

Part 1 – Praising the Lord with Our Whole Heart

Now we come to a portion of this great ‘Deuteronomy book’ of the Psalms that *Praises* our Heavenly Father with what’s called the “Great Hallel” (Great Praise) Psalms. So, of course, they praise the Lord (YHVH) for His *everlasting* mercy, *and* goodness towards us, *and* how that mercy and grace was manifested to us in Christ’s death and resurrection. In olden times, Psalms 113 through 114 were sung by the congregation at the *beginning* of the Passover celebration; and Psalms 115 through 118 were sung by the congregation at the *end* of the Passover celebration. And this is relevant to us today because, as Math 26:30 tells us, after Jesus Christ, and the disciples, partook of the *first* Holy Communion, they “sung an hymn” and then went out to the mount of Olives to pray, before Jesus was then arrested. So, our Lord, and Savior (Jesus Christ) sang a ‘hymn’ (with His disciples) after the very first communion service! And just what do you suppose they sang? Most likely it was one (or more) of these precious “Great Hallel” (Great Praise) Psalms. This means that, our Lord and Savior (Jesus Christ) *prepared Himself to endure the sufferings* He would soon endure *by singing* of the enduring loving-kindness of our Heavenly Father (YHVH)! So, these “Great Hallel” (Great Praise) Psalms should certainly be important for us today too, for Jesus Christ was our (perfect) example to follow (John 13:15, 1 Pt 2:21).

Now, the subject/title of this great **Psalm 111** is “***Praise for Yehovah’s Works***”. And it’s the first (of three) so called ‘Hallelujah’ Psalms because it (like Psalm 112 and 113) begins with “Praise Ye the Lord” (i.e. Hallelujah). Further, this Psalm 111 **is also an acrostic Psalm**. And, as we’ve learned before, an Acrostic is simply a type of ‘poem’ in the Bible - specifically in the Book of Psalms - where the initial letters of each successive line, or stanza, spell out a word, phrase, or pattern. In the case of the Acrostic *Psalms*, the pattern is based on the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. But, as we’ve learned, some Psalms are ‘irregular’, such as Ps 9-10, where seven letters were omitted throughout the two chapters (which are truly one Acrostic together). And also, in Psalms 25 and 34, where one letter was omitted and one letter was duplicated to stress the point of the central verse (11). However, Psalms 37 was *perfect and complete as is this Psalm 111*, which (along with Psalm 112) has 22 lines (in the Hebrew), each line beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew Alphabet (which the *Companion Bible* shows). And, this Psalm 111 stresses praise for Yehovah *because of His ‘works’* while Psalm 112 (which is connected to this Psalm 111) praises Him *for His ‘ways’* (which are *always* holy and righteous).

Additionally, this chapter again has neither any subtitle, nor subscription, as many of the Psalms do. So, we don’t know *who* wrote it, nor even at *what point in time* it was written. But regardless, we know that *no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost* (2 Peter 1:20-21). Further, we know that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for **instruction in righteousness**: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works* (2 Tim 3:16-4:1). So,

this Psalm (as with the others) is *still* an *incredibly* enlightening Psalm, which makes it well worth our studying it...

