

**Psa. 150:1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.**

The purpose of the psalmist in this psalm is to exhort the people to praise God. This is what we are saying when we say, “Hallelujah.” The Hebrew states, “halal Yahh,” or “make a boast, cause to shine, praise, glorify the self-Existent, Eternal God.”

The *sanctuary* is a reference to God’s dwelling place—a “sacred place or consecrated spot” according to Webster. The psalmist is exhorting the people of Israel, so I am sure that his thoughts were regarding their worship at the temple. In our day that reference would be to the church. Taking it a step further, we know that we are the temple of God, so we can make direct reference to our bodies. It’s one thing to be able to glorify the Lord with our actions at church, but it’s a whole other thing to glorify the Lord with our bodies. It’s a truth with which we believers really need to connect. God is with us all the time; our desire and intent should be to “praise” Him in everything we do, say and think. This was focus of the wonderful novel, *In His Steps*, by Charles Sheldon.

The Hebrew for *firmament* made a reference to the “expanse of the sky” from a root that referenced “to pound the earth, to expand, to overlay.” This would seem to be referencing the whole earth as covered by the sky. It would seem to imply an attempt to spread the glory of the Lord throughout the earth. The “firmament of his power” would be a reference to God’s power as declared by the heavens and everything under the heavens.

This first verse seems to focus on where we are to praise God. I think the conclusion is that we are to praise Him everywhere.

**Psa. 150:2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.**

Now the psalmist turns to why we should praise God.

Firstly, for His mighty acts—the things He does, the actions that reveal His great power and authority. Secondly, for His “excellent greatness”—for Who He is, His character.

The nation of Israel had many specific, miraculous acts of God on their behalf in their history to which the psalmist could be referring; some of the most well known come quickly to mind.

- Creating a nation from the union of two people beyond the years of childbearing—through the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah.
- Delivering them from bondage to the Egyptians through the ten plagues that induced Pharaoh to let them go to taking them through the Red Sea on dry land when he changed his mind and was coming to take them back.
- Providing for them and protecting them through the wilderness wanderings in spite of their disobedience. Their shoes never wore out; they were fed manna from heaven; they were given water from a rock when needed.

- Giving them the land of their own by empowering them to drive out the heathen nations that were occupying those lands.

In each of these instances it was very obvious to the Jewish people, as well as the heathen nations round about, that it was the supernatural almighty hand of God in action. Rahab expressed that truth when the spies came to check out Jericho.

Josh. 2:9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

Josh. 2:10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

Josh. 2:11 And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

God always acts in accordance with His character. The Hebrew for *excellent* is a reference to abundance. That threw me at first; then I realized that everything about God's character is available in abundance, an unlimited resource.

1Chr. 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Psa. 112:3 Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

Psa. 117:2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

Is. 26:4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength:

Jer. 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Lam. 3:22 *It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

Lam. 3:23 *They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

Hab. 3:6 He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: **his ways *are* everlasting.**

**Psa. 150:3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.**

**Psa. 150:4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.**

**Psa. 150:5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.**

Now the psalmist gives suggestions as to how to praise the Lord; or to keep the alliterated outline—what we can use to show our praise. The psalms are written by musicians, so it is only natural that they would focus on the use of musical expression. The *sound of the trumpet* is a reference to the clear tone of a cornet or curved horn; the Hebrew term is “shophar.” The word *psaltery* references the lyre, but the Hebrew also stated, “a skin-bag for liquids (from collapsing when empty),” which brought to my mind a bagpipe. The *harp* is referencing the instrument we recognize by the same name. A *timbrel* references a tambourine or drum. *Dancing* is the movement of the body to the rhythm of the music. *Stringed instruments* reference the ability to make chords. The *organ* is a reference to reed instruments, such as the clarinet and oboe. The *loud cymbals* reference vibrations that result from clanging, but that is done with specific intent. The *high sounding cymbals* are referencing an expression of joy and rejoicing.

I’m sure this psalm was not used very often in many of the conservative congregations of the past. It is a definite encouragement to utilize all types of instruments and free bodily expression in praise to the Lord. As in all things, I think we have to seek God’s guidance when determining what is appropriate as well as what is inappropriate regarding the expression of our praise. I think a simple, honest question will go a long way in determining the answer—Does it honor God and direct focus to Him, or does it bring attention to the person(s) making the expression?

**Psa. 150:6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.**

The Hebrew for *breath* references “divine inspiration, intellect...” I think it is obvious that only rational beings can give meaningful expression to praising the LORD. Much of creation is an expression of praise to him just through being—to observe the creation is to see God glorified or praised.

We may not be able to control the actions of others, but the encouragement of the psalmist is to the individual—Praise YE the LORD. Hallelujah!!