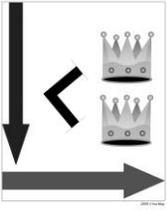


Week Twenty-eight: Kingdom Praise - Psalm 150



Overview

God's story begins with a perfect environment created by a loving God. He placed the crown of His creation—the man and the woman—into a paradise where they would walk with Him in praise and worship. Sin stole their hearts from God and replaced His praise with undeserved rebellion. Successive generations refused to honor Him as their King, and eventually the entire earth experienced the judgment of the flood.

Noah's

sacrifice was a sweet aroma to God, and Abraham's offerings were a praise to His name. Joseph gave Him praise before Pharaoh, and Moses and the children of Israel raised up a song of praise when God delivered them from Egypt (Moses also wrote Psalm 90). Samuel's mother Hannah offered a wonderful song of praise when God heard her prayer, but only in the time of David was praise elevated to an entire book of praise songs. Each psalm was a hymn sung by God's people, so each psalm is designated as "Psalm 23" (hymn 23), not "Psalms 23."

David and his successors created Israel's songbook—the Psalms. Someone has said that the Psalms are the Law of God percolated through the heart of David. He wrote about half of the Psalter, but writers were producing psalms even in the time of the Divided Kingdom. These psalms run the gamut of human emotions. They address depression (Ps. 42, 43), comfort in death (Ps. 23), fear (Ps. 56), anger over the prosperity of the wicked (Ps. 73), confidence in trials (Ps. 46), and joy (Ps. 98). *Penitential* psalms express repentance over sin (Ps. 32, 38, 51). *Messianic* psalms declare the hope in the coming Messiah who will bring Israel redemption (Ps. 2, 22, 110). *Imprecatory* psalms look forward to coming judgment on those enemies who attack God's people (Ps. 58, 137). *Psalms of Ascent* (Ps. 120-135) were sung by Israelites as they made their thrice-annual pilgrimages up to Jerusalem for the feasts. *Story* psalms rehearse the history of Israel and teach coming generations about God's faithfulness in the past (Ps. 78, 105, 106). *Hallelujah* psalms conclude the book (Ps. 146-150), but most of the psalms "contain an element of praise" to the LORD, the God of Israel (Walvoord & Zuck, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 779). Psalm 150 finishes out the Psalter and, as the final hymn, demonstrates the glorious praise due to the one true God.

Lesson Objective:

At the conclusion of this lesson, participants will recognize that God is worthy of praise in all places and at all times, and will be challenged to give Him the praise that He is due.

Key Truths

God calls His people to praise Him for who He is and what He does.

God created all things for praise to Him.

God delights in the praise of His people and desires that all peoples everywhere should praise Him.

Lesson Outline - Psalm 150

The final psalm of the psalter begins and ends with “Hallelujah” This Hebrew word means, “Praise the LORD” The verb for praise is followed by the covenant name of the LORD, the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush. The verb is a command; praise is not optional, it is expected. The writer follows the first word with a series of commands to praise the LORD that weave a tight outline for the psalm.

1. Where to Praise the LORD (1).

- The Psalmist begins by commanding God’s people to praise Him in His sanctuary (“holy place”). Praise begins in the house of the LORD. The Tabernacle of Meeting in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem are the two edifices on which the LORD has placed His name and promised His presence. He commands His people to praise Him when they come to the sanctuary. Worship in the Temple is commanded for the priests, the people, and even the servants who minister during the evening hours (Ps. 134).
- Praise also takes place in the “firmament.” This “expanse” is sometimes used of heaven itself, but basically it portrays the truth that people are to praise Him in every place. There is no place on earth where praise cannot be offered to God. He is worthy of praise from His people when they are in the house of the LORD, but He also deserves praise wherever they may be. Praise ought to come to Him while people are at work, at play, at home, on the road, or wherever they are. God deserves praise wherever and whenever Believers today are to praise God both at worship in their churches and at work, on the road, in the home, and wherever else they are.

