

The Commands & Cause to Praise the Lord

Psalm 149:1-9

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Introduction: We come tonight to the 4th of the five Hallelujah Psalms that close the Psalter. Three weeks ago we considered Psalm 148, which I entitled “The Call for Universal Praise.” There we noted: Heavenly praise (:1-6), Earthly praise (:7-10), & “Humanly” praise (:11-14). Plumer declares: “There can be no circumstances in which *hallelujahs* will be ill-timed. We may sing in view of what (Who) God is, in view of what He has done, in view of what He has promised, at all times, in all circumstances, publicly & privately.” It is suggested that Nehemiah is possibly the author, but that is not conclusive. Whoever the author is, the psalm is another “song of the saints.” Wiersbe sees the theme of the psalm as worship, & says, “The most important activity of the local church is the worship of God, for this is the activity we will continue in heaven for all eternity. This psalm is a primer on worship & gives us the basic instructions we need.” He outlines it: “Worship the Lord Intelligently (:1-2), Worship the Lord Fervently (:3-4), Worship the Lord Gratefully (:5), & Worship the Lord Triumphantly (:6-9).” I suggest 2 parts to the Psalm: The commands to praise (:1-6) & the cause to praise (:7-9).

I. The commands to sing praise to the Lord (:1-6)

A. A new song (:1-3) >

1. The new song is to come from the heart. “The glory of God is new every morning. New mercies demand new praises” (Plumer). Compare Psalm 40:3 & congregational singing. Note: “The ‘old man’ (Eph. 4:22) can never sing the ‘new song’; for a change of hymn there must be a change of heart” (Scroggie).
2. A natural rejoicing...”it is a summons to the truly pious to be glad in the Redeemer, & to make known their joys by suitable songs” (Plumer). Note: The Lord is both the Creator & King of His people.
3. A noted “*dance*.” Ryrie writes: “In the O.T., whirling motion done by a single individual or by a large group, not by couples (cf. II Sam. 6:16).” Note: “The dances, of course, were not modern ballroom or disco dances but rather interpretive dances that pointed to the Lord & not some person’s talent (see Ex. 15:20; Judges 11:34; I Sam. 18:6; Jer. 31:4).” Consider also the words of Scroggie (copy).

B. A known Savior (4-6) >

1. The **delight** in His people (:4):
 - a. “*Beautify*” means to “adorn” & the word “*salvation*” speaks of deliverance & prosperity.
 - b. “The King of heaven will honor the *meek, humble, or afflicted*, & He will also make them glorious with salvation, complete, entire, everlasting in heaven” (Plumer).
2. The **declaration** by His people (:5-6):
 - a. “*Rejoice*” (greatly rejoice) & “*sing aloud*” (shout for joy) even upon their “*beds*”? Beds of sickness or even dying? Note: “Songs in the night now take the place of tears & sorrow (4:4; 6:1). They can lie down in peace without fear of being roused to repel a sudden assault (cf. Neh. 4:23)” (Kirkpatrick).
 - b. “*High praise of God be in their mouth, & a two-edged sword in their hand.*” A devouring sword & compare Nehemiah 4:9, 16. The builders prayed but also kept their swords close at hand.

II. The cause to sing praise to the Lord (:7-9)

A. The vengeance by the Lord (:7-9a) >

1. Future – “*To execute vengeance*” to be fulfilled “...in the destruction of the systems of heathenism itself by the Gospel preached among the nations” (Plumer).

Note: See Isaiah 60:12 & compare Luke 4:21.

2. Future – “*To bind their kings with chains...*” – this denotes conquest, the victory of truth & righteousness; demonstrates the power of the Gospel & the powerlessness of the mighty.

Note: “*the judgment written*” – the judgment written in prophecy; prophets in the O.T. who preached the ultimate judgment of the nations.

B. The victory of His people (:9b) >

1. The saints have a part in the triumph of the Redeemer by virtue of their prayers & holy living.

2. The closing word of the saints: “*Hallelujah*” – Praise ye the Lord!

Conclusion: This Psalm could rightly be summarized as: “The Song of the Saints.” Singing & rejoicing are evidences of true revival & “times of song birth” (Scroggie). Consider the revivals of the 18th century (1700’s), which produced soul-stirring hymns. In our hymnal we have 13 songs by Charles Wesley, such as #1 – “Rejoice the Lord is King”; one song by John Wesley, #255 – “Jesus, Thy Blood & Righteousness”; one hymn by William Cowper, # 258 – “There is a Fountain”; 2 by Philip Doddridge, such as #517 – “O Happy Day”; 2 by John Newton, most noted for #147 – “Amazing Grace”; 2 Hymns by Augustus Toplady, such as #451 – “Rock of Ages”; & 12 songs by Isaac Watts, such as #6 – “I Sing the Mighty Power of God.”

Saints have both a song in their heart & a sword in their hand. In the O.T. the conflict was literal & physical - not personal vengeance but against the enemies of God. In the Church Age, Christians are soldiers, but our warfare is not conducted with carnal weapons, but spiritual (see II Cor. 10:3-4 & cf. I Tim. 6:12). As such, we need to put on the entire armor of God (Eph. 6:12-18). Wiersbe comments: “The church must take worship very seriously & realize that worship is a part of the believer’s warfare. To ignore worship, trivialize it, turn it into entertainment, or make it a routine activity is to play right into the hands of the enemy. It is an honor to serve in the Lord’s army of worshiping warriors!”

How about you tonight? Are you a worshiping warrior?