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Psalm 134

Phase 1: ORAL



Step 1: Listen

Listening to a guide translation and versions of the psalm

Listen well to the poem (notice content, emotions and interesting use of language). There are two guide translations in Appendix A:

1. **Hebrew-mirror** - copied from the Exegetical Layout and adjusted for minimal readability,
2. **Guide translation** - the literal, type 1 corresponding (but more readable) translation, exegetically the same as Hebrew-mirror.

Activity: Read the Hebrew-mirror and the Hebrew tight version in Appendix A. One reader per translation or one reader for all translations (as skills permit). Others to listen with closed books. Consider 'how to listen' – posture? With responses? In silence?

Activity (optional): After listening to the psalm being read aloud in several translations, divide into two groups - one being 'the priests', the other group 'the pilgrims'. Now act out the psalm, using gestures and the right tone of voice for what you are saying. (Verses 1 and 2 are said by the pilgrims as they walk past the Temple and see the priests at work. Verse 3 is spoken by the priests in return, as the pilgrims continue on their journey home.)

Especially think about how the pilgrims (returning home) will call the attention of the priests (v.1) in a natural, cultural way.



Step 2: Familiarise

Explaining and discussing the meaning and beauty of the psalm

Get an overview of the poem (the big picture) - what's the main message? Who is involved? A poem must be understood as 'a whole' (unlike a story).

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PSALM

After listening to the guide translations, please respond to any of the following questions:





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- What do you like about the psalm?
- What do you find difficult?
- How does the psalm make you feel?
- Which verse do you find particularly important in this psalm?
- What does this psalm teach you about the LORD? What is the LORD like?
- Are there any noticeable repetitions in this psalm?

CREATIVE RESPONSES

Divide into small groups and discuss (orally) the following questions:

- 1) What do you like about the psalm?
- 2) Do you find anything difficult or strange?
- 3) What do you think is the main idea of the psalm?
- 4) What words are repeated often?
- 5) In your drama (Activity 1), what word did you use to get the attention of the priests (in v.1)? Is this a natural 'attention-getting' word? Is there an ideophone that might do this? Is it accompanied by an action? Could you use music and (change of rhythm) in a song to get attention?
- 6) Think about how bless is used by both groups of speakers. Does it have the same meaning for both?
- 7) What places are mentioned in the text which represent the place where God is?
- 8) What does Zion mean to you?
- 9) What words do you use in your language to address God?
- 10) What does lifting hands imply in your culture? Are there different ways of lifting hands? Do they mean different things?
- 11) What does holy place mean for you? Is there a particular place in your community that people consider to be holy?
- 12) Which expressions are similar in meaning? Look at v.1a and v.1b. Also v.1b and v.2a.

ENGAGING WITH THE WHOLE PSALM

Facilitator: address the following topics:

- *The participants in the psalm, the different “speakers” and “audiences”*
- *The historical background and the context of the psalm, the story behind the psalm, if relevant*
- *The theme of the psalm*
- *The flow of the psalm*
- *The potential big picture obstacles*
- *Emotion map*
- *The peak or peaks of the psalm*
- *The genre and purpose of the psalm*
- *Highly important poetic device(s) related to understanding the big picture*
- *How does the psalm point to Christ?*



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Theme and flow of the psalm

In the first two verses, the pilgrims address the priests serving in the sanctuary at night time, encouraging them to bless the LORD. The priestly Aaronic Blessing of Numbers 6:22-27, where the priests lay the name of the LORD on the people with the six blessings, underlies this psalm

Then in v.3, the priests respond with a blessing upon the pilgrims.

Emotions in Psalm 134

It is important to try and map the different emotions in this psalm: joy, celebration, apprehension?

Activity: Discuss in small groups the different emotions in this short psalm.

