PSALM 150

GOD, MY EXCEEDING JOY
A JOYFUL JOURNEY THRU THE PSALMS

THE NEVER-ENDING CALL *August 25, 2024*

I. IMPACT

A. Lesson: Ps 150 invites all living things to engage in exuberant praise of the almighty God.

1. In one sense the psalm is a conclusion (both to the book and to sections within the book). But it is also a **beginning** of worship, calling on all earth and heaven to give all in praise to the God who is worthy of it all.

2. It is an invitation that **never ends**. It is like the famous hymnic line, "We've no less days to sing God's praise then when we first begun."

B. In Judaism:

1. According to the Talmud (a collection of opinions from ancient Rabbis), it was a custom of the Jews to sing Psalm 150 while bringing in their offerings for the Feast of Firstfruits. This was not the original usage of the song but became a tradition.

2. For many centuries, it has been a custom for Pss 146-150 to be chanted each morning in synagogue services.

C. In Christianity: Ps 150 has been the basis of numerous poems and hymns of praise. The psalm itself is recited often in liturgies of various high churches (Anglican, Lutheran, Catholic, etc.).

D. In Culture: Ps 150 has inspired at least 17 classical compositions by the likes of Bach, Stravinsky, and others. It is sometimes referred to as "the musicians psalm" and "praise beyond words."

PSALM 150

Purpose: While this ps closes out the Final Hallel (Pss 146-150), Book V (Pss 107-150), and the whole Psalter, it is also a startup to worship, almost like an unfinished hymn of praise, calling all creatures everywhere to praise God with all at their disposal.

Type: Corporate Hymn of Praise
Author: Unknown
Date: Sometime after restoration of the Second Temple, c. 522 BC
Placement: Conclusion of the Final Hallel (Pss 146-150) & the Psalter

OPENING CALL TO PRAISE	UNIVERSAL LOCATIONS OF PRAISE:	OVERALL CAUSE FOR PRAISE:	INSTRUMENTAL MEANS OF PRAISE:	UNIVERSAL INVITATION TO PRAISE:	CLOSING CALL TO PRAISE
v. 1a "Hallelujah"	The Places of God's Presence v. 1bc	The Attributes of God's Greatness v. 2	An Orchestra for Praise vv. 3-5	Call to All Living Things v. 6ab	v. 6c "Hallelujah"
	God's Sanctuary on Earth v. 1b	God's Mighty Deeds v. 2a	Triumphant Trumpet Blasts v. 3a	Recipients of the Call: All with the Gift of Breath v. 6a	
	God's Sanctuary in Heaven v. 1b	God's Surpassing Greatness v. 2b	Melodic Stringed Instruments v. 3b		
			Rhythmic Celebrations of Dance v. 4a	Content of the Call: To Praise Yah v. 6b	
			Joyful Playing of Strings & Pipes v. 4b		
			Intensifying Sounds of Cymbals v. 5		

II. GENRE: Hymn of Corporate Praise

A. Most hymns of praise begin with a call to worship, followed with reasons for worship, and concluding with a final call to worship.

B. Ps 150 certainly begins this way, but the repetition of the command "praise" (**13** times) makes this song unique. While there is one verse explaining motivations for praise (2), the majority of the poem contains only calls to praise.

E. In this sense, it feels like an intentionally **incomplete**. The lack of conformity suggests that this calling of praise is unending.

F. Because this song concludes the whole Psalter, it assumes the worshipper is mindful of all the other thing said about God.

III. SETTING

A. AUTHOR & BACKGROUND

1. This ps is anonymous and there are no legends of authorship.

2. The term "**Hallelujah**" (1a, 6b) was coined during or after the exile, so this song is a product of the Second Temple period which began around 522 BC.

B. PLACEMENT

1. **End of the Final Hallel (146-150),** each of which begins and ends with "Hallelujah."

2. **End of Book V (107-150):** Whereas the other books end with doxologies (41:13, 72:19, 89:52, 106:48), this entire ps sees as a grand doxology.

3. **End of the Psalms:** Ps 150 parallels **Ps 1**. Both contain 6 verses. Both are intentionally placed as bookends to the Psalms. While Ps 1 focuses on the individual's walking in wisdom, Ps 150 focuses on the corporate praise of the righteous ones as the worship that all the world should give.

III. COMMENTARY

A. Psalm 150 by the numbers:

17 mentions of God	Yah = 3	God = 1	Him/His = 13
13 uses of "Praise"	hallelujah = 2	commands = 10	exhortation = 1
9 Heb. prep. *beyth*	"in" = 2	"for" = 2	"with" = 5
7+ music instruments	trumpet, harp, lyre, timbrel, strings, pipes, cymbals		

B. **All about Praise:** The only verb root used is ***halal*** (to praise).

C. **All Creation a Sanctuary:** While God had a sanctuary on earth (2a) & has one in heaven (2b), all of creation belongs to him (6). Abraham Kuyper famously said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, '**Mine**!'"

D. **Orchestra of Praise:** Ps 150 mentions more musical instruments than any other. A similar list is found in 1 Chr 15:16, 28.

1. **Trumpet:** A **ram's** horn, not a metal instrument. This would be more for calling to attention than playing music.

2. **Harp & Lyre:** Similar handheld instruments of varying string counts. These typically had sound boxes.

3. **Timbrel:** A tambourine without the metal jingles, often played by woman dancing joyfully during celebrations.

4. **Stringed Instruments:** Probably larger instruments than the harp and lyre, perhaps including floor harps.

5. **Pipes:** Hand flutes, pan flutes, etc.

6. **Cymbals:** v. 5 refers to one kind of instrument being played differently: gently rubbing together versus loud gonging.

E. **The Gift of Breath:** After the long list of instruments, the reader might feel breathless, but the ps ends (6a) by calling on all things with the gift of breath (Gen 2:7) to use it in praise of the Maker.