

In God's Presence, Pt. 1

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Last week, in the final portion of the series we were covering about *True Thanksgiving*, there was a portion that I was going to cover, but basically knew I didn't really have time to do that and ended up skipping over it. We're going to pick part of that back up today because it has much to do with what we're going to cover here.

This sermon is entitled *In God's Presence* with this being *Part 1*.

There is more that we need to cover here to go more in depth into some of this that you'll see as we go along. But to me, I'm excited about this particular series we're going through because we're going to cover a lot of different areas of things that tie into the overall title here *In God's Presence*, and hopefully, we come to appreciate, to grasp even more deeply how incredibly blessed we are as God's people.

Psalm 100. This is a part of what was addressed before. Again, the last series ties in very closely with what we're going to cover now, and we're going to look at this Psalm once again here, at least the first portion of it, then we're going to continue on with what is stated there that ties in with what we're covering.

Psalm 100:1—A psalm, basically the word for “melody” of **praise**, thanksgiving. The word “praise” in Hebrew really is the word for “thanksgiving. It’s about thanksgiving. That’s why, again, that portion here ties in so perfectly well with what we’re covering.

Then it says, **Make a joyful noise**. This word has to do with the word to “cry aloud.” So, it doesn’t just have to be in music or in a song; it has to do in other things as we’ll see as we go along here. But obviously, some of these things as far as the Levites were concerned and the use of psalms, so much of this was a matter of what they did sing.

We have songs in the song book, obviously, about some of this and I look forward to the day we can do this once again more so. But we live in a society, in an age right now where it’s expedient for us to be wise. It reminds me a little bit of going around Jericho and they were to keep silent. Then there comes a time in God’s time we can shout, glorify God, sing once again. Those times are coming again, but we have to wait in God’s time and understand that God guides and directs us and leads us to be wise in what we do and how we do it.

Sometimes people bristle up a little bit. I think of times past when we’ve done various things as far as changes were concerned, singing before services on the Sabbath. I remember when some of that was changed and whooo-eee, some in Toledo especially blew up over that. Some left eventually over portions of that, as being the reason for it. You think, what an incredible thing, and not understanding the reasons why, not understanding how God leads and guides and directs us. But another story.

Cry aloud unto the Eternal, all the earth. We do that when we pray. We cry out to God Almighty. Especially when you're going through something that's difficult, when you're going through something that's exceedingly stressful, when your life is on edge, whatever it might be that's come at you, and there are times when we go before God more intense, if you will, in our prayer, more involved in our prayer, truly just crying out to God and praying to Him about whatever it is we're addressing and helping us to get focused and so forth.

Serve the Eternal with gladness. That word, obviously, joy, happiness. That's what God desires to see in our life because of the way of life we live, to understand, yes, it's difficult, yes, there are battles to fight, but we're to strive for this.

Come before His presence with singing. This is the word for "a ringing cry." Again, it can be in singing, and generally, that's how praises are generally done, in this manner, of thanking Him. But it's a matter of being enthusiastic in approaching God. That's the way prayer should be. Because so much of this is about prayer because we come into God's presence; we should be coming into God's presence every day. What an awesome thing.

It's hard for us to really grasp how incredible that is, what has been given to us. We tend to take that for granted, we really do, and to really see and grasp the greatness of that, how mighty that is in our minds, it's really difficult, it truly is. The longer we're in the Church the more that can be difficult. Especially considering our past if we were in the protestant world and then called out of that, and then we come into God's Church and certain ideas and certain patterns still follow us.

So again here, God wants us indeed to come before His presence with that kind of spirit. One that cries out too to God, with excitement, with enthusiasm. We look forward to it, we want that, we know we need that, we know we need that strength and help in our lives day by day.

Going on, **verse 3—Know that the Eternal, He is God.** So again, we can take that for granted. You think, "Well, I know the Eternal, He is God."

He made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with thanksgiving. So, we tend to look at this in different ways, perhaps when we read through Psalms like this, and don't always put it to what we're doing now, how we're living our lives, what it means in our relationship day by day in the Church.

So, "Enter into His gates." What is that about? You're coming before His presence. Again, it's about coming before God's presence. We can't grasp heaven. We can't grasp where God is. God says that's where He abides. We don't understand what that is. We don't know where it is. We tend to think physically. We want to know, where is it? You can't know it. You can't understand it.

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving." So again, this admonition of the last series we went through. That's how God wants us to approach Him. If we grasp how great God is we're going to

have more of a mind of thanksgiving. That's what we just went through. "He is God. He made us." We need Him. "...and not we ourselves." We're not independent of God and yet that's the way the world is, as though we don't need God. But we do need God.

"We are His people. We're the sheep of His pasture." To put things into perspective and to thank God for it.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with, again, thanksgiving and praise unto Him. And bless His name. This has a lot in itself in what is said. "To bless His name." How do you bless God's name? It's about His name. It's the honor. It's realizing how blessed we are that we know Him, that we know who He is, Yahweh Elohim, that we know what Elohim is about. It's about the family. And so, it broadens it even more, and on and on it goes. Our Creator. Just like the Sabbath. Every Sabbath it should strike us, in one respect, seventh day. It's to remind us He is our Creator. Everything we have is because of Him.

For the Eternal is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth to all generations. I think of all the truth, the word of God that we have been given. It's hard for us to grasp it sometimes, it truly is.

So yes, we're able to come into God's presence whenever we choose. Any time. Any time of day. That is so awesome to truly understand that, and we do that in prayer. We should want this to be a priority in our lives each and every day, something we not take for granted.

Because it's too easy to do that in this human life, to take it for granted. That has to do with the value we place upon being able to come before God's presence. There is nothing more valuable that can be given to a human being, nothing more incredible that can be given to a human being.

