

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Praise of God in Book II of the Psalter, Session 4, Call to and Cause for Praise

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, Praise of God in Book II of the Psalter, Session 4, Call to Cause for Praise, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt **analyzes** the Psalms in Book Two of the Psalter (Psalms 42-72), **focusing** on the themes of praise. He **examines** five key aspects of praise within these Psalms: **the call to praise, the cause for praise, how praise is performed, the content of praise, and the place of praise**. Hildebrandt **illustrates** these concepts with specific examples from the text, drawing connections between the Psalms and their historical and cultural contexts. Finally, he **discusses** the implications of these findings for contemporary worship.

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hildebrandt, Session 4 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms & Wisdom → Psalms).



**Hildebrandt_Pss_Se
ssion04.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Hildebrandt, Praise of God in Book II of the Psalter, Session 4, Call to Cause for Praise

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture on praise in Book II of the Psalms:

Briefing Document: Dr. Ted Hildebrandt on Praise in Book II of the Psalter

Introduction

This document summarizes the key themes and ideas presented by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in his fourth session on "Praise in Book II of the Psalter" (Psalms 42-72). The session explores various aspects of praise, including the call to praise, the reasons for praise, how to praise, the content of praise, and the place of praise, drawing heavily on examples from Book II of the Psalms. Dr. Hildebrandt's approach also incorporates insights into Hebrew poetry, intertextual relationships, and the movement from lament to praise within the Psalter.

Key Themes and Ideas

1. Context of Book II of the Psalter:

- **Canonical Context:** Book II is characterized by a significant number of Psalms of lament. It is also known as the second Davidic collection.
- **Elohistic Psalter:** The name "Elohim" is used more frequently than "Yahweh" in Book II, distinguishing it from Book I.
- **Intertextuality:** The Psalms are interconnected through "catchwords and intertextual relationships" (building on the work of Jerry Wilson). This suggests that the Psalms should be read in light of each other and as a unified composition.
- **Three Characters:** The Psalms often feature a king, a Psalmist under attack, and an enemy. The Psalmist pleads to the king for deliverance.
- **Ritualistic Nature:** Praise is often contextualized within the temple, sacrifices, and processions.

1. Call to Praise:

- **Imperative Form:** Calls to praise are often expressed as commands or imperatives (e.g., "Clap your hands, all you nations, shout to God with cries of joy," Psalm 47:1).

- **Inclusio:** Some calls to praise act as "inclusio," bookending sections of a Psalm (e.g., Psalm 67:3-5, where it begins and ends with "May the peoples praise you, O God").
- **Commitment to Praise:** The Psalmist sometimes expresses a personal commitment to praise (e.g., "I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign Lord," Psalm 71:16).
- **Vow to Praise:** Praise can be tied to a vow made in times of trouble, with the Psalmist promising to praise God in return for deliverance or blessing (e.g., Psalm 61:5-8).
- **Progression of Praise:** Book II, like the larger Psalter, moves from lament at the beginning toward praise at the end, often concluding with "Praise be to the Lord," followed by a double "Amen."
- **Double Praise:** Some Psalms even have a double "Praise be" as well as the double "Amen."

1. **Cause to Praise:**

- **"For" or "Because" Clauses:** Reasons for praise are often introduced with the words "for" or "because" (Hebrew *ki*).
- **God's Attributes:** Reasons for praise include God's awesomeness, kingship, and power (e.g., "for the Lord Most High is awesome, a great king over all the earth," Psalm 47:2).
- **God's Actions:** Praise is also prompted by God's acts, such as preserving lives (e.g., "for he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping," Psalm 66:9).
- **Deliverance:** God's deliverance is a cause for praise (e.g., "You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance," Psalm 66:12).
- **Answered Prayer:** God's listening and responding to prayer inspires praise (e.g., "Praise be to God who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me," Psalm 66:20).
- **The blending of cause and praise:** Sometimes the reason for praise is the praise itself (e.g., "because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you" Psalm 63:3)

