

# Understanding Hebrew Praise Words

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## Hebrew Praise and Thanksgiving Words An Aspect of Our Worship

**1 Peter 2:9-10** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may “proclaim the praises” of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Praising God is to be a way of life! Praising and thanking Him is an important aspect of our worship! We are to be a people of praise! We are to be those who out of our heart continually are acknowledging God’s great goodness in our lives through praise and thanksgiving.

**Psalms 71:8** My mouth is filled with Your praise (tehillah/a song of praise) and with Your glory all day long.

**Hebrews 13:15** Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

**“Sacrifice of Praise” means “A Thank Offering”**

**Hebrews 10:11** tells us day after day; again and again the priest of the O.T. offered the same sacrifices over and over again! Their continual service unto the Lord was to offer sacrifices as a means of worship.

As believers in Christ and the present day royal priesthood, we thank God we are not required to offer the blood of bulls and goats as offerings. However, how much more are we to offer the sacrifice of praise since we have been blessed and cleansed from sin by the blood of the lamb, made acceptable in God’s sight, given a new life in Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, and blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3) Praise God!

Praise is an expression of Faith! It is an act of our will and is the sincere outward expression of our inward trust in God. It is giving glory to God; exalting, acknowledging and thanking God for who He is; what He has done; and what His Word promises us that He will do.

Praise lifts the heart to God and you might say it charges our spiritual battery. It lifts our spirit as we lift Him up! The Bible says draw near to God and he will draw near to you. It connects us to the source of our spiritual power and recharges our spiritual battery. Are you staying connected?

**Hebrew Praise Words:** There are 7 Hebrew Words for Praise. They are words that are active and not passive; nothing passive in praising God. They involve lifting hands; bending the knee; shouting; singing; clapping; celebrating; acting foolish in the eyes

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of unbelievers. You might say it is not just a “cerebral pursuit” but it is intended for the whole person to be involved: spirit - soul and body to be engaged! They are heartfelt expressions of our love and thanks to God.

**Mark 12:29-30** “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength!’ Enjoy God!

1. **YADAH:** To Praise with the “**extended hand**” or to “**throw out the hand**”. The Hebrew word YADAH comes from two root words; **YAD** which means the “**open hand**”, direction, power; and **AH** which has reference to Jehovah. Together they are rendered **Hands to God. YADAH is to revere or worship with extended hands.**

**Ps 42:5-6** <sup>5</sup> Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will **praise (yadah)** Him again—my Savior and my God!

2. **TOWDAH:** It is used to indicate “**thanksgiving**” in songs of worship. The word comes from YADAH which means to extend the hands. **We are lifting hands in Thanksgiving and singing unto the Lord.** It also has specific reference “**to confession**” of the Truth. As in a court room of law we are lifting hands in thanksgiving and confessing the Truth about God, His Word, His Promises, and who He is!

**Ps 26:6-7** I come to your altar, O Lord, singing a song of **thanksgiving (towdah)** and telling of all your wonders.

3. **HALAH:** to shine; hence, **to make a show, to boast;** and **to be clamorously foolish;** a loud and continuous sound focused on the Lord; **to rave;** causatively, **to celebrate!**

**Ps 149:3** Let them **praise (halah)** His name with the dance; Let them **sing praises (zamar)** to Him with the timbrel and harp.

**Ps 150** **Praise (halah)** the Lord! (halah) Praise God in his sanctuary; praise (halah) him in his mighty heaven! Praise him for his mighty works; praise his unequalled greatness! Praise him with a blast of the ram's horn; praise him with the lyre and harp! Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes! Praise him with a clash of cymbals; praise him with loud clanging cymbals. Let everything that breathes sing praises (halah) to the Lord! Praise the Lord!

**2 Samuel 6:14-16, 20-23** When David danced before the Lord and Michal saw David leaping and whirling before the Lord this was Halal praise.

**HALAH is to rave upon the Lord; it is to be clamorously foolish before the Lord.** The word “**HALLELUJAH**” means “**HALAH to Yahweh**” or “**Praise the LORD!**”

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4. **TEHILLAH:** Praise; A spontaneous song of praise; a song of praise. Tehillah is to sing your Halah praise to God!

**Psalm 100:4** Enter into His gates with Thanksgiving (towdah) in our hearts and into His courts with **praise (tehillah)**. Be thankful (yadah) to Him, and bless (barak) His name.

5. **BARAK:** to bless; to kneel as an act of adoration.

A related Hebrew word is “**berakah**” meaning a blessing; a gift or a present. From this we can see the concrete meaning behind “**barak**” in the sense of a blessing. It is to bring a gift to another (God) while kneeling out of respect. The extended meaning of this word is to do or give something of value to another. God “**blesses**” us by providing for our needs and we in turn “**bless**” God by giving Him of ourselves in true worship.

**Psalm 34:1-3** I will **bless (barak)** the Lord at all times; His praise (tehillah) shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast (halal) in the Lord...

6. **SHABACH:** to address in a loud tone, a loud adoration, a shout! To proclaim with a loud voice, unashamed, The **GLORY, TRIUMPH, POWER, MERCY, AND LOVE OF GOD.**

The phrase “shout unto the Lord” can be understood as the action of SHABACH. It is not just being loud! **We are to have the attitude of putting our whole being into it, an attitude of being totally uninhibited.**

**Psalm 117:1-2** Praise (halah) the Lord, all you nations. **Praise (Shabach)** Him, all you people of the earth. For He loves us with unfailing love; the Lord's faithfulness endures forever. Praise (halah) the Lord!

