

Quotes from the Word: Praise the Lord

OLD TESTAMENT

“The Lord is my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation;
He is my God; and I will praise Him....”

Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand;
and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances (Exodus 15:2,20).

Then David danced before the Lord with all his might. David and all the house of Israel brought up
the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet (see 2 Samuel 6:14-15).

I will bless the Lord at all times;
His praise shall continuously be in my mouth.
(Psalm 34:1)

I will sing and give praise.
Awake, my glory!
Awake, lute and harp!
I will awaken the dawn.

I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing to You among the nations.
For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens,
And Your truth unto the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory be above all the earth.
(Psalm 57:7-11)

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
To declare Your loving kindness in the morning,
And Your faithfulness every night.
(Psalm 92:1-2)

O come, let us sing to the Lord!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;
Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.
O come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.
(Psalm 95:1,2,6)

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Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!
Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
(Psalm 96:1)

Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands!
Serve the Lord with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing.
Know that the Lord, He is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.
Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.
For the Lord is good;
His mercy is everlasting,
And His truth endures to all generations.
(Psalm 100)

Praise the Lord!
For it is good to sing praises to our God....
Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
Sing praises on the harp to our God.
(Psalm 147:1,7)

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;
Praise Him with the lute and harp!
Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;
Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!
Praise Him with loud cymbals;
Praise Him with high sounding cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord!
(Psalm 150:3-6)

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NEW TESTAMENT

As He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice (Luke 19:37).

Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

“Hosanna to the Son of David!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’

Hosanna in the highest!”

(Matthew 21:9)

Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!” (Revelation 19:5).

HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

PRAISING THE LORD

To give praise to God and to praise God is to confess Him, and from confession of heart to worship Him (*Apocalypse Explained* 1210).

“Confession” involves the celestial of love, and genuine confession, or that which is from the heart, can only be from good. The confession which is from truth being called the “voice of singing, the voice of them that make merry, and that sing psalms” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3880:4).

By “Alleluia,” in the Hebrew language, is symbolized, “Praise ye God,” therefore it was an expression of thanksgiving, confession, and celebration of the Lord from joy of heart (*Apocalypse Revealed* 803).

By ‘they were singing a new song’ is meant the acknowledgment and glorification of the Lord, that He Only is the Judge, Redeemer and Savior, thus the God of heaven and earth (*Apocalypse Revealed* 617).

The various kinds of affections from which the Lord is confessed and glorified are...expressed by various kinds of sounds and instruments; the various kinds of sounds in “making a loud noise,” “breaking forth,” “shouting for joy,” and “singing psalms,” and the various kinds of instruments, by “harps,” “trumpets,” and “cornets” (*Apocalypse Explained* 323:9).

The Lord saves mankind out of mercy alone and does not demand any praise or thanks in return for His Divine benefits (see *Spiritual Experiences* 2098).

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SINGING

Songs are mentioned in many passages of the Word, especially in David [the Psalms], and they symbolize confession and glorification of God by singing (*Apocalypse Explained* 857).

The reason why “a song” also symbolizes glorification, which is confession from joy of heart, is because singing exalts, and causes affection to break out from the heart into sound, and show itself intensely in its life (*Apocalypse Revealed* 279:2).

Songs were for the sake of exalting the life of love, and the joy derived from it (*Apocalypse Revealed* 279:3).

Harmonious sound and various forms it takes symbolize states of joy and gladness in the spiritual world (*Arcana Coelestia* 8337:2).

MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP OF ANCIENT CHURCHES

When the ancients who belonged to the Church ascribed glory to the Lord they did so through songs, psalms, and various kinds of musical instruments. For the ancients who belonged to the Church experienced a joy surpassing all other joys when they called to mind the Lord's Coming and the salvation of the human race by Him (*Arcana Coelestia* 8261:3).

In ancient times gladness of heart was attested not only by musical instruments and songs, but also by dances. For joys of the heart, or interior joys, burst forth in the body into various acts, as into songs, and also into dances. It is from this that “dances” are mentioned in the Word, and by them are signified gladnesses of the affections of truth or of faith, from good or charity (*Arcana Coelestia* 8339).

In former times many types of musical instruments were used when God was worshipped. In general wind instruments were used to express affections for good, and stringed instruments affections for truth (*Arcana Coelestia* 8337:2).

Among the ancients it was also customary in sacred worship to sing in choirs, and there would be one or any number of persons who could respond to the others, which represented a reciprocation and response, like that of the Church from heaven, and of heaven from the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 8340).

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

In heaven affections are perceived by sounds; and because there are various affections, and various sounds are produced by musical instruments, therefore these instruments, by correspondence and consequent agreement, symbolize affections (*Apocalypse Explained* 323).

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The meaning of the “voice or sound” of various instruments of music is joys from internal and external affections. They symbolize affections because of their harmony, for musical sounds express affections and produce them with joy (*Apocalypse Explained* 1185).

