

# “Praise the LORD”

(Psalm 150)

## Introduction

➤ This year’s Summer Sermon Series, titled “Sing to the LORD”, has led us to preach on many different biblical passages. Using a lyric from a Christian worship song as the theme/topic for our sermons (e.g., grace, mercy, prayer, the cross of Christ) can take us almost anywhere in Scripture.

One of the challenges with this series can be deciding on what verse/passage of Scripture (or biblical topic) to preach. For, oftentimes, there are many passages from which to choose. The song I have chosen for this morning’s sermon did not pose such a problem – for the Scriptural passage is in the title: “Psalm 150 (Praise the Lord).” This modern hymn was written in 2020 by Matt Boswell and Matt Papa. It is their musical interpretation of Psalm 150.

**Psalm 150** ~ “Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! <sup>2</sup>Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! <sup>3</sup>Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! <sup>4</sup>Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! <sup>5</sup>Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! <sup>6</sup>Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

- This six-verse Psalm has a whopping thirteen commands (imperative verbs)! Yet, everyone of these commands is essentially the same word: “*Praise*” (*hālāl*; to praise, boast, exalt; vs. 1<sup>x3</sup>, 2<sup>x2</sup>, 3<sup>x2</sup>, 4<sup>x2</sup>, 5<sup>x2</sup>, 6<sup>x2</sup>). This Hebrew word translated “*praise*” (*hālāl*), is used 165 times in the Old Testament, with the majority of these in reference to God. Over half of its occurrences are in the Psalms alone.
- Psalm 150 is a psalm of pure praise – no requests, no laments, no complaints. This Psalm is one unmitigated, uninterrupted, declaration of worship to God. In this Psalm, we find five elements of worship. These are basic and essential truths concerning what it means to truly worship God. These truths are revealed by asking five simple questions.

## 1. Who should we worship? (vs.1a)

- We must not overlook the first command – which is repeated twelve more times – “*Praise the LORD!*” (vs.1a). We are commanded to praise (worship) God – “*Praise the LORD*” (3x; *hālāl yāh*), “*Praise God*” (1x; *hālāl ’ēl*), “*Praise him*” (9x; *hālāl / hallūhū*). This may seem (tediously) obvious, but it can easily (subconsciously) be ignored (which may be why it is so often repeated). For our worship of God can come alloyed with other things – e.g., music (instrumentation), expression (posture), emotions (feelings). This is a form of idolatry (Ex.20:1-3; 1Cor.10:14; Col.3:5).

God alone is to be the object and subject of our praise – the sole and supreme object of our worship – is the one true God. The Hebrew word translated “*LORD*” (*yāh*; Ps.150:1, 6<sup>x2</sup>), in verse one, is the contracted form of the Yahweh (*yhwh*; Jehovah), which is the Hebrew name for God (used almost 7,000 times in the Old Testament). This name for God was given by God, as He (with this name designation) declared Himself to be the self-existing eternal God.

**Exodus 3:13-15** ~ “Then Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?’

<sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM [*hayah ... hayah*].’ And he said, ‘Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM [*hayah*] has sent me to you.’’ <sup>15</sup>God also said to Moses, ‘Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The LORD [*yhwh*; Yahweh/Jehovah], the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”

The two-word phrase “I am” translates the one Hebrew word (*hayah*) which means “to be.” It is from this Hebrew word that the divine name of God as Yahweh (Jehovah) is derived. When used of God, this word refers to God as the “I AM” – the self-existing, eternal God (i.e., always and forever the “I am”, never “I was” or “I will be”). The phrase “I Am” is in reference to God’s self-existent eternally. That is, God has always been and will forever be. He is never the “I was” or even the “I will be.” This is who we are called to worship – the only true self-existing, eternal God.

➤ In verse one, we are explicitly commanded to praise Yahweh. In fact, the Hebrew phrase – translated *“Praise the LORD!”* (vs.1a) – is from which our English word “Hallelujah” is derived (*hālāl* + *yāh*). This relatively short Psalm (six verses) essentially has thirteen “Hallelujahs.” This phrase is repeated almost forty times in the Psalms, and almost always as a command.