1. How to Praise:

- **Exuberance and Joy:** Praise involves heartfelt joy and thankfulness that overflows in expressions of worship (e.g., "My joy and delight. I will praise you with harp, O God, my God.")
- **Moral Prerequisites:** There are moral prerequisites to praising God; wickedness disqualifies, and righteousness is needed (e.g., "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened," Psalm 66:18).
- **Body Parts:** Praise is expressed through various body parts:
- **Lips and Tongue:** For shouting joy, declaring righteousness, and proclaiming God's acts (e.g., "My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you," Psalm 71:23).
- **Hands:** For clapping and lifting up in worship (e.g., "Clap your hands, all you nations, shout to God with cries of joy," Psalm 47:1; "I will lift up my hands," Psalm 63:4).
- **Musical Instruments:**
- **Harp (Navel):** A larger, single-armed instrument with more strings.
- **Lyre (Kinnor):** A smaller, two-armed instrument, often associated with shepherds.
- **Shofar (Trumpet):** A ram's horn, used for gathering people, warning of war, and ceremonial purposes.
- **Timbrels/Tambourines:** Played by maidens in processions (e.g., "with them are the maidens playing the tambourines" Psalm 68:25)
- **Singing:** Singing and song are also part of praise. Music has the ability to touch the soul in unique ways.
- **Personification:** Not only do humans participate in praise, but the meadows and valleys are personified as singing to God (e.g. Psalm 65:13)
- **Telling/Proclaiming:** Praise also involves telling or proclaiming God's mighty deeds to others, especially to the next generation (e.g., "My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long," Psalm 71:15).

1. Place of Praise:

- **Movement from Sinai to Jerusalem:** The Psalms describe a movement from God dwelling on Mount Sinai (the place of the Ten Commandments) to the sanctuary in Jerusalem.

- **Sanctuary and Temple:** Specific places like the sanctuary, the temple, and the house of God in Jerusalem, especially in Zion, are the special location for worship and praise (e.g., "Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion," Psalm 65:1).
- **Mount Zion:** Mount Zion, is described as the "city of our God, his holy mountain...the city of the great king."
- **Universality of Praise:** While the sanctuary and Zion are important, praise ultimately transcends those places and extends to "all the earth" and all the nations (e.g., "Shout for joy to God, all the earth," Psalm 66:1; "be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth," Psalm 57:5). This transcends to the church beyond Israel and the whole world.
- Dr. Hildebrandt notes that Jesus' comment to the woman of Samaria seems to align with this universalizing of praise.

1. **Content of Praise:**

- **Descriptive Praise:** This involves praising God for who He is and His attributes (e.g., His holiness, loving-kindness, and mercy), and His mighty acts of old. (Klaus Westermann)
- **Declarative Praise:** This involves giving praise for specific acts that God has done, such as delivering an individual from a specific peril. (Klaus Westermann)
- **Works of God:** God's works (creation, providence, mighty acts) are a central content of praise (e.g., "All mankind will fear and will proclaim the works of God," Psalm 64:9).
- **Creation:** Creation is a basis for praise (e.g. "who formed the mountains by your power" Psalm 65:6) for the Psalmist, with focus on the *doxological* function, not the how or when.
- **Providential Care:** God's care for the land is also a cause for praise (e.g., "You care for the land and water it," Psalm 65:9).
- **Mighty Acts of God: Exodus:** The Exodus from Egypt is a major theme (e.g., "he turned the sea into dry land," Psalm 66:6).
- **Conquest of Canaan:** The conquest is another mighty act of God (e.g., "with your hand, you drove out the nations and planted our fathers," Psalm 44:2).
- **Shekinah Glory:** The movement of God's glory from Sinai to Zion.