Psalm 111

I Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

So, befittingly, this Psalm begins with the phrase “praise ye the Lord”. And while this Psalm (111) is the first (of three) “*Hallelujah*” Psalms (and is liked together to the next one, Psalm 112, by a corresponding Acrostic arrangement), we’ve seen this phrase *before*, back in Psalms 104, 105 and 106. And the meaning of this phrase (praise ye the Lord) is *the same* as it was in the other Psalms. So, the word ‘**praise**’ here is *still* the Hebrew word **halal** (#1984); it’s a primitive root that means **to be clear** (orig. of sound, but usually of color); **to shine**; hence, **to make a show**, or **to boast**; and thus, **to be** (clamorously) **foolish** or, **to rave**; and, causatively, can mean **to celebrate** or **to stultify**. So, in the context of this verse, to **celebrate** (all that the Lord, YHVH, has done for us) is what the word ‘praise’ means. And then, the word ‘**Lord**’ is **Yahh**, or **Yah** (#3050), which a contraction (i.e. shortened version) for God’s sacred name **Yehovah**, #3068, but it means the same thing (**self-existent** and **eternal**). Thus, *Yah is Yehovah in a special sense and relation*. It thus **reveals Yehovah as having BECOME our Salvation** (first occurrence Ex 15:2), He Who IS, and WAS, and IS TO COME. Therefore, the Hebrew words in this phrase are: **halal** (#1984) **Yah** (#3050), which is a Hebrew phrase most Christians are actually familiar with, “*Hallelujah*”. So, this now is the *fourth* ‘Hallelujah’ in the Old Testament, but (to reiterate) the first (of three) “*Hallelujah*” Psalms (Psalms 111-113).

Now, the second word ‘**praise**’ in this first verse is a *different* Hebrew word, which can mean *to use* (i.e. hold out) *the hand*, *to throw* (a stone, an arrow) *at* or *away* or even *to bemoan* (by wringing the hands). But, in the context of this Psalm it means **to revere** or **worship** (with extended hands) (#3034). But, it is not the ‘*outward* worship’ that this Psalmist promises to give the “Lord” (which is Yehovah, #3068, the second time it’s used in this verse). No, the Psalmist promises to give the Lord (Yehovah = YHVH) praise (reverence and worship) with his ‘**whole heart**’, which does mean ‘the heart’ (as the most interior organ) (#3824). However, it’s not the *physical* heart (that pumps our blood) the Psalmist is referring to; for this word is often used *figuratively* (like #3820) to refer to the **feelings**, **will** and even the **intellect**. So, while our ‘heart’ being referred to is *a part of our spirit* (intellect) it’s the part of us that has our *feelings* (*emotions*), *desires*, *intentions* and *motivations*. And this is different than our ‘mind’ which is simply our *thought process* (thoughts). Heb 4:12 explains this difference when telling us that, because *the Word of God is quick* (living, #2198), and *powerful* (sharper than any two-edged sword) it can divide apart our soul (body, our ‘self’) and spirit (heart and mind), which is why it’s also a ‘discerner’ between the thoughts (mind) *and* intents (heart) of our ‘inner man’ just as God knows the difference between even the joints and marrows of our flesh body!

An easy way to remember the difference between your ‘heart’ (which Paul calls the ‘carnal mind’ in Rom 8) and your ‘mind’ is to think of how you sometimes ‘know better’ than to sin but, still ‘want’ to sin... you *know* (in your mind) something is wrong but you still *want* (in your heart) to do it. That’s why it’s so important for us to ‘deny’ (spiritually crucify) our heart (desires, emotions) when they go against what Gods’ Word (and Holy Spirit) tells us to do. As Jesus told us in Luke 9:23: *If any man will come after me, let him **deny** himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* The word ‘deny’ here means *to deny utterly*, i.e. *disown* or to *abstain* (#533). And Paul tells us this also, in Gal 5:24, when he wrote: *And they that are Christ's have **crucified** the flesh with the **affections** and **lusts**.* The word ‘crucified’ here means *to impale on the cross* and, figuratively, *to extinguish (subdue) passion* or *selfishness* (#4717). And, the word ‘affections’ means *something undergone*, i.e. *hardship* or *pain* but (subjectively) it also means *an emotion* or *influence* (3804). And then the word ‘lusts’ means *a longing* (especially for what is forbidden) (#1939) and comes from a word that means *to set the heart upon*, i.e. *long for* (rightfully or otherwise) (#1937).

