

Psalm 134:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

Analysis

The call specifies worship's form: 'Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.' The command 'lift up your hands' describes physical posture in prayer and worship. Raised hands expressed dependence, surrender, appeal, and praise (Psalm 28:2; 63:4; 141:2; 143:6; Lamentations 2:19; 1 Timothy 2:8). The location 'in the sanctuary' (qodesh) means the holy place, the temple/tabernacle - the designated place for encountering God's presence. Though believers can pray anywhere, there's special significance to corporate worship in God's appointed place. The repetition 'bless the LORD' reinforces the command from verse 1 - this is worship's essence. The combination of physical posture (lifted hands), proper location (sanctuary), and verbal praise (blessing) engages whole person in worship. This verse models that worship involves body, setting, and words.

Historical Context

Lifted hands was common biblical worship posture (Exodus 17:11; 1 Kings 8:22, 38, 54; Ezra 9:5; Nehemiah 8:6; Psalm 28:2; 63:4; 134:2; 141:2). The sanctuary/temple was where God's presence dwelt and where proper worship occurred. While synagogue worship developed later, temple worship included specific rituals, locations, and postures. The physical dimension of worship engages human embodiment.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does the physical act of lifting hands contribute to worship?
2. How does worshiping 'in the sanctuary' differ from private devotion?
3. What is the relationship between inward attitude and outward posture in worship?
4. How do Christians understand 'sanctuary' after the temple's destruction?
5. What role does physical embodiment play in authentic worship?

Interlinear Text

שָׂאֵל שָׂאֵל יְדָכֶם קְדַשׁ בָּרְכֵי אֶת 1 בָּרְכֵי הָרָה:
Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless the LORD
H5375 H3027 H6944 H1288 H853 H3068

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 28:2 (Parallel theme): Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

1 Timothy 2:8 (Parallel theme): I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Psalms 141:2 (Parallel theme): Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Psalms 63:4 (Blessing): Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

Lamentations 2:19 (References Lord): Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.

Psalms 63:2 (Temple): To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

Lamentations 3:41 (Parallel theme): Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

Psalms 26:6 (References Lord): I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

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