

LESSON 9

OCTOBER 31, 2021

UNIT II. CALLED TO PRAISE GOD

“I JUST WANT TO CELEBRATE”

DEVOTIONAL READING: Ephesians 5:15-20

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Psalms 147–150

PRINT PASSAGES: Psalms 149:1-5; 150:1-6

KEY VERSE

Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. (Psalm 150:6a, KJV)

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Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. (Psalm 150:6a, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Compare the reasons for and the expressions of praising God in both Psalms 149 and 150.
- Be spiritually inspired by various types of praise music and hymns.
- Praise God using the Psalms.

KEY TERMS

Beautify (149:4)—Hebrew: *paar* (paw-ar’): to make beautiful; to glorify; “crowns” (NIV).

Everything (150:6)—Hebrew: *kol* (kole): the whole; all; “every thing” (KJV).

Firmament (150:1)—Hebrew: *raqia* (raw-kee’-ah): an extended surface, expanse; “mighty heavens” (NIV).

Humble (149:4)—Hebrew: *anav* (aw-nawv’): poor; afflicted; “meek” (KJV).

Joyful (149:2)—Hebrew: *gil* (gheel): full of pleasure and happiness; “glad” (NIV).

Praise (149:1)—Hebrew: *tehillah* (teh-hil-law’): an expression of honor, homage, or approval.

Sing (149:1)—Hebrew: *shir* (sheer): to make musical sounds with the mouth.

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher’s Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!”).
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People choose different ways to express their emotions. What are some of the ways in which expressions of victory and joy can be shared? Psalms 149 and 150 share great praise for who God is and the joy of praising Him with our whole being.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

It is often true that the same persons who are most reserved and withdrawn in worship are loud, free, and unrestrained in other settings. Ironically, they are usually the very people who look with disapproval upon those who celebrate God in worship with the same energy and passion they may

display at sporting events or other occasions. While there is certainly a time and place for every expression, God is actually more worthy of our joyous expressions of delight and praise than any other being on earth. How is it that we can be so generous and uninhibited in our excitement and affection for those who have done little or nothing for us, yet so sparing in our enthusiasm for the One who has given us everything?

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

Psalms 146–150 all begin and end with the command to “Praise the Lord” (Hallelujah)! In Jewish culture, these psalms have long been used in daily morning prayer and are sometimes referred to as the “daily hallel.” *Hallel* is a Hebrew word that means “praise.” The psalms in this section alternate between praises of God’s own people (see Psalms 146, 147, 149) and praises from creation as a whole (see 148, 150). Some scholars believe that the references to a “new song” in Revelation 5:9 and 14:3 both refer to Psalm 149:1. Given that God’s mercies are new every day (see Lamentations 3:22-23), is He not worthy of a “new song”? Psalm 150:2 offers a parallel construction that calls for the collective praise of God’s people with that of the entire creation. God is worthy to be praised, not only “in His sanctuary” by His people in worship, but also “in His mighty firmament”—the dome of the sky that covers the whole earth and is inhabited by all people. The Old Testament records the long history of God’s people’s commemorating great victories with musical celebration and dancing: at the crossing of the Red Sea (see Exodus 15:20-21); after David’s victory over Goliath (see 1 Samuel 18:6-7); and in Jerusalem, when the ark of the covenant was recovered (see 2 Samuel 6:5)—just to name a few. The last psalms in the Psalter are said to anticipate God’s ultimate victory over evil. It is important to point out that unrestrained music and dance were also used as a part of pagan revelry and was noted as blasphemous (see Exodus 32:17-20). Our worship must always be intentional with an intentional focus on our God, thanking Him for Jesus, the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Have you ever had a burning desire to celebrate?
2. Share your thoughts, feelings, and some reason for a strong desire to celebrate.
3. What are you willing to do when you have a need and desire to celebrate?