So, what this Psalmist is promising to do is to praise (revere and worship) our Heavenly Father (YHVH) with **all** of his ‘heart’, which means he’s dedicated to kicking out (i.e. spiritually crucifying) the part of him (which we all have, Ecc 3:11) that wants to sin (each day) so that he will not be worshipping the Lord (YHVH) in ‘vain’ (Isa 29:13; Mth 15:3-20; Mk 7:6-23), which means *being fake* (empty) in your worship, *because* you have other things in life that are *more important* to you than loving and obeying our Heavenly Father. You see, to our Heavenly Father, ‘love’ is more than just an emotion. Yes, He wants our affections (*feelings* of ‘love’) but, as Jesus said, “*If ye love me, **keep** my commandments*” (John 14:15). And again, (in vs 23), “*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*”. The word ‘keep’ here not only means *to fulfil a command* (as in to obey Him) but also to *guard* His Word in our heart (#5083), as well as sharing His Word (the truth, John 17:17) with others (as the opportunities arise, <https://t.me/BibleStudyGodsWord/465>). In other words, God’s ‘love language’ is *obedience*. And that means **it takes work for us to ‘keep’** (guard and protect) **obeying our Heavenly Father as the top priority in our life**. Said another way, obeying our Heavenly Father *has* to be what we ‘set our heart upon’ (desire) - first and foremost - in life... otherwise, all other forms of worship (singing and ‘good works’) mean nothing to Him (Mth 7:21-23, Ps 50, etc.).

Moreover, as Paul explained in Rom 13:10, “*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law*”. Our Heavenly Father has given us the Ten Commandments, Statutes and Judgments [<https://t.me/BestStudyBible/155>] to help us to understand *how* to obey Him: from our individual life (the Ten Commandments), to the government (Statutes) to the judges (Judgments). And, when we fall short (of His righteous laws) – as we **all** do at times (Rom 3:23) – we simply need to *earnestly* repent (in Jesus’ name, John 14:13-14, John 15:17, John 16:23-26)

and ask God to forgive us (1 John 1:1-2). But we must *also sincerely* strive to *stop* sinning. Which, again, means kicking out (each and every day of our life) any negative (and sinful) thoughts and desires, intentions and motivation out of our ‘inner man’ (spirit, i.e. heart and mind). This is why Jesus also said we can *only* truly worship our Heavenly Father (who we cannot see) ‘in *spirit and in truth*’ (John 4:23-24). So, if we don’t put **truth**, which is God’s Word (John 17:17), into our mind (thoughts) *and* heart (desires, intentions, motivations, feelings) then ***we really are not worshipping Him***. This means we cannot ‘play Church’ by listening to (and believing in) twisted (perverted) forms of His Word... as the ‘traditions of man’ are (Mth 15, Mk 7), which (sadly) most Churches teach today [<https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/212>]. So, it is *imperative* we understand what it *really* means to praise (***to revere or worship***) our Heavenly Father because, that’s (loving *and obeying* Him, *from the heart*) is the *only* thing that truly pleases Him! And, if you want ‘blessings’ from our Heavenly Father, you must please Him (Heb 11:6; Mth 5:3-20, etc.). And that’s *why* this Psalmist *begins* by promising to give to the Lord (YHVH) *true* reverence, and worship (‘praise’ #3034), with his *whole* heart.

Now, another interesting point about verse 1 (here in Psalm 111) is that the Psalmist promises to praise the Lord (YHVH) “***in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation***”. The word ‘**assembly**’ here means *a session*, i.e. *company of persons* (in close deliberation); and, by implication, it can also mean *intimacy, consultation, or a secret* (#5475). The *Companion Bible* notes renders this as a ‘conclave’ or ‘secret assembly’. So, this could be referring to a gathering of a group, or a private meeting. But when we consider the fact that this word is connected to the ‘upright’ (i.e. the assembly of the upright’) then the meaning becomes quite clear. For, it is *definitely* referring to a *private* meeting of those who are ‘**upright**’, which simply means ***straight*** (literally or figuratively, #3477). However, the prime root this word (upright) comes from is quite helpful in understanding what the ‘upright’ (straight) people are. For, it not only means ***to be straight or even*** it also (figuratively) means ***to be*** (or, ***to make***) ***right, pleasant or prosperous*** (#3474). So, the ‘assembly of the upright’ simply means a private meeting of those who have an *upright* heart.