Psalm 18:1. Again here, it says, **To the chief musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Eternal, who spoke to the Eternal...** And how did he speak to them? Prayer. So many of these are about the prayers of David and his petitions to God Almighty. **...who spoke to the Eternal the words of this song.** So, so much of what was written there in Psalms by David, of David, those things became songs. They made it to be in music and David put it into music and others put it into music.

...the words of this song in the day that the Eternal delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. So, we've read those stories not too long ago, how God delivered him over and over again and that strange kind of relationship where David knew what God had said to him, he was going to be king, and yet he wasn't presumptuous in that, and he honored who was still king. Then how Saul reacted to him, the jealousy that existed there. Quite an incredible story.

And so keeping that in mind, that this is what he's gone through, and then he says this, **I will love You, O Eternal, my strength.** That should be in our thinking all the time, God is our strength. We're weak. We're really, really weak as human beings. As much as food should teach

us that we need God. Fasting, how long can you fast? After a while you realize then of, more the importance of having a relationship with God. Because that's what's equated with that, the food we need that comes from God on a spiritual plane. We can't go very long without food and water, and that's the way it is with us spiritually. We should learn from that analogy.

"O Eternal, my strength." We shouldn't look to ourselves. We have to work, and we have to throw ourselves into something with all of our being, but to know that we are very lacking. We're very shallow in that respect. I marvel that God can work with us as human beings, but He does. He loves us and He has a great plan and He's going to give us so much more. That's why we can't comprehend it in what's in this thing in our head. We can only use so much of it.

The Eternal is my rock, my fortress. Do we think that way? Do we really think that way regularly day by day, "my strength, my rock"? Because if we see that we know that everything is built upon Him, on His word, His way of life. We believe that; we're thankful for that.

...my fortress/my stronghold. Protection. That's where we go, we go to God to keep our focus right, to keep our minds right.

...and my deliverer. Delivering us out of spiritual Egypt. God has incredible patience with us. I marvel at that at times. You just can't help. When we see ourselves, just have to marvel of the patience of God. Because we're kind of slow. We're slow to change; we're slow to transform. It doesn't happen overnight; it takes time. And God's very patient with that. Why? Because He loves what He's creating. He loves us. We're the beginning of that process.

...my God is my strength. So, you think about the things he went through, and this was his focus over and over again. This is what carried him through with the kind of mind, the kind of thinking that he had and what we need to have.

...my God is my strength, in whom I will trust, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. There are many of times that Israel trusted in themselves, when Judah trusted in themselves, when kings trusted in themselves and their armies, and countries trust in themselves and their power and their armies and what they can do. And "In God We Trust"? Far, far, far, far, far from that!

I will call upon, the word, again, "to cry out." **I will call upon the Eternal, who is to be praised.** So, he's telling this to God. What an incredible thing. "I'll call upon You, Eternal, who is to be praised because of all You have given, because of all You've revealed." Awesome.

...so shall I be saved from my enemies. David had an incredible confidence in that, knowing that God was going to work things out.

Verse 4—The sorrows of death encircled me. Many a time saw that coming in at him, his life threatened over and over and over again, knowing that he had enemies that wanted to destroy him. We look at this on a spiritual plane, and partially physical but understanding it's spiritual in the world because people don't like the fact that we're not observing this day today at the

end, toward the end of December, one that I hoped years and years ago would be the last one. And we're still here with the same old music that just about drives me nuts. Some of these things are catchy, they get into your mind and they're hard to keep out.

So, things come at us, things from this world and people who don't like it when they find out more about you and what you really believe. That's why it's very, very wise not to tell them too much. Don't do what you do normally when you first come into the Church where you dump the whole load on them. Because they didn't ask for the whole load. They might have asked one question and all of a sudden here you are telling them more. They might have asked something about why do you, why the seventh day, and before long you're talking about the Last Great Day too. We let them have it because we're excited. They're not.

The sorrows of death encompassed me/encircled me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. It's a reality. There are times that are fearful. There are times we can be afraid. It's a human trait. It's a human experience. That in itself should help us to draw closer to God. "He is my strength. He is my deliverer. He is my rock. He is my fortress. I'm not going to get myself out of any of this, He has to do it." There are those points in life where you realize this is in God's hands, whatever it might be that comes your way.

The sorrows of the grave encircle me, and the snares of death... So again here, "the sorrows of the grave," death, realizing how close things are and how, what it means for those who are with you, those that followed him and so forth at different times, and on it goes.

...and the snares of death were in front of me. So, realizing that just like traps, so many things out there to ensnare God's people, and it's horrible what ensnares people from time to time. But we all have to stand, we all have to determine that God is our strength, that God is to be praised, that our life is in His hands, and this is it, this is what it's all about.

In my distress I called upon the Eternal. Now, that's not the only time we do that, but he's showing a particular time having been delivered from Saul and reiterating some of the things he went through.

"In my distress." So, we do that more so, more intently, more earnestly at a time when things are coming at us, that we can actually grasp are too great, that are beyond our ability to resolve, and we cry out to God. That's what this is talking about. "I called upon." We do so in prayer.

I called upon the Eternal, and cried out unto God. He heard my voice. What an awesome thing! He knew that. He believed that. He believed that's the way it would be. That's why he called upon God and that's why he cried out to Him, for his voice to be heard. He believed that it would be because of that relationship that he'd developed over time.

Now, think how strong that is in us, or should be in us, that knowledge, that understanding, that confidence that God hears us any moment, any day, any time we want to come before His presence, the presence of Almighty God, before His very throne of power and might, glory.