INSIGHTS

As Christians, we sincerely want God to be pleased with our worship. We believe this to come not from rituals or routines but from sincerity of heart. We additionally find great joy in a variety of music styles, formats, and instruments for worship and praise. As we seek to worship the Lord and strive to strengthen our relationship with Him, we enjoy exploring praise music from different times and cultures. They not only give us strength, but the songs of praise also give us renewed purpose in our Christian living.

EXPLORATION

As Christians, we must begin, especially if not done before, to explore our praise to God using a full range of emotional expression. We are complicated beings with varying ranges of emotions given to us by God; as we grow and learn to tap into those and share with God in worship, we are better prepared for His service and His glory. With this journey of self-discovery through the soul and worship exploration, we must seek to find, within the Psalms, sources and examples of worship and praise. They will benefit our walk with and for the Lord.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

COMMENTARY ON PSALM 149:1-5

KJV

PRAISE YE the LORD. *Sing* unto the LORD a new song, and his *praise* in the congregation of saints.

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be *joyful* in their King.

3 Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

4 For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will *beautify* the *meek* with salvation.

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

NIV

PRAISE THE LORD. *Sing* to the LORD a new song, his *praise* in the assembly of his faithful people.

2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be *glad* in their King.

3 Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp.

4 For the LORD takes delight in his people; he *crowns* the *humble* with victory.

5 Let his faithful people rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.

This hymn of praise makes special reference to the celebration of a recent victory. Many interpreters understand the closing verses to be eschatological rather than historical. However, the first four verses are clearly related to a present reality of God's deliverance. Although the event cannot be identified precisely, the purpose of the original composition is evidently to thank God for victory at the time of the warrior/writer's return. The writer issues a summons to praise the Lord. The scene appears to be a great assembly of saints, believers, godly people gathered at the Temple. The importance of the occasion is seen in the need for a new song to celebrate a new victory of their enemies. Verse 3's mentioning of dancing, singing, and musical instruments all together clearly highlights the spirit of rejoicing and joy shared in verse 2. The victory itself is an indication that God's favor and salvation have been poured out onto His oppressed people. The saints are encouraged to sing this new song of victory. They are pictured as rejoicing in triumph and singing from their beds because safety is now their reward for their faithfulness. The picture of the warriors' praising God with the "two-edged" sword in their hands is symbolic of the victories won in His name. The fact that the sword is still in their hands also indicates a right-now victory accompanied with a right-now praise filled with joyful dancing, singing, and music. In similar fashion, today's saints are to wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (see Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12). The closing verses (7-9), to some, seem to contradict verses like "Vengeance is mine; . . . saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Capturing the whole of this psalm as being a new song of victory from battle, the writer is highlighting the victory of the Lord through the hands of His saints, giving them honor. With God's loving favor against our enemies, the natural response is to praise Him with dancing, singing, and the playing of musical instruments. The unwritten and maybe unspoken beauty of Psalm 149 is that we are not just called to worship—it is God who gives us the cause (reason) to worship and the confidence to worship Him freely. What a mighty God we serve!

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

Sometimes we sing old songs with new meaning and understanding. Sometimes we create our own song for the Lord. Which moments in life inspire you to sing your own song to the Lord?

Young Adult Questions:

Some people go through life taking credit for every blessing God has bestowed on them. Why is it important to acknowledge God and thank Him for what He has done? Other than dancing and singing, what are some other ways in which you can praise God?

COMMENTARY ON PSALM 150:1-6

KJV

PRAISE YE the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the *firmament* of his power.

2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

6 Let *every thing* that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

NIV

PRAISE THE LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his *mighty heavens*.

2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,

4 praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe,

5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.