As we learned earlier, this means they worship our Heavenly Father *wholeheartedly*. There’s nothing more important to them than loving, and obeying our Heavenly Father. After all, when our heart is ‘crooked’ (*not* upright, Deut 32:5, Ps 125:5, Prov 2:15, etc.) then our heart has *departed from Him* (Ezek 6:9, 14:1-5; Isa 59:2; Jer 9:6; Isa 29:13) because we are longing (lusting) after other things than Him. Now, it’s not bad to love your family and friends; and really, we *should* – because we are commanded to love others, even as our self (Lev 19:18, Mth 19:19, 22:39; Mk 12:31; Gal 1:14; James 2:8). Nor is it bad to enjoy the things our Heavenly Father gives us (1 Tim 6:17). But, as Paul warns (in 1 Tim 6:9-10), when we begin to *lust* for things (physical things, people, money, entertainment, sex, pride, etc.) then our heart has changed from being ‘upright’ (serving, and loving, our Heavenly Father) to being ‘crooked’ (serving, and loving *other* things and/or people above the Lord, YHVH). That’s why Jesus told us we *cannot*

love God and ‘mammon’ (wealth, money) (Mth 6:24) at the same time. And that’s why Paul told us: “*But godliness with contentment is **great gain**. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content”.*

So, keeping our heart ‘upright’ means keeping our Heavenly Father as the One who you love (and obey) *more than anything* else. And, it’s interesting this Psalmist speaks of praising the Lord (YHVH) in the ‘assembly of the upright’ (private meetings of the upright ones) because really, people still do this today. But mostly, it is done in private (home) ‘meetings’ when people get together to study God’s Word. And the reason this is done today, mostly in homes, is because *so many* Churches have become corrupted (i.e. they teach the ‘traditions of man’ instead of the Word of God). And, as such, those who *really* are seeking our Heavenly Father are *much more likely* to have ‘private meetings of the upright’ in their own homes! Now, the Psalmist also promises to praise (revere and worship) the Lord (YHVH) – with his whole heart – in ‘**the congregation**’, which simply means *a stated assemblage* (specifically, a concourse, or generally, a family or crowd). So, this implies a *larger* group of people who come together to praise the Lord (YHVH); which (today) *could* be in a ‘Church’ [<https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/332>] that *actually* teaches God’s Word ‘without spot or blemish’ (1 Tim 6:14).

But, either way (i.e. a smaller group or larger one) this Psalmist is surely speaking of praising the Lord (YHVH) in groups of people who *also sincerely* worship our Heavenly Father, with their ‘whole heart’. However, we should remember that: back when these ‘praise’ Psalms were written, their form of worship *depended on* blood sacrifices, and other ordinances (which Jesus has *now done away with*, Heb 10:10), to find forgiveness *and* to have their prayers heard (via the Aaronic priesthood). So, their form of worship truly *did* center upon worshiping at a building (the Temple). But, for us today, *it’s not that way anymore* (John 4:23-24) because Jesus Christ has *already* come to fulfill all the blood sacrifices (Mth 5:17; Col 2:14; Eph 2:15; Heb 10:10, etc.). After all, the word ‘**Church**’ means *a calling out* as well as *a popular meeting* (#1577). So, it does not (at all) refer to a building, organization or corporation of any sort! Therefore, as Jesus also taught us (John 4:23-24), *true* worship means worshiping our Heavenly Father *wherevers we are*, even in our own home. As Paul pointed out (1 Cor 3:16-18, 1 Cor 6:15-20, 2 Cor 6:14-18) *we are the Temple of God **when** His Holy Spirit is within us!* And that’s why your daily (personal) Bible studies are some of the most *wonderful* times of worship you’ll ever have! And if you are fortunate enough to find others who truly love our Heavenly Father wholeheartedly (enjoy studying His Word, not believing in ‘traditions of man’) then it is certainly a blessing to have others to fellowship with too. However, it’s *not* necessary. As Jesus said, *where two or three are gathered together in my name, **there am I in the midst of them*** (Matt 18:20)...