**Psalm 63:3-5** Because Your loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall **praise (Shabach)** You! Thus I will bless (barak) You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name ... my mouth shall praise (halah) you with joyful lips!

7. **ZAMAR:** To sing praise accompanied with instruments. To make instrumental music accompanied by the voice. It is to celebrate in song and music! **It is to pluck the strings of an instrument, and refers to praise that involves instrumental worship. The one word is usually translated “sing praises.”**

**Psalm 66:4** Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise (tehillah) glorious. Say to God, “How awesome are Your works! ... all the earth shall worship You and **sing praises (zamar)** to You; they shall sing praises (zamar) to Your name.”

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## The Blessing of Praise and Thanksgiving

### 1. Heartfelt Praise Invites God's Presence

**Psalm 22:3** But You are holy, enthroned in the praises (tehillah) of Israel.

**Enthroned:** yashab --- to dwell, to remain, to sit, to abide

The Verb “enthroned” indicates that wherever God's people exalt and praise His name, He comes to abide, sit and dwell there in their midst.

We Praise because of who He is and what He has done and what He promises to do!

### **In 2 Chronicles 5:1, 11-14 We See the Presence of God Show Up!**

**2 Chron. 5:1** Solomon finished all his work on the Temple of the Lord. Then he brought all the gifts his father, David, had dedicated—the silver, the gold, and the various articles—and he stored them in the treasuries of the temple of God.

**2 Chron. 5:2-6** Solomon then summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all the heads of tribes. They were to bring the Ark of the Lord's Covenant to the Temple from its location in the City of David, also known as Zion. When all the elders of Israel arrived, the Levites picked up the Ark. The priests and Levites brought up the Ark along with the special tent and all the sacred items that had been in it. There, before the Ark, King Solomon and the entire community of Israel sacrificed so many sheep, goats, and cattle that no one could keep count!

**2 Chron. 5:7** Then the priests carried the Ark of the Lord's Covenant into the inner sanctuary of the Temple...

**2 Chron. 5:11-14** Then the priests left the Holy Place. ... <sup>12</sup> And the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and all their sons and brothers—were dressed in fine linen robes and stood at the east side of the altar playing cymbals, lyres, and harps. They were joined by 120 priests who were playing trumpets. <sup>13</sup> The trumpeters and singers performed together in unison to praise and give thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices and praised the Lord with these words:

"He is good! His faithful love endures forever!"

**At that moment a thick cloud filled the Temple of the Lord. The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the Lord filled the Temple of God.**

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**Matthew Henry Commentary:** When the singers and musicians praised God, then the house was filled with a cloud. It was not when they offered animal sacrifices, but when they sang the praises of God, that God gave them this token of his favor; for the sacrifice of praise pleases the Lord better than that of an ox or bullock, Ps. 69:31. All the singers and musicians were employed, those of all the three families; and, to complete the concert, 120 priests, with their trumpets, joined with them, all standing at the east end of the altar, on that side of the court which lay out most towards the people, v. 12. And, when this part of the service began, the glory of God appeared! It was when they lively and with all their heart lifted up their voice to praise the Lord. It was when they were in their praises and celebrating the everlasting mercy and goodness of God.

## 2. Praise “Prepares the Way” for the Lord to Fight our Battles.

**2 Chronicles 20:15-22** When the children of Judah found themselves outnumbered by hostile armies, God assured the people through Jahazel, a Levite, that this would be His battle. He told them to go out against them, and He would do the fighting for them. So what did the children of Judah do? **They sent their army against their enemies led by praisers!** So on they went, the tribe of Judah went ahead of the army declaring, **“Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever!”** And when they began to sing and to praise, the enemies actually defeated themselves!

**2 Chron. 20:12** We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help.”

**2 Chron. 20:15-16** Jahazel said, “Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

**2 Chron. 20:18-19** Then King Jehoshaphat bowed low with his face to the ground. And all the people of Judah and Jerusalem did the same, worshiping the Lord. Then the Levites from the clans of Kohath and Korah stood to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud shout.

**2 Chron. 20:21-23** After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the Lord and praising him for His holy splendor. This is what they sang: “Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!” <sup>22</sup> At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves. Hallelujah!!

## 3. Praise “Sets the Captives Free” and “Opens the Prison Doors”!

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**Acts 16:22-27** A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape. So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks.

Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!

**Acts 16:22-34** Paul and Silas rejoiced in their terrible circumstances. This most certainly is a sacrifice of praise! Paul later wrote to the Philippians "Rejoice in the Lord always." There is power in praise. This is the power of praise in action. It can turn a situation around and transform a heart.

## **Praise Scriptures:**

**Ps 7:17** I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

**Psalm 9:1** I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

**Ps 28:77** The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore, my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song will I praise him.

**Psalm 18:49** Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.

**Psalm 135:3** Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.

**Psalm 147:1** Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely...

**Psalm 92:1** It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praise unto thy name, O Most High.

**[Psalm 100:1-2](#)** Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

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[Colossians 3:16](#) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[Psalm 95:1-2](#) Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

*Dear Friends,*

*My earnest prayer is that you will become a true “Worshiper” of God. I pray you will be desirous of worshiping God in every aspect of your life. May every act; every deed, every moment of your day bring greater glory to God than ever before. God is searching for those who will purposely dedicate themselves to worship Him in spirit and truth.*

*I pray you will incorporate an attitude of thanksgiving in all things; an attitude of praise, honor and obedience in your day to day living. May the grace of God strengthen you for His service and may you discover the true joy there is to be found in living everyday life to the Glory of our LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ! God Bless You Richly!*

*Love in Christ,  
Diane Waghorne*