2. Why We Praise the LORD (2).

- God deserves praise because of what He does; His mighty acts rescued His people from Egypt, parted the waters of the Red Sea, broke down the walls of Jericho, gave water from the Rock, and gave them the land of Canaan. His mighty acts delivered Daniel from the lions’ den, brought down fire on Elijah’s sacrifice, and sent chariots of fire to protect Elisha. His mighty acts include His daily provision for His people with rain from heaven, bread for the day, and protection from foes. God acts mightily on behalf of His people; He even looks for those who trust in Him, so that He can act mightily on their behalf (2 Chron. 16:9).
- God also deserves praise because of who He is. He is great His greatness encompasses the totality of His attributes. He is great because He rules as sovereign over the universe. He is so sovereign that He can give people free choices and still retain full sovereignty He is good; in fact, He is the good of the universe. Ps. 119:68 says, “You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes.” God is good, so He does no other than good. He is wise; in fact, His wisdom is so

high that no one can even grasp His thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). He is merciful and just, kind and loving, gracious and tender, yet at the same time holy, just, and the Judge of all humanity. His “excellent greatness” calls forth praise from all His creation.

3. How to Praise the LORD (3-5)

- The Psalmist now calls for praise with a variety of instruments: wind instruments, stringed instruments, brass instruments, and percussion instruments. These differing instruments indicate that praise was usually with accompaniment. In fact, the Greek verb for “sing psalms” in the New Testament means to sing accompanied by musical instruments. God seeks praise that involves the whole person and all the talents of His people.
- In fact, praise includes “dance” (4). Such praise is exuberant and uninhibited; David’s dance before the LORD exemplifies one whose heart is filled with praise and whose actions are before the LORD rather than men (2 Sam. 6:14). God delights in praise that is focused solely on Him, rather than on other worshipers.

4. Who Should Praise the LORD (6)

“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD” (6). Praise is the hallmark of God’s people, but praise is the responsibility of every created being in the universe. Jesus even said that if humans withhold their praise, the rocks would cry out (Lk. 19:40). God is seeking worshipers who will “worship Him in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:23-24). God calls all nations to praise Him and to look to Him for their salvation (Is. 45:22). He is worthy of the praises of all people everywhere.

When the apostle Paul defends his missionary ministry to the Gentiles in Romans 15, he quotes the Psalms to demonstrate that God is seeking praise from all nations. Quoting Psalm 117:1, he writes, “And again: ‘Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles Laud Him, all you peoples’” (Rom. 15:11). One motive for God’s missionary ministry to the nations is to bring praise to Himself from all the nations. Praise from every nation will come to pass; John’s vision in the book of the Revelation reveals a song sung by people redeemed “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). They join with the angels and the elders to sing heaven’s sweetest song: “Worth is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing” (Rev. 5:12).

God created everything to bring Him praise and commands everything that has breath to praise Him. One day Balaam’s donkey will praise the LORD; one day the great fish who swallowed Jonah will praise the LORD; one day the lions who refused to eat Daniel will praise the LORD. In fact, in Revelation 5:13, John records, “And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever’”

The text of this psalm ends as it begins—“Hallelujah”

Application - What does this lesson teach about God? Man? Sin? Redemption?

Praise ought to characterize God's people; praise flows from a scriptural understanding of who God is and what He has done.

Praise is informed by Scripture as well; those who hide God's Word in their hearts will have a basis for praise as well as vocabulary for praise.

Praise should be on the lips of God's people as they gather for worship and wherever else they go.

Summary

God speaks to command His people to praise Him.

God acts with mighty acts to invite praise and to show that He is worthy of praise.

God reveals His nature and His actions to incite His people—and all creation—to praise Him.

Discussion Questions

Why do people struggle to express praise to the LORD? Why do many churches seem dead when they should be so alive with praise?

What are some of the mighty acts that God has done for us today for which we should praise Him?

Why do churches sometimes quarrel over styles of music, and how could learning from the Psalms help in the praise of the church?