



Psalms 148-150

Psalm 148-150
Tape #7217
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Psalm one hundred and forty-eight as we continue our journey through the Bible. The Psalms are devoted to a great part to praising the Lord. They are songs of praise. The Psalms of course were the Hebrew hymnal. These were written to be sung. These are the lyrics of the songs. We don't know the melodies. But they were written to be sung. A great part of them are devoted to praising God. And many of them are devoted to exhorting people to praise God. And it is, I guess, quite fitting that the last of the Psalms, beginning with one hundred and forty-six, all begin and end with the Hebrew word, hallelujah, which means, "Praise the Lord". These are Psalms in which we are exhorted to man's highest capacity and that is that capacity to praise the Lord. Man comes to the ultimate of his life experiences when he devotes himself to praise unto God. And thus the exhortations here at the end of the Psalms. So these last Psalms are really devoted to the exhorting of the people to praise the Lord.

Now in Psalm 148, *Praise ye the LORD*. (The beginning with a hallelujah. And then) *Praise ye the LORD from the heavens*: So the Psalmist, first of all, he's going to call, really, pretty much the whole universe into praise. And he begins with the highest order of created beings, the angels. Those in the heavens.

praise him in the heights. ²*Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.* These are the heavenly hosts. Now just who they are and what they are, will remain for us a mystery until we're there. But just the various of hosts of heaven that God has created. We know that angels are in various orders or ranks. There are the cherubim. There are the seraphim. There are the great and mighty angels. They are divided into ranks of principalities of powers and might and thrones and dominions. And no doubt, it's a reference to the various orders. And thus the exhortation for the hosts of heaven to praise God.

³*Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.* Still dealing with the heavens, the sun, the moon, all the stars of light, praise the Lord!

⁴*Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,* Now this is probably a reference to the universe as such. The Bible speaks of three heavens. There is that heaven, which is the atmosphere around the earth. As God created the birds that fly through the heavens, the atmosphere around the earth. The second heaven is your celestial heaven, the stars, the moon, the planets and so forth—in the heavens. We look up into the heavens at night. The third heaven is the place of God's dwelling, wherever that may be. Paul the apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, said, there was a man in Christ about fourteen years ago. And whether or not I was in the body or out of the body, I don't know. Maybe I had an out of the body experience, but I was caught up into the third heaven. And there I heard things that were so amazing, so remarkable, that it would be a crime to try and describe them in human language—the glory, the wonder, the awe, of the dwelling place of God! It's so awesome that man hasn't language that can communicate these truths. There are not words that can describe them, so there is no way to communicate.

Now, in the existentialism philosophy today, they talk a lot about truth is what you experience it to be and thus truth is relative. It may be true to you, but not true to the next person. We all interpret things as we see them. So you look at the modern art and you try to interpret it. What do you see in all of those globs of paint that were thrown at that canvas? Well, it looks like a camel. A camel? Where do you see a camel? Well, you see that little hump there and that leg down there, you know. And so you try to interpret it. Now, as we stand together in the gallery, looking at the modern art. I look at it and I say, what in the world is that? What were they thinking of when they just put an eye over here and a nose down here and a big toe over here. I mean it doesn't come together. It doesn't make sense. And it's trying to get across a message, but I can't interpret it. Just pull yourself together, man, let's not go to pieces. It's just—what are they trying to tell me? Now as we stand together looking at the art, I'm wondering what in the world do you see in that? And you will hear someone say, isn't that lovely? Isn't that marvelous? And I say, what?

Now, you see, this is an illustration of the existentialism philosophy. It is you interpreting it as you see it. I interpret it as I see it—trash! And yet someone pays \$100,000 for that thing. They must see in it something that I don't. But that's the idea of existentialism philosophy. Every man develops his own value. He sees in it what he see, but what he sees, may not be what I see. And thus what is true to him may not be true to me. And every man develops his own value system of what is right and what is wrong. And that is basically is the idea of the existential philosophy.

