD’s oath.
 - Peter cited Psalm 132:11 in Acts 2:30.
- **vv. 13–18** Prayer and Its Answer
 - The prayer of verses 8–9 corresponds to the contents of these verses. Interestingly, each corresponding answer exceeds in some way the preceding petitions.
 - These verses describe a kingdom greater than the historical Davidic kingdom. Messiah’s kingdom fulfills the Davidic pattern.



- **v. 13** “For the LORD has chosen Zion”
 - David’s selection of Zion for the residence of the ark of the covenant reflected God’s choice of Zion.
 - *How can God lead you to perform His desire?*
- **vv. 15–16** See Isaiah 61:9–11.
- **v. 15** “I will abundantly bless”
 - Could also be translated, “I will certainly bless.”
- **v. 16** Compare verse 9.
 - Note the differences:
 - ✓ v. 9 “Your” (God’s); v. 16 “her” (Zion’s)
 - ✓ v. 9 “righteousness”; v. 16 “salvation”
 - ✓ v. 9 “sing/shout joyfully”; v. 16 “sing/shout aloud for joy” — The construction is more intensive and emphatic in v. 16 (could translate as “will certainly shout joyfully”).
- **vv. 17, 18** “horn . . . lamp . . . crown”
 - These three items indicate strength, clarity or life (see 2 Sam 21:17; 1 Kgs 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19), and royalty.
 - Psalm 132 begins with affliction and David’s determination. It ends with success and glory.
- **v. 18** “crown”
 - The same word identifies the high priest’s crown (Exod 29:6; 39:30). It is also used of Saul’s crown (2 Sam 1:10), Jehoash’s crown (2 Kgs 11:12), and the Davidic king’s crown (Ps 89:39).
 - Messiah will be both King and Priest (Zech 6:12–14).

4.0 Singing Psalm 132

“Gracious Lord, Remember David”

(Tune: “All the Way My Savior Leads Me”)



1 Gracious Lord, remember David,
How he made Thy house his care,
How he vowed to seek no pleasure
Till Thy house he should prepare.
Lord, remember his devotion;
Restless in his courts he trod
Till he found a habitation
Fit for Israel’s mighty God;
Till he found a habitation
Fit for Israel’s mighty God.

2 Far away God’s ark was resting,
It is with His people now;
We will go into His temple,
At His footstool we will bow.
With the ark, Thy might revealing,
Enter, Lord, into Thy rest;
Let Thy priests be clothed with justice,
Let Thy joyful saints be blest;
Let Thy priests be clothed with justice,
Let Thy joyful saints be blest.

3 Let the king behold Thy favor
For Thy servant David's sake,
Unto whom a sacred promise,
Sure and faithful, Thou didst make.
If his children keep Thy covenant
And Thy testimony own,
Then, as Thou, O Lord, hast promised,
They shall sit upon the throne;
Then, as Thou, O Lord, hast promised,
They shall sit upon the throne.

4 Thou, the Lord, hast chosen Zion,
Thou hast ever loved her well;
"This My resting place forever,
Here," Thou say'st, "I choose to dwell.
Surely I will bless and help her,
Feed her poor, her saints make glad,
And her priests shall stand before Me
In salvation's garments clad;
And her priests shall stand before Me
In salvation's garments clad.

5 "I will cause the might of David
Ever more and more to grow;
On the path of Mine Anointed
I will make a lamp to glow.
All His enemies shall perish,
I will cover them with shame;
But His crown shall ever flourish;
Blessèd be His holy Name;
But His crown shall ever flourish;
Blessèd be His holy Name."

— Words: Author Unknown

5.0 Praying Psalm 132

- Lord, help me keep my vow, my faith promise for my church building. [vv. 2–4]
- Lead me in a path of righteous and joyful living, Father. [v. 9]
- Use me, O God, to provide food for the poor. [v. 15]

6.0 Applying Psalm 132

- We must take an active role in housing the Lord's ministries.
- God leads us in our desire to serve Him and how that desire is fulfilled.
- David's God still desires His people's worship and fulfills His Word.

Christian tramp well-worn paths: obedience has a history.

This history is important for without it we are at the mercy of whims. . . . If we are going to live adequately and maturely as the people of God, we need more data to work from than our own experience can give us.

. . . A Christian who has David in his bones, Jeremiah in his bloodstream, Paul in his fingertips and Christ in his heart will know how much and how little value to put on his own momentary feelings and the experience of the past week.

Biblical history is a good memory for what doesn't work. It is also a good memory for what does work—like remembering what you put in the soup that made it taste so good so that you can repeat and enjoy the recipe on another day; . . .

A Christian with a defective memory has to start everything from scratch and spends far too much of his or her time backtracking, repairing, starting over.

— Eugene H. Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*
(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 162–63