- **Kingship:** God's kingship and protection (e.g. God's protection of widows and the fatherless, Psalm 68:5).
- **Personal Deliverance:** God's personal deliverance (e.g., "He has delivered me from all my troubles," Psalm 54:7).
- **Future Deliverance:** Hope for future deliverance (e.g., "May all who seek you rejoice and be glad," Psalm 70:4).
- **Forgiveness of Sin:** Praise is offered in response to God's forgiveness of sin (e.g., "Save me from blood guilt, O God, the God who saves me," Psalm 51:14).
- **Attributes of God:** Praising God for his attributes of being:
 - **Loving (Hesed):** Covenantal, steadfast, and unfailing love (Psalm 62:12)
 - **Power/Might:** (Psalm 66:3)
 - **Righteousness:** (Psalm 71:19)
- **Metaphors for God:** Describing God as refuge, strong tower, fortress, and source of salvation.
- **Name of God:** The name of God is to be praised, representing God himself.

1. Lament as Basis for Praise:

- **Counter to Prosperity Gospel:** Lament is the basis for true praise because often the Psalmist only reaches out to God in the first place during times of difficulty and trouble. This is a rebuke of the prosperity gospel.
- **Grief:** It is important to let others grieve without trying to force rejoicing.
- **Cry of the Soul:** Lament is where the cry of the soul comes up to God, leading to deliverance and praise.

1. Passion for God:

- **Pursuit of God:** The Psalms begin with an underlying passion for God.
- **Thirst for God:** The soul pants for God, like a deer for water (e.g., "As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God," Psalm 42:1).

Conclusion

Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture provides a rich and nuanced exploration of praise in Book II of the Psalter. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical, literary, and theological context of the Psalms, as well as the diverse expressions of praise. The lecture underscores that praise is not merely a formulaic exercise but a heartfelt response to God's character and actions, born from both joy and lament. It is expressed through the whole self – body and soul – and goes out to encompass the entire world, even though its origin is in Zion. Ultimately, praise comes from a deep and abiding passion for God.

4. Study Guide: Hildebrandt, Praise of God in Book II of the Psalter, Session 4, Call to Cause for Praise

Book Two of the Psalter: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What are the three primary characters often depicted in the Psalms of Book 2 and what are their roles?
2. Explain the significance of the term "Elohistic Psalter" and how it relates to Book 2 of the Psalms.
3. Describe the difference between a "call to praise" and a "commitment to praise," providing an example of each.
4. What is a "vow to praise," and how does it relate to difficult situations or personal deliverance?
5. What is the key clause that is often associated with identifying a cause for praise in the Psalms?
6. Explain the distinction between narrative and poetry as it relates to the structure of the Bible.
7. What are some of the moral prerequisites to praising God as outlined in the text?
8. Describe two different instruments of praise, noting their physical differences and common uses.
9. How does the text differentiate between "descriptive praise" and "declarative praise," and what is the focus of each?
10. What is the significance of the idea that praise transcends the physical location of Zion?

Answer Key

1. The three primary characters are the king (who delivers and destroys), the psalmist (who is attacked and pleads), and the enemy (who attacks the psalmist). The psalmist appeals to the king for help who ultimately delivers and defeats the enemy.

