

Find Strength in Praising God

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

Copyright © 2003

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 6

FINAL JUDGMENT BRINGS THUNDERS OF PRAISE

Chapter 2 12

TRANSFORMED BY PRAISE

Chapter 3 17

PRAISE THE GOD OF MIRACLES

CONCLUSION 22

INTRODUCTION

God loves to hear the praises of His people. Throughout the Word of God, we find verse after verse exhorting us to enter into praise. Praises are a declaration of heaven's glory and of the Lord's sure victory.

As believers, we need to recognize the eternal value of praising God. It is something that leads us into glorious victories. The walls of Jericho fell in response to the praises of God's people.

There are so many things praise will do for us. It releases us from pressure and helps to prepare our hearts for God's communication from His Word. This booklet examines the principle of praise from the Bible's perspective. Through God's Word, believers will see that great strength comes when we praise the Lord.

Chapter One

FINAL JUDGMENT BRINGS THUNDERS OF PRAISE

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

“For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

“And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

“And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

“And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and

as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God” (Revelation 19:1-9).

Picture what God has watched throughout thousands of years. Consider the account of creation and the history of mankind. Think of all the things that have happened in the world. The God of patience who made man in His image has to deal with a world filled with uncountable idols manufactured by the human race.

The Babylonian system got its start as described in Genesis 9 and entered into its fulfillment in chapters 10 and 11. Eventually, it will culminate with the one-world church, a one-world monetary system, and a one-world dictator. And in Revelation 19, we see that God will judge that system, the antichrist, and Satan.

God Is Not Mocked

Romans 11:22 describes the goodness and the severity of God. The psalmist declared that God is angry with the wicked every day (Psalm 76:7-8). According to Hebrews 10:31, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. In Revelation 19, we see the outworking of perfect justice that is yet to come—but it does not come without warning or without multiple opportunities for a way of escape.

You see, this same God who will judge His creation also greatly loves every man and woman in the world (John 3:16). On the Cross, two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ paid for every sin we would ever commit. Yet, millions upon millions have rejected His Word. They have no idea why they were created, and soon they will face judgment.

Because of His justice, judgment will come.* The Lord will judge the Babylonian whore with her false religion. He waited all those years, initiating His love and giving men and women a chance to receive Him. In the last three-and-a-half years of the Great Tribulation, He will let out His wrath on the children of disobedience.

Once those people are thrown into hell, their

lusts will never be satisfied. They will still have a hunger for the things that kept them from receiving Christ. The intellectual will have no theories to contemplate, because the truth about everything will be clearly revealed. The proud person will be tormented by his unveiled helplessness. The molester can no longer molest. The murderer can no longer murder. The fornicator can no longer fornicate. The religious person who relied on his own works will gnash his teeth when he sees that he ignored the simplicity of grace. Judgment will come to everyone who rejected Christ as their Savior.

Shouts of Rejoicing

At that moment when the devil's world system is judged, the cries from heaven will be much different than you would think. You would think that there would be tears. You would think that there would be rivers from all the weeping. But there are none.

God loves justice, and the scene will be that of much rejoicing when His justice is being fulfilled (Psalm 33:5). The day of grace will be over for the unsaved. The day of mercy is done for them. God will mock them with laughter (Proverbs 1:26). He watched them choose to reject

His way with their free volition. He watched them take His Word and add to it or take away from it to meet their own rationalizations. He sent people and situations to reveal Himself to them personally, yet He honored their free volition, allowing them to reap what they sowed.

All of God's justice will be consummated as all the voices around His throne shout, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah! Give glory to Jesus Christ for His salvation. Glory and honor to Him." Why? God waited patiently throughout time, and He held back the terrible judgment that unrepentant people had accumulated.

Breathing Praises to God

"Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 150:6).

"This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord" (Psalm 102:18).

In the Word of God, the phrase "praise the Lord" appears 314 times. Hallelujah means "praise the nature of Yahweh, who is full of mercy, full of longsuffering, full of graciousness, abundant in goodness and doctrine (see Exodus 34:6). Job 38:7 says that when God created the universe, the angels praised Him. When Jesus

was born, the angels praised God. The trees clap their hands and praise Him. All of creation praises the Lord.

We were created to praise God. Every child is created to praise God. Every adult was created to praise Him. Praises should fill our mouths. The Lord Jesus Christ formed us for Himself to show forth His praises (Isaiah 43:7).

** To begin to understand how God, who is love, can judge those He died for, be sure to read God's Justice Will Stand, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 2003.*

Chapter Two

TRANSFORMED BY PRAISE

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

We have a great family in our church. I can remember how their marriage was ready to fall apart when I began counseling both of them. By their learning to look unto the Lord instead of each other, God was able to work. They each found a reason to praise God. I watched this woman’s life—how she prayed and praised God. I watched her husband become a mighty man of God. One by one, the children, who had been living worldly lives, became tremendous Christians. All of them are people I love so much.

That woman would not give up, and now her husband truly loves her. They have a

tremendous family, and even in the midst of trials, they reveal the victory that is theirs as they worship and praise God.

I am so thankful today that God's name reveals His nature: Mercy, Grace, Forgiveness, Longsuffering, Abundant Goodness, and Precise Thinking.

Inhabited by Praise

"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3).

Let me tell you the story of a lady who was so depressed, she couldn't even look out of her windows. She would never even raise the curtains. This indescribable depression went on for two full years. She didn't want to talk to anyone. She was just miserable. Then she was given our little booklet, "Just Let God Love You." After she finished it, something was released in her. She finally went to a window to look outside, and she said, "Boy, everything looks good today!" She was released to praise God.