Because musical instruments and dances symbolize varieties of joy and gladness that spring from the affections, as well as the affections themselves of the mind which their sounds excite, “David and the whole house of Israel played before Jehovah upon wooden instruments of every kind, and upon harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels; and on sistra, and on cymbals” (2 Sam. 6:5) (*Apocalypse Explained* 323:11).

Sounds from stringed instruments correspond to truths from good, or to things intellectual, in which the angels of the Lord’s spiritual kingdom are. But sounds from wind instruments correspond to goods, in which the angels of the Lord’s celestial kingdom are (*Apocalypse Explained* 856).

The instruments whose sounds are discrete, as stringed instruments, pertain to the class of spiritual affections; and the instruments whose sounds are continuous, as wind instruments, pertain to the class of celestial affections (*Apocalypse Revealed* 792).

THE PSALMS

The Psalms of David are songs, for they were played and sung and were called songs in many passages (*Apocalypse Revealed* 279:2).

As there are various affections of good and truth, and each expresses itself by an appropriate sound, so in the Word, especially in David, various kinds of instruments are mentioned, which signify corresponding affections. One who knows the internal sense of the Word, and also the sounds of the instruments there named, can know what affection is there signified and described. The angels know this from the mere mention of the instruments when a person is reading the Word, and also from the matter described there in its own words (*Apocalypse Explained* 326:12).

The angels who constitute in heaven the Lord’s celestial kingdom, when a person is reading the Word, draw from his affection alone the internal sense of it, which affection arises from the sound of the words in the original tongue. But the angels who are in the Lord’s spiritual kingdom draw the internal sense from the truths that the words contain. Therefore the person who is in spiritual affection has from the celestial kingdom joy of heart, and from the spiritual kingdom confession from that joy (*Apocalypse Explained* 326:13).

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SINGING IN HEAVEN

In ancient times people who knew that songs with words of the prophets had an inner meaning, contemplated it, and were consequently affected by it, experienced an inner gladness. At the same time the angels who resided with people ascribed glory to the Lord as well. So those who sang and those who listened to songs experienced heavenly gladness as a result of the holy and blissful influence from heaven—gladness in which it seemed to them as though they were transported into heaven. Such was the effect the songs of the Church had among the ancients. Such also is the effect they have at the present day, for the affections of spiritual angels are especially stirred by songs which refer to the Lord, His kingdom, and His Church (AC 8261:3).

In heaven glorifications and celebrations of the Lord are taken from the Word, because then they come from the Lord, inasmuch as the Lord is the Word, in the sense that He is the essential Divine truth in the Word (see *Conjugial Love* 81).

In heaven they have exhibitions and shows, and instrumental and vocal musical performances, all in the highest perfection (*Conjugial Love* 5).

“We have days of celebration here, proclaimed by the prince, to relax people’s spirits from the fatigue that the drive to excel may have produced in some of them. These days are accompanied by instrumental and choral musical performances in the public squares.... Bandstands are erected in the public squares on such occasions, surrounded by latticework woven out of vines, with clusters of grapes hanging from them. The musicians sit inside in three tiers, with stringed and wind instruments, both high-voiced and low, shrill-voiced and mellow. On either side of them are singers, male and female, and they entertain the citizens with delightful exultation and singing, in concert and solo, varying the type of music periodically. On these days of celebration, such performances last from morning to noon, and after noon till evening” (*Conjugial Love* 17:1).

“Every morning we hear the most charming singing of young women and girls coming from the houses around the public squares, filling the whole city with its sound. Each morning they express some particular affection of spiritual love in song, which is to say that they express it in sound by the variations or modulations of the singing voice, and the affection is perceived in the singing as though the singing were the affection itself. The sound infuses itself into the souls of its hearers and stirs them to a corresponding state. Such is the nature of heavenly song” (*Conjugial Love* 17:2).

Every affection, since it is from love, when it falls into sound, produces a sound in accord with itself; consequently from the sound that is in the speech, and in which, as it were, the expressions of speech flow, the affection of the other is heard, and thus becomes known to his companion; this is manifestly so in the spiritual world, where all sounds of speech make manifest the affections (*Apocalypse Explained* 323:9).

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CHOIRS

In the heavens glory is ascribed to the Lord by choirs (*Arcana Coelestia* 8261:3).

A choir exists when a considerable number group together, thinking, speaking, and acting as one in continuous progression. In heaven praise to the Lord is offered in most instances by choirs (*Arcana Coelestia* 8115).

Angelic choirs were once praising the Lord and doing so with heartfelt joy. Their praises were heard sometimes as sweet singing. No human singing, however heavenly its sweetness and harmony, can compare with that of those angelic choirs (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3893).

There is also a form of speech among good spirits and among angelic spirits in which many speak simultaneously, especially in gyres or choirs. It has a cadence that sounds rhythmic. These choirs do not fix their minds on any word. Their thoughts are on the sense, and their words follow spontaneously from this. Songs took this form in the past, and so do the Psalms of David (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1648).