If we are not wise and vigilant, we can gravitate toward self-centeredness and wander away from being Christ-centered. That is to say, left to our own natural inclinations, we may find ourselves more focused on what worship does for us than what it declares about God (i.e., our “experience” in worship rather than the exaltation of God, or how we are worshiping rather than who we are worshiping). This is a subtle yet significant shift from true God-centered, God-honoring and God-pleasing worship.

**John 4:23-24** ~ “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:23-24 ~ “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers [*proskynētēs*] will worship [*proskyneō*] the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship [*proskyneō*] him. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship [*proskyneō*] him must worship [*proskyneō*] in spirit and truth.”

**Matt 15:7-9** ~ “You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: <sup>8</sup>‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; <sup>9</sup>in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

➤ Our worship of God must not be shallow or hollow; it must not be insincere or impassionate; it must not be distracted or divided; it must not be ritualistic or mechanistic. God will not receive self-styled or self-centered worship. He will not accept worship that is not solely and sincerely offered to Him.

**Isa 42:8** ~ “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.” (Ex.20:2-6; 34:14)

➤ There has been a subtle, yet notable, shift in Christian “worship” in America over the years. This trend is to focus more on the worshipper than on the One who is to be worshipped. For many Christians, and in many churches, “worship” is designed to make the worshipper feel good or to have some kind of emotional or euphoric (“spiritual-high”) experience. So-called “worship leaders” are expected to play the “worshippers” favorite songs, to play them with the desired instruments and tempo and volume, and to not play any (or very many) songs that the worshipper does not know or like; to cater to the worshippers wishes and whims.

The unspoken sentiment is, “If you want me to ‘worship’ in your church, you better ‘worship’ the way I want to.” The often spoken (negative) sentiment is this: “I didn’t get anything out of worship today.” To which I often want to respond: “That’s ok. It was primarily for you anyway.” The most important question is not “What did I get out of worship” but “What did God receive from my worship?”; not “Was I pleased with the service?” but “Was God pleased with the service?” (see Ps.51:16-17; Is.1:10-17; Amos 5:21-24).

➤ I think this shift is also seen in how worship songs are promoted or packaged. Decades ago, it was common to see a picture of a dove, a cross, a bible, or a church on the album cover of worship songs. Today, it is not uncommon to instead see a picture of a crying (emotional) worship leader or a throng of people enthralled in worship (the subtle message being, “If you by this album, you too will have this

experience”). Today we have “worship leaders” (who are to create a worship experience) rather than “song leaders” who merely lead the singing. Unfortunately, the focus can be more on the emotions and posture of the worshipper than on the God who is to be worshipped.

I have personally witnessed this many times during my over thirty years as a pastor. One inglorious example immediately and often comes to mind. Years ago, we had a new person leading us in the singing worship songs during church. After church, he said to me: “Your church doesn’t know how to worship!” I was quite stunned by the sheer arrogance of that statement – to think that you have the ability to judge the sincerity and depth of someone’s spiritual (internal) worship! I said to the man, “What makes you say that, how can you tell?” He said, “Not many people were raising their hands.” Admittedly, with a bit of anger I responded: “A person’s posture tells you absolutely nothing about their worship (a person can kneel in the front of the church, with hands raised, and be thinking, ‘I hope everyone sees how spiritual I am’!)” “... *For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart*” ( Sam.16:7).

Another memorable example is when a lady, who was visiting our church from out of town, gently told me that our “worship” (i.e., singing) was too subdued. She told me no less than a-half-a-dozen times that her church “really rocks!” There is no place in Scripture where we are told to make sure our worship “rocks”, but we are commanded to praise the one who is our Rock and our Redeemer!

✓Illust: Stephen Charnock gave this sobering rebuke of any egocentric worship of God:

“Some worship him, intending thereby to make him amends for the wrong they have done him; wipe off their scores, and satisfy their debts; as though a spiritual wrong could be recompensed with a bodily service, and an infinite Spirit be outwitted and appeased by a carnal flattery. Self is the spirit of carnality; to pretend a homage to God, and intend only the advantage of self, is rather to mock him than worship him. When we believe that we ought to be satisfied, rather than God glorified, we set God below ourselves, imagine that he should submit his own honor to our advantage; we make ourselves more glorious than God, as though we were not made for him, but he hath a being only for us; this is to have a very low esteem of the majesty of God. Whatsoever any man aims at in worship above the glory of God, that he forms as an idol to himself instead of God, and sets up a golden image, God counts not this as a worship (*The Existence and Attributes of God*; p.245, Kindle edition).

