

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Adult Bible Fellowship
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Psalm 150 — The Final Hallel's Doxology

1.0 Introducing Psalm 150

- The Psalter's "Final Hallel" consists of five psalms (Pss 146–150) that each begin and end with "Hallelujah" (= "Praise the LORD").
- As the final psalm, Psalm 150 serves as the closing doxology for Book 5 as well as for the entire Psalter.
- Psalm 150 commands praise for God thirteen times.
- This psalm appears to elaborate on Psalm 145:21,
My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,
And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.
- According to the Jerusalem Talmud (*Bikkurim* 3:2), the celebrants bringing the first fruits to Jerusalem would recite Psalm 150 during their procession.

2.0 Reading Psalm 150 (NAU)

150:1 Praise the LORD!

Praise God in His sanctuary;
Praise Him in His mighty expanse.

150:2 Praise Him for His mighty deeds;
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

150:3 Praise Him with trumpet sound;
Praise Him with harp and lyre.

150:4 Praise Him with timbrel and dancing;
Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.

150:5 Praise Him with loud cymbals;
Praise Him with resounding cymbals.

150:6 Let everything that has breath **praise** the LORD.

Praise the LORD!

3.0 Understanding Psalm 150

3.1 Outline

- I. **Where** to Praise the LORD (v. 1)
- II. **Why** Praise the LORD (v. 2)
- III. **How** to Praise the LORD (vv. 3–5)
- IV. **Who** to Praise the LORD (v. 6)



3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “in His sanctuary”
 - Although “sanctuary” could refer to God’s “holiness,” the parallel (“mighty expanse,” cp. Ps 19:1) indicates a place rather than an attribute.
 - Since the parallel is the expanse of heaven, “His sanctuary” might indicate the heavenly sanctuary, God’s abode.
 - This interpretation does not exclude praise by mankind on earth, since the angels in heaven model the praise mankind should imitate (Rev 14:6–7; 19:10; 22:9).
- **v. 2** “His mighty deeds”
 - See Psalms 106:2, 145:4, and 12.
 - These deeds include creation and the deliverance of Israel.
- **v. 3** “with trumpet”
 - Note the variety of musical instruments that the psalmist directs in praise:
 - ✓ Wind instruments:
 - “trumpet” (*shofar*)—the ram’s horn blown on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9) and other special occasions (Ps 81:3; Joel 2:15). David employed it in worship (2 Sam 6:15).
 - “pipe” (*ugav*)—perhaps something like a panpipe. Appearances include Genesis 4:21, Job 21:12 and 30:31, and here. Sometimes translated “flute.”
 - ✓ Stringed instruments:
 - “harp” (*nevel*)—perhaps with a slanting yoke—one type, at least, has 10 strings (Pss 33:2; 144:9). See 2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Chronicles 15:16; 16:5
 - “lyre” (*kinnor*)—perhaps with a sounding box. First mentioned in Genesis 4:21. It is David’s instrument (1 Sam 16:16, 23). Psalmists used it in singing praise to God (Pss 43:4; 71:22).
 - “stringed instruments” (*minnim*)—Appears only here and in Psalm 45:8.

✓ Percussion instruments:

— “timbrel” (*tof*)—the tambourine, which women play as they dance (Exod 15:20). It accompanies assemblages of instruments used by prophets (1 Sam 10:5), those bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:5), and in singing praise to God (Pss 81:1–2; 149:3).



— “cymbals” (*tsiltsilim*, 2x)—two metal plates (usually copper) banged together to make a clanging sound; the text might refer to two kinds of cymbals. This word for cymbals occurs only here and in 2 Samuel 6:5. A related word appears 11x in Chronicles and also in Ezra 3:10 and Nehemiah 12:27.

- “They include instruments that would be played by priests (the horn), by Levites (harp, lyre, cymbals), and by laypeople (tambourine, strings, pipe).”—John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3 vols., Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 3:748.
- “[I]nstruments as accompaniments to praise, or any aspect of prayer for that matter, are God’s will as His Scripture frequently shows. David led in organizing musical ministry (1 Chr. 22–29), and it exercised a strategic role under the guidance of several later kings. It also was sorely missed in the exile (Ps. 137), and important under Ezra and Nehemiah, in the inter-testamental era, and among New Testament believers. So it has usually had a stimulating ministry ever since. And heaven is filled with music as the Book of Revelation reflects.”—James E. Rosscup, *An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible: Igniting the Fuel to Flame Our Communication With God*, electronic ed. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2008), 1001.

- v. 4 “dance”
 - See notes on Psalm 149:3.
- v. 5 “loud . . . resounding”
 - Worship at the Tabernacle and in the Temple was not always quiet or subdued in tone.
 - The Old Testament does not depict worship music as entertainment. It did not matter which instruments were employed, but how they were used and why.
- v. 6 “everything that has breath”
 - The psalmist calls on all living creatures to praise the Lord—both mankind and animal life.
 - The same phrase occurs in Joshua 10:40 (cp. Gen 2:7; 7:22).
- v. 6 “Praise the LORD!”
 - “Hallelujah!”—“This is the message of the Psalms in one breath.”—Rosscup, *Exposition on Prayer in the Bible*, 1001.

4.0 Singing Psalm 150

“Praise Him in His Sanctuary”
(Tune: “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”)



Praise Him in His Sanctuary.
Praise Him in His Mighty Heav'n.
Praise Him for His acts of Power.
Praise for He alone is great.
Praise Him with the sounding trumpet.
Praise Him with the Harp and Lyre.
Tambourine, strings, flute and dancing, clashing cymbals tell His power.

Praise Him everything that's living.
Praise Him everything with breath.
Praise Him all ye saints of Heaven.
Praise Him ransomed souls from death.
For our God is high exalted,
In Heaven's throne He reigns supreme.
Yet our Mighty Holy Father condescends to dwell in me.

— Words: Two Anonymous Bereans (2009)

5.0 Praying Psalm 150

- Father, I praise You for all Your mighty deeds. [v. 2]
- Thank You for the musical instruments used in worshipping You. [vv. 3–5]
- Lord, may my last breath be used to praise You. [v. 6]
- HALLELUJAH! [v. 6]

6.0 Applying Psalm 150

- God desires that we use musical instruments as accompaniments to praise.
- We should not allow entertainment value to determine our worship music.
- All who breathe should praise God and praise should be our breath.

Psalm 150 teaches that all available instruments were to be used by Israel for the praise of God in worship. The range of instruments went from simple flute to complex harp, from soft lyre to loud resounding cymbals. Even though these instruments had been borrowed from neighboring nations with pagan associations, all were to be used rightly in the praise of God. Ultimately He is to be seen as the source of everything good, including music and instrumentation.

— Ronald Barclay Allen, *The Wonder of Worship: A New Understanding of the Worship Experience*, electronic ed., Swindoll Leadership Library (Nashville: Word, 2001), 180 fn. 2

*Having reached the final summit of the Psalter's mountain chain of praises,
let's look to the day when we shall stand in the highest heavens
praising the Most High God.*