Psalm 111

*2 The **works** of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*

Now we begin to see the Psalmist speak of the 'works' of the Lord', which is the *subject* of this great 'Hallelujah' Psalm. The word '**works**' in this verse means *an action* (good or bad) and, by implication, also means *a product* (specifically, a poem) or (generally) *property* (#4639). In the context of this Psalm, it's referring to the *actions* of the 'Lord' (#3068, *Yehovah*). And His works (actions) are indeed '**great**' which means *great* (in any sense) and can even mean *older* (#1419) because our Heavenly Father's 'works' have been around for a *very* long time. As Ps 102:25 said: *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.* And, as Ps 19:1 so duly proclaims: *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.* Yet, our Heavenly Father's 'works' also include His *tender mercies and loving kindnesses* (Ps 25:6), *freeing Israel* from Egyptian bondage, *bringing them into* the Promise Land (Ps 44:1-3) as well as His *mighty judgments* He has used to punish the wicked and save the righteous (Ps 119:52).

So, in *every way*, the 'works' of the Lord (YHVH) are indeed *very* great, and have been around for a long time (of old), *because* our Heavenly Father is *eternal* (#3068), as Isa 46:9-10 points out so well. Further, this word '**great**' (#1419) comes from a prim root that means *to be* (or, *make*) **large** in various senses, such as in *body, mind, estate* or *honor*, also in *pride* (#1431). So, our Heavenly Father's works are also very 'large' in the sense they deserve *great* honor, *and* respect, from us. And that's simply because He (alone) is our Creator, i.e. He has created **all** things in heaven, *and* on earth (Gen 1:1, Isa 42:5, Isa 45:12, 18, Ezek 18:4; Zech 12:1, Ps 96:4-5; 148:1-6, John 1:1-3, Acts 4:24; 14:15, Eph 3:9, Col 1:16, Rev 4:11; Rev 14:7) *-including us* (Ezek 18:4). And, as Rev 4:11 tells us, He created all things for His pleasure! This is why all those who do *not* give Him pleasure (i.e. the incorrigible rebels) will (in the end) be 'blotted out' of existence (Rev 20:10-15).

And then (in this Ps 111:2) we're told that the 'works' of the Lord (YHVH) are *sought out of all them that have pleasure therein*. The words '**sought out**' here is a prim root that means *to tread* or *frequent*, i.e. usually *to follow* (for *pursuit* or *search*); and, by implication, also means *to seek* or *ask* and, specifically, *to worship* (#1875). And the word '**pleasure**' means *pleasure, desire, valuable thing* and even (by extension) *a matter* (as something in mind) (#2656). And it comes from a prim root that means *to incline to*, (by implication) *to bend* or (figuratively), *to be pleased with* or *desire* (#2654). So, all those who take pleasure in God's 'works' seek (search out) His 'works', even as though they were pursuing something *very* valuable. And, essentially what this means is that: all those who truly appreciate our Heavenly Father's 'works' (from His creation to His righteous ways) earnestly seek out (and desire) His Word *because* they consider it a 'valuable thing'. As Prov 8:11 says, God's *wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it*. James 3:17 also tells us that God's wisdom (i.e. the wisdom that is 'from above') is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*. And that's why those who are not rebellious take great pleasure in God's works (and Word) *and* seek Him out as though they

were looking for ‘hidden treasure’ (Matt 6:19-21; 12:35; 2 Cor 4:6-8). And, in our next study, we’ll learn *why* the Psalmist says that those who have pleasure in God’s ‘works’ seek them out, i.e. we’ll get the ‘details’ of how wonderful His works really are! But, until then, let’s remember...

*4 **Blessed** is that man that **maketh the LORD his trust**, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*

*5 **Many**, O LORD my God, **are thy wonderful works** which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

*8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, **thy law is within my heart.***

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

*10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.
Ps 40:4-10*

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

*16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, **and glorify your Father which is in heaven.***

Matt 5:14-16

We’ll pick this up in part 2...

AMEN.