Historical setting of the psalm

This is the last of the 15 Psalms of Ascent (Pss 120-134), which were songs sung at the time of festivals (such as Passover) in Jerusalem. Here, the pilgrims are about to return home at the end of the festival and as they pass the Temple, they see some priests working at night. They call out to them and encourage them to praise the LORD. In turn, the priests pray a blessing on the pilgrims. Pilgrims either before dawn or at night interacting with the priests, even maybe when departing for home (before dawn?).

Compare and contrast the dark tents of Kedar in Ps 120, the first of the Songs of Ascent, with the sacrifices and priestly service at night in the last Song of Ascents in Psalm 134.

How does this psalm point to Christ and the New Testament?

Now, as a New Testament church, Zion is spiritual, heavenly. We are priests serving the LORD and Christ in a spiritual temple with spiritual sacrifices of praise (including the psalms!). See 1 Peter 2:5 and 9.

But Father and his Son also bless us from the heavenly Zion (Hebrews 12:22-23).

UNLOCKING SOME OF THE BIG PICTURE OBSTACLES TO THE PSALM

- There are **two sets** of **speakers** in this short psalm: pilgrims (vv. 1-2) and priests or their spokesperson (v.3).
- Singing the psalm at **night** may raise questions. At the same time, many cultures have nighttime ceremonies. The nighttime setting of this psalm is normal for the priestly service in the sanctuary, in the tabernacle or temple. Compare 1 Chron 9:33 (day and night service), 23:30 (morning and evening service), and Isaiah 30:29 (night of consecration). The Passover feast, especially, was a nighttime event (Motyer).



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- In v.2, does **HOLY** refer to a holy place or to the Holy One, YHWH himself? It can be either one, but in this psalm and normally in other references to hands lifted up, it is lifted to the Divine Being in the case of prayer and worship, and not to a place (e.g. Ps 63:5; also 1 Tim 2: in the NT). The priests lift their hands to bless the people (Num 6:34). It can also refer to both, YHWH in his sanctuary, which is probably to most likely here.
- The psalm contains several key terms that need to be consistently translated with other occurrences.

Activity: Discuss the key terms LORD, bless, Zion, holy place; heaven and earth (word pair), night. (See the footnotes in Appendix B.)

- There is the question what does “**night**” mean. What the tabernacle or temple open at night? Did the priest serve at night? According to Psalm 134, they did. Some commentators like Segal said no, temple was locked, but others like PHR says yes, according to Isa 30:29, or the changing of guards as in 1 Chron 9:33, cf. 1 Chron 23:30, 26. It was also argued that the pilgrims could have come before daybreak, but whatever the argument, the priests were serving at that time.

SEGMENTATION OF THE PSALM

Stanza 1: vv.1-2 call to worship (pilgrims speaking to priests)

Stanza 2: v.3 blessing (by priests, speaking to pilgrims)

Activity: What words are in both stanzas, uniting them as part of the same poem?

FINAL SUMMING UP

To summarise the Psalm, discuss the following questions:

- What is the main point or message of the psalm?
- What does this Psalm teach you about the LORD?
- How can you or your church use this psalm?
- What heading or title would the group suggest for this psalm?



Step 3: Internalise

Absorbing the big picture of the psalm

‘Get the poem inside yourself’ (feel the emotions and be able to recall the main ideas).

Look at the whole psalm so that you can experience it and retell the message. This is not an attempt to memorize the psalm, but to be able to understand the whole message and to express it in the target language. Aim to do at least the first two activities.





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CREATIVE RESPONSES

First, do Internalisation Activities 1-5 as a whole group

Internalisation Activity: Listen to Psalm X being read again. Note all the words you hear which speak of God's power, or which are very intense/extreme language.

Internalisation Activity: Say each line of the psalm in the right order, as a group. Use your own words; there's no need to have it precisely right. Then let one or two persons say each line of the psalm, again in the right order

Internalisation Activity: Then, as a group, make gestures for each line and again say all the lines in order, but this time with gestures. Use mime/gestures to show the emotion and action.

