

Grace Communication 5 – Praise Communication

a study for the Gulf Coast Baptist Church Bible Institute

Fall 2023 by Steve Thomas

Introduction

The word for praise in the New Testament is *αἰνεσις* – literally a thank offering. This is contrasted with the words used in the Old Testament for praise. In the OT there was a physical component to offering praise. The Hebrew word carried with it the understanding of a physical action and a shout almost like a cheer. In the OT the same word is often translated as “confess” or “give thanks”. This is often the case with OT and NT distinctions, the OT focuses on the outward or physical side, and the NT looks at it from the inward or spiritual perspective. The believer is fortunate to have a biblical definition for the new testament perspective: The fruit of our lips confessing His name. *Hebrews 13:15*

Definition

Praise can be defined as *an expression of the appreciation for the character of God evidenced by a particular blessing*. It is a connection of the character of the Godhead with the behavior that evidences that character. It is often connected with thanksgiving.

Recipients of praise

It is appropriate to direct praise towards each member of the Trinity. Praise directed towards the Father can be found in Luke 2:13, 20. God’s faithfulness and goodness are being connected to the gift of the promised Messiah. The spirit beings and shepherds are participating in this praise to the Father. God’s power, kindness, and goodness are connected with the healing of the lame man in Acts 3:8,9. The Father is being praised in Ephesians 1:6,12, 14 for the work of both the Son and the Spirit. God’s truth and righteousness are extolled in his judgment of One World Religion in Revelation 19:1-5.

Praise is also directed towards the Son and Spirit in Phil 1:9-11. The life and speech of the believer gives praise to the second and third members of the Trinity. The believer, when he lives out the character of Christ in his words and deeds, is directing attention to the behavior of the Godhead, and the result is praise. This is not possible without the Son and Spirit’s active work in the believer’s life.

God will direct praise towards believers. Romans 2:29; 1 Corinthians 4:5. Not many details are given about exactly what God will praise in his saints, but every believer will receive praise of God.

Repetition of praise

The key verse for praise, Hebrews 13:15 gives two constructions that are significant. The word continually gives the believer a frame of reference for how often he should praise. Praise, along with worship and thanksgiving should be the default setting of the believer.

The present tense (continuous action) should mark that this is the habitual activity of the believer priest. The carnal believer is not focused on the character and behavior of the Godhead, instead is “savoring” things of men and not of God Mark 8:33.

Reason for praise

Comprehension of the character of God is essential to the communication of praise. This is only possible with the illumination of the Holy Spirit 1 Cor 2:11-12. The more the believer knows about God the better he will become at praise. Praise is a characteristic of a spiritual believer Eph 5:18-19.

Praise is one of the sacrifices of the believer-priest 1 Peter 2:5,9, Heb 13:15. These sacrifices are to be the focus of the believer's mindset and behavior. Some other sacrifices are the believer's body as a living sacrifice, giving, faith, thanksgiving, good works, and fellowship.

The salvation of the believer is a source of praise to God Eph 1:6,12,14. It is one of many opportunities, but a good place for the believer to start.

Result of Praise

Praise is well-pleasing to God, the sacrifices of the believer priest are a sweet smelling savor (fragrance) to God. 2 Cor 2:15, Eph 5:2. There is a saying that God delights in His own attributes. Communication that is focused on Him will cause God to delight in the believer's communication. It does not require a divine response, like intercession, supplication, and the request.

Conclusion

In order for the believer to appropriate and utilize the benefits of his present tense salvation, he must approach God with what God has provided. The Spirit of God enables the believer to see God in a clear way, and to connect His character with His behavior. To worship, give thanks, and praise God at the right hand of the Father is a privilege to be appreciated and treasured. Many of the trials that the believer will go through are for the purpose of God receiving glory for how He will resolve that conflict. Praise, along with worship and thanksgiving should be a permanent part of the believer's communication to God.