➤ To be sure, true worship does affect the worshipper – mentally, emotionally, spiritually. A person who truly worships God will be edified, humbled, instructed, encouraged, renewed, etc. But true worship is first and foremost about praising God! True worship never begins nor ends with man and his need, but is preoccupied with God and His glory! We must constantly fight against being self-centered (or “others” centered) and fight to be Christ-centered!

✓Illust: This is the essence of Matt Redman’s great worship song titled “The Heart of Worship.” The song was written at a time when Redman’s pastor, in the late 1990’s, thought his church was merely going through the motions (the production) of worship – concert goers and not worshippers.

“There was a dynamic missing,” said Redman, “so the pastor did a pretty brave thing. He decided to get rid of the sound system and band for a season, and we gathered together with just our voices. His point was that we’d lost our way in worship, and the way to get back to the heart would be to strip everything away. ... . ‘The Heart of Worship’ simply describes what occurred.”

I’m coming back to the heart of worship / and it’s all about You, it’s all about You, Jesus.

I’m sorry, Lord, for the thing I’ve made it / when it’s all about You, it’s all about You, Jesus.”

(Matt Redman © 1999 Thankyou Music Ltd)

## 2. Where should we worship Him? (vs.1b)

➤ This can seem like a strange question, as the obvious answer is ... we should worship God everywhere! This goes to the doctrine of God’s omnipresence. That is, God is fully and simultaneously present everywhere at all times (see Ps.139:7-12). God is Spirit (Jn.4:24), and not a physical being, therefore He is not bound by space or time. Humans are physical (finite) beings and therefore are incapable of

being in more than one place at a time. God infinitely transcends both space and time, and is therefore fully present everywhere at all times.

Not only is God simultaneously present everywhere, but He is also fully present everywhere. In other words, God is never “partly” or even “mostly” present anywhere – God is fully present wherever He is, and there is no place where God is not, which means that God is always fully and simultaneously present everywhere.

This ought to be a great comfort to every Christian, and a great terror for every non-Christian. Non-Christians must come to grips with the fact that they are never removed from the presence of God. Avoiding church buildings, the Bible or Christians does not hide anyone from God. Unbelievers will often say, “If I came to your church, the roof would cave in.” But the truth is, the reason the roof does not collapse when sinners enter a church is the same reason why the McCullough Memorial Bridge does not collapse when sinners walk or drive across it. Because God is patient (2Pet.3:9), not because God is not omnipresent. No one can escape the omnipresence of God – “*no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account*” (Heb.4:13).

- While this is certainly true, there is a sense in which God is “especially” present – i.e., sacred times and sacred places. Such times can be called the “holy ground” occurrences in the Bible. We can think of “*the Most Holy Place*” (or holy of holies”) in the temple (see Ex.26:33; 30:10; Heb.9:3, 7); when God spoke to Moses from “the burning bush” (Ex.3:1-6; Acts 7:3-34); the preincarnate Christ appearing to Joshua (Josh.5:13-15); the apostle Paul’s and apostle John’s encounter with the ascended and glorified Christ (Acts 9:3-8, Rev.1:9-17). If we were required to take our sandals off every time we were in the presence of God we would never be in sandals. To be sure, in all of these occasions God does not change but the human perspective or encounter with God changed.
- In this light, the Psalmist described two specific places in which we should worship God.

a. On earth ~ “*in his sanctuary*”

- The first place we are to praise God is “*in his sanctuary*” (vs.1). The Hebrew word (*qādaš*) translated “*sanctuary*” is very similar to our understanding of a sanctuary today. It refers to “a holy place” or “a place set aside from that which is common or profane.” The word is used to describe that which is designated as sacred. This reference in Psalm 150:1 is a bit ambiguous, leading scholars to disagree on its exact interpretation. Some believe it refers to God’s dwelling place in heaven; others suppose it to represent the temple in Jerusalem; and still others think this refers to the corporate gathering of God’s people.
- To be sure, wherever God’s people gather to worship God is a sacred place; a sanctuary. And so, in some sense, every one of these interpretations can be accurate. It seems most likely that, in contrast parallelism, the Psalmist was specifically referring to God’s temple in Jerusalem – the sacred place where God’s people gathered to worship Him. For the call is for God’s people (who are still alive, see vs.6) to worship God. By application, for us today, this applies to the corporate gathering of the church.