Internalisation Activity: Lastly, as a whole group, use the popcorn method. Each line, in the right order, is said by a different person. Do this a second time to further reinforce.

Internalisation Activity (optional): The storyboard method: draw pictures of each event in the psalm as they unfold.

Then divide the group into two or three groups

Internalisation Activity: Skits—act out what's happening in each of the lines. Make a little drama. Encourage them to use facial expressions, body language, motions, and movement to try to experience the emotions and the sequence of events. This psalm lends itself well to a skit.

Internalisation Activity: Memory song, chant or memory aid to help remember the psalm. Consider making a short poem of the song in the local language or Language of Wider Communication to help you remember the different actions in order. This song is only to help everyone remember each stanza in sequence (and the lines in sequence if it is a short psalm)

Other Options

Activity:

- 1) In pairs, share some examples of how you have been *blessed* by the LORD.
- 2) In the big group, share some ways that you *bless the LORD* in your language. What body language might you use?



Step 4: Explore and compose

Explore the Hebrew and local poetry and compose a song

EXPLORING HEBREW AND LOCAL POETRY

For the facilitator: in this step, address the following topics to explore in Hebrew poetry:





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- 1) Repetition of words, images, and sounds
- 2) Handling the Hebrew parallelisms
- 3) Figures of speech, like metaphors, personification
- 4) Rhythm, verse length, beat
- 5) Word order, clause order
- 6) Poetic devices that emphasize and mark something as important

Once the artist-translators have sufficiently internalised and drafted the psalm in the workshop setting, compose a song, poem, rap, chant, or prayer to capture as much of the psalm as possible.

There are several poetic devices to investigate here in Psalm 134:

1. Repetition

Look at the Flower Garden in Appendix C for an overview of the repetitions. Give special attention to the verb “bless”. Do not hesitate to use repetition in your translation.

2. Shifts

In verse 3 the scene changes and the speakers are now the priests, those “standing in the house of the LORD”. How can this discontinuity be marked in your song?

3. Figures of speech

Psalm 134 does not use much picture language. Closest, maybe, is the “lifting of the hands”, which symbolises surrender in prayer but also for the priest’s action of blessing the people.

COMPOSING A SONG

For the facilitator: several considerations, like the big question when to start doing the song

- 1) *When to start composing a song? The guide writer and facilitator have some freedom when. Either at the end of step 4, or after step 5. There are pro’s and con’s to each option. One advantage of doing it in Step 4 (before the detailed exegesis) is that the team starts to think about poetry. They only start to think about poetry once they start composing a song. The risk is that when they compose something early, before step 5, that they settle on a melody they like, but need to change it or even abandon it after getting the more detailed exegetical insights. The advantage*
- 2) *Some other considerations: what about memory aid, the poem or song made at the end of Step 3?*
- 3) *Another option is to only compose a nice tune and song on one stanza with not any serious exegetical issues. That tune can then be used for the rest of the psalm at the end of Step 5. Experience with shorter sections, like one or two stanzas at a time, to compose.*
- 4) *The team needs to learn some song-writing skills.*
- 5) *It is not necessary to use the same tune for every stanza. Sometimes 3-4 tunes can be used for long psalms.*



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Note the poetic devices used in the Hebrew mirror or in the Flower Garden (Appendix C). What is the psalmist trying to achieve? Consider what poetic devices are used in the local language to achieve the same functions.

Activity: NOW, COMPOSE A SONG! Participants are to choose a style or genre that is relevant for the psalm, and to set the whole psalm or sections to a rhythm or music. The song needs to cover all the main stanzas, but doesn't need to be correct in every detail (that comes later in Step 5)

Activity: Make a recording of the composition(s).



Step 5: Draft

Translating stanza-by-stanza

Listen to the poem again. Orally create stanza-by-stanza a first draft of the psalm in the target language, trying to capture the poetic elements and essential details of the meaning. To take full advantage of the oral form, avoid reverting to written Biblical text at this point.

