

## Lesson 5 – Psalms of Praise

**Psalms**

“Praise” means to boast. While we usually think of boasting as self-centered, it can also be outward, boasting about someone other than self. That’s praise. Another definition of praise is the expression of admiration to God for his attributes, like his power and holiness, and his works, like creation and salvation. Praise includes many nuanced forms, like thanksgiving and glorification (see Hebrew Poetry & Terms of Praise handout). Acceptable methods of praise are defined in the terms of the covenant. For example, Israel praised with instruments (Psa. 150:4), but Christians praise with unaccompanied singing (Eph. 5:19).

God’s name in the original Hebrew was *YHWH* (old Hebrew did not have vowels). *YHWH* occurs over 6,500 times in the Old Testament. In the Jewish synagogues, Jews began using *Adonai* (Lord) in place of *YHWH* out of fear of misspeaking when saying God’s name. When the Greek translation was produced around the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, *YHWH* was replaced with *Kurios* (Lord). While our English translations do not follow the Greek version of the Old Testament, nearly all of them have adopted the replacement of *YHWH* with Lord, usually stylized in small caps (LORD), or Jehovah. When vowel markings were added to the Hebrew text for pronunciation, the vowels from *Adonai* were added to *YHWH* to produce *YaHoWaH*, which was Latinized as *Jehovah*. The Literal Standard Version (LSV) retains *YHWH*. The Legacy Standard Bible (LSB) and World English Bible (WEB) use *Yahweh* [pronounced yah-way], the most accurate representation of God’s name. A shortened form, *YH* (*Yah* or *Jah*), occurs about 50 times in the Old Testament by itself, mostly in Psalms. *YH* is also found in many Jewish names and words, with various English spellings (*yah, jah, iah, je, jo, etc.*).

Lesson 5 – Psalms of Praise

**Questions**

1. Several psalms refer to praising God with instruments. Why did Israel use instruments in worship (2 Chron. 29:25)? Why do we not use instruments in worship? Did the early church use instruments in worship?
2. In Hebrew, *shiyr* and *zamar* mean “sing” and “make music (melody).” This pairing occurs several times in Psalms (27:6; 57:7; 108:1). In the Greek translation, the words are *ado* and *psallo*– the same words Paul used in Eph. 5:19. Israel was instructed to use instruments in praise. For example, Psalm 33:2 called for making music on a ten-stringed harp. With what are Christians to “make music” according to Eph. 5:19?
3. Besides playing instruments, what other methods of Israelite praise are mentioned in the psalms? (Psa. 47:1; 149:3)
4. Christians are instructed to sing psalms. Would every line of every psalm be appropriate to sing today (Psa. 20:3; 68:29; 79:1; 144:9)? Why or why not? May some words be used metaphorically? (Heb. 12:22; 2 Cor. 6:16-18)
5. Several psalms refer to singing a new song to God (Psa. 96:1; 40:3). What are some reasons to write and learn new songs?

Lesson 5 – Psalms of Praise

6. What figure of speech is found in Psa. 96:11-12; 98:7-8; and 148:3-4, 7-10? What is meant by this poetic language?
  
7. We get *hallelujah* and *hosanna* directly from Hebrew/Aramaic. What do these terms mean? (Psa. 118:25; Matt. 21:9; Psa. 146:1; Rev. 19:1)
  
8. Briefly define the following kinds of praise:
  - a) Magnify
  
  - b) Glorify
  
  - c) Exalt
  
9. Psalm 103 begins: "Bless Yahweh, O my soul." What activity or trait of God does this particular praise recognize? What are some of God's blessings that David mentions in this psalm?
  
10. The three primary Hebrew names/titles of God are used in Psa. 136:1-3. What are the Hebrew words behind these terms? If you have access to the following translations, note how the name of God is translated in v. 1 in each:  
Legacy Standard Bible (LSB), Young's Literal Translation (YLT), Literal Standard Version (LSV). All three are available to read for free online. See links below.

# Bible Survey: Section 6: Wisdom & Poetry

## Lesson 5 – Psalms of Praise

4 of 4

11. Which well-known hymn is based on Psalm 148?

12. What attributes and works of God inspire praise in the following verses?

- a) Psa. 7:17
- b) Psa. 47:1-2, 6-8
- c) Psa. 95:1-7
- d) Psa. 107:1
- e) Psa. 139:14
- f) Are there any you'd add to this list? Please cite your verses.

For Question 10, the translations are available to read for free online at:

- [biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm136%3A1&version=LSB;YLT;ESV](http://biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm136%3A1&version=LSB;YLT;ESV)
- [read.lsvbible.com](http://read.lsvbible.com)

An interlinear showing the Hebrew words is found here:

- [biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/nas/psalms/passage/?q=psalm%20136%3A1-3](http://biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/nas/psalms/passage/?q=psalm%20136%3A1-3)

Click on a word to see the Hebrew, definition, occurrences, and more.