He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him. So, things like this are written by inspiration. David was a prophet. He was known, noted to be by God, by scripture, to be a prophet, and there are things he wrote that so many are about Christ and the relationship between God the Father and Joshua. Then we have those things that are about us and our relationship with God, the Church, anyone that God calls, whom God calls.

He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him. Now, this word “before” literally means “presence.” It’s in the presence. More so than just coming before, it’s about being in the presence of God. That’s how it’s used in scripture. So, we’re going to see that over and over and over again. I feel like it drives the point home even more so to understand that, that it’s about God’s very presence, to come before Him. And what’s that mean? Well?

...even into His ears. He hears. He’s there. He’s only there; He wants us to do that. He desires that we do that. That’s how we’re able to grow. That’s how we’re able to keep on track. That’s how we’re able to receive more of His strength and His power, and His spirit into our life, is by that relationship. We cry out to God, “I know I need help. I need Your spirit every day.”

Psalm 68. So as we consider the incredible blessing of life that we have that so very, very few have ever been given or experienced in their lives - and again, that’s difficult for us to grasp - the more thoroughly we can understand, treasure, and deeply appreciate what it means that we are able to come into God’s presence whenever we want, whenever we choose.

Another Psalm of David. I’m just going to give a more accurate translation. Some of these translations are so hideous sometimes, they really are, because they don’t get it. They don’t know, they don’t understand so they try to translate words, but they don’t get it.

Psalm 68:1—When God arises His enemies are scattered. That’s the context here of what it’s addressing. **Those who hate Him flee at His presence.** So, it’s showing the power of Almighty God and what God’s purpose and plan is in time to accomplish. So, when God does arise to do whatever He’s going to do, and accomplish it, like in leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, tremendous power is going to be recognized, is going to be seen, is going to come into play.

Over and over again through history, the various things when God has arisen to intervene for His people, whether it be king David or other ones through time, this is what’s being discussed by David, in essence. “When God arises.” That’s the context; for a purpose that He’s going to do to intervene.

“His enemies are scattered. Those who hate Him flee at His presence.” So again, this word “before” or sometimes “in the face of” is how it’s given. But to me it just doesn’t give enough.

As smoke is driven away... In other words, as by the wind. So the wind comes, there’s smoke, and it’s driven away. That’s what it’s showing here. **...so they are driven away**, in essence, **before God.** Those who oppose God, those who don’t want God, those who seek to hurt God’s people. So again, whether it be kings or nations, Judah at times, or Israel at times and various things in history this is what it’s addressing.

As smoke is driven away, so they are driven away. When God arises to do what He's going to do this is going to happen. Nothing can stand in His way. Nothing can prevent Him.

As wax melts in the presence of fire... So, have a candle, whatever, tip it upside down, the more flame you get on the wax the more it starts dripping off. It says, **As wax melts in the presence of fire the wicked perish at the presence of God.** That's what it's about.

So, when it's God's time, when it's time for God's judgment everything comes under judgment in God's time. But when He arises to execute it it's going to happen. Nothing can withstand God. Even that being that thought that he could, still things that he can. So unsound.

But the righteous are glad, who rejoice in the presence of God. So, this reflects us, what we should be like, our life. "The righteous." Well, we're only righteous if we believe God and do what He's given us to believe, live by faith. That is what God accounts to us, attributes to us for righteousness. Because we're not and we know that; that's why we pray to God day by day.

We cry out to God at different times to be forgiven of different ideas, wrong thinking, wrong thoughts toward someone else, whatever it might be, of whatever relationship it might be there that something is said, or you know that's wrong, that we should love one another. And if that's not there and there is resentment, bitterness, anger, jealousy, envy, whatever it is, and we know those things are wrong, we have to go before God and pray that God forgive us of such a mind and help us to become transformed so that's not a part of our thinking.

"But the righteous are glad," because that's what it produces, joy, happiness. Living like that, the more we're able to live like that and know whenever we go before God it's forgiven, it's gone, awesome! Because of the kind of patience, the kind of love that He has for this creation that is so weak and feeble.

"But the righteous are glad, who rejoice in the presence of God." So again here, it goes together. Being of this mind, if we believe God, this is what we're going to be doing. We're going to be coming into His presence day by day, different times, whatever it might be, short, it doesn't matter, conversation, something, a plea that goes out to God about something.

Yes, and gladness to rejoice. Verse 4—Sing unto God, sing praises to His name. So again now, this word is the word "sing." There are times we're able to do that. Not as much as we used to as far as a congregation, but there are times, if you've gone through any of those songs, they can come into your mind and it's awesome.

Sing praises to His name. Extol, which means to lift up, to build up **Him** (God). It's the way we should be in our thinking, to grasp, to want to grasp even more so how incredibly great God is, to be in awe of our God and what He has planned for us.

So again here, **Extol Him who rides above the plains.** It's not on the clouds. Some of these translations, the words aren't even there in the Hebrew. It's the word "arabah." It's having to do with the plains and especially in the region where they were in that part of the world.

So, it's saying again here, **Extol Him who rides above the plains, by His name JAH**, Yahweh. It's a beginning. It's God. **Rejoice in His presence.** Over and over again, to rejoice in God's presence. So, we should marvel that we can do this any time we want, to be able to rejoice in that, to be thankful for that.

Verse 5—A father of the orphaned. In other words, we understand it those needing shelter, food, rescuing, love, nurture, and that's the world. That which the world doesn't have on a spiritual plane we are blessed to partake of.