Activity: Divide into smaller groups and let one in each group read through guide translation #2: Hebrew-tight (or play a recording) while others translate. The oral draft can at that point be recorded and/or immediately written down (Step 6 merged with Step 5).

STANZA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Often it speeds the work to have different groups do different stanzas. If you do this, make sure you all hear the psalm from top to bottom and to make suggestions to other groups when you come together...

Stanza 1: Verses 1-2

<p>Song of Going.up/Ascents</p> <p>1 Behold, bless (pl.) YHWH, all servants of YHWH the ones standing in the house of YHWH at night.</p> <p>2 Lift up pl your.hands (to) holy [place] and bless (pl.) YHWH.</p>	<p>A song of ascents.</p> <p>1. Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, (the ones) who serve by night in the house of the LORD.</p> <p>2. Lift up your hands towards the holy place, and bless the LORD.</p>
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Discuss:

- See the notes in Appendix B and in Step 2 about the unexpected attention-grabber “behold! Look! Watch!”
- Servants here are not lowly slaves or bondservants, but the servants of the LORD ministering in the sanctuary. Consider how to render it.
- Which word-order should be followed for the vocative: verse-initially or after the verb? Languages differ in terms of discourse preferences.
- Standing in the house of YHWH means standing ready to serve, or actually serving or ministering by making sacrifices, singing the prescribed songs, or blessing the people of Israel. They had other functions too.
- Holy can either refer to the holy place, the sanctuary, or to the LORD, the Holy One, or to both, holy YHWH in his holy place. Maybe follow the rendering in the language of wider communication in your area.
- Recall the word you decided (in Activity 4) would be best in this stanza for bless?

Creative activity: Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

Stanza 2: Verse 3

3. May He bless you, YHWH from Zion,
One making heavens and earth.

3. May the LORD, who created heaven and
earth, bless you from Zion.

Discuss:

- Almost every word in this verse is ‘loaded’ (or a key term). Consider the *LORD* and *Zion*, and think about different ways that you might translate them.
- *From Zion* means from Zion as the LORD’s dwelling place and throne on earth. Translate as is, literally.
- *Heaven and earth* are a way of expressing ‘everything (the LORD created)’. It has a good poetic effect, and use it if you can, but there are other ways to express it. How else could you say that? Can you think of other word pairs that would convey a similar idea?
- In your language, would you repeat the verb “*making*” in the last line?

Creative activity: Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Activities:

- 1) Listen again to the recordings of each verse or section.
- 2) Think about how to include relevant parts from previous steps and to use ideas from the previous creative activities.



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- 3) Put everything together to make a poetic oral representation of the complete psalm, and then record it.

Phase 2: TEXT



Step 6: Transcribe

Make a written draft

Activity: Transcribe the recording/s of the oral draft onto paper or a computer.

Before moving on to the checking steps, check the transcribed draft for the following. This should be done as a whole group, looking at the psalm projected onto a screen or wall. Doing this now will help the exegetical and poetical checks that follow to stay focused on essential matters.

1. **Versification:** put the verse numbers into the psalm.
2. Check that the number of the psalm, and any **superscription**, are in place at the top. (Superscriptions are often left out completely according to team policy, but they are recommended to be put in the written text but not the song.)
3. Put in the **stanza breaks** (blank lines usually).
4. Correct the **punctuation**, in particular finding out where the sentences should end. Different groups use different approaches. Our recommendation is to use capital letters only for the beginning of sentences, not for the beginning of each poetic line.
5. Correct the **spelling**. You may find that there is a lot of discussion over this. The group needs to have consistency but also needs to abide by any government guidelines.
6. Raise any questions you have about the **back translation** at this point. The back translation just needs to be comprehensible; it does not need spell checks etc. You, the facilitator, are the only person who needs it. However, without a good back translation you cannot understand what is going on. As a bonus, at least a couple of exegetical questions you've prepared usually turn out to be unnecessary after this step.
7. Check the **line divisions** (this refers to how the power is broken up into lines and where to make those breaks).



