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August 2021 “WORSHIP 6: PRAISE TO ENTER IN”

Dear Friends,

Many years ago, we used to sing a praise song in church that had the following lyrics:

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart
I will enter His courts with praise
I will say “This is the day that the Lord has made”
I will rejoice for He has made me glad
(Chorus)
He has made me glad, He has made me glad
I will rejoice for He has made me glad

That song was based on the 100th Psalm, especially verse four:

***¹Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
²Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.
³Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
⁴Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
⁵For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.***

This Psalm – and the song based on it – is all about an attitude of heart, a decision on the part of the Believer. I must choose to make a joyful noise. I must choose gladness. I must choose to come before Him with singing. I must choose to enter before Him with thanksgiving and praise. I must choose to be thankful and bless His name. Nothing in this Psalm indicates that the Holy Spirit will move on a person to make this happen. It is totally and completely up to me. Doing so is much easier when I remember that my born-again spirit is created in God’s righteousness and true holiness, that my salvation is of His grace and not my works, and that He is good, His mercy and truth are everlasting.

Some might say, “Yes, but Brother Martin, that’s from the Old Testament, and we are a New Testament generation. So those instructions aren’t really applicable today” That excuse is, as the Apostle Paul might put it, all dung. There is *nothing* in Psalm 100 that is associated with the Old Testament Law; it is all about how much we value our relationship with Father God. The truth is, Psalm 100 is a very strong “hint” at what God expects when we approach Him.

As a parent, how would you respond if your children came to you with a sour, grumpy expression on their face, fussing, complaining, blaming you for their problems, and expecting you to give them whatever they ask? Conversely, what if they approach you with a smile, a hug, and love in their voice? When Christians show up at church with a sour attitude, prayers requests that are nothing more than complaints, and a willingness to testify more about their problems

than about God's goodness, there is no way they are going to realize when God's presence shows up in the service.

Read again Psalm 100:4,

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

Many Christians may not realize God prophetically gave this instruction nearly 450 years earlier.

In Exodus chapter 14, The Israelites had been released by Pharaoh to leave Egypt. However, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent the Egyptian army after them. God miraculously parted the Red Sea and the Israelites walked across on dry land. When the Egyptian forces began chasing after them across the dry seabed, Moses stretched forth his hand and the waters returned, drowning all the Egyptian soldiers. When the Israelites saw what happened, they broke out in a praise celebration of immeasurable jubilee, a summary of what they sang and shouted is recorded in Exodus 15:1-21.

But three days later they had completely forgotten how the hand of God had delivered them and they began fussing, complaining and, as the Bible puts it, murmuring.

²²So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. ²³And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? ²⁵And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, ²⁶And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee. ²⁷And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters. (Exodus 15:22-27)

Three days after witnessing a world-changing miracle of God, they failed to believe that He can not only part water, but He can also deliver water. They were essentially accusing God of failing them. Again, God produced a miracle, this time to change the waters of Marah from bitter to sweet. But before He did, He reminded them to diligently harken to His voice, give ear to His commandments, keep all His statutes, and do that which is right in His sight. As you will soon understand, these instructions are very critical to keep in mind.

THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

After delivering them from Egypt, God began giving Moses instructions on establishing order within the Israelite nation.

¹And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they

were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ²Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; ³From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies. ⁴And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers. ⁵And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur. ⁶Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. ⁷Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab. ⁸Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar. ⁹Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon. ¹⁰Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud: of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. ¹¹Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni. ¹²Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. ¹³Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran. ¹⁴Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel. ¹⁵Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan. ¹⁶These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel. (Numbers 1:1-16)

But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses. (Numbers 2:33)

⁵And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ⁶Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. ⁷And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. ⁸And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. ⁹And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. (Numbers 3:5-9)