...a judge, used more in the sense of "a defender" **of the widow.** We can understand that for those who have lost their husbands, but it's more than that. Those without support, livelihood, home, and so forth. If we understand this on a spiritual plane, what this means, our longing to see this world receive what it's going to receive, our longing to see the Millennium established, our longing to hopefully see some even from our past who have been scattered. But the longer we go the more difficult that becomes, it truly does, because of the human mind. Incredible.

So it says, again, **of the widow, is God in His holy habitation dwelling.** So again here, it shows God's focus, His desire, His desire so much above and beyond ours for those who suffer. It shouldn't be hard for us to look around the world. We should have that moment from time to time. I do sometimes when I see various things on the news, and you just cringe, and you look forward to the time that won't exist anymore. You look forward to the time that finally God's government is here because mankind is so oppressed, and they don't understand that. They don't really believe that, especially in the western world. To a point, maybe, but not on the plane they really are because they don't see it spiritually and how it affects them.

One translation next says, "**God sets the solitary in families.**" That's not what it says at all. **He brings out those who are bound into prosperity.** Those are the words. Incredible. "**He brings out those who are bound into prosperity.**" Spiritual. So, we can look at things physically, even read a Psalm physically, but it's about God's purpose and about God's plan for His creation. We can understand the things about Egypt, being brought out of bondage, but we see it in a deeper way on a spiritual plane of being brought out of spiritual bondage, the process that takes place there and how hard that is. People are in such incredible bondage.

That's why sometimes when we're called it takes a lot to get our attention. We have to be brought down; we have to be humbled by God. That's why this world has to be humbled like it's going to be to the extent it's going to be. Just like this nation has to be humbled to the degree it is before it'll even begin to listen, before it'll even take thought of listening to something that opposes what they're hold onto, like this day in their religious beliefs, understanding that he wasn't even born at this time of year. Understanding that it was about a mass and what all this means and all these things that have been so convoluted it makes you sick inside. It truly does. But to see people freed of all that? Awesome!

So we, again, are incredibly blessed to understand what we have. **He brings out those who are bound into prosperity.** We've been given a prosperity that candidly, we can't grasp. You can't grasp the depth of the prosperity that God has placed before you.

We try. We seek God, we seek to grow. As we grow we grasp more and more of that through time, we come to see more and more the depth of God's mercy, the depth of God's grace, the purpose of what God is doing, the things that lie ahead, whether it be the Millennium or the Great White Throne. Things that God has even revealed more fully to us in the last few years than ever before in the Church.

No one on earth has been given to understand what we understand right now. No one! No one in the scattered body, no one in any Church era before this. It's just because of where we are we are blessed to glean, to drink in of, to have, to be fed by what God is preparing the world to receive in such a great way. Exceedingly blessed. It's hard for us to understand that.

This particular section here when it talks about the solitary here in the words here, "God sets." It's a word that means "dwells; inhabits; remains; abides," which kind of reminds us then of God's spirit dwelling in us and our ability to dwell in God. Then this portion here where it says, "sets the solitary in families." Again, the Hebrew of this mean "only; only one," and then "families" is the word for "house."

God abides in only one house is what it's saying. So, people don't translate it that way because it doesn't make sense to them. What do you mean "dwells only in one house?" We know what that house is. It's the temple of God. We are blessed to be a part of it. We have understanding of that in a way that the world doesn't grasp, never has, of what God's purpose is to become a part of Elohim.

Then it goes on to say, **He brings out those who are bound into prosperity.** To know these things, to understand these things, that God desires to dwell in us. God wants us and desires that we choose to dwell in Him and His Son.

I want to read a couple places where this word is used, this thing of "in families" and how they've translated it.

Isaiah 2:2—It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Eternal's (families?) ...mountain of the Eternal's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And you think, well, the world doesn't grasp that anyway, but sometimes we just don't grasp what we do see, or we begin to take some of it for granted. To grasp what God says about establishing the Kingdom of God over all the governments of the earth, the hills and the mountains that exist today, governments small and large.

And so, this is talking about that "the mountain of the Eternal's house, shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto

it." We so look forward to that time. So again here, how that particular word is used up there, God and His holy dwelling, in His house, as it's talking about.

2 Chronicles 6:7—Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house. So simple for us. We see these. It's so clear when you see something like this and you see a mistranslation of how they don't begin to grasp and comprehend in a Psalm what it's about, what God is showing, what David was writing and so forth.

Now it was in the heart of David my father, so this is Solomon, to build a house for the name of the Eternal God of Israel. But the Eternal said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well that it was in your heart.

Notwithstanding, you shall not build the house; but your son which shall come forth out of your loins, he shall build the house for My name.

Now, I marvel at times, just like this here, and Solomon went through this, and he believed he fulfilled this. He believed this, what this was about, and it wasn't. It was far, far beyond this. But it was a type of something to be done physically that represented, pictured something that would take place spiritually. Again here, even as God progressively reveals things, I think how much more through time that God has revealed about His temple.

What an incredible thing that Herbert Armstrong... I mean, think about it. Not even known until then fully what this was all about. Herbert Armstrong began to teach in the 80's that it wasn't about a physical temple in Jerusalem being constructed but it's about a spiritual one that God is building. He began to talk about that more and more and began to build upon that before he died. Then it wasn't long after that, and basically, the Church forgot about that. They lost that.

Whenever they would read things about the temple or the house of God or whatever, it didn't have the same meaning. It wasn't about the Church; it didn't mean the Church. It was about God's throne; it was about God's presence and whatever. But to understand it as we do today, it's about God's people, it's about God's Church and what He's building. It starts with the Church; the Church in the Millennium gets bigger. Those who come through it, those who live through it, those who choose it become part of Elohim in time.

"**Notwithstanding you shall not build a house. But My Son who comes forth out of your loins.**" Speaking of Joshua. It would come out of that lineage from David in time.

