

Psalms 100:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

Analysis

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. This verse describes the procession into Temple worship, moving from outer gates toward inner courts. "Enter...gates" (bo'u sh'arav, בָּאוּ שְׁעָרָיו) likely refers to the Temple gates through which worshipers passed from Jerusalem's streets into sacred space. "Courts" (chatzrotav, חֲצֵרָתָיו) were the open areas within Temple precincts where worshipers assembled.

"Thanksgiving" (todah, תּוֹדָה) and "praise" (t'hillah, תְּהִלָּה) are paired throughout Scripture but carry distinct nuances. Todah specifically denotes thanksgiving for concrete acts of deliverance or provision, while t'hillah praises God's character and inherent worthiness. Both belong to worship—gratitude for what God has done and adoration for who God is.

"Be thankful unto him" (hodu lo, הוֹדוּ לוֹ) uses the Hebrew yadah (יָדָה), meaning to praise, give thanks, or confess. The same root appears in "Judah" (praised) and in confessional contexts. True worship involves acknowledging God's goodness, both corporately and personally.

"Bless his name" (barchu sh'mo, בָּרְכוּ שְׁמוֹ) reverses the expected direction—humans blessing God rather than God blessing humans. While we cannot add to God's blessedness, we can acknowledge, declare, and celebrate it. "His name" represents God's revealed character and reputation. To bless His name is to honor, magnify, and proclaim His worth.

Historical Context

The Jerusalem Temple featured multiple courts and gates: the Court of the Gentiles (outermost), Court of Women, Court of Israel (Israelite men), and Court of Priests (innermost, where sacrifices occurred). Worshipers processed through these spaces, with access limited by gender, status, and ritual purity. Levitical choirs and musicians likely stationed at gates to lead processions.

Psalm 100 may have been sung during festal processions, particularly the Feast of Tabernacles when pilgrims from across Israel converged on Jerusalem. The psalm's structure—call to worship, theological foundation, entrance liturgy—suggests liturgical use in Temple services.

Thanksgiving offerings (todah) were voluntary sacrifices accompanying public testimony of God's deliverance (Leviticus 7:12-15). Unlike sin or guilt offerings (required for atonement), thanksgiving offerings celebrated answered prayer, healing, rescue, or provision. The worshiper would testify to God's goodness before the community while offering sacrifice.

After the Temple's destruction in 70 AD, synagogue worship replaced Temple ritual. Early Christians adapted Temple worship patterns—entrance songs, scriptural readings, prayers, and teaching—while recognizing Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice who fulfilled Temple symbolism. The church became God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), and believers became priests offering spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How can contemporary worship spaces and liturgies cultivate the progressive movement from thanksgiving to praise that this verse describes?
2. What is the relationship between gratitude for specific blessings (thanksgiving) and worship for God's character independent of circumstances (praise)?
3. What does it mean practically to 'bless God's name' when we can neither add to nor diminish His essential glory?

Interlinear Text

בְּאוֹ	שְׁעַר יוֹן	בְּתוֹךְ ה	חֲצֵרֹתַי	בְּתִהְלֵךְ ה
Enter	into his gates	with thanksgiving	and into his courts	with praise
H935	H8179	H8426	H2691	H8416
הוֹדוּ	ל	בְּרַכּוּ	שְׁמוֹ:	
be thankful	H0	unto him and bless	his name	
H3034		H1288	H8034	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 13:15 (Resurrection): By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

1 Chronicles 29:13 (Resurrection): Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

Psalms 66:13 (Parallel theme): I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,

Isaiah 35:10 (Parallel theme): And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Psalms 96:2 (Blessing): Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.

1 Chronicles 29:20 (Worship): And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the king.

Psalms 65:1 (Resurrection): Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

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