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Step 7: Contents Check

Checking exegetical faithfulness

Check the exegesis of the oral translation. Consider whether the correct meaning has been translated and if the wording used can be improved. The purpose of this step is to check the content of your draft for faithfulness and trustworthiness.

Activity: Review the draft translation in detail, using the oral recording of Step 5 or the transcription of Step 6. Do an exegetical check by comparing the draft with the guide translations given in Appendix A and the exegetical layout in Appendix B and adjust the text as necessary.

EXEGETICAL CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

v.1a: Does the translation begin with an attention-getting word which is used in the local culture to address respected people?

- v.1a: Does the word used for *bless* imply worship?
- v.1a: Check the position of the vocative is natural (at the beginning? Or the end of the line?)
- v.1a *Servants of the LORD* could refer to priests, but in later psalms, refers to the community of faith generally. Can you find a word that includes both professional priests and the community of faith?
- v.1b: *at night*: could refer to guard-duty or an evening ritual. Or it could be a metonym for 'day and night' (= always). It also could mean 'a time of trial/difficulty'. Try to translate literally to include all options.
- v.1b: *those standing* usually means 'those serving' but could mean 'those enduring'.
- v.1b: *house of the LORD*: ensure the word used does not just mean a common house.
- v.2a: *lift hands (towards your holy place)*: symbolizes prayer.
- v.2a: to the *Holy* [place]: in the direction of the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant (symbolizing God's presence) was kept.

¹ Also Ps 128:5. *Zion* (mountain in Jerusalem where Temple was built) symbolizes the presence of God. *Yahweh from Zion* is explaining *he* (in the verb). This slows down the text.

¹ *The one/ Yahweh making heaven and earth* is also used in Ps 121:2 and 124:8 (both psalms of Ascent) and other psalms (e.g., Ps 115:15). *Heaven and earth* is a formula, used often to indicate "everything".

¹ There is an accumulation of poetic features in v.3: change of verb form, two descriptions of *he* (from first verb), key term (*Zion*), formula (*heaven and earth*), rhythmic parallelism (3 words in each line) and semantic parallelism. This accumulation of poetic features underscores that this verse is the high point of the psalm.





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Step 8: Poetry Check

Compare and weigh the poetic features

Check if the Hebrew poetry is all accounted for in the translation through equivalent poetic features in the target language. Consider if the poetry of the translation can be improved, for example, look at the length of lines and the use of rhythm and ideophones.

Activity: Consider the poetic features of your translation. Do they reflect the purpose of the Hebrew poetic features, drawing attention to the correct parts? Experiment a bit with different word-orders and see what sounds the most beautiful, the most poetic.

POETIC CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

- There is a chiasm across the psalm (*bless, YHWH, house, holy place, YHWH bless*) with *Lift up your hands* in the centre, giving it some prominence.
- At the end of v.2, there are 2 imperative verbs in a row. These highlight the active role expected of the listener and move the text toward the climax in v.3.
- v.3: This verse is the climax, as indicated by an accumulation of poetic devices:
 - The form of the verb changes to a subjunctive (indicating here a prayer). This is important, after 4 imperative verbs.
 - There is a shift in subject (*YHWH* does the blessing).
 - The use of many key words, including *Creator, Zion, heaven and earth*.
 - The use of semantic parallelism and rhythmic parallelism.



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Step 9: Finalise

Preparing the final version of an authenticated translation

Prepare the final version which will serve as an authorized translation, that in turn will serve as the basis for performing the psalm in the community (audio, visual and written).

Activity: Re-check the spelling of your transcription, the punctuation, in-setting, and the layout of paragraphs to represent stanza segmentation.

Activity: Re-check the essential accuracy of the back translation (not worrying about spelling).

Activity: In AVTT, ensure that the final text of your psalm is uploaded with a back translation, check that the recordings from different steps are in the correct place, and do a final audio recording.

Activity: If possible, copy the final written text into Paratext.



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Phase 3: PERFORMANCE



Step 10: Perform

Performing the psalm in your community

Convert text into performance (dramatic reading/song/chant) to both perform and share this psalm, ensuring the main message comes through in content and style (the same emotional mood as the original poem in the Bible).

You now want to convert your written translation into a performance (song or chant) so that you can share it with your community. You need to make sure that the main message comes through in content and style (the same emotional mood as the original poem in the Bible). The genre - lament or praise or thanksgiving or other - should be similar to songs of the same genre in your culture.

Psalm-specific ideas:

- ...

Activity: Identify any relevant genres or styles or performance and put the psalm to music. You can put the whole psalm to music, word-for-word, or you can use creative licence to adapt the psalm for the performance.

Activity: Complete a transcript and back translation for the lyrics of any song created by the team to be checked before recording.

FINAL CHECKLIST

In the end of each psalm, there should ideally be four products:

1. Transcription: An authorized, authenticated, or officially written draft in AVTT and Paratext.
2. Dramatic Reading: A recording of a dramatic reading or recitation of the whole psalm, using the authenticated version word-for-word, recorded in AVTT.
3. Whole Psalm Performance: A recording of a performance of the whole psalm, using the entire authenticated version but with freedom to adapt it for authentic performance, including poetic and dramatic features beyond the authenticated version, recorded in AVTT.
4. Song or Hymn: A recording of a performance of part of the psalm including the main idea of the psalm, in the form of a song, hymn or chorus, with or without drama, with freedom to adapt it for authentic performance and to make it easy to sing and remember, recorded in AVTT. An improved version of the Step 4 composition could be used here.



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Appendix A: Guide Translations

Hebrew-mirror	Guide Translation
<p>Song of Going.up/Ascents</p> <p>1 Behold, bless (pl.) YHWH, all.servants.of YHWH the ones standing/serving in.the.house.of YHWH at.night</p> <p>2 Lift up pl your.hands (to) holy [place] and bless (pl.) YHWH.</p> <p>3 May.he.bless.you, YHWH from Zion, one.making heavens and.earth.</p>	<p>A song of ascents.</p> <p>1. Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, the ones who stand by night in the house of the LORD.</p> <p>2. Lift up your hands towards the holy place, and bless the LORD.</p> <p>1. May the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion.</p>





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Appendix B: Exegetical Layout

Psalm 134 is a simple praise psalm. No reason is given for the praise.

SUGGESTED HEADING

Stop, praise the Lord in the midst of your work

Coding for TAM Verbs and Hebrew features:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qatal perfective = blue • Yiqtol imperfective = red | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infinitive construct = purple • Wayyiqtol waw+imperfective = pink • Jussive/cohortative = light brown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperative = brown • Participle = green • Weqatal = navy |
|--|---|--|

<p>הִנֵּה בְּרַכּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל־עַבְדֵי יְהוָה</p>	1a	Behold ¹ , bless ² YHWH, all.servants.of YHWH ³
<p>הָעֹמְדִים בְּבַיִת־יְהוָה בַּלַּיְלֹת</p>	1b	the ones standing ⁴ /serving ⁵ in.the.house.of YHWH ⁶ at.night ⁷

¹ Attention-getting word (Listen! Behold! Come! Give attention/be quiet!)

² Bless in this context is a word implying worship. The verb occurs more than 400x in the Bible, and 4x in this psalm.

³ Vocative (which slows down the text and makes it personal). *Servants of Yahweh* could refer to priests, but in later psalms, refers to the community of faith generally.

⁴ standing (before YHWH): see Deut 10:8; 2 Chr 29:11.

