

“Seven Words of Praise”

Various Scriptures

Michael Rush

June 30, 2023

Michael: Good morning, gentlemen.

Brave Men: Good morning.

Michael: How are you today?

Ted Wood: Good.

Michael: It’s a pleasure to be here; I’m honored to be here. I’m humbled to be standing in front of you this morning. Could we bow our heads and say a prayer?

O Lord our God! Father, we come to You this morning, Lord, just thanking You for all You’ve done. Thank You, Lord, that while we were yet in our sins and trespasses, Lord, You shed Your blood and died for us, that we who believe on Your name might have eternal life. Lord, I thank You for snatching me and every man here from out of the muck and the mire and sitting us on a high place, not according to the righteousness which we have done, but according to Your mercy You saved us. We thank You and we praise You.

Lord, I ask as I go forth this morning that You would lead and guide me. Let the men’s ears be inclined to hear what thus saith the Lord. And we ask all these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Michael: This week we’re going into Independence Day. It’s a celebration of freedom for our country. And I was going to do a teaching on freedom in Christ. And as I studied I couldn’t nail down a subheading; it was so big. You know, if I had ten thousand subjects I couldn’t do it. But what happened was, I thought about freedom, and I thought about being in front of the men. And I thought about one of the things as I’ve gone through this Christian walk. I sometimes see a lack of freedom, a hindrance to freedom, and that is in praise.

I don’t know if it’s just this country; I’ve heard about what happens in places like Africa and places like that, where there is exuberance. I know that when I say this that praise is not always outward. But it ought to have some kind of heartbeat to it, right? You know, the Lord tells us in His word the different ways to praise Him. That’s what I’m going to go over today.

I’ll tell you a little story. Back in 2010—I think it was 2010—I had a class reunion; it was my 35th reunion. I graduated when I was one. *(Laughter)*

Ted: Yeah! *(Laughter)*

Michael: My 35th reunion, and I ran into a lot of people that I hadn’t seen in a long time. And that next Sunday my praise group at my church, which sang the third Sunday of every month, was all men; I was the leader of it. And so a group of young ladies from our class came to church, and so they were there. It was nice to see them for praise and worship.

And there was one young lady who I had not seen since school. She was there and she came up and she said she would do it. But she also said, “I feel a little funny.” And I said, “Why?”

And she said, “People are clapping and raising their hands and things, and I’m not used to that.”

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And I said, “Okay. So you’re one of those frozen chosen.” (*Laughter*) She might have been Presbyterian. You know, it’s funny. We can joke about denominations, right? I grew up Baptist.

Anyway, what I said to her was, “You know, the Bible says that it’s okay to clap our hands and raise our hands and stomp our feet.” I said that these are acceptable methods of praise. So she learned something that day. So today I would like to maybe teach some that don’t know and maybe remind some that know.

I’m amazed; we hear this all the time. I’m amazed that we go to functions—football games, all kinds of things as men. We’re reserved people. And we act just like David did before Michal: very undignified. Sometimes our passion is in certain places. But how many know that our passion ought to be in the Creator of heaven and earth—the One who saved us, the One who gave us eternal life, right?

So as I go through this this morning I would ask each and every one of you to ponder our heart’s cry, our heartbeat about how rooted we are in just what God has done, because one of the things about praise is that it’s never rooted in the externals. You know, sometimes we come to church, and we’re exhorted to praise. And we use excuses like “I don’t like that song,” or “I don’t like them,” or “I don’t know them,” or this and that. But how many know that our praise can’t be dictated by them? It has to be dictated by Him; it’s got to be dictated by Him—one God, one Spirit, one Lord above all. Amen.

So as we start here today, this concept I’m going to go over today is one that we most know about at church, as with the word “love.” We deal with the word “love.” In the Greek we know four words that we generally talk about. There are more, but we generally talk about four words. We talk about love in these ways: *eros*, *storge*, *phileo*, and *agape*. I’ve heard it pronounced *agapay*, right? And we’re used to that. Anybody who has been at church for any amount of time knows that.

What we don’t hear a lot are the words that are used in the Psalms for praise. They are different, and there are seven of them, and they are used quite a bit. On your papers you’ll see this; I need my glasses. The first one is *yadah*. And it is “*to revere and to worship with extended hands.*” How many of you have ever praised the Lord with extended hands? It doesn’t have to be musical by the way; it does not have to be musical. “*To hold out the hands; to throw a stone or an arrow.*”

Now it means also—to throw a stone or an arrow in battle, whether it was a stone or whether it was an arrow. But in the context of praise, it’s to revere or to worship with extended hands. Now does anybody relate to that? If you haven’t, put it into practice.

