

“Our Ultimate Purpose in Life” (Psalm 150)

Introduction:

Psalm 150 is kind of an odd psalm because it basically consists of 12 or 13 commands, and they are all the same command. But these commands show us where the book of Psalms has been taking us all along, where it has been heading, the very goal and purpose of the Psalter (and our lives!)

The big picture of Psalm 150:

First: There are 12 commands to praise (completeness) and 1 invitation to praise.

Second: There is an ambiguous inclusion: “Hallelujah” (Hebrew), which is both a call to praise and praise itself.

Third: There is a fairly clear structure.

150:1 Where?
150:2 Why?
150:3-5 How?
150:6 Who?

Fourth: It’s a “praise psalm” with a call to praise and a cause of praise. But a twist!

It’s an action Psalm: now it’s time to do something about this great God described in Psalms 1–149. It’s like the application at the end of a sermon.

Fifth: It fits the wider context.

Psalms 146–150 all begin and end with “Hallelujah.”

Book Five ends with a great doxology of five psalms, Psalm 150 being the climax.

1) Where? (150:1)

His glory fills the universe and so should his praise.

We join the angels in praise. (Rev 5:11-12)

Praise can be an individual activity, but it is best in the group (sanctuary).

2) Why? (150:2)

In a nutshell: because of what he has done and because of who he is.

His acts of power lead to praising his greatness because they show his greatness.

3) How? (150:3–5)

First: Seven different instruments mentioned: strings, wind, percussion.

Second: Trumpet=shofar, a ram's horn without a mouthpiece.

Third: Loud music (trumpet, cymbals, clashing cymbals.)

Fourth: The Psalms were to be sung.

Fifth: Dancing (all of ourselves)

4. Who? (150:6)

Everything (not everyone) with breath. (Genesis 2:7; Revelation 5:13)

Everything without breath too! (Psalm 148:7–12)

Israel's God is not a tribal god or a regional god or a god of a particular people.

Conclusion:

The Psalter move from lament to praise.

Psalms 1–89 (first 3 books) mostly laments; Psalms 90–150 mostly praise and thanksgiving.

The Psalter is an eschatological book.

The Hebrew title is “Praises.” This may not seem appropriate for much of the book, but it is clearly appropriate for where things end: all pain, all enemies, all disappointments gone.

God will restore the right order under his kingship, in his kingdom.

In the end, everyone and everything praises God.

The Psalter shows us our ultimate purpose in life.

“Praise God in his sanctuary.” We are now the temple/sanctuary of God where praise should be found. Our ultimate purpose and highest function are to praise God (Psalms 146:2; 119:175).

The Psalter shows us what praise looks like.

What is the purpose of Psalm 150?

It is the “Nike” psalm!

“I’ll Praise My Maker” by Isaac Watts (1674–1748)
(A paraphrase of Psalm 146)

1 I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath,
And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne’er be past
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

2 Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel’s God; He made the sky,

And earth and seas with all their train;
His truth forever stands secure;
He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor,
And none shall find His promise vain.

3 The Lord pours eyesight on the blind;
The Lord supports the fainting mind;
He sends the laboring conscience peace.
He helps the stranger in distress,
The widow and the fatherless,
And grants the prisoner sweet release.

4 I'll praise Him while He lends me breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne'er be past
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.