**1 Cor 3:16-17** ~ “Do you [2<sup>nd</sup> per. pl.] not know that you [2<sup>nd</sup> per. pl.] are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you [2<sup>nd</sup> per. pl.]? <sup>17</sup>If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you [2<sup>nd</sup> per. pl.] are that temple.” (see 1Cor.6:19; 2Cor.6:16)

**Eph 2:19-22** ~ “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

**Heb 10:19-25** ~ “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near with a true heart in full

assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

- While churches today do not all have a “sanctuary” – a room solely dedicated to corporate worship services – it is still important for us to view the place of worship as a sacred place. This perspective should affect how we act during a church worship service (our attitude, our attentiveness, our attire, our commitment). When the church gathers to worship God the place in which they worship is His sanctuary.

#### b. In heaven ~ “in his mighty heavens”

- Secondly, we are to “*praise [God] in his mighty heavens!*” (vs.1). This expression is a bit less confusing. For both those who conclude that “sanctuary” refers to God’s throne or abode in heaven, and those who see “sanctuary” as God’s temple on earth, tend to interpret the “*mighty heavens*” as not referring to the earth. The Hebrew word translated “*heavens*” (*rāqîa* ‘) can be translated “expanse” (see Gen.1:6-8,14-17) or “sky” (Ps.19:1; Dan.12:3). This could refer to “heavenly beings” (i.e., angels) or the “heavenly lights” (i.e., sun, stars, moon). In either case, the call to worship goes out to all non-physical (non-corporeal) creation (contrast vs.6).
- The “*heavens*” are referred to as “*mighty*” (‘ōz) as they are the powerful display of God’s strength and glory. God created the angels, and all heavenly beings. God created the universe (“known” and “unknown”), and all the planets, constellations, and galaxies. The heavens, and all that are in them, are praising God.

**Ps 19:1** ~ “The heavens [*šāmayim*] declare the glory of God, and the sky [*rāqîa* ‘] above proclaims his handiwork.”

**Ps 89:5** ~ “Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!” (Ps.97:6; 145:10)

**Ps 148:1-6** ~ “Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens [*šāmayim*]; praise him in the heights! <sup>2</sup>Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! <sup>3</sup>Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! <sup>4</sup>Praise him, you highest heavens [*šāmayim*; lit. heavens of heaven], and you waters above the heavens [*šāmayim*]! <sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created. <sup>6</sup>And he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.”

**1 Chron 16:31** ~ “Let the heavens [*šāmayim*] be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns!’”

- The point is both simple and profound. God is to be worshiped everywhere – by all His creation. We are called to worship God everywhere. No matter where we are, no matter what time it is, no matter the day of the week, no matter what we are doing ... we are to be praising God. When we praise God, we join the heavenly choir that is always praising God.

**1 Cor 10:31** ~ “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

### 3. Why should we worship Him? (vs.2)

- We are to worship God alone because He alone is God, and He alone is worthy of worship. He alone is the self-existing, sovereign, eternal God. He alone is our Creator and He alone is our Savior. All creation is the work of His hands, the expression of His divine will, and for the glory of His name. He alone is to be worshipped because He alone is worthy of worship.



**Ps 29:1-2** ~ “Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. <sup>2</sup>Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.”

**Rom 11:36** ~ “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” (see Acts 17:24-28)

➤ In verse two, the Psalmist divides the reasons to worship God into two categories.

a. His divine works ~ “for his mighty deeds”

➤ First, we are to praise God for all that He does: “*Praise him for his mighty deeds*” (vs.2). The English phrase “*mighty deeds*” translates one Hebrew word (*gebûrâ*) which describes power and strength – his powerful work or feats of strength. We used of God is describes His ultimately power over all things. No one has power equal to or greater than God; not even close!

**1 Chron 29:11-13** ~ “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power [*gebûrâ*] and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup>Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might [*gebûrâ*], and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. <sup>13</sup>And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.”