The Eternal therefore has performed His word that He has spoken. For I have been raised up in the place of David my father and set on the throne of Israel, as the Eternal promised. Well, it was a type, but that isn't what the promise was all about. That was just a small type of what was to be done later on. That's an awesome thing. ...**that the Eternal has promised, and have built the house for the name of the Eternal God.**

So again here, **Psalm 68:6—God dwells only**, in other words, as the only one **in the**, in other words, **His house**. That's what it's talking about. Clear back then at that point in time He was the only one. That's what it's addressing. There was no one else in His house. There was no one

else in Elohim yet. There was no one else in what He was going to build that these things are all about that we just read about, one who would come from David's loins and a house that he would be building, His Son Joshua would build, in essence. He would be the cornerstone, Christ would be. Awesome!

And we know these things. We live by these things. And again, it's so easy to take the knowledge we have for granted and not realize how richly blessed we are. Who understands? Who knows these things? Does anyone in the scattered Church know what this is about? Sadly, no, not a one; not a single one.

God dwells “only,” as the only one, as it should be, in the house, His house, bringing those out who are in bondage. It's not just about Israel coming out of Egypt. We understand that. It's about everyone. The world is in bondage and God is the one who has to draw us out of it. He is the one that has to begin the process, and it can't begin until He does it.

But the rebellious dwell in, or as the word is “settle down in” **scorched land**. What a horrifying thing. When I read this all I can see are all those that I have known since I came into the Church who have left. Many more than who ever stayed, obviously. Because they rebel against God. To leave God, to leave God's Sabbath, to leave God's Holy Days? Some say, “Well, I didn't leave the Sabbath. We still have the Holy Days.” It's sad. Go off on a tangent and do something else?

It's boggled my mind how some, even once their minds can become convinced and know that Joshua didn't come into existence until born of Mary, and then to leave that and go back to being with groups who believe otherwise? How can you be conflicted in your mind and do something like that?

Well, people can go all the way back to Christmas as well. I wasn't going to use that word today, but I did. But people do who have been a part of God's Church. Mind-boggling! Because they lose the strength, the only strength that can deliver them and keep them in that delivered state, leave God's presence.

When they leave His presence and they're no longer able to just go before His throne and be heard by the Great God of the universe, they no longer have that, instead, they're cut off from that. Because sin cuts us off from being able to do that. He won't hear us then. He won't help us. He won't give us the strength we need. The truth that we had at one time, we might hold on to certain physical knowledge, or knowledge we see on a physical plane, but it doesn't have life in it anymore. It doesn't have God's spirit anymore. It's gone.

But the rebellious dwell in/settle down in scorched land. They don't even know it. What a horrible thing. Interesting, the word, it's the word really for “dry,” dry land. If we understand what that means on a spiritual plane, it's without water. Land without water. An individual without the water of life, an individual without God's spirit, separated from that life, separated from the spirit of life.

So it goes on to say, **O God, when You went forth in the presence of Your people...** Different times that God has been in the presence of His people, one way or another to have a relationship, whether it be with the physical nation of people and He was there, but the presence we have is far, far, far beyond that. That was all based around physical things. Ours is about a spiritual relationship with the Great God, a personal presence that we're able to have.

O God, when You went forth in the presence of Your people, when You walked through the wilderness. Selah. It means think about this, meditate upon this, what this is about, what God did long ago and what it means for us.

The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God. The things, the miraculous power that God exhibited on a physical plane with a physical minded people because they weren't being worked with spiritually. So they had other things that they saw because fear is a component of the human mind that can help a person walk right. Fear of getting caught. Fear of whatever it might be when something is being done that's wrong. When they see something of that kind of power and He says, "I am God," well, it helped a little bit to keep the nation together. But it didn't help a lot because they rebelled over and over and over again.

The earth shook, literally, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God. Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. So, a very physical presence. We're going to come back to that later on in this series. But a very physical presence of things that there is so much there to learn from that process of what took place then and to understand what we have been given.

Again, we're blessed beyond comprehension. We have to ask God to help us to grasp more, to see more, to appreciate more deeply what He's given to us already that others don't have, never have had on the earth.

I marvel at Moses and Joshua and different ones that came along and lived by what God gave to them to what they had at that point in time. 10 Commandments, the Levitical system, and the Levitical system eventually had to be done away with. That wasn't even meant to last. It was to go away. It was to be done away in time. We read about that recently. Incredible!

So, he had the law, the 10 Commandments, but to understand them spiritually, they didn't know those things yet. So much wasn't known until Christ came along. Then, finally, God began to give it through the disciples, the apostles to the Church to understand things on a spiritual plane, and we're at the height of it all. So blessed. But it's hard to see ourselves that way. Sometimes we don't think we amount to much of anything. We look at our lives and "Who am I?" "Who are we?" Look at our size. Look at what we are.

This is everything to God right now. This is everything. This is where God is building. This is where God is focused. It's not on the world except for the fact of bringing it to a head so that things can begin to be worked with. But as far as what's being worked with here, He's

constructing. He's finishing off the building, the first phase, the first incredible phase of a temple, His house. Right now there are two who dwell in it. Very soon there's going to be 144,000 plus two. Incredible to know these things, to understand such things.

There are some listening today, there are different ones that are being prepared for that. We can't comprehend that. How awesome is that? Again, we can't grasp it all. Only to a point. When it says we "see through a glass darkly," in other words, it's like it's all fogged over or old glass that used to have that kind of grey stuff on it and you're trying to look through it to see on the other side, what's there, it's kind of how we are. We see a little bit here and there.