I’ll tell you this. When I came back to church back in the ‘90s, after not having gone for fifteen years, a guy came up and hugged me. And I think he still has my handprint on his chest. (*Laughter*) I didn’t know what he was trying to do to me. I mean, I don’t play act. Boom! It was good too; I had to be stepped on. (*Laughter*) And as time went on I learned that brothers in Christ did things like that.

As time went on I would teach people to praise in certain ways. And I wasn’t comfortable because I’m more reserved. But it was the Spirit, right?, because as I was learning the acceptable words of praise I was also connecting the words I was hearing to the reality of who God was and what He had done for me, and so I really thought about it.

I don’t know if you’ve ever heard Voddi Baucham. He has this thing called “The World, the Flesh and the Devil”; it’s a pretty well-known sermon. He talks about these

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ways that people talk about being saved. He tells the story about how you were in the ocean, and how you were reaching out your hand and then God reached out and grabbed you. Or you were on a lifeboat and God reached out and grabbed you. The way he says this, he says it really loud. He says, *“Dead men don’t grab!”* His point was that no, you weren’t sick. No, you weren’t on the life raft. You were dead; the Bible tells us that. *“While you were dead in your sins and trespasses He made you alive in Christ Jesus, and seated us together in heavenly places.”* Amen? So we would praise in that realm, knowing these truths. If I can get this thing to come back on again, let me see. There we go.

All right, I want to read something here; I have to go over this first word. So the Scripture is from Psalm 67:3; you all have it in front of you. It says:

*“May the peoples praise You, O God;
May all the peoples praise You.”*

Yadah, right? So we think of that. If you don’t know that word, maybe you might think of a loud voice, which we’ll get to. You may think of some sort of verbal thing, which we’ll get to. But in this particular case they’re talking about the raising of the hands, a reverent upward extension of the hands to God.

Yadah is one of the seven words translated in the Old Testament as “praise.” And it’s found over 111 times in Scripture; it’s what we know as “praise,” at least 111 times; it’s this word *yadah*. It’s defined as meaning *“to extend hands or to throw out the hand. It is used to describe the act of shooting an arrow or throwing a stone. In the context of praise it describes those moments when the Hebrew people were so overcome by the glory of God that their hands shot upward in response.”*

Have you ever heard of this? Have you ever heard of this: that “He saves from the gutter-most to the uttermost?” Have you ever heard that?

Gary Craig:No.

Michael: That’s a cute little saying. But here is what I want to say: We’re all in the gutter-most. And He makes us the uttermost; amen?

Brave Men: Amen.

Michael: So the purpose of me telling you this is that some of you have heard of a guy who is no longer with us; his name is Jeffrey Dahmer. And I’m sure you all know that he was a notorious serial killer. I don’t know if you know this; some of you may. But he came to the Lord in prison. I’ve shared this with people before, and they have said, “If he’s in heaven I don’t want to go there.” And if you have that attitude you probably won’t be there. *(Laughter)*

So he did an interview with a guy named Stone Philipson MSNBC many, many years ago. And as he was talking in prison about his acts, his dad comes. His dad ironically worked over in Robinson at Bayer. They lived in Ohio. He commuted, so he was actually an employee over at Bayer in Robinson.

And he’s on here and they bring his dad in. And he tells his dad that this creation book that he gave him changed how he thought. And Stone Philips was curious. And he said, “I always thought that we came from some primordial slime and that nothing mattered.”

He said, “When I read this creation book and found out that we were created and that God had made us, and that I am thoroughly and totally under the authority of God in the Person of Jesus Christ, it changed my thinking.” Now he made no excuses. He never tried to say, “I didn’t do it”; he never gave a reason. In fact, they tried to give reasons why he

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did what he did. They said, “Was it your parents? Was it your upbringing? Was it your environment?”

He said, “No; all of that is a cop-out.” He said, “I knew what I was doing; I did what I did. But now by the Spirit it’s for real to me that Jesus Christ is my Lord, and that I am 100% under His authority.” It was just amazing, the way he was testifying.

Now people that don’t understand how God works may think that they saved themselves. Or maybe they think that well, he can’t be saved and do those heinous sins. We should read Scripture. There are a lot of bad guys in there. And as Paul said, “I am chief: me standing right here in front of you, I’m the chief among sinners.” Amen? I thank God for what He’s done.

But when he uttered his testimony proclaiming Christ I was watching it with a friend of mine on the couch. And when he said this, the way he articulated it was so powerful. At the same time both our hands were like that (extended), and tears rolled down our faces at the same time. I don’t know if you guys know about the Holy Spirit. But it was an amazing moment; I can’t really explain it, just like I can’t explain God’s sovereign mercy and grace toward me. I just know He does things like that; amen? And anybody who has been made alive in Christ Jesus this radically, just like Paul on the Damascus road, knows what I’m talking about, amen?

So if you think God can’t save a Jeffrey Dahmer, then you don’t know the same God I know. He’s that powerful. He has that much mercy. And we all ought to be thankful for that. Amen?

Brave Men: Amen.

Michael: Let’s move on to the next word. That clock moves really fast. (*Laughter*) The next word is a word called *halal*. And it means “to boast.” So another word for praise is “*to boast, to rave, to shine, to celebrate.*” And the last one says “*to be clamorously foolish.*” Amen?

Now all of us at some point in our lives have been clamorously foolish; I guarantee it. If you say that you haven’t, I’m going to ask your wives. (*Laughter*) But how many have been clamorously foolish for the Lord? It’s a good thing to be.

Of course when we see this, the first thing that comes to my mind once again is David when he danced out of his clothes, right? And his wife Michal, she was ashamed. “How can you do such a base thing?”

And he said, “I’m going to be even more undignified than this.” Do you know what I mean? It’s amazing to me. I used to go to Steeler games a lot. I had a cousin whose husband was a coach for the Steelers for many years. She retired a couple years ago. So I went to a lot of home games. The family was really interested in that. And it’s amazing that people get to those games so early. And they are clamorous before the game. And by the time they get into the game, I don’t think they really know what happens during the game. (*Laughter*) They are so out of it; they’re just “*drunk with wine, which is dissipation,*” not filled with the Holy Spirit.

But the Scripture for this is “*Let them praise*”—*halal*—“*His name with dancing, and make music to Him with timbrel and harp.*” We know these instruments from the 149th Psalm of course. Most of us are probably most aware of that reference of instruments from the 150th Psalm.

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So I'll read this. *“Imagine the Hebrew people gathered together. There are tens of thousands of Levites and musicians who face the Israelites. And together they form a sort of a praise gift. The Levites and musicians played and their songs rose, and a combustible energy built and built until some spark of God ignited the praises of the people. In that moment the worshipers began to shout, laugh and dance. They jumped around, hands raised. To the outside observer they might have appeared drunk or foolish. But they were most sober in their celebration of God. They were incarnating halal. The concept of halal is so embedded in the notion of praise that it serves as a capstone to the entire book of Psalms. In Psalm 150:6 the writer concludes: ‘Let everything that hath breath’—halal—‘praise the LORD!’”*

Now I won't read the rest of this. But think about this: How many times have you read that line and thought of this kind of praise. I didn't. As a matter of fact, I could almost say this 100%: that many people who make excuses about not being exuberant in praise have looked at that last line in the 150th Psalm as “I praise like this.” And they sit in a chair. But it uses the word *halal*, and it's a different kind of praise, right?

So the reason that I say this is because it talks about all these different ways of praise, right? *“Praise Him with timbrel and dance. Praise Him with the harp.”* Praise Him in all these ways that are outward. But people say, “I praise Him in my own way.” But God gives us instructions on the ways to praise.

I know there are many here who are in the military and that were in the military. And there were things you did: you saluted, you marched, you sang those crazy songs: “I don't know what you've been told.” But you did it exuberantly. The reason you did it exuberantly is because you had thoughts about how people before you had served for this country and fought for the freedoms of this country, and you wanted to be just like them. You had a passion for that.

And so when you went into the military you knew they had these things. You knew you were under the authority of your superiors. And there were certain things that came with that: wearing a uniform, your salute, the actions you took, the words you said—authority.

Do we have the same or greater thoughts about the authority that we have in God and what He has done—the fact that He has set us free, the fact that by His blood we have forgiveness of sins? By His resurrection we have newness of life. And being filled with His Holy Spirit we have a living hope in Christ Jesus. And He's coming back; He's going to take us with Him who believe on His name.

So I would just implore anyone here who hasn't thought about things like this to think about that, and not to be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Oh we can say we're not ashamed. But how much are we not ashamed that when we think about His goodness and we think about what He's done, when we think about what He's going to do and what He's continually doing, that we might be clamorously foolish for Him? Amen?

Mike Davis: Amen.

Michael: Amen. Go ahead, Don.

Don Maurer: Michael, does the word *hallelujah* come from that word?

Michael: Thank you, Don; I meant to say that. That's why you're here. *(Laughter)* Hallelujah does come from that word. That's where we get it, amen. So thank you, Don.