In existential philosophy, they talk much of the "ultimate experience" because it's searching for that experience that will interpret to you as the ultimate experience of life. And what might be the ultimate experience to you may not be to me. Now they have discussed the fact that death may indeed be the ultimate experience of life. But you won't know until you experience it. But in talking of this ultimate experience, if you should ever have it, because it is the ultimate experience, it would be impossible for you to describe it to someone else, because there aren't any words in the vocabulary of man that could describe the ultimate experience. And thus you would be sort of at a loss of trying to describe it. You might have it but you're going to have sort of just keep it to yourself because there aren't words that could express or describe it to someone else. Now it's sort of frustrating and all to have an experience that you can't share with someone! You know half the fun is sharing it, relating it to someone else. Oh you don't know what we did last weekend, it was a blast, you know. And you like to relate the experiences of life to others.

I heard of a preacher that got into golf. And finally golf got into him. He became an addict. He was like the fellow who got ready to tee off. This hearse went by with all of the cars following it. The guy took off his hat and stood there at attention until the whole funeral procession went by. He put his hat back on and teed off. His other three fellows who were with him on the foursome, said, hey man, you're old fashioned. They don't do that anymore. Don't you know that you know, when funerals go by, you don't your hat off. They used to but they don't do that anymore. He said, well, that's the least I could do for my wife.

They say that golf can really get a hold of a guy. And the pastor was one of those, where golf really got hold of him. So much so, that he started sneaking out on Sunday mornings before the first service, to get in eighteen holes—get up at the crack of dawn, go out and play eighteen holes. He was just into golf. His guardian angel was talking with another angel and telling of the problem that he was having with this minister that he was watching, that he was so into golf that he was neglecting his ministry. And he's actually going out now on Sunday morning and playing golf. He'll be out this morning, you watch at the crack of dawn, he'll be out there playing before he goes to church. He's not putting the time into study and all, that he should be because golf has gotten such a hold on his life. So his angel friend, oh, I'll take care of that for you. He said, oh, I would appreciate that. So, he said, come on let's go down to watch him. So the fellow got up to the first tee. It was a four hundred and seventy five yard to the green. And the minister stood there. He addressed the ball and he came off with his swing. And the angel grabbed the ball, carried it through the air all the way up to the green and let it roll and guided it right into the cup. It plopped right in! And his guardian angel said, what in the world are you doing? I told you I was having a problem with guy! And now you give him a hole in one on a four hundred seventy five yard hole. What's wrong with you? Are you crazy? He said, no. Who's he going to tell? It's awful not being able to tell something like that you know, something exciting.

And so, if you would have the ultimate experience, you wouldn't be able to relate it, because there aren't words. There isn't a language that can express. So if you say to a friend of yours, you know, last week I had the ultimate experience of life. If they would say to you, oh, that's exciting! Tell me about it. You would know that they don't know anything at all about the ultimate experience. Because if they knew anything about the ultimate experience, they would know that you can't tell them. Because there aren't words that can describe the ultimate experience. So you see the world is sort of in a problem with existential philosophy because you are searching for the ultimate experience, but if you have it, you won't be able to share it. There aren't words.

Well, in a sense, you might say that Paul the apostle had the ultimate experience, being caught into heaven, because he said, it would be a crime to try to describe the things that I heard!

So the hosts of heavens are called upon to praise the Lord. And then the heaven of heaven, the very dwelling place of God.

and ye waters that be above the heavens. This probably is a reference to then to the heaven, the atmosphere around the earth, referring probably to the clouds that are carrying the water.

⁵*Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.* They exist at the Word of God. God said, let there be light and there was light! And God commanded and they were brought into existence by what they call the *divine fiat*, or by the divine word of God. He spoke the universe into existence.

⁶*He hath also stablished them for ever and ever:* They have been established by God and *he hath made a decree which shall not pass.*

Now, having called on the heavens, he turns now to the earth and calls upon the earth and those that dwell upon the earth to praise the Lord. Starting basically with inanimate objects and then working to animate objects and ultimately unto man. So ⁷*Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons,* (The word there, is sea monsters.) *and all deeps:* All of those creatures that dwell in the depths of the sea.

