

Worship, Praise and Prophecy (by Lorraine Waddell)

In our churches, we use a term to describe the time we spend singing with instrumental accompaniment as 'Praise and Worship'. It is essential to separate these words first of all, to examine them individually, and to come to a full understanding of the rich meaning of each.

Biblically speaking, worship leads to praise but it seems sometimes we have adopted an understanding that is almost a reverse structure in our churches, coming from the thinking that two or three lively praise songs lead us into quieter, slower 'worship' songs. This is not necessarily 'wrong' but it needs greater understanding of what worship and praise really are.

Worship is a heavenly reality. Around the throne of God there is continual worship; it is the theme of Heaven – the Saints and Angels are in a place of perpetual revelation and their response is to continually cry "Holy! Holy! Holy!" They know "even as they are known." (1 Cor. 13:12).

God is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Worship begins in the heart – it's a heart thing! It's a giving of oneself, surrendering will and desire, recognising His absolute lordship, and longing to be holy as He is Holy.

When we read the word 'worship' in the Old Testament, it is a translation of the Hebrew word 'saha' – to fall down, to bow down. This was a physical positioning. The worship we experience now, since Christ, is a spiritual positioning, beginning in the born-again human spirit and inspired by the indwelling Spirit of God. We could very well feel like physically bowing down because that is an outward response to, and expression of, the inner relationship. What a wonderful experience it is to be free to physically express the passionate love of the loved for the Lover, of the Bride for the Bridegroom, of the saved for the Saviour, of the redeemed for the Redeemer, of the created for the Creator!

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We tend these days to speak about worship in terms of mainly the outward expression. Worship is a spirit-position which can have a physical expression, but not necessarily. We can praise without worship; God says "these people praise Me with their lips but their hearts are far from Me. (Is. 28:13) We can also worship without praising. Worship is a heart-thing. God sees the Heart!

Out of a heart of worship can flow all kinds of beautiful expressions through the voice, through instruments, and through movement. A creative God has gifted us with creative inspiration and expression of those inspirations – all of these are 'praise'.

David, "a man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22) was a King, a Prophet, and a Priest; a forerunner of Jesus. David teaches us so much about how to express praise from a heart full of worship; a heart which overflows and spills out in demonstrational response. His set-up for the Tabernacle in Jerusalem was second to none in this respect. Out of the 230 times praise is mentioned in the Old Testament, 180 of these are found in the Psalms.

The promise of God to "rebuild the Tabernacle of David" (Acts 15:16), in the last days will obviously include a building up of the model of 24/7 praise (including song, instruments, and dance), prophecy, and intercession which David created.

When praise comes from a worshipping heart, it is "comely". In other words, it is beautiful and appropriate, according to Ps. 33:1. It gives God pleasure! (Ps.149 1-4); not because He is some sort of egotistical Super-Being but because he takes pleasure in relationship with us, and, of course, He is worthy of praise. (2 Sam. 22:4) He is holy; we enthrone Him with our praise. (Ps. 22:3). With the "high praises of God in our mouths"

and the double-edged sword of the Word in our hands, we exert our Kingdom authority over the Enemy. (Ps. 149: 6-9).

There are several basic forms of praise in the Bible. It is interesting to note that they each indicate some kind of outward physical movement or sound. This is very encouraging for those in the Church, in these days, who have caught the wind of the Spirit and sense a freedom in many physical expressions of praise.

Yadah (e.g. Gen 29:35) - to hold out the hands
Towday (e.g. Josh 7:19) - an extension of the hand in avowal or adoration
Zamar (e.g. Judges 5:3) - to play an instrument, accompanied by song
Tehillah (e.g. Ps. 117:1) - to sing a structured song or psalm
Shabach (e.g. Ps. 117:1) - to address in a loud tone – SHOUT!
Halal (e.g. 2 Chron. 5:13-14) - to be clamorously foolish; to rave; to celebrate

Halal is the kind of praise which was happening in the Temple of Solomon, when the glory cloud filled the place and the priests could not stand to minister.

Prophetic Praise

The work of the prophetic ministry is to release the will of God into the earth “as it is in Heaven.” Jesus taught us this. When He was teaching us how to pray, He directed us to start with praise – declaring the greatness and awesomeness of God – “Holy is your name.” Praise takes us higher, makes us more aware of our place in the heavenlies, more aware of our place with Jesus.

First of all, you don’t have to be a prophet to prophesy! Paul said “I wish you would all prophesy” (1 Cor. 14:5). Jesus is IN you, is He not? “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Rev. 19:10). “The word is in your mouth” (Rom. 10:8) to sing ‘the song of the Lord’ or to speak it out, prophetically.

Praise has always been a time in any gathering when prophetic inspirations come. David prophesied this and Paul confirmed it.

Heb. 2:12; Ps. 22:22. “I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will sing praises to You”. In the assembly of worshipping hearts praising God, Jesus testifies of the Father.

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Rev. 19:10). Who speaks out this testimony? Those who are inspired at those times by the spirit of prophecy and are willing to speak it out or sing it out as the song of the Lord.

The ‘song of the Lord’ is the spontaneous prophetic song, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to declare the truth, giving “edification, exhortation, or comfort” (1 Cor. 14:3) to the listeners.

The prophetic song was very much a part of the Tabernacle of David.

1 Chron. 25:7 “So the number of them (the musicians), with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the Lord, all who were skilful, was 288.”