

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

CXXXIV: Call To Vigilant Service For The Lord

(Psalm 134:1-3)

I. Introduction

- A. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:58 directed that we believers should always abound in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in Him.
- B. Psalm 134:1-3 applied this directive to those divine assignments that often went unseen and possibly even unappreciated by many other believers, so we view the psalm for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Call To Vigilant Service For The Lord, Psalm 134:1-3.

- A. The introductory remarks are part of verse one, so the numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1092). We thus stay with the English Bible's numbering system.
- B. We then translate Psalm 134:1-3 (as follows):
 1. "A song of ascents. Behold! Bless Jahweh, all of you servants of Jahweh who stand [before a superior to serve him] in the house of Jahweh in the nights," Psalm 134:1.
 2. "Lift up your hands [toward] the sanctuary and bless Jahweh," Psalm 134:2.
 3. "May Jahweh bless you from Zion, [He Who] made heaven and earth," Psalm 134:3.
- C. We note significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 1. Since Israel's worshipers visited to the temple by day but slept in their family dwellings at night, those priests who ministered through the night watches served God at times that were not often appreciated by the crowds. Such ministries included (a) a late evening worship service involving musicians (1 Chronicles 9:33 ESV; 23:30 ESV; Alfred Edersheim, The Temple, 1975, p. 144), (b) servicing the candlestick's seven lamps in the Holy Place that were to be kept burning (Exodus 27:20-21 ESV), (c) servicing the fire on the altar of burnt offering that was to be kept burning (Leviticus 6:9 ESV) and (d) guarding the temple courts from unlawful trespassers as Biblically required of the Lord (Numbers 3:10).
 2. The psalmist called for such priests to bless the Lord, to lift up their hands in worship towards the Holiest of Holies where God dwelt above the mercy seat and to bless Him, Psalm 134:1-2. God would then bless them (v. 3), for their service was unto the Lord, not for the praise of men. The absence of appreciative crowds was not to hinder them from wholeheartedly functioning with due diligence throughout the night.
 3. The ministries of the priests who were to keep the fires on the candlestick and altar of burnt offering lit loom *huge* when we consider the **typology** of those furnishings: (a) the gold candlestick's 22 almond buds, the almond being the "awake" tree that starts to grow buds in the fall for the next spring, pictures the 22 Hebrew consonants that were written in Moses' era (J. Weingreen, Hebrew Grammar, 1969, p. 1, 6), so the lampstand typified God's (pure gold) living, perpetual inspiration (almond) of written Scripture (22 buds). (Umberto Cassuto, Exodus, p. 342-344; Ex. 25:31-37; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). (b) The altar of burnt offering, made of wood (Ex. 27:1a) to typify Christ's humanity that was put on the cross for our sin (Heb. 10:5-7; John 1:29; Isa. 53:3-5, 10b), was overlaid with brass, typifying God's judgment on our sin (Num. 16:36-40). The altar of burnt offering thus signified the cross where Christ became the object of God's wrath against man's sin as his substitutionary atonement to provide salvation for man, Rom. 3:21-26; 2 Cor. 5:21.
 4. Thus, the temple priests who worked through the night were responsible (a) to preserve the testimony of what later we know is (i) the **perpetual** divine inspiration of written Scripture and (ii) the **perpetual** efficaciousness of the cross of Christ, **essential** truths for believers at **ALL** times! (b) Then, the priests' guarding of the temple courts from errant trespassers even at night upheld the testimony of the **perpetual** holiness of God! (c) Finally, the musicians who participated in the late evening service as were all the other priests who ministered at their various posts in the temple precincts were to praise the Lord and thus be blessed of Him, for their duties were not to be performed for the praise of the crowds, but for the Lord!

Lesson: *Though they ministered throughout the night when the crowds of worshipers were absent, the priests on night duty in the temple had nevertheless IMPORTANT duties in typologically testifying of Scripture's living, PERPETUAL divine inspiration, the PERPETUAL efficaciousness of Christ's atonement and the PERPETUAL holiness of God and of worshipping God. Their vigilance was important, so the Lord would then bless them for it.*

Application: *May we vigilantly do our God-assigned duty, for it is pleasing to Him even if it is unheralded by men.*