

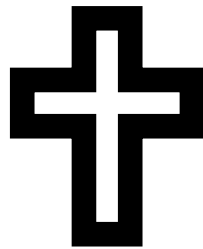
Twelve Lessons

on

The Book of Psalms
Volume Three

by

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PERPETUAL PRAISE – LESSON 1

Psalm 113

Introduction: This psalm of praise exalts the majesty of God. It is the beginning of a range of six psalms (Ps. 113-118) which the Jews called the Hallel psalms. The word Hallel means “praise.” These psalms were sung at three of the annual celebrations of Israel – the Passover feast, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Psalms 113-114 were sung before the Passover meal, and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the Passover. Matthews Gospel reveals Jesus and His disciples sang an “hymn” (Mt. 26:30) which would have been taken from the later portion of the Hallel (Ps. 115-118). Herbert Lockyer calls this psalm “Magnificat of the Old Testament.” (A Devotional Commentary on the Psalms, pg. 477). Charles Spurgeon said: “Praise is the honey of life which a devout heart extracts from every bloom of providence and grace.” (Ps. 30:11-12)

Lesson Goals:

1. To examine those who are to praise the Lord.
2. To analyze the force or pressure to praise the Lord.
3. To research the responses to praise.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Hallelujah – Greek form of the Hebrew word Hallelujah, used to express joy, praise, and thanksgiving. The words, "Praise the Lord," found often in the Psalms, are a translation of the Hebrew Hallelujah (Ps 104:35; 116:19; 147:1). The word was probably a standardized call to worship in the Temple, since it usually appears at the beginning or end of a psalm. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. LORD – In small letters and with initial capital "Lord" represents Adonai in KJV of Old Testament. In capitals LORD represents Jehovah. "GOD" in capitals also represents Jehovah (Gen 15:2, 'Adonay (OT:136) Yahweh (OT:3068)). "God" in small letters, with initial capital, represents 'Elohiym. (Fausset's Bible Dictionary).
3. Dunghill – The rendering in KJV of three Heb. words and one Gk., and meaning: (1) a heap of manure. Figurative. To sit upon a dung heap denoted the deepest degradation and ignominy (1 Sam 2:8; Ps 113:7; Lam 4:5). (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).

I. CALLED TO PRAISE – Ps 113:1-3 – This hymn is a song of joy and praise to the name of God. We are too slow to praise the Lord so God calls and compels us to praise Him.

A. Personal Praise – “Praise, ye the LORD” – The first phrase of the psalm opens with a Hallelujah. The exhortation to praise is given five times in this great psalm (Ps. 113:1,3,9).

1. Distinct Praise – “O ye servants of the LORD” – The servants of God are directed to praise the Lord. The word “servants” is the Hebrew word “ebed” and means a bondman. The Old Testament bondman is a powerful picture of one who potentially pledges his lifelong allegiance and service to his master (Ex. 21:1-6). Who is more qualified than those who have been redeemed by His blood, enlisted by His grace to praise His name, and marked out for time and eternity to serve the Lord of Glory.
2. Directed Praise – “praise the name of the LORD” – The name of Jehovah was the name which saved them out of the land of Egypt from the hand of Pharaoh and the name which would satisfy their every need (Ps. 81:10). The people of God were encouraged to rejoice in the God who had saved them and could satisfy them (Ps. 89:16). God's earthly people, the Jews, were to praise the name of Jehovah, God's heavenly people the Church, are to praise the name of Jesus. We realize that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament.
 - a. Saving Name – Acts 4:12 – “none other name”
 - b. Sheltering Name – Prov. 18:10 – “runneth into it”
 - c. Supplying Name – Jn. 14:13;15:7 – “in my name”

B. Perpetual Praise – These words remind us of the command of Paul “Rejoice evermore.” (1 Thess. 5:16) The psalmist calls upon us to let the joy bells ring and the praise resound as we think upon the name of the LORD.

1. Timely Praise – “from this time forth” – When we think of it logically, praise must have a beginning to be timely. There are times when nothing can soothe the soul and refresh the heart like Spirit led praise and worship. When we think of it historically we remember that the disciples sang these words in the Upper room. When sung before the last Passover meal the phrase – “from this time forth” takes on new meaning. From this time forth – from Calvary on – Raises a new level of praise for the believer.
2. Daily Praise – “from the rising of the sun...”

The Levites were instructed to praise the Lord at least twice a day (1 Chron. 23:30). The psalmist praised God at least seven times a day (Ps. 119:164). Surely on this side of Calvary every blood bought, Spirit indwelt believer can praise the Lord daily. From dawn till dusk, from the commencement to the conclusion of every day we are enlisted to praise the name of our God. From the eastern sunrise to the western sunset – these remind us of the removal of our sins by Calvary's blood (Ps. 103:12; 1 Jn. 3:5) – always an incentive to praise!

