

Call to Obedience # 415
 PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

Praising God Outloud

by Reimar Schultze

There are over 75 admonitions in the Bible telling us to “Praise the Lord.” These calls to praise are not requests for thoughts of praise or for whispered or mumbled expressions of gratitude. Rather, they are calls for hearty, verbal expressions of thanksgiving toward Him Who made us, Who saved us and Who keeps us. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord! Indeed, verbal praise is what the book of Hebrews instructs: *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name* (Heb. 13:15).

If the church would pay 75 times as much attention to her call to praise the Lord as to the rebirth, what kind of church would we have then? I believe that there is a problem of attitude, scholarship and spiritual blindness relating to the doctrine of praise. Here I will set forth the following: 1) God commands praise, 2) praise must be audible, 3) how praise helps us, and 4) why praise is obnoxious to some people.

GOD COMMANDS PRAISE

First note that all of creation praises God. *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?* (Job 38:4-7) The stars began their songs and have never ceased; the angels shouted for joy at the creation of the universe; and God commanded all creation to be and to stay in praise.

Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light (Ps. 148:1-3).

Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

Mountains, and all hills... (vs. 7-9).

Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:

Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

Let them praise the name of the LORD... (vs. 11-13).

All creation is commanded to praise God. Yet, how many theologians, Christian scholars, ministers, deacons and church members do you know who fulfill their daily duty to praise God and who teach others to do likewise? Man's first obligation, once he comes into this world, is to praise God. And he is never released from this calling. All sin comes out of a praiseless heart. Yes, the Apostle Paul brilliantly traces all **sins**, all perversion and all spiritual decay to the neglect of praise. In Romans 1, he tells of unregenerate man: that every single problem of the human heart has its beginning in the neglect of praise. Paul says of them: *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened* (Rom. 1:21). So here are the fruits of a praiseless life: 1) perversion of the mind, 2) perversion of the heart, and 3) men turning into fools (Rom. 1:22)!

Notice that this eventually leads to the basest sins such as homosexuality and fornication (Rom. 1:26-32). Homosexuality is not the result of genetic, social or chemical abnormalities, but is the consequence of man refusing to praise God frequently! That is Romans 1! Likewise, fornication is not the result of the pressures of an immoral world, but first of all the fruit of a praiseless life! That is Romans 1! So also are envy, deceit, rebellion, murder, and all unrighteousness. That is Romans 1! Can you imagine, then, that as the absence of praise gets you into trouble, the presence of praise keeps you out of trouble? That is Romans 1! Can you hear the depths of the cry of God, *Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* (Ps. 107:8, 15, 21, 31)? Can you see that God had much more in mind when He gave us the Praise Psalms than for us to make them a Sunday morning reading ritual? Can you fathom that Paul is not just talking when he says, *Rejoice evermore. ...In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you* (I Thes. 5:16-18).

PRAISE MUST BE AUDIBLE

By audible I mean that praise must be audible to human ears, the angels' ears, the devil's and the demons' ears. That is why the Scripture admonishes us to LOUD praise, as we find in the Psalms: *Make a joyful noise unto the LORD... rejoice, and sing praise* (Ps. 98:4). In the Gospels the angels gave loud praise at the birth of Jesus. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem: *...the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice...* (Luke 19:37). Some of the Pharisees asked Jesus to rebuke His disciples, but Jesus said: *...I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out* (Luke 19:40).

Jesus liked the loud praise He heard. He lived in it before He became flesh. He missed it on earth. Loud praise had been His dwelling place! It made Him feel at home, away from home. The Pharisees did not like it. People who have a pharisaical spirit still do not like it.

The early church was born in loud praise! When Luke said that the first Christians were *Praising God, and having favour with all the people...* (Acts 2:47), he said so because somebody heard them praising.

The Revelation reverberates with loud praise because John heard it! Friend, the closer John got to the throne, the louder was the praise he heard. There John heard four creatures in and around the throne *...saying, Holy, holy, holy...* (Rev. 4:8). He heard the 24 elders saying *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...* (Rev. 4:11). He heard the voice of many angels: *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever"* (Rev. 5:12-13).

HOW PRAISE HELPS US

Here is how praise helps us. First of all, praise makes us feel better. True, we are not to walk by feeling, but it certainly gives us a lift to feel good especially when that feeling comes out of obedience to God. Further, praise drives away anxiety and the fear of man. Praise rejects sadness, brings gladness and ends madness. Praise starves the carnal man and feeds the spiritual man. Praise multiplies mercy and submission; it chokes stubbornness

and condemnation; it builds up the good and tears down the evil; it purifies, restores and sustains our vision. Praise places God's armor upon us and shines it. It ushers in the cross and removes the dross. It increases our burden for the lost, the unsanctified and the needy. Praise destroys our confidence in the flesh and helps us to believe God's promises. Praise prevents us from polluting, diluting, amending or misinterpreting God's revelations. Praise sharpens our discernment, brightens our hope and aids us in understanding the Scriptures. Praise brings us to brokenness, yieldedness, poverty of spirit and meekness of heart. It builds a defense against temptations. Praise is the breath of victorious living and milk for new converts to get fat on. *Oh, that men would praise the LORD!*

WHY PRAISE IS OBNOXIOUS TO SOME PEOPLE

Praise is so obnoxious because all of hell is against it. People who have had "out of body" experiences have seen the earth covered with millions of demons. The demons are everywhere: in cars, homes and churches. They congregate to create misunderstanding, division, unbelief and jealousy wherever men gather. They feed lies and gossip, and plant wickedness in peoples' hearts. They are everywhere where praise is not heard!

Scholars tell us that the devil was once the archangel in charge of leading the angels in praise to God, but he became jealous and wanted all the praise for himself. Consequently, he and his followers were cast out of heaven and now battle us here on earth. The devil hated praise to God then and he hates it now. He and his demons will exercise all their powers to keep our mouths shut when we attempt to praise God. They cannot stand praise!!! They will flee at the sound of it. And since the devil is not omniscient (all-knowing) as God is, he does not know when you praise God in your heart; hence, it does not scare him off. But when you audibly praise the Lord, the demons hear and they will retreat—and you will build an impenetrable channel through which your petitions can ascend to the throne of God. So, because of the abundance of demons everywhere and because they are set against our praising God audibly, it often takes a pressing to get started in praise; but, oh, what joy once we break through. Yes, my friend, God demands praise. God deserves praise and He will dwell where praise is found.

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