**Ps 145:4-6, 10-13** ~ “One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts [*gebûrâ*]. <sup>5</sup>On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. <sup>6</sup>They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. ... <sup>10</sup>All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you! <sup>11</sup>They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power [*gebûrâ*], <sup>12</sup>to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds [*gebûrâ*], and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. <sup>13</sup>Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. [The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.]”

**Ps 103:22** ~ “Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!”

➤ We are to praise God for all His divine works – past, present, and future! We praise God for His creation, His salvation, His judgement, His sanctification, and His providence. Everything God does is a display of His divine power and might. We are to praise God for all that He does.

b. His divine character ~ “according to his excellent greatness”

➤ Secondly, not only are we to praise God for all that He does, but we are also to praise God for all that He is – for His divine works and His divine character. We are to praise God “*according to his excellent greatness!*” (vs.2). The phrase “*excellent greatness!*” (*rôb gādal*) can also be translated “surpassing greatness” (NET) or “abundant greatness” (HCSB). The idea here is that God’s is infinitely greater than all others.

**Ps 145:3-6** ~ “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. <sup>4</sup>One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. <sup>5</sup>On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. <sup>6</sup>They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.”

**Ps 96:4-6** ~ “For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. <sup>5</sup>For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. <sup>6</sup>Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.”

➤ We are to praise God for His divine character – His nature and attributes – His sovereignty, His goodness, His love, His justice, His mercy, His omnipotence, and His holiness; just to name a few. God’s attributes are all equally true of God and are indelibly tied to one another. While they are distinct, they are inseparable. God’s nature is the absolute combination of all His perfect attributes.

We must worship God for who He is, and not just for what He has done for us. If we fail to worship God for who He is, we can fall to the capricious idolatry of self-worship – praising God because solely because (or only when) we think He had done good things for us.

#### 4. How should we worship Him? (vs.3-5)

➤ The decision of what instruments to use in a church worship service has resulted in what is called “worship wars.” The term “worship wars” describe the battle that is being waged among people in the church over the philosophy or liturgy (and sometimes theology) of worship. Typically, the battle lines drawn in this so-called war are over what style of music is going to be played during worship, what instruments are going to be used in worship, what type of songs will be played during worship, as well as what skill-level the worship leader ought to possess in order to lead worship.

From the midst of this war are the battle cries of hymns vs. choruses, organ vs. drums, traditional vs. contemporary, charismatic vs. meditative, seeker sensitive vs. spiritual edification, orchestra vs. praise band, formal vs. casual, doctrinal vs. emotional, and even (I kid you not) hymnal vs. visual projection. Churches literally fought and split over “worship” styles. Some churches, in an attempt to appease and cater to their congregation, even split their services according to “worship” styles (i.e., one service “traditional” and another service “contemporary”). Satan loves when Christians fight over such things, because that means they are not worshipping God (Satan does not care what you worship as long as you do not worship the one true God alone).

In my earlier days as a pastor, it was not uncommon to receive a phone call from someone considering attending our church. Seemingly more often than not, among the top of the list of questions asked was, “Do you have drums?”

➤ As we see in Psalm 150:3-5, and throughout the Bible, true worship is not relegated to certain instruments. Notice the variety of instruments noted in these verses: *“Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! <sup>4</sup>Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! <sup>5</sup>Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!”* (vs.3-5). It is fairly easy to identify: 1) Wind instruments ~ *“trumpet”* (vs.3; or “horn”), *“pipe”* (vs.4; or “flute”); 2) String instruments ~ *“lute”* (vs.3; or “lyre”), *“harp”* (vs.3), *“strings”* (vs.4); 3) Percussion instruments ~ *“tambourine”* (vs.4; or “timbrel”), *“cymbals”* (vs.5<sup>x2</sup>).

These instruments, and many more, are listed in the Bible as instruments of worship. The word *“dance”* (*māhōl*) is an anomaly in this list of instruments but describes the joyful and worshipful dance to the Lord (see Ex.15:20; Sam.6:15-16; Ps.30:11; 149:3).