⁸*Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours (rain); stormy wind fulfilling his word:* ⁹*Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:* ¹⁰*Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:* He calling on them to praise the Lord!

And then he turns to the ¹¹*Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:* ¹²*Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:* He doesn't leave anybody out!

Praise! ¹³*Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent(or exalted); his glory is above the earth and heaven.* So we are to praise the name of the Lord. That name, Yahweh, or Jehovah, whatever the pronunciation maybe, probably Yahweh. All through the Bible there is great reverence given to the name of God. Now God is not His name and don't get confused. The Bible speaks of many gods. The gods of the heathen are many, but the Bible speaks of the true and the living God. And it speaks of Him by name.

Now, there were names for the gods. There was Mammon. There was Molech. There was Ashtoreth. There was Apollo. There was Zeus. There was Jupiter. I mean they had all of the gods. Gods named after the planets. Gods named after the constellations. I mean there were all kinds of gods.

But there was one true and living God. And His name was Yahweh. And His name was held in extremely high reverence. So much so that they would not write the name of God in text, in the end. First they would just put the consonants so that you could not pronounce it. Then they even ceased doing that. They would just leave it blank. And even today in the Hebrew papers, they won't even write God. But they will write G--, so you will know what they are talking about. But the reverence that they held for the name of God. And here, let them praise the name of Yahweh! For His name alone is exalted! His glory is above the earth in the heavens!

¹⁴*He also exalteth the horn of his people, (The power of His people.) the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.*

In Psalm 149 again, the exhortations. Now Psalm 149 was probably written during the time of Nehemiah. After they had returned from the Babylonian captivity, and they were going through those difficult times of rebuilding the wall and rebuilding Jerusalem and rebuilding the temple. You remember as they were rebuilding the wall, there were these fellows—Sanballat and these others who had set themselves against them. And they were ambushing those that were working on the walls so that they had to work with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. One fellow would do the work and the other fellow would stand guard. They rebuilt the wall under very difficult circumstances. And this Psalm was probably written at that time—an exhortation to praise the Lord again.

^{149:1}*Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song,* (And probably the song of deliverance from Babylonian captivity. The song of praises unto God for His bringing the people back again into the land.

Sing unto the Lord a new song, *and his praise in the congregation of saints.* ²*Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.* So the rejoicing and the joy that they are to have in the Lord, in their King!

³*Let them praise his name in the dance:* Now the word, rejoice, is to spin around and joyful is to jump up and down. So you've almost got the dance there. Praise His name in the dance. Dancing was a form of praise unto God. They danced before Lord. Even today the Israeli's are great in the dancing. We went down on Friday night to watch the welcoming of the Sabbath, there at the Western Wall. And the young students come down from the Yeshiva, the girls come down. They used to not, but they said, well the guys were in it, so the girls get in it now. And the girls come down, singing and dancing around the Western Wall. Then the fellows come down from their Yeshiva. They come down with sort of a little dance step at they are singing. And then they dance before the Lord, there at the Western Wall. It's a very moving experience to watch them thus praise the Lord. So praise His name in the dance! Now that's not the kind of dance that goes on at the disco or whatever. But this is that kind of interpretative dancing or just the joyful dancing, the folk dancing of the Jewish people.

let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp. The timbrel is probably kind of a tambourine kind of an instrument. You remember Miriam, the sister of Moses, led the ladies of Israel in a dance, using the timbrel in the singing—with the timbrel and the harp. And David danced before the Lord with the timbrel and the harp. And so the exhortation to praise the Lord.

⁴*For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people:* That is, He takes pleasure in His people who are devoting themselves in praise of Him. The Lord, actually, takes pleasure in your praises. We are told that the Lord inhabits the praises of His people, dwells within them. And the Lord takes pleasure in your praise.

he will beautify the meek with salvation. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. He'll beautify them. Meekness is a characteristic that is not admired by the world, but it is a characteristic that is extolled for the child of God. It is a desired characteristic.