I love Mr. Armstrong's example of the puzzle. You know, pieces here keep being put in and we see more and more. It just continues to get bigger and bigger, better, and better, more clearly seen. And to grasp what we've been given? You really can't, but you should strive to, to cry out to God for help in that, to appreciate it, to be thankful for it, and to treasure it.

Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. So again, like I said, we're so blessed beyond comprehension at our freedom, our ability, if you will, that's given to us to come into God's presence any time of day. God wants to hear us everyday.

We're going to go back into Psalms. We've looked at some already here. But even more focused on that use of this particular word about "God's presence," or being in His presence and focus on some of the different Psalms here, and we'll complete the sermon here today by doing that.

We're going to start in Psalm 88. So again here, there are Psalm after Psalm that has so much meaning in the context of what we're covering here in this particular series and we're going to focus on these now beginning with this one here, **Psalm 88:1–O Eternal, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night.** So, you can just tell by how it starts here. That's why sometimes I try to encourage people if you're going through something, you're having a difficult time, to even come into God's presence to pray about a matter because of maybe different things because there are times in our lives where we have so much going on or whatever, we don't even know what to say or how to say it. We just are stressed. There are times, or maybe we don't know fully what to focus on more fully because of the stress we've gone through in a particular day. Go to a Psalm.

So often when you go to a Psalm, when you start through it and you see what's being said, so often you can see things that apply to you that you can begin then to pray to God about. Gradually it can help you to begin to get back in focus, the kind of focus we need to have. So, there are times in our life where we have those kinds of things happen.

O Eternal, God of my salvation. So again here, crying out as he says, day and night, you can tell this is a matter of a time that is intent, if you will, intense in his thinking. And it goes on to say, **Let my prayer come**, again, not the word "before" but **into Your presence**. Isn't that our desire? Wouldn't that be everyone's desire who ever wanted to have a relationship with God, who wanted to live right, who wanted favor from God Almighty, is to know that they're able to

come into His presence when they do pray? Because you look through time and they prayed. They prayed to God Almighty.

This is an occasion like this when you go through the Psalms, and it talks about prayer. Prayer is so much a part of our life. It's about that opportunity, that time that we can spend with God Almighty in building a relationship, if you will, and sharing with Him. Everything is to be shared with God. God knows us inside out. Nothing is hidden from Him. The best thing to do is to be totally truthful and open and honest because you're not going to hide one thought from Him. Nothing. Nothing that's been done, nothing that's been thought. God knows it and He's there to help. He wants to help.

But we have to ask for it. What an incredible thing. He wants us to do this to learn, so He can teach us, so He can mold and fashion us, to give us the strength we need to address it successfully.

Let my prayer come into Your presence. Incline Your ear to my cry. So again, a desire especially when we're going through something and we want Him even the more so to hear us, to help us, to intervene. That's generally what it is the more intense it might be. Oftentimes, it's because we need help and we need help, we want it now, we need relief, we need help to give us peace, to give us a focus, to give us some edge of something to see to deal with whatever it is we're dealing with, and so we cry out to God at times even more so in life. That's the way it should be, obviously. But again, to understand that we can do this, and that God wants us to do this, to come into His presence and you can do that. We can't take that for granted. We truly can't.

Let my prayer come into Your presence, incline Your ear unto my cry, for my life is full of troubles. How often have you been able to say that one? We get bombarded at times, we truly do. **My life is full of troubles and my life draws near to the grave.** Life is short; it doesn't last long. Incredible to understand that process of life. Eventually, it's over in this physical life.

Psalm 95:1—Come, let us sing. Again, not this specific word in this case for sing, but one that is about giving out a ringing cry or even a great rejoicing together at times, whatever it might be. **Come and let us cry out in loud voice and sound before God.** So, there are different occasions where that might be the case. This is, basically, when used at this particular word here, as in "triumph," if you will, when we grasp what God has given us there is that which is a matter of being filled with that kind of thought, that sense.

...to the rock of our salvation. God gives us victory; God gives us help. So, there are times, too, not to forget that though we need God at different times in our life to address various hardships, difficulties, and wanting His intervention, when we've had it, when we've had God's intervention and help in our life we need to remember to be thankful to Him. Whatever it might be, if you're going through a battle and that we're able to conquer it, whatever that battle might be, a time to remember being thankful to God.

So again, another means of triumph before God, that God has given us the ability to conquer whatever it might be to conquer. How many things have you dealt with in your life that at times you come to a point where something has been conquered and you see God's help in your life? Man, what an incredible thing to share that with God, to remember to share that with God, to be ever so thankful that He gave the ability, the power to see, to do or to work things out around us that we didn't even have part in, but God worked it out.

Come into His presence with thanksgiving. So, always this part. So there are different kinds of prayers we have in our life in a relationship with God. Times we need God, times we want God - we should always want Him. We should always want that strength and that power, His spirit to deal with matters day by day. Because without it we're on our own, and we want to be able to keep focused and to think in the right ways about everything, about others, especially, because most things are about relationships.

"Come into His presence with thanksgiving." Always. Always. Always. That helps you to become focused. That helps you to magnify God even more because you know where it's coming from. It builds that relationship, the bond that needs to be there. Because that has to be there.

Come into His presence with thanksgiving and raise voices aloud to Him in song. So, at times we're to do that, can do that.

For the Eternal is the great God, and the great King. I remember going through, I think it was at a Feast of Tabernacles, because there are things that people have thought about, considered in speaking of Christ being the King of kings and so forth but have failed to recognize that God Almighty first and foremost is the King. Awesome. The Lord, the Lord of All, King of all, but He's given those kinds of titles, if you will, and responsibilities that go with that to His Son. But it comes from God first.