2. The term "Elohistic Psalter" refers to the preference for the name Elohim over Yahweh when referring to God in the second book of Psalms. This can be seen in comparisons such as Psalm 14 and 53.
3. A "call to praise" is a direct imperative to praise God (e.g., "Clap your hands, all you nations"). A "commitment to praise" is a self-reflective declaration by the psalmist to personally praise God (e.g., "I will proclaim your mighty acts").
4. A "vow to praise" is a promise to God, often made in times of distress or danger, to serve or praise him in the future in exchange for deliverance or blessing. It often accompanies personal reflection and devotion.
5. The key clause is the word "for" or "because" (Hebrew "ki"), which introduces the reason or rationale for praising God after a call to praise. This connective explains the cause for celebration.
6. Narrative in the Bible is typically presented in paragraphs with justified columns, while poetry is structured in single lines often grouped into bi-colons or strophes. The structure of the lines, and not paragraphs, in poetry matters.
7. Moral prerequisites include righteousness and a sincere heart, meaning that wickedness and cherished sin can disqualify a person from offering acceptable praise. Righteousness is the foundation of acceptable praise.
8. The navel (harp) is a larger instrument with one arm, a big sounding box, and many strings, while the kinnor (lyre) is a smaller, portable instrument with two arms connected to a sounding board. Both were played while walking.
9. "Descriptive praise" focuses on God's actions, attributes, and nature (e.g., His creation), while "declarative praise" emphasizes God's specific deeds, particularly his acts of deliverance or specific blessings in a person's life.
10. While Zion is significant as a holy place for God's presence, praise is not limited to that physical location but extends to all the earth, reflecting the universality of God's glory. All people, everywhere, are called to praise.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of lament in the Psalms as a foundation for praise, using specific examples from Book 2. How does understanding lament change one's understanding of the nature of praise in the psalms?
2. Discuss the various ways in which the psalmist demonstrates the "how to praise" category by using specific body parts and instruments. How do the chosen forms of expression enhance or add to a more profound understanding of praise?
3. Examine the movement from the specific place of praise in Zion to the universal call to praise found throughout the earth. How does this shift expand the understanding of praise beyond the physical and cultural bounds of Jerusalem?
4. Explore the interplay between the "call to praise" and the "cause to praise" in Book 2 of the Psalms, noting how these two concepts sometimes blend and enrich each other. What is the significance of this overlap in our understanding of praise?
5. Using the concept of content of praise, develop an understanding of what is being praised by combining examples of the attributes of God, His acts of deliverance, and the personal testimony of the psalmist. How can these categories lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the praise of God?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Elohistic Psalter:** A term used to describe Book 2 of the Psalms, where the name Elohim for God is favored over the name Yahweh.
- **Call to Praise:** A direct command or imperative to praise God, often using words like "shout" or "clap."
- **Commitment to Praise:** A personal declaration by the psalmist of their intention to praise God.
- **Vow to Praise:** A promise to praise God in response to a specific deliverance or blessing, often made in a time of distress.
- **Key Clause:** The words "for" or "because" (Hebrew *ki*) that introduce the rationale or cause for praising God.

- **Bi-colon:** Two lines of poetry that often express a synonymous or antithetic parallel meaning.
- **Strophe:** A grouping of lines within a poem that acts similar to a paragraph in prose.
- **Verb Gapping:** The poetic practice of omitting a verb in the second line of a bi-colon as the first verb is assumed.
- **Synonymous Parallelism:** Two lines of poetry expressing the same idea, often with slight variations.
- **Antithetic Parallelism:** Two lines of poetry expressing contrasting or opposite ideas.
- **Descriptive Praise:** Praise focused on God's attributes and actions, describing His nature and character.
- **Declarative Praise:** Praise centered on God's specific deeds and acts of deliverance.
- **Navel:** A type of harp, usually larger, with a single arm and a big sounding box.
- **Kinnor:** A smaller, portable type of harp or lyre, with two arms connected to a sounding board.
- **Shofar:** A ram's horn used as a trumpet for gathering, warning, and praise.
- **Hesed:** A Hebrew term referring to God's steadfast, covenantal, and unfailing love.
- **Selah:** A term in the Psalms that may indicate a meditative pause.
- **Refrain:** A line or phrase repeated in a Psalm, often highlighting a key theme.
- **Synecdoche:** A figure of speech where a part is used to represent the whole.
- **Metonymy:** A figure of speech where one thing is used to represent something else that is closely related.
- **Imprecation:** Curses or prayers for judgment against enemies, sometimes used as a basis for praising God.