THE TABERNACLE

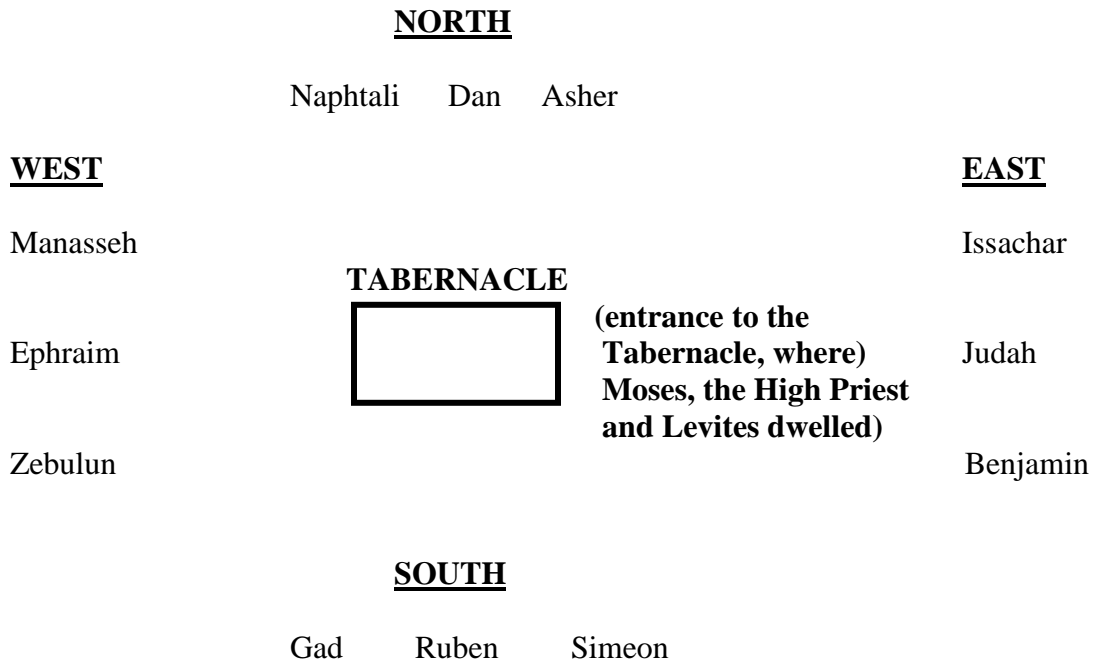
Exodus chapters 35-40 detail the construction of the Tabernacle. Very briefly, here was its layout:

- 1) The entrance to the Tabernacle, which led to the courtyard.
- 2) Past the entrance was the Bronze (Brazen) Altar. This is where the animals were sacrificed and burned.
- 3) Past the Bronze Altar was the Bronze Laver. Filled with water, this is where the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the Holy Place.
- 4) Past the Bronze Laver was the Holy Place, which resembled a rectangular tent.
- 5) Just inside the Holy Place was the Table of Showbread on the right and the Candlestick on the left. The Table of Showbread had 12 loaves of specially prepared bread representing the tribes of Israel. The Candlestick, also called the Golden Lampstand and the Menorah, was the only light in the Holy Place and was never to go out.
- 6) Past the Table of Showbread and the Candlestick was the Altar of Incense, which stood before the curtain of the Holy of Holies. Every day, at morning and again at evening, specially formulated incense was burned on this altar.
- 7) Past the Altar of Incense was the Holy of Holies, separated from the rest of the Holy Place by a very thick curtain, called a veil. This is where the Ark of the Covenant was

kept and where the High Priest entered once each year to offer the blood of the animal sacrifice for the sins of the Jewish nation.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE JEWISH TRIBES

Numbers chapter two details the manner in which the tribes of Israel were to encamp around the Tabernacle. Below is a simple diagram of that arrangement.



The name “Judah” means “praised.” When he was born, his mother Leah said, “Now I will praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah...” (Genesis 29:35). Judah is commonly referred to as “the tribe of praise.” The only entrance to the Tabernacle was on its east side. It was impossible for anyone to get to the Tabernacle or the High Priest without first going through the tribe of Judah, the tribe of praise. Read again Psalm 100:4 and note how descriptive it is of this arrangement,

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

Now consider again the instructions God gave the Israelites in Exodus chapter 15,

...If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes...

God has given us a graphic illustration of how we are to approach our High Priest, Jesus, and how we are to enter into His presence: we are to “pass through the tribe of praise.” In other words, He expects us to come before Him with praise and worship. In the tribal arrangement around the Tabernacle, the people would pass through the Tribe of Praise, bringing their sacrifice to the priest. Christians today are to bring a sacrifice to our High Priest, but it is not an animal we are to offer:

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. (Hebrews 13:15)

Never in my life have I heard a Christian say, “Wow, what an incredible presence of God was in the service!” while holding on to a sour, complaining attitude and having refused to truly praise Him the entire time. But what I have heard are glorious testimonies of a beautiful experience with God in His presence from Christians who lay aside the weights of life, cast down the thoughts of despair, and enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise in their hearts and worship pouring from their lips.

The reality of a faithful, living, healing, blessing, loving God is ours at any time when we come before Him with unfettered worship and praise!

In His Grace,

Jim

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