

FPFWC Christian Development



Called to Praise God

October 2021

Fall Quarter

October 23, 2021

Lesson #4 – Praise God For His Presence

SCRIPTURE TEXT –Psalm 84

Key Verse - Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.

Selah.—Psalm 84:4

ICE BREAKERS –

1. Why is being in God’s presence so important?
2. How can we renew our desire to worship God and have a positive attitude toward going to church?
3. Why is it sometimes most important to attend church on those days when we don’t feel like going?

LESSON BACKGROUND

Psalm 84 is one of the 17 psalms that constitute Book III of the Psalter (see the Lesson Context of lesson 5 for explanation of the psalms’ arrangement in terms of five “books”). Expressions of praise characterize many of these psalms (see the visual for lesson 5). A total of 11 psalms are written “for the sons of Korah,” 4 of which are in Book III—namely, Psalms 84; 85; 87, and 88—according to their superscriptions (compare Lesson Context: Superscription in lesson 6). This could mean either that the songs were written *by* those descendants of Korah or that they were written *for* them to sing. In either case, the sons must have been musically gifted (2 Chronicles 20:19).

Regarding Korah himself, he was a descendant of Kohath, a son of Levi (Exodus 6:16–21). Korah, accompanied by members of the tribe of Reuben, had led a rebellion against the God-given authority of Moses and Aaron during the exodus. As a result, Korah was put to death along with 250 others (Numbers 16:1–2, 35).

Despite this blemish on the family line, Korah’s descendants (Numbers 26:58) became prominent in the temple worship that King David arranged before his death, toward the day his son Solomon would complete the building of the temple. The record of the service of Korah’s descendants as gatekeepers is found in 1 Chronicles 9:19; 26:1.

If Psalm 84 was written *for* rather than *by* the sons of Korah, one guess about its author is King David. This is based on the occurrence of the word translated “shield” in Psalm 84:9, 11 since this word occurs also in Psalms 3; 5; 144 and others—the superscriptions of which attribute them to David. This would date the psalm’s composition before David’s death in 970 BC. But other psalms that are not attributed to David also have that word, so the conclusion is not ironclad.

The occasion of the composition may have been that of a pilgrimage to the temple, perhaps for a new-year festival. This, though speculative, is as good a guess as any (see on Psalm 84:5, below).

Regarding the superscription's "To the chief Musician," see discussion in Lesson Context: Superscription in lesson 6. The meaning of the phrase "upon Gittith" is uncertain. The word *Gittith* is likely a musical term, perhaps a musical instrument or a reference to a certain type of celebratory melody (see also Psalms 8 and 81).

LESSON COMMENTARY

Psalm 84: The Threefold Aspects of True Blessedness

On the heading of this **Psalm of the sons of Korah**, see the comments on the headings of Pss 3–4; 42–43, and Introduction: Author. The three parts of this psalm comprise those three concurrent aspects (not progressive "steps") of the believer's walk with the Lord, as presented in terms of worship in Zion. Whereas Asaph's psalms mourned the destruction of the nation and the temple, this psalm anticipated the temple's restoration and the prospect of glorious worship there (Sailhamer, *NIV Compact Bible Commentary*, 334).

A. Dwelling in God's Presence (84:1–4)

84:1–4. The first aspect of true blessedness is proximity to the **LORD of hosts** whose presence on earth was centered in His **dwelling places**—the plural form referring to the temple compound and all its distinct sections (as in 43:3; 46:4). The psalmist's **soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the LORD** (v. 2; cf. 42:1), a poignant indication of the psalmist's focus on being in God's presence. All those who love God should yearn to **dwelling in God's house**, not simply as the priest who served there, but as the Lord's guest enjoying His presence (v. 4; cf. comments on 15:1; 23:6).

B. Living in God's Strength (84:5–7)

84:5–7. True blessing accrues to the person (Hb. *adam*, which, though usually translated **man**, is properly a designation for any human individual) who finds his **strength ... in God alone** (v. 5; cf. 1Sm 30:6). No matter what happens, even **Passing through the valley of Baca** ("weeping," v. 6), the saddest of times, those who trust in the Lord can transform those tears and **make** the valley of weeping into a **spring** of water. People such as this **go from strength to strength** (v. 7a). No matter where they go or what their circumstances may be, God's strength is always available to them; and to "recharge" this strength they appear regularly **before God in Zion** (v. 7b). This refers to the three pilgrimage festivals (Unleavened Bread, Weeks [Pentecost], and Tabernacles), when God commanded that every man in Israel "appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses" (Dt 16:16). Likewise, today we should seek God's presence through study of His Word as our resource of fellowship, refreshment, and strength.

C. Trusting in God's Grace (84:9–12)

84:9–10. After praising God (vv. 1–7), the psalm transitioned with a prayer that was likewise focused on the joy of fellowship with God in His presence. **For a day in Your courts is better than thousands outside** away from Him (v. 10).

84:11–12. The Hebrew in the phrase **the LORD gives** denotes an ongoing/unending action; **grace** indicates it is God’s consistent, never-ending supply to His people throughout the OT, both by protecting and providing for them, as well as by granting them **grace** (or “favor”) in the eyes of others (cf. Gn 39:21; Ex 3:21; 11:3; 12:36; Dn 1:9). The description of God as **a sun** reinforces the concept of God’s grace as the giver of life; being a **shield** indicates that He is the One who protects life (v. 11).

LESSON NUGGET – The Psalmist expressed his desire for God. This desire for God is one of the most basic drives within man, rivaling even our desire for air, water, and food. We are created with a vacuum that can only be filled by God. We may try to fill it with other things, but what we are really thirsty for is Him, and we won’t be satisfied until we come into fellowship with Him, allowing Him to satisfy the deepest need of our lives; His presence.

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary.