

Let everything that has breath
praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150:6

Praise Points

with Karen Holland

Don't Let the Rocks Cry Out

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey

Zechariah 9:9

As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest! Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, Teacher, rebuke Your disciples. But Jesus answered, I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!

Luke 19:37-40

And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!

Mark 11:8-10

Our English word "hosanna" comes from a Greek word "hosanna" which comes from a Hebrew phrase hoshiya na** . This Hebrew phrase is found in one place, Psalm 118:25, where it means, "Save, please!" It is a cry to God for help. It's interesting how the meaning of this phrase has changed over the years. As time went on, hoshiya na gradually changed from being an ordinary cry for help, to the shout of hope and exultation seen in the above passages - "Salvation! Salvation! Salvation has come!" It's no coincidence that in the psalm the exclamation: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" immediately follows hoshiya na. This seems to be an immediate answer to hoshiya na a cry for help.

So "Hosanna!" means "Hooray for salvation! It's coming! It's here! Salvation! Salvation!" "Hosanna in the highest!" means "Let all the angels in heaven join the song of praise. Salvation! Salvation! Let the highest heaven sing the song!"

We are also to rejoice greatly (Zechariah 9:9). We are to sing and make music in our hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:19-20), just as the people of Jerusalem did during Jesus' triumphal entry (Mark 11:8-10, Luke 19:37-40). Notice, however, that this type of praise will have its critics. Like the Pharisees, some will try to silence or suppress it. It's eye opening to take a look at how Jesus answers the request to rebuke His followers for their loud outward display. According to Luke 19:40 if these (His followers) become silent and fail to praise Him, the very rocks will cry out. Why would Jesus say something like this?

The Pharisees feared all the attention Jesus was receiving. Jesus was someone who was willing to stick his neck out for those looked down upon, for the powerless, for the oppressed, and for all kinds of sinners and those thought to be sinners. His ideas and actions upset the status quo. Both the religious leaders like the Pharisees and the political establishment feared his influence. They wanted a way to silence both Jesus and his followers. They wanted this

silence to maintain their own control and power. In this light the Pharisees request makes sense. It also makes sense that Jesus would not want the praises of His people silenced. But why would the rocks or stones cry out, if we His people are silent and fail to praise Him? This got me thinking about rocks and praise - it was then that this passage was brought to mind.

*As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame. Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, and, A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. **But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.***

1 Peter 2:4-10

Peter depicts the church as a building, and each believer as a living stone in that construction. The foundation or cornerstone is Jesus Christ. This is a good picture of life in the body. All that we have and are as believers must be built on the love of God in Christ Jesus. Whether we are focusing on the body as a whole or us as individuals, the only building that will last is that which is built upon Christ (Matthew 7:25).

Look at the reason given (1 Peter 2:9) for building a spiritual house of living stones, a people belonging to God. It's to declare His praise, the praise of the one who calls out of darkness into His wonderful light. The people that the Lord formed for Himself were formed that they may proclaim His praise (Isaiah 43:21, Psalm 102:18)! The Lord takes delight in His people and favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His loving kindness (Psalm 149:4, 147:11). In both these psalms we see that His people are praising Him. For it is good to sing praises to our God; it is pleasant and praise is becoming to the upright (Psalm 147:1; 33:1).

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised! He is to be reverently feared and worshipped above all gods ((Psalm 96:4)). The Lord is to be praised now and forever more (2 Corinthians 11:31; Romans 1:25). As His living stones His praise is to be continually in our mouths, blessing His name at all times (Psalm 34:1). We are to offer up a sacrifice of unceasing praise, giving thanks to His Holy name (Hebrews 13:15).

As these praises rise, the Lord inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22). A glorious (unspeakable) inexpressible joy springs up, for in His presence is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11). This joy can not be stopped or suppressed. It can't be held in or silenced. It just has to flow forth from a full heart, a heart touched by Christ the living God.

So don't remain silent! Don't let the rocks cry out (Luke 19:40)!

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation (Psalm 95:1)! Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forever. From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is to be praised (Psalm 113:2-3). Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD (Psalm 150:1)! Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music (Psalm 98:4). Let your love of the Lord Jesus pour out; rejoice with a glorious (unspeakable) inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8).

HOSANNA! BLESSED IS THE KING; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; PEACE IN HEAVEN AND GLORY IN THE HIGHEST! HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST!

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

Hebrews 13:15

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Philippians 4:4

**Hosanna explanation from John Piper. <http://www.soundofgrace.com/piper83/032783e.htm>

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