⁵*Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.* Now David in some his psalms talks about his bed swimming in his tears. He talks about sorrow endureth for a night and some of the sorrowful experiences in the night hours, on the bed. And yet he is exhorting here, the Psalmist, whoever he is, to sing aloud on their beds.

⁶*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;* Now you see, this is about the situation that had happened in Nehemiah's day. There was great praise because God had delivered us from captivity. God has brought us back into the land. There was great excitement. There was great praise unto the Lord for what the Lord had done. People were excited about God, about the things of God. And yet, it was still a dangerous time. They still needed to defend themselves against these enemies that were round about. So let the praises of God be in their mouth, but a twoedged sword in their hand;

⁷*To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;* ⁸*To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;* Or in chains of iron.

⁹*To execute upon them the judgment (that God has) written:* And God uses many times nations and armies as His instrument of judgment against other nations and other people. God used Babylon as His instrument of judgment against Judah, the nation of Judah. So they execute upon them the judgment that is written.

this honour have all his saints. We shall judge the angels, the Bible says. Executing the judgment of God.

Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 150 is sort of the climax or the culmination of it all! It just sort of brings the whole of the Psalms together. It is a short, little Psalm, but really it encompasses so much!

^{150:1}*Praise ye the LORD.* Where? *Praise God in his sanctuary:* So here in the sanctuary of God, we are to praise the Lord.

praise him in the firmament of his power.

What shall we praise Him for? ²*Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.* So praising Him in the sanctuary, praising Him for His might acts, praising Him according to greatness or the excellency of His greatness.

What are we to praise Him with? ³*Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:* Trumpets were used to a great extent in the temple worship. A thousand trumpets blaring out during the dedication of the temple in the time of Solomon. It must have been glorious!

praise him with the psaltery and harp. The musical instruments of those days.

⁴*Praise him with the timbrel* (The tambourine type of instrument.) *and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.* Pipes, they didn't have organs in those days. But the Hebrew word is pipes—musical instruments made of pipes. We have pipe organs and that's why it's translated as organs.

⁵*Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.* ⁶*Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.* So he calls us to praise God. If you are breathing, praise Him in the sanctuary! Praise Him in the firmament of His power! Praise Him with the dance. Praise Him with the instrument! Praise with your voices! Let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord!

Some day I'd like to have a meeting at the Pacific Amphitheater, and have everybody who plays any kind of an instrument, just bring it! Trumpets, trombones, whatever and then just all join together in giving praise to God. Cymbals, drums, guitars, whatever. Using them as instruments of praise unto God. We don't have those instrument with us tonight, but we have our voices. Let's stand. Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise Him all creatures here below! Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen.

And now from our hearts, let's give thanks unto God. Let's lift our hearts in praise to Him. Praise Him for His mighty acts! Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him for His love! Praise Him for His grace that He has bestowed upon us! Praise Him for His mercy that endures forever! Praise Him that He has chosen us and called us that we should be His disciples. Praise Him for the marvelous work that He has done in our midst, the work of His Spirit within our lives! The power that He has given to us to overcome sin, the world, the flesh! Praise Him for His lovingkindness, for His patience, for His longsuffering! Let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord!

Father, we thank You tonight that we can lift our voices in praise unto You, as we think, Lord, upon You, upon the greatness of Your power. As we look at the vast universe that You have created, as we look at the minute life forms that You have created, we stand in awe and wonder, of Your power and of Your wisdom. Truly You are an awesome God! And we praise You! And we thank You, Lord. That You love us and that You have called us to be Your disciples. You have chosen that we should follow You, that we might know the riches of Your glory and Your grace that have been manifested through Jesus Christ our Lord. We praise You, Father, for loving us so much, that You sent Your only Begotten Son, to redeem us from our sin. To lift us out of the pit, out of the miry clay, and to establish our feet upon the solid rock, the foundation of Jesus Christ. We thank You, Lord, for Your strength that sustains us day by day. We praise You, Lord, for You are worthy and deserving of all praise. Lord, fill our hearts. Fill our lives with continual praise and thanksgiving. In Jesus' name. Amen.