5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Praise of God in Book II of the Psalter, Session 4, Call to Cause for Praise, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Praise in Book Two of the Psalter

1. **What is the general structure of Book Two of the Psalter (Psalms 42-72) and how does it relate to praise?** Book Two of the Psalter is often referred to as the second Davidic collection and the "Elohistic Psalter" due to the frequent use of the name Elohim for God. It begins with many Psalms of lament but transitions toward praise, mirroring the movement found within individual Psalms and the Psalter as a whole. Many of these psalms contain calls to praise, causes for praise, and various ways to offer praise. Book two ends with a double "praise be" followed by a double "amen," a common feature at the end of each of the five books within the Psalms.
2. **What are the different calls to praise and how are they expressed?** The calls to praise in Book Two are often expressed through imperatives or commands, such as "Clap your hands" and "Shout to God with cries of joy." These calls are not always direct commands; they can also be expressed as a desire or wish that the people praise God: "May the peoples praise you, O God." There is also the concept of a "commitment to praise," where the psalmist invokes himself, stating, "I will praise you". These calls often lead to a "vow to praise" where the psalmist makes a commitment that if God delivers them or does something, then they will fulfill their vow to praise God.
3. **What constitutes the "cause for praise" and how is it identified in the Psalms?** The "cause for praise" provides the reason why God is being praised. It's often indicated by the connecting word "for" or "because," which explains the rationale for praise. These causes can range from God's awesome nature and kingship to specific actions of deliverance. Causes for praise are not always explicit; sometimes, they are implied through descriptions of what God has done, like bringing someone to a place of abundance or preserving lives. The cause for praise often blends with the praise itself, such that describing God's love being better than life is both a reason for praise and the expression of it.

4. **What are the moral prerequisites for praise, according to the Psalms?** The Psalms emphasize that there are moral prerequisites for praise, meaning wickedness disqualifies a person from offering acceptable praise to God. Righteousness is needed. God objects when the wicked recite his laws or take his covenant on their lips, because their wickedness is a violation. The psalmist recognizes that cherishing sin in one's heart can hinder God from hearing praise. Therefore, the righteous and upright in heart are those who will glorify God.
5. **How do body parts and instruments play a role in the expression of praise?** The Psalms use various body parts to symbolize a wholehearted expression of praise. Lips, tongues, and mouths are used for shouting, singing, telling of righteousness and proclaiming God's mighty acts. Hands are involved in clapping and lifting up in praise. In addition, instruments like the navel (a larger harp) and kinnor (a smaller lyre), trumpets (shofar), and tambourines, were used to amplify the expression of praise. These instruments were often incorporated in processions and gatherings, enhancing the collective experience of worship.
6. **What is the content of praise in Book Two and how is it categorized?** The content of praise encompasses both descriptive and declarative elements. Descriptive praise focuses on God's actions and attributes, such as his holiness, loving-kindness, mercy, and power as demonstrated through creation and his providential care for the land. Declarative praise involves thanksgiving for God's specific acts of deliverance. Other areas of praise include: the Exodus, the conquest of Canaan, God being a father to the fatherless, and personal deliverance. Also, forgiveness of sin, and God's righteous character as well as being a refuge, a strong tower and fortress. Finally, the very name of God is to be praised as a metonymy for the character of God himself.
7. **How do the Psalms emphasize both the specific place of praise (Zion) and the universal nature of praise?** The Psalms highlight the significance of Zion, the temple, and the sanctuary in Jerusalem as a designated place for praise, often depicting a movement from Sinai to Zion. However, this focus is not restrictive. The psalms move towards a universal view of praise, calling on "all the earth," all nations, and kingdoms to praise God. This movement of praise from a specific place to a universal expression is emphasized. The ultimate goal is that all creation would praise God.

8. **How does lament connect to praise, and what does the book suggest about passion in relation to God?** Lament is not seen as contradictory to praise, but as its basis. It is often through the depths of lament that the soul cries out to God, resulting in deliverance, salvation, and ultimately, praise. This journey from lament to praise gives a rich depth to worship. The book begins with a great passion for God, likened to a deer panting for water. It suggests that the pursuit of God and the desire for a deep, personal relationship are essential to experiencing true praise and are the underlying motivation for all expressions of praise in the psalms.