

Psalm 65:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

Analysis

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. This verse celebrates the privilege of divine election and access to God's presence. "Blessed" (ashrey, אָשָׁר) is the same word beginning Psalm 1—"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly." It indicates a state of happiness, well-being, and spiritual flourishing that comes from right relationship with God. The ultimate blessing is not material prosperity but proximity to God Himself.

"Whom thou choosest" (tivchar, תִּבְחַر) emphasizes divine initiative. The verb bachar (בָּחַר) means to choose, select, elect. Throughout Scripture, God chooses people not based on their merit but according to His sovereign purpose and grace (Deuteronomy 7:6-8, John 15:16, Ephesians 1:4-5). Israel was chosen not because of greatness but because of God's love. Individual believers are chosen before the foundation of the world. This divine choosing precedes and enables human response.

"And causest to approach unto thee" (uteqarev, וְתַקְרַב) continues the emphasis on divine action. The verb qarav (קָרָב) means to bring near, cause to approach. The Piel causative form indicates God actively brings the chosen person near to Himself. This is particularly significant given the holiness regulations in Israel's

worship. Ordinary Israelites couldn't enter the Holy Place; only priests could. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, and only once yearly. Yet God chooses and brings near those He elects, granting access that would otherwise be impossible. This anticipates Christ's work providing access to God's presence for all believers (Hebrews 10:19-22).

"That he may dwell in thy courts" (yishkon chatzereyka, יִשְׁכַּן חַצְרֵיכָה) describes ongoing habitation, not occasional visits. Shakan (שָׁכַן) means to settle, abide, dwell permanently. Chatzer (חַצֵּר) refers to the temple courts where worshipers gathered. The imagery evokes Psalm 84:10—"a day in thy courts is better than a thousand"—and Psalm 23:6—"I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." The blessed person doesn't merely attend worship services but lives in God's presence continuously.

"We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house" (nisbe'ah betuv beyteyka, נִשְׁבָּעָה בְּטוּב בֵּיתְךָ) shifts from singular (the man) to plural (we), indicating corporate worship. Saba (שָׁבָע) means to be filled, sated, satisfied completely. Tuv (טוֹב) means goodness, beauty, welfare, happiness. God's house doesn't merely contain goodness—it overflows with goodness to the point of complete satisfaction. "Thy holy temple" (qedosh heykhaleyka, קָדוֹשׁ הַיכָּלֶב) emphasizes the sacredness of God's dwelling. Despite its holiness that could consume sinners, the temple becomes place of satisfaction for those God brings near through His choosing and enabling grace.

Historical Context

The temple courts in Jerusalem had various levels of access based on ceremonial purity and status. The Court of the Gentiles was outermost, open to all. The Court of Women was for Jewish women and men. The Court of Israel was for Jewish men in a state of ritual purity. The Court of Priests was for priests ministering at the altar. Beyond this was the Holy Place (accessible only to priests) and the Most Holy Place (accessible only to the high priest on Yom Kippur). These gradations reflected holiness regulations under the old covenant, maintaining separation between holy God and sinful humanity.

Against this backdrop, Psalm 65:4's promise that God chooses and causes people to approach Him and dwell in His courts is radical. It anticipates a greater access than the old covenant provided. Prophetic literature promised a coming day when knowledge of the LORD would fill the earth (Isaiah 11:9), when God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28), when all nations would stream to the LORD's house (Isaiah 2:2-3). These prophecies envisioned unprecedented access to God.

Jesus fulfilled these promises, tearing the temple veil from top to bottom at His death (Matthew 27:51), symbolizing opened access to God's presence. Hebrews 10:19-22 declares believers now have boldness to enter the Most Holy Place through Jesus's blood, having hearts sprinkled clean and bodies washed with pure water. What the psalmist celebrated in limited temple-court access, Christians experience fully through Christ—chosen before the foundation of the world, brought near by Christ's blood, made to sit with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:4-6).

The promise of satisfaction in God's house echoes throughout Christian experience. Augustine famously prayed: "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee." This verse testifies that the human heart's deepest satisfaction is found not in created things but in the Creator, not in earthly temples but in divine presence, not in religious ritual but in relational reality with the living God.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding election (God choosing and causing to approach) affect your sense of security in your relationship with God?
2. What does it mean to 'dwell' in God's presence rather than merely visiting occasionally through sporadic prayer or worship?

3. How does satisfaction in 'the goodness of God's house' differ from satisfaction in earthly pleasures, possessions, or achievements?
4. In what ways does Christ fulfill the temple imagery, granting believers permanent access to God's presence?
5. How should the privilege of access to God's presence through Christ affect daily life, priorities, and worship?

Interlinear Text

אשר י	תָּבִּט ר	וְתַקְרִיב
Blessed	is the man whom thou choosest	and causest to approach
H835	H977	H7126
unto thee that he may dwell	in thy courts	we shall be satisfied with the goodness
H7931	H2691	H7646
בְּתַּךְ וּבְ	בְּצָצְרִים	בְּשָׁבְעָה
of thy house	even of thy holy	temple
H1004	H6918	H1964
בֵּית בָּ	קְדֻשָּׁה	הַיכְלָלָה

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 84:4 (Blessing): Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

Ephesians 1:4 (Holy): According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Psalms 23:6 (Good): Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Psalms 36:8 (Parallel theme): They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

Psalms 33:12 (Blessing): Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

Psalms 4:3 (Parallel theme): But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

Revelation 3:12 (Temple): Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Psalms 63:5 (Parallel theme): My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

Jeremiah 31:25 (Parallel theme): For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

Psalms 15:1 (Holy): LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?