But I remember within the Church that it was not recognized in that manner as it should have been, to the degree it should have been. God first. Not Christ, God Almighty. So, we in our minds in God's Church must keep that right and have that right. Some of that is a spin off from the protestant world, sadly, that crept into part of the Church as well at times.

For the Eternal is the great God, and the great King above all gods. What do you mean "all gods?" It's the word "Elohim." Now, it can be used in different ways, talking about God's and different religions and ideas, families, god families, because so many were based upon that in times past in mythology and so forth and false gods.

But God in this particular verse, just like this one here, makes it very clear that He is the **King above all Elohim**. In other words, God Almighty, He is the King, and He's giving one who's going to be the King of kings on the earth because there are going to be other kings on the earth at that time. Not rulers in a physical sense who are elected, who are appointed, who might have some lineage, but those that God makes kings. But Christ will be the King of all that is there. Awesome.

Verse 4—In His hand are the deep places of the earth. The heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it. Now, you think about going through time and things that people dealt with in different periods of time, there wasn't a whole lot of knowledge out there in the sense of what we would consider today, people going to school, learning mathematics, going to school, learning to write, learning to read, going through various things of that nature that people were able to do commonly so, like we do in this country because of the school systems we have.

They didn't have those things hundreds and hundreds and thousands of years. People didn't have that kind of thing where they could send their children off to school to learn mathematics, science. What did they have in science? Not a whole lot. And again, toward the end of time in the sense of 6,000 years, look how much we have just in the physical things alone. Mathematics, the sciences, everything else as far as education that's out there, and it's mind-boggling.

But they didn't know much. They couldn't see much. So, they were able to focus on various things in a physical world that to them were vast. Go up to the edge of an ocean and where does it end? Can't see the other side. Where is the land? People get out there in a boat and they had to learn through time where various things were around the Mediterranean and the like, and after that not a whole lot of knowledge. Some of the funny ideas that people had, how to navigate and so forth. Again, kind of primitive knowledge compared to what we have today. Now you have GPS.

But in similar manner that things have not been given to mankind through time, haven't had access to, haven't known, so it is with God. But the closer we get to the end the more that has been given. We are so blessed.

In His hand are the deep places of the earth. The heights of the hills, things that people don't understand, have never seen, never conquered, never been able to be there, **are His also. The sea is His, for He made it.** They were in awe at a much smaller area around them because that's all they had to see. And yet they were in awe of those things, and they spoke of those things as recorded here.

David, when he looked into the sky and saw a few hundred, several hundred stars up there, and made the comment that he marveled. Today we realize there's a whole lot beyond that that we can't even begin to see by the naked eye from earth. Then you have telescopes that can go through and get through the light, and then you get some on the other side, the Hubble that goes out there without any obscurity whatsoever and can peer farther out there. The more we know the less we know, the more we realize we don't know. But this is what they had to know.

How much in awe are we of all we know? Not just in the physical world, but that should be a large part of it. The universe, and God put it there. Watching something on TV the other day here about someone marvelling about 13.5 billion years out there a star and the light has just now gotten to the earth. Some parts of the universe took 13.5 billion years to get here. Can't

comprehend that, how awesome God is. But as much as we can try to do that on a physical plane, which is good for us, we should strive to do that on a spiritual plane. Because they're tied together.

It's about God. It's about the power and the might of Almighty God. And what is the most important? That's why David said what he did about what he was able to see, that God was concerned with this little dot. Now we know that it was a whole lot smaller than what he realized because it was big to him. I mean, the earth was. But we realize it's pretty puny compared to what we know that's out there. Awesome! It's a small planet compared to things we see out there. The sun we have is puny compared to so many that are out there!

"In His hands are the deep places of the earth." I think the deep places of the universe. How vast, how great, how all powerful is God Almighty to have created what He did. Pshew! It's all there for a purpose - for His Family.

That's why I think of sometimes when people used to read Revelation, even within the Church when it talks about the earth and the firmament and everything that's going to melt, and it's like coming a time when it's just all going to disappear, it's just all going to melt and be gone. It's like everything that's out there is just going to melt away and not be there anymore.

No, it's been put there to be there for a long, long, loooong time. For a purpose, and we don't even know what it is yet. God has things planned out into thousands, into millions, into billions of years for His Family. That's how great Almighty God is. We'll ever be learning and ever be growing and becoming more in awe.

The height of the hills are His also. And the sea is His, for He made it. And His hands formed and fashioned the earth. Come and let us bow down in worship, to praise in other words, to give honor, in the presence of the Eternal our Maker, our Creator. How could we do otherwise? This should be our thinking in different prayers we have. Just a prayer like that is awesome in itself. Matter of fact, good exercise just to go through that and think upon these things and pray to God about them, about your mind toward God. It'll help. It'll strengthen.

Because one thing about God is there's power in His words, and when they're in our minds and we think about them and they become ours because we accept them, because we believe them, there is power in that.

Psalm 105:1—Give thanks to the Eternal. Over and over and over again, words about praise that really should be thanksgiving in scripture in the Old Testament. And this, it's just a constant theme. That's why we went through that particular series, and now going through this, that it's a matter of grasping all these things in a greater way, becoming more deeply thankful, if you will, for what God has placed before us.

That's a part that helps us to be happier in life and to rejoice more in the plan that God has for us. Truly does. To where the hardships of this earth and of this life are put into proper perspective. They're not a big deal. Yeah, it can be tough at times. That's life. To learn the

better purpose of what life is to be, and without doing that we can't grasp it; we'll never be able to have it. We have to go through the process of choice, transformation, choice for God. Because the vast majority who have ever been called have rebelled against God Almighty, have gone against what God has shown them. And yet He's given them everything...everything! Everything to make it possible to be inheritors of the entirety of the universe along with Joshua. That's what He says. It's all out there for God's Family, for whatever He has purposed to be a part in doing that we don't know about yet, but it's there.