⁵ Those standing usually means “those serving” but could mean “those enduring”.

⁶ House of Yahweh is one of four places mentioned in Ps 134, indicating a place where God is. The others are holy [place], Zion, and heavens. Make sure the word you use does not just mean a common house.

⁷ At night could refer to guard-duty or an evening ritual (See 1 Chr 9:33). Or it could be a metonym for “day and night” (= always). Also, could mean “time of trial/difficulty” as in Ps 6:6.





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שָׂאוּ יְדֵיכֶם קֹדֶשׁ	2a	Lift up pl your hands ⁸ (to) holy [place] ⁹
וּבְרַכּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה:	2b	and bless ¹⁰ (pl.) YHWH. ¹¹
יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן	3a	May he bless ¹² you (sg.), YHWH, from Zion, ¹³
עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:	3b	one making ¹⁴ heavens and earth. ^{15 16}

⁸ *Lifting hands (towards your holy place)*: symbolizes prayer. See Pss 28:2c and 63:2, 4b. Lifting hands to either the holy place (the sanctuary tent or the holy rooms in the temple; the majority view) or to the Holy One. Lifting hands "in the sanctuary" (NIV) is not in the Hebrew. Here it refers to the direction of the spreading of the hands. v.3 has "from Zion", the opposite direction. Other Psalm references of lifting hands are Ps 28:2, 63:5, 88:10, and then in Lam 3:41.

⁹ *Holy [place]* refers to the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant (symbolizing God's presence) was kept. The sense is *in direction of Holy [place]*.

¹⁰ *Bless the Lord* means "to acknowledge gratefully who he is" (DK), who he is as the Blessed One and the One who blesses, in contrast to Him blessing us, "giving us to be what we are not" (DK). This concept is key to the psalm.

¹¹ Chiasm across vv.1 and 2 (indicated by blue and grey shading in vv.1-2). Also chiasm in vv.1-2 with bless and holy place. At the end of v.2, there are 2 imperative verbs in a row. These highlight the active role expected of the listener, and move the text forward to the climax in v.3.

¹² The form of verb (subjunctive) indicates a prayer. This is important, after 4 imperative verbs. Also, there is a shift in subject (*Yahweh* does the blessing). See Num 6:24.

¹³ Also Ps 128:5. *Zion* (mountain in Jerusalem where Temple was built) symbolizes the presence of God. *Yahweh, from Zion* is explaining *he* (in the verb). This slows down the text.

¹⁴ Interpretation of "Maker of heaven and earth" is that He is the Creator, so He is more than able to bless you.

¹⁵ *The one/Yahweh making heaven and earth* is also used in Ps 121:2 and 124:8 (both psalms of Ascent) and other psalms (e.g., Ps 115:15). *Heaven and earth* is a formula, used often to indicate "everything".

¹⁶ There is an accumulation of poetic features in v.3: change of verb form, two descriptions of *he* (from first verb), key term (*Zion*), formula (*heaven and earth*), rhythmic parallelism (3 words in each line) and semantic parallelism. This accumulation of poetic features underlines that this verse is the high-point of the psalm.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B



Appendix C: Flower Garden

The repetitions and patterns below are placed upon the guide translation. Read the commentary at the end of this Appendix which explains insights into these patterns.

Colour Code:

- **Colours** = repetitions of words and associated concepts
- **Bold** = fronting in Hebrew; focus or special topics
- **Borders** = figures of speech, like metaphors and similes
- **[Behold]** = important discourse markers

Psalm 134

- 1a **[Behold]**, **ble**ss **YHWH**, all servants of **YHWH**
 1b the ones serving in the **house of YHWH**
 at night,
 2a Lift up your hands to **holy [place]**
 2b and **ble**ss **YHWH**.
 3a May **YHWH** **ble**ss you from **Zion**,
 3b One making heavens and earth.