➤ There is certainly no “worship war” over instruments in the Bible, nor is there any tension between hymns vs. choruses, old vs. new, or solemn vs. loud. We are commanded to sing to the Lord in worship, using various instruments and various songs and various expressions – *“a joyful noise to the LORD”* (Ps.98:4) – a heavenly orchestra of praise to God. Including the instrument of our voices.

✓ Illust: “The Spirit-filled life produces music. Whether he has a good voice or cannot carry a tune, the Spirit-filled Christian is a singing Christian. Nothing is more indicative of a fulfilled life, a contented soul, and a happy heart than the expression of song. ... When the believer walks in the Spirit, he has an inside joy that manifests itself in music. God puts music in the souls and then on the lips of His children who walk in obedience” (John MacArthur; *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*; 5:19).

**Col 3:16** ~ “Let the word of Christ dwell [*enoikeō*; imp. vb.] in you richly, teaching [*didaskō*; vb. part.] and admonishing [*noutheteō*; vb. part.] one another in all wisdom, singing [*adō*; vb. part.] psalms [*psalmos*] and hymns [*hymnos*] and spiritual songs [*pneumatikos ōdē*], with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (see Eph.5:19)

➤ Notice that worship is not relegated to singing alone. In a church service, the worship of God does not end once the singing ends (and the preaching begins). Preaching – the proclaiming and understanding of God’s Word – is a part (form) of worship. Unfortunately, it is popular today to refer to singing in

church as “worship.” Some churches even call their song leader a “worship leader” and their musicians the “worship team.” This can reinforce the misconception that worship is merely singing.

The truth is that our knowledge of the Word of God increases our capacity to worship God! It is only when we truly dig down into the depths of divine truth through God’s Word, that we can elevate to the heights of praise in true worship. A false or shallow understanding of Scripture can lead to a false or shallow worship.

- The real battleground of worship is not the music or the musicians, but the hearts and minds of the worshipper (see 1Sam.16:7; Ps.51:17; Is.57:15; 66:2; Amos 5:21; Matt.15:7-9; Jn.4:24). We must fight against spiritual arrogance and self-righteousness. We must fight against selfishness and self-centeredness. We must fight against insincerity and hypocrisy. We must fight against false doctrine and idolatry. We must always remember that the ultimate goal in worship is to truly, and solely, *“praise [God]”* (vs.3<sup>x2</sup>, 4<sup>x2</sup>, 5<sup>x2</sup>).

## 5. Who should worship Him? (vs.6)

- As we come to this last question, we find it totally comprehensive: *“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!”* (vs.6). There is absolutely no ambiguity here. If it breathes it should worship Yahweh! In fact, with every breath we are to praise the Lord.

**Ps 148:7-12** ~ “Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps, <sup>8</sup>fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word! <sup>9</sup>Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! <sup>10</sup>Beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds! <sup>11</sup>Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! <sup>12</sup>Young men and maidens together, old men and children!”

**Rev 5:13** ~ “And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!’”

- What about those who refuse to worship God? We know that those who die in rebellion against God will, in their condemnation, worship God. The solemn fact is, one day *“every”* knee will bow before the God the Son, and *“every”* tongue will confess Him as Lord – either voluntarily or involuntarily – even Satan and His demons.

**Phil 2:9-11** ~ “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Is.45:23-24; Rev.5:13-14).

**1 Cor 10:31** ~ “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

## Conclusion

- This Psalm, and the entire book of Psalms, ends with a universal command for everyone to praise the Lord. The Lord has given every living thing breath, and He demands and deserves that that breath is used to praise Him; that we, as humans, join with all creation and the heavenly hosts in worshipping God and Him alone.

Verse 1

You made the starry hosts / You traced the mountain peaks  
You paint the evening sky with wonders / The earth, it is Your throne  
From desert to the sea / All nature testifies Your splendor



Chorus

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord / Sing His greatness all creation  
Praise the Lord, raise your voice / You heights and all you depths  
From furthest east to west / Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

Verse 2

You reached into the dust / In love, Your Spirit breathed  
You formed us in Your very likeness / To know Your wondrous works  
To tell Your mighty deeds / To join the everlasting chorus

Verse 3

Let symphonies resound / Let drums and choirs ring out  
All heaven hear the sound of worship / Let every nation bring  
Its honors to the King / A roar of harmonies eternal

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