

## **The Way of Psalm 119 - Entering the Presence of our Lord**

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Throughout God's word we find instruction for returning to His presence. There is the simplicity of D&C 93:1 and its **5 covenant** steps, along with the many *ascension* experiences of the Book of Mormon, like that of Lehi in the 6th verse of the book. In Psalm 119 King David used Jewish poetry (part of the ancient temple drama liturgy) for instruction on how to re-enter God's presence. It is unique among the Psalms in that it features **22** total stanzas, each with **8** verses. They mirror the **22** letters of the Hebrew alphabet, *Aleph* through *Tau* - a *timeline* from God's *creation* (Aleph-1) to His final *judgment* (Tau-22). The end result is to be "*blessed*" - entering the presence of God and being *renewed* there, as symbolized by the number **8**. Throughout this Psalm we see **8** terms repeatedly used to stress the importance of coming to Christ. It is accomplished by first entering into "**the way**," then adhering to God's **word** thereafter, also known as His **law, commandments, statutes, precepts, judgments, and testimonies**. There are **7** different terms used for being *in the way*, His way of *Grace*. All say the same thing in different nuanced ways, thus avoiding redundancy. The end result is to be "*blessed*," to enter the sacred presence or "*rest*" of the Lord. The **8** words of these **22** stanzas, tied to this *blessed* state, are:

1. The **Way** is the Lord's pattern for returning to His presence (Psalm 119:30)
2. The **Word** is a general term for God's revelation or instruction (Psalm 119:11)
3. The **Law** in the Bible includes the first 5 books of the Old Testament, *the Torah*, also known as the Pentateuch (Psalm 119:44). It also includes additional instruction in added scripture that bring us closer to God, including personal revelation from God and His angels.
4. His **Commandments** are authoritative guides (Psalm 119:166)
5. His **Statutes** are those enacted laws that are inscribed (Psalm 119:8)
6. His **Precepts** are injunctions or requirements (Psalm 119:69)
7. His **Judgments** are binding laws also known as judicial decisions (Psalm 119:7)
8. His **Testimonies** are *ordinances*, symbolic earthly rites that point to greater realized "sealings" in heaven (Psalm 119:2)

**Key Word**           The word "*blessed*" in this short paper means "*in the state of the gods*," or in the condition of the past, present, and future members of the Council in Heaven. In the ancient temple drama, of which the Psalms were the liturgy (now in in-correct order), kingship began with a foreordination, extended through this life, and continued thereafter forever. Christ was enthroned at the Temple of Bountiful in the New World in 3rd Nephi. After this ancient ceremony concluded, our Lord chose a new leader (king and priest) among the people to lead them upon His departure. He then gave a lecture to the people - the *Beattitudes*, each beginning with the word "*Blessed*." He said to Nephi, a king over his people, "And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: *Blessed* are thou Nephi, because of thy faith...And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher [king and priest] over thy brethren" (1 Nephi 2:19:22). Our Lord finalized this important ancient temple drama (at Tabernacles) in the New World by offering a great feast on the **8th** day. It was the Sacrament, the emblems of which He miraculously supplied Himself as the King of kings (see 3 Ne. 20). "The Stone [seer and prophet] which the builders rejected [in Jerusalem] is become the headstone of the corner" (the house of Israel, Psalm 118:8; Zech. 10:4). See Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend the Hill of the Lord*, Eborn Books, pps. 925-29.

**Key Numbers**       The number 5 in scripture is tied to *covenants* as part of God's *grace*. Both covenants and God's grace allow us to return to His presence.

The number 7 in scripture is tied to *spiritual perfection* over a 7-part *time period* and sequence of events that lead to this blessing.

The number 8 in scripture is tied to *rebirth* and *renewal* upon completion of this time and sequence, made possible because of God's Atonement and Resurrection.

The number 22 in scripture is tied to final *judgment at the end*, as symbolized in the 22nd letter of the Hebrew alphabet Tau. Its shape is that of *the scales of justice and mercy*.