3. Continual Praise – “and forevermore”

Praise must take its place in time, and praise shall continue when time shall be no more. The psalmist tells us 160 times in the Hebrew Hymnbook that we should praise our God. The psalmist cast's his eye far beyond the veil of this life when all the ransomed Church of God would praise the Lamb of God forever more (Rev. 4:12-14).

II. COMPELLED TO PRAISE – Ps. 113:4-6 – The compulsion to praise never comes from the standpoint of individual worthiness or accomplishment. The compulsion to praise is always rooted in who God is, and what He has done (Rev. 4:11; 5:12). We praise not because of our worthiness but because of His.

A. High and Holy – “the LORD is high above” (vv4,5) – He reigns supreme above His creation. Heaven is His throne, earth His footstool, the clouds the dust of His feet and the stars twinkle below Him. We are compelled to praise Him because of His exaltation. He is equally incomparable in Heaven and in earth (Ps. 89:6). No angelic being in Heaven nor any executive upon the earth can match the majesty of God. He has set His glory above the heavens for they cannot contain Him (1 Kings 8:27). He is so vast that He must inhabit eternity (Isa. 57:15).

B. Meek and Lowly – “Who humbleth himself” – We are compelled to praise Him for His humiliation (Phil. 2:6-8). He is so exalted that He is above all things, yet He is so lowly that He stooped and humbled Himself to meet our need. “In His incarnation, Jesus stooped through the immense distance between heaven and earth to become man. Phil. 2:6-8. The two propositions human reason will never be able to unite are Who dwelleth on high, but He humbleth Himself, yet the two are in perfect harmony in the greatest text in the Bible...(Jn. 3:16)” (Lockyer, pg, 481).

III. CONSIDERATE PRAISE – Ps. 113:7-9 – Our praise is considerate because of God's compassionate mercy upon us in our low estate. When we consider His mercy, grace and power on our behalf, praise is our only rightful response.

A. Our Poverty – “raiseth the poor out of the dust” – The Hebrew word for poor means thin weak or lean. As sinners we are bankrupt and helplessly poor to offer anything to God. Yet he raised us from the rags to riches, guilt to grace and from poverty to the palace. “In Britain, the highest honor to be coveted is elevation to The House of Lords, but how such an exaltation fades into nothingness alongside of being made to sit among the princes of God's people. How blest we are if among those elevated to the Peerage of Heaven, we live forever in the House of the Lord of lords!” (Lockyer, pg 482). We are now princes in the ranks of paradise (Ps. 113:8). A prince is a child of the King (Rev. 1:6)! He has raised us from paupers to make us princes in Christ. It is interesting to note that in the opening portion we are called “servants” and here we are deemed to be princes. The portion of the Lord's servants will one day be realized as we are lifted to His palace in paradise.

B. Our Plight – “liftheth the needy out of the dunghill” – “Both in Syria and Palestine, a man shut out from society would lie upon the *magbele*, or dunghill, or heap of ashes, by day calling upon passers by for alms, and by night hiding himself in the heap that had been warmed by the sun. Yet the compassionate eye of God is ever open on the lowest of the low, and is ever ready to grace and exalt those of low degree.” (Lockyer, pp. 481,482). The dust and the dunghill speak vividly of where we are outside of Christ. We are sinners by nature and sinners by choice. We are identified in Adam's sin and condemned by our own sin of unbelief (Rom. 5:12; Jn. 3:18). He knew we could never lift ourselves out of the dust and dunghill of this life, therefore He stooped down to rescue us! We could not come to where He was so He condescended to come to us.

C. His Power – “He maketh the barren woman to keep house” – One of the significant features of shame in the Eastern economy was to be childless (1 Sam. 1:6,7). The barrenness of the Eastern woman was a source of great social shame and personal sorrow. The barren woman was considered one who was not favored by the Lord with a child. However, an even greater shame is the shame of sinfulness – which God can deliver us from in Christ.

CONCLUSION – This Psalm ends like it begins – “Praise ye the LORD.” Hallelujah! All the subject matter is

enveloped between two Hallelujah's. When the noted agnostic Robert Ingersoll died, the printed funeral notices said, "There will be no singing." We need not look for hymns, carols or spiritual songs among infidels, agnostics or skeptics. When a person is without God, without Christ, and without hope they have nothing to sing joyfully about. We do not marvel that the songwriter tells us:

Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God,
But children of a Heavenly King can speak His praise abroad.