It is one of the most beautiful things in all the world for God to inhabit the praises of His people. God inhabits with a special habitation anyone who praises Him according to His nature. They will have a special union and com-

munion with God.

I recently heard the great testimony of two brothers. Their mother prayed and prayed for these boys because they were so rebellious. One night their mother was on her knees and the boys were on their way to rob a convenience store. As the boys planned their crime, a man led by God, bold as can be, knocked on the door to give them a Bible tract.

The younger boy just started crying.

"Why are you crying?" the older boy asked.

"Let's be realistic," said the younger brother. "Mom is praying for us like she always does."

The man led both of them to Jesus right there where they were planning to stage their first robbery.

Think of what it will be like in heaven with all the angels and the souls of just men made perfect worshipping God together. Our soul bodies will be perfect in heaven. All of us who are saved will be there, with no death, no sickness, no disease, no crimes, and no violence. We will be perfect forever, and we will live with each other in this perfect state.

King David appointed four thousand people to praise God with singing and with instruments. In heaven, there will be millions more.

Together, as a heavenly choir, we will begin to praise God all at once.

Praise Brings Victory

“And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

“And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

“And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever” (2 Chronicles 20:19-21).

Singers were appointed to go before the army and praise God. To me, this means that God was asking the nation of Israel if they would trust Him. “Do you trust Me? Do you trust My nature? Do you trust Me enough to send the ones without weapons to lead the army

into battle?"

They did trust God, and they won the war.

I love to watch a congregation stand and clap to honor the Lord Jesus Christ during the worship time. I love to hear the singing and watch as God leads us into a couple of extra choruses. God inhabits our praises. As we assemble ourselves together, Jesus Christ sings in the midst of the congregation. We praise Him. We gather together and our cares are gone. The worries are gone. We sense Jesus Christ in our midst.

Chapter Three

PRAISE THE GOD OF MIRACLES

“But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

“And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

“And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

“But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

“And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

“And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

“But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

“And immediately Jesus stretched forth his

hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

“And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

“Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matthew 14:24-33).

In the fourth watch of the evening, the disciples were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. The storm was raging. The waves were high. The wind was severe. Then, Jesus walked across the water, and they thought they were seeing a ghost.

“Be of good cheer. Don’t fear,” Jesus said to them.

Peter spoke up, “Lord, if it’s you, bid me to come.”

“Come!” the Lord said.

Peter stepped out, and I believe that James and John were as jealous as they could be.

Jesus Christ called Peter to come out into the storm. The Lord calls us into the storms. He calls us into raging waters. Peter walked out onto the water, looking unto Jesus with proper focus. Then, the wind and the rain distracted him and he began to sink.

But, one little word, “Come,” got Peter out

on the water. When we hear the Lord say, “Come,” we should say, “Hallelujah, praise God!” When we look at the miracles in the Bible, the Word can get into our souls and fill us up with expectation from God. The testimony of the Word of God can make us realize that everything He does for us is motivated by grace, and every single thing is a miracle.

In Revelation 19, we see people everywhere praising God, shouting and singing, lifting up their voices. The whole earth is full of God’s glory (Isaiah 6:3). The whole earth is filled with His praise.

Don’t be afraid to shout “Hallelujah.” Say it again and again. Praise Him right where you are, whatever you are going through. We are going to see every person in heaven praising God—even the Christians who have always seemed a bit uncomfortable praising God in church. I believe that when heaven is revealed in all of its glory, our first response will be to praise Him. There will be no more funeral homes, no more graveyards, and no crime. Just praise, praise, and more praise.

Words of Praise

Go through the book of Psalms and you will

find praises everywhere. The men who wrote those chapters understood suffering. They knew what it meant to be persecuted by others and to be tormented by the results of their own sin.

But in every case, the writers believed the Word of God and sang praises to the Lord (Psalm 106:12). In Ezra 3:10, the foundation of the temple was completed and the congregation shouted, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Praise to the Lord." And I love it that Psalm 119:171 says, "I praised God when I learned His doctrine."

Let me say this: When we give thanks *in* everything, when we give thanks *for* everything, when we rejoice and truly praise God from the bottom of our hearts, we are healthier people. Praising God is good for our bones (Psalm 42:11). It is good for our eyes and our ears. It is good for every part of us.

From Praise to Good Health

Praising God could save your life. Let me tell you this story: A seventy-five-year-old lady had a habit of praying three times a day. Someone broke into her house to rob her at knife-point. She looked the guy right in the eye and said, "You can't touch me because Jesus Christ

is in this room protecting me. If you touch me, the God that I praise would kill you before you could blink an eye. Get him, Lord.”

The guy dropped his knife and ran out of the house.

When interviewed by a reporter, the woman said this, “I just based my confession upon 1 John 5:18: ‘The wicked one touches us not’. I just made my confession based upon the Word of God.”

What can you say to that? Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

CONCLUSION

The great hallelujah choir will be a wonderful attraction in heaven, according to Revelation 7:9-12. But let's not wait until we get to heaven to praise God. Let's praise Him for everything that we have down here.

Imagine the singers who went before the army with praises and brought Jehoshaphat an easy victory. What brought down the walls of Jericho? The people of God shouting seven times on the seventh day. They shouted praises again and again and the walls just came right down. That is how powerful praise is.

Let's shout praises to God. People will be healed because we have believed Him to do it. People will be delivered because we stand up and praise God.

Praise the Lord right where you are. Praise Him and be released.