Give thanks to the Eternal, proclaim His name. Make His deeds known among the people. Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him. Think about (the word "meditate" if you will) all His wondrous works. It's good for us spiritually. Glory in His holy name. Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Eternal.

That's the way it should be. It's a matter of rejoicing if we seek God, if we want God there is a joy in that, a fullness of life that can't come any other way. People try to go out and have joy in this world. That's fine to a point, but that's not where it's going to fully come from that lasts. It's temporary joy.

I love roller coasters. You know what? It doesn't last long. And I haven't been on one in a long time because I hate the lines more than I love the ride. Anyway, that's the way life is. You get on, you have the ride, it's over. It didn't last very long. All things physical are exactly like that.

We're going to have a potluck. Doesn't last long. But it's exciting for that moment in time that we can all be together on a day where you just can't go out afterwards to some place. But we can go here and enjoy something that's awesome. But it's gone.

So, every little thing in life, whatever you might plan, whatever it is you desire to do, as long as they're within the law, they're fine choices to make. Maybe golf. If you like to golf. I golfed for a little while, for a few years. One friend gave me a book, "How to Break 120." I wasn't good at it so in time I kind of gave it up. It was only temporary, but when I was out there, you know, it's more about God's creation, it really is. It's calm. It's peaceful. Unless you're thinking you're better than what you are. That's when you see people swing things into the pond, clubs and so forth. Expect more from themselves than reality.

But the whole point being is that everything is just a little while. A little while here, a little while there. But this physical life is not what it's about. But people hold on to that and that's what they want. A certain moment in time they think will give them a happiness and a rejoicing, so they leave God's Church to get it. That's what they really believe.

They think there is something that will give them something better than what they have in God's Church somewhere else. To use their money somewhere else and to rebel against God. To have a relationship with someone else that they think is going to bring them a happiness. Then after a while without God in the picture, and without God working, probably, most likely with the other person... Well, that's not going to be happening.

It's not going to be a happy life. There is going to be a lot of drama—drama, drama, drama at some point—and it didn't give you a lot of happiness for very long. Maybe six months, maybe a year, and all of a sudden, there are the drudgeries of family, and maybe, especially, if you had a whole bunch of others that come into that family.

Only in God's Church can you put things in their proper perspective in families, in life, to live for the same objectives, as a whole. But even in that we're temporary in this life. Your job, it's temporary. It's a means to an end. Everything you buy, everything that you own is temporary. And yet sometimes we just put too much emphasis on it in our thinking, in our mind, and it becomes greater than something that God has given to us. And frankly, everything that we have God has given to us.

So, that's quite a dilemma for me sometimes—well, it's not—thinking about people's choices and why today we are so small. We have gone through hundreds and hundreds and a few thousand people in the Church of God—PKG. Why is that? Because it's been that way for 2,000 years. Unless God kept bringing people in it would get smaller. So you can always know what God is doing by whether someone is coming in or not. Because God has to do that. God does the calling, we don't. We can put the information out there, and no one's coming.

That's why you knew in 2008 God was doing something. 2009, 2006, 2007, it was a powerful time and God gave us a boost. Because otherwise, you know what would have been? Well, a couple things. Those who came through the Apostasy only would be continuing on, and we've been tending to get a whole lot older since that happened. And quite a few have died, and more will die, so it just gets smaller and smaller in that respect and be more difficult.

But God gave us a boost and gave us others to be a part of fellowship that gave us encouragement and a boost in that. And others, candidly, who very potentially have an ability to become a part of the first resurrection. Incredible!

So, it's talking about **Glory in His holy name**. Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Eternal. But I want to mention a little bit more about this phrase "glory in His holy name" because it's unique in what is said about the word "glory" in that respect, how it's used.

Some sources see this as meaning "to boast or to have pride in something; to boast in; to have pride in," and so, to have pride in His holy name, well, we realize, well, what do you mean by pride? What do you mean boast in? Do we boast to others? What does that mean? How is that used?

So, it really has to do more about how we respond to focusing on thinking more upon God, and it is more of about our state of being able to grasp God and what we have been given. To come into His presence, all the truth that God has given to us, about our seeing what it means, again, to be in the presence of God, to understand that even more deeply. That we have a mind of great gratification and exaltation, if you will, but we recognize that comes from God. But we recognize we're lifted up by it too.

We are exalted by God living in us, dwelling in us. That isn't something it's a matter of pride, it's not a matter of glorying in ourselves, it's a matter of gratitude, thankfulness, thanking God that He will dwell in us. I mean, how profound is that, to know that we not only come into God's presence, but He gives us of His holy spirit. He's given us the impregnation of His spirit and He desires to dwell in us through a measure of His holy spirit. Absolutely mind-boggling.

So again here, to understand what this means, sometimes words don't capture everything when they're translated. This here is more. It's more about exactly what we've been talking about, to know how blessed we are, that we're lifted up by God's presence. Not only coming into His presence but by His presence, that He wants to dwell in us. Exceedingly blessed.

Verse 4—Seek the Eternal, and His strength. We should do that every day. We do that through prayer, seeking God, seeking the Eternal through prayer, and His strength because we want that help, we know we need it. Without it, what are we?

To seek His face, as it says here, **seek His**, again, that word "face" it's the same word. **Seek His presence evermore.** So, the stress is even put on it, the emphasis, if you will, that this is something we should do day-by-day-by-day. Again, to "seek His presence evermore."

Remember His marvellous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth.

Part 2 next Sabbath.