6 Let *everything* that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

The final hymn of praise measures up to its position of honor as the doxology for the whole Psalter, collection or book of psalms, as in this case referring to the book of Psalms. Every phrase in the psalm appears to build on the previous phrase and thought in preparation for a great climax, which comes suddenly as a grateful and great outburst of mighty praise for the Host of heaven and earth. The place of this worship is specific—the sanctuary. The sanctuary could have reference to God's heavenly habitation and/or His earthly temple, as we understand that God inhabits the praises of His people (see Psalm 22:3). While the former meaning would align with "the firmament," the latter idea would have much more significance for the assembled worshippers. Believers also believe, as is with God's dwelling, that His firmament is spiritual and is wherever His presence is located, experienced, and/or felt. The reason for the marvelous praise is the Lord's "mighty acts." This has been the theme of many psalms. His greatness has been a recurring theme in these final hymns of praise (see also Psalms 145 and 147). The psalmist seems to list the instruments in a random order. It is likely that they are specifically called out to play when mentioned and to continue playing throughout the Hallelujah praise. With the choir assembled, a bold charge is given for everything with breath to "praise the Lord." This charge is not just to the priest and Levites or even to the congregation. Instead, all of creation, each creature, is charged to do so. This makeup

becomes the choir of all choirs—as all are gathered to do more than sing; everything is too loudly and bold shout, proclaiming “Hallelujah” to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In this single, short, yet powerful psalm, we find where to praise (verse 1), why to praise (verse 2), and how to praise (verses 3-5). We should use any instrument we have. It is believed that the instruments called out were those the writer had on hand, not to limit or exclude any other instrument from worship. It is also believed that as the instrument is called out the musician of the instrument was to make a boastful, joyful noise that would be highlighted in verse 6. If you are still confused regarding praise, the writer makes it plain: everything that has breath should praise the Lord (verse 6). This is a dramatic closure to a powerful psalm. Together, with all of God’s given instruments and talent and energy bestowed upon us, we should create melodious music for our Lord and Savior.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

What would it take to draw you into an expression of worship that reflects the psalmist’s description?

Young Adult Questions:

(1) During worship service, do you feel free to worship God without holding back, or are you concerned about what others may think of you? Explain.

(2) It is not enough to have a thankful heart; every believer should be committed to praising God. How are you most comfortable in expressing praise to God? How often do you praise God outside of church worship?

LIFE APPLICATION

Refer to Adult Book

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

—Think outside the box to consider new ways in which you can praise the Lord. Do not limit your experience to the sanctuary, but include new places and new expressions. Go ahead, make God’s day.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

—Think of new ways that you can engage others in praise to the Lord, sharing your faith through worship and acts of service.

Refer to Young Adult Book

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

—James 1:17 states that “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change” (NIV). When you are successful in doing a task, you may be tempted to boast or take credit. Even though you may work diligently, never forget that without God you could do absolutely nothing. He deserves the honor and the credit for the blessings you enjoy.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

—God is so majestic that He reigns supreme over every earthly ruler. He is the King of every king, and Lord of every lord. Throughout the world, people give endless honor, fanfare, and undeserved praise to political and spiritual leaders—even those who are wicked and corrupt. God is not interested in such grand displays and public accolades. What matters to Him is sincere, honest praise that proceeds from a grateful, loving heart.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, November 7, 2021, is "The Rest of the Story." The Devotional Reading text is Revelation 1:1-8, the Background Scripture text is Revelation 7:9-17, and the Printed Text is Revelation 7:9-17.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, remove barriers that might hinder us from worshipping You fully and sincerely. Allow Your Holy Spirit to lead us to engage others in the full worship experience. We love You and thank You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS ALL PEOPLE PRAISE GOD

(November 1-7, 2021)

MONDAY, November 1: "May God's Ways Be Known" (Psalm 67)

TUESDAY, November 2: "The Nations Flock to Mount Zion" (Isaiah 2:1-5)

WEDNESDAY, November 3: "Make Disciples of All Nations" (Matthew 28:16-20)

THURSDAY, November 4: "Gentiles Seek the Lord" (Zechariah 8:18-23)

FRIDAY, November 5: "All the Nations Will Glorify God" (Psalm 86:1-11)

SATURDAY, November 6: "God's Servants Are Sealed" (Revelation 7:1-8)

SUNDAY, November 7: "Multitudes Praise God" (Revelation 7:9-17)