

## Lord, teach us to Worship Part 4: The Biblical expressions of Worship

As we continue on with our series, “Lord, teach us to Worship,” I think it’s important to focus in on this series title and header: Lord, teach us to Worship; because many in our Christian and church culture approach worship along the lines of “Lord, lead me to the worship *that I like* and *that I am comfortable with...*” instead of Lord, teach me what it means to worship You according to Your Word. Are you open to learning about worship that looks different than what you have been exposed to or have experienced in your Christian walk and church life? More importantly, are you open to actually worshipping differently than you have up to this point in your Christian life and church experience, *if* it’s Biblical and the Spirit of God leads you too?

In today’s study of the Scriptures, we will be looking at Biblical Expressions of Worship. In other words, the Bible shows us many different ways that God is worshipped, specifically in this case through musical worship, which we said last week, has a prominent place throughout the Scriptures.

The Bible, has been described as, through an acronym as the B.I.B.L.E. = Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. It is Life’s instruction manual and one of the areas it instructs us in is worship.

Today I want to focus on 3 different areas in musical worship:

1. 3 main types of musical worship
2. The 7 Hebrew words for the English word that gets translated “Praise” (and...)
3. Some of the many different “expressions” of worship that we see throughout the Bible

There are 3 main types of musical worship: ***Celebration, Praise and Adoration.***

In **Ephesians 5:19**, we see some instructions by the Apostle Paul that mentions three different types of worship: Psalms, Hymns and spiritual songs. Hymns fit into the first category = Celebration. Celebration is singing *about* God. Psalms and Spiritual songs can fit in both categories of Praise and Adoration. Psalms and Spiritual songs can be declaring things about God, but can often be directing praise and adoration *to* God, as well.

You’ll often notice in the Psalms of the Bible at times, the Psalmist is declaring things about God, and then directing his Psalm towards God and then all of a sudden it turns into *God* speaking through the Psalmist, making declarations of His own!

Spiritual songs are literally, in the translation of the original language: songs in the spirit, or spontaneous or new songs. There are quite a few Scriptures that admonish us to “sing new songs” to the Lord: **Psalm 33, 96, 98 144, 149** and **Isaiah 42**; nine times in total.

Praise songs are often transition songs, as we move from celebrating the goodness of God and His attributes and benefits, into a more intimate time of worshipping God directly and seeking to be in His presence: Adoration.

Remember last week, when we looked at the Temple Model of Worship, it was moving from the Outer Courts, to the Inner Courts, to the Holy Place and then into the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was and the presence of God was. That should always be the goal of our worship, to be with Him, to tangibly feel His presence, both individually and corporately.

God inhabits the praises of His people (**Psalm 22:3**); God seeks out true worshippers, who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (**John 4:23,24**); God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (**Hebrews 11:6**). What is the reward? His presence. "In His presence is fullness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures forever more." (**Psalm 16:11**)

Yet again, the English language fails us when we simply look at all the words in the Hebrew (and Greek) that get translated poorly in our English version of the Scriptures (Zhodiat's plug).

The word "praise" in the English could be defined as "an expression of admiration; an act of worship." But in the original language of the Bible, we see words that have a very specific meaning and/or action: Let's look at the 7 Hebrew Words for Praise in the Old Testament.

For an example, let's read **Psalm 150 [SLIDE]**

***Praise the LORD!***  
***Praise God in His sanctuary;***  
***Praise Him in His mighty expanse.***  
***Praise Him for His mighty deeds;***  
***Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.***  
***Praise Him with trumpet sound;***  
***Praise Him with harp and lyre.***  
***Praise Him with timbrel and dancing;***  
***Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.***  
***Praise Him with loud cymbals;***  
***Praise Him with resounding cymbals.***  
***Let everything that has breath praise <sup>[d]</sup>the LORD.***  
***Praise the LORD!***

First off, this Psalm gives us specific reasons to praise God and specific ways to praise Him, including musical instruments (some of them being played loudly) and that word for "praise" in the Hebrew is specific. It's the word Halal, which is the root word for the word we are more familiar with in the church: Hallelujah. There are 6 other words in the Hebrew that have a very specific definition, and command to Praise God in a specific manner. Let's look at them:

- Yadah: To worship, give thanks, or praise, and to lift the hands. For example, "My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him".
- Towdah: To lift the hands in thanksgiving.
- Shabach: A loud, joyous shout of testimony.
- Zamar: To worship the Lord while playing an instrument; to touch the strings.
- Barak: To kneel in reverence and submission.
- Halal: To praise, boast, shine, rave, be clamorously foolish, or act madly. For example, "I called to the Lord who is worthy of praise, (Hallal) and have been saved from my enemies"

The word, Halal (which appears 165 times in the OT) is where we get the popular word, Hallelujah (which, by the way, is the only word in the entire world that is the same in every language); and it means "praise the Lord" So, we say "praise the Lord" generically, all the time in church, in casual conversation, but there are specific ways to praise the Lord, depending on which Scripture you happen to be reading.

These 7 Hebrew words are just the specific ways that the word "praise" is defined in the Old Testament; there are many other Scriptures that show other Biblical expressions of worship:

***"O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. Thus, I have seen You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise You. So, I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name."*** -Psalm 63:1-4

***"Lift up your hands to the sanctuary and bless the LORD."*** -Psalm 134:2

***"Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground."*** -Nehemiah 8:6

***"We lift up our heart and hands toward God in heaven..."*** -Lamentations 3:41

***"O clap your hands, all peoples; Shout to God with the voice of joy [triumph]."*** -Psalm 47:1

The Psalms are full of different expressions of worship towards God; over 50 different physical ways to worship Him. Is He not worthy of these expressions? We can go to sporting events and get hysterical cheering on a team... but come to church and we just sit there or stand with our hands in our pockets, not even singing about the greatest being in the universe, who did the greatest act of all time, *for us...!!!*

We've been trained well... our church cultures have taught us what is acceptable and what is not, without even consulting the Bible or the Spirit of God.

We are called by God to love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and STRENGTH. We are to love God with our WHOLE being: voice... body... It means worshipping God with all that you are, all of you.

Now, some will answer: that's just emotionalism. Is it? Are we not allowed to express emotions in church? Are some emotions acceptable and some are not? Are emotions bad? Is it okay to express sadness and grief in the church, but not joy and happiness and laughter?

When the disciples returned after Jesus commissioned them and they came back with reports of healings, demons being cast out, etc. we see this recorded in the Gospels:

***"At that very time He [Jesus] rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit..." -Luke 10:21 (emphasis mine)***

The Greek word translated as "rejoiced greatly" is Agalliao and it means to "jump for joy, exult, be very glad, or to laugh uncontrollably."

God is a God with emotions. We have them because we are made in His image. Emotions are not bad. Sure, we don't let them drive the car, but we don't put them in the trunk either.

Others may say, "I just don't like certain musical styles of worship." Worship doesn't have a style or a sound, it has a heart posture. When we care more about the style and our preferences, then we do the One whom we worship, there is a problem...

When we say "I'll only worship God in this one style or one way..." it's like someone who knows God is calling them to missions and then saying, "But God, I'll only go to this one place that I want to go to... don't ask me to go anywhere else, because this is one place is my preference; it's what I'm comfortable with." Who is the Potter and who is the clay? **[RICK STORY: cassette]**

***"As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"***

***Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" -Luke 19:37-40***

Are you going to let some rocks out praise you? Take your focus off the music and put it onto the One who is worthy of our worship. Follow the Scriptural examples of expressions of worship and be led by the Holy Spirit. Do not worry about what others will think. You are worshipping to an audience of One.