Ted: Jah. Hallelu Jah.

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Michael: Hallelu Jah!

Don: Jah is God.

Michael: Yeah. Jah is God; that’s right. So the next one is the word *zamar*. Some of these words you can hear pronounced different ways. I’m doing the best I can. If you’re not—

Ted: You’re not Jewish; you’re off the hook.

Michael: That’s right. (*Laughter*) *Zamar* means “to make music; to celebrate in song and music; to touch the strings or the parts of a musical instrument.” This is *zamar*. The Scripture reference is Psalm 144:9:

*“I will sing a new song to You, O God,
On a harp of ten strings.
I will sing praises to You.”*

There is a reticence among men sometimes for singing in the church, making music to the Lord. One thing we don’t want to do in corporate worship is to become spectators, amen? Lift up your voice! God has been merciful to each and every one of us. It ought to bring a song out of us in some way, shape or form. When we’re in corporate worship we know in these modern times that the words on the screen help us to sing. Just try to sing!

You know, here’s what I want to tell you. Anybody who goes to Christ Church, do you know that I don’t really like a lot of those songs? They’re not really my favorite songs. But I sing them.

Now I’m a stickler. So here’s what we used to do. I had my men’s chorus. We’d have a rehearsal every so often. For at least a part of the rehearsal we would sing. We usually rehearsed twice before we sang. We sang once a month. Twice to three times we would rehearse, and one rehearsal we wouldn’t sing at all. Do you know what we would do? We’d go through the words of the song. And we would go over the words almost one by one to see whether we needed to sing that song or not; that was number one. We didn’t want to sing anything that wasn’t Biblical, right?

Secondly, my purpose for doing that was that when the men sang they were connected with what the song means; amen? You can’t sing with your heart what you don’t understand. We need to understand. That’s one of the reasons why Bruce and now Jeff is here: to help us understand “*Thus saith the LORD.*” You know, there’s a lot in this book. And through translation from Greek and Hebrew, the limitations of the English language which we’re talking about here today, with a word or a phrase that means multiple things, I wanted the men to know that, so that when they stood and sang, that they understood what it was to praise.

Most of the guys that sang with me couldn’t sing; they really couldn’t. (*Laughter*) They weren’t going to be on “American Idol.” (*Laughter*) Nobody is on their best day. But with singers, good singers are a dime a dozen; they really are. They’re everywhere. But the ones that can praise the Lord from the heart, and worship in spirit and truth, that ain’t a dime a dozen. And I want those guys. I want guys that really understood. We had guys in my group that were drug addicts. We had whoremongers, womanizers; we had all of these people singing. But they were worshipers.

And don’t you know that the people in our former church were told many, many times that we had a choir where almost everybody could sing. But people looked forward to us being up there. It was twofold. The people of God love to hear people worship; it helps

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them to worship. And there is power when men worship the Lord. The Scripture is replete with stories of men worshipping the Lord. We look at these guys and we lift them up because we say, “Oh, I want to be like him. He’s a man after God’s own heart. I want to be like him; he’s a mighty man of valor.” But how many of you know that the same God that raised them up and did what He did in them is the same God that is working in you? You can be a mighty man of valor. You can be a man after God’s own heart.

But those guys had one thing in common. They knew how to praise the Lord. And they weren’t bound by limitations and standards of what a man is.

There’s a book that we went through years ago. It was a popular Christian book about men being men. It’s called *Wild At Heart*. Some people may love that book; I don’t. I don’t like that book, and I’ll tell you why. I’m not saying there’s nothing good in it. I think it’s foolishness. I think it locks men into a place of being kind of this guy. They use references to Esau and things like that. I don’t like it because I think, as we look at the landscape of where we’re at in the church of America, that we need men who are exuberantly praising the Lord but still being men. I’m not talking about folks that find their inner selves, whatever that is—all these weird kinds of things.

Ted: Or drink Bud Lite.

Michael: Leave it to Ted. (*Laughter*) Men who are not ashamed to cry. When you think about what God does and all that, it ought to bring a tear to your eyes. Or to shout; it ought to bring a shout out of you. The same shout that you cry out when you catch that big fish or shoot that deer, or when someone cuts you off. (*Laughter*) Not that. (*Laughter*) But we ought to be able to be exuberant in that way for the Lord. So I did that with my men.

The other thing here is that it talks about playing instruments and worshiping. And one of the things that happens is another thing that we can go over. Sometimes people are playing instruments in churches. There’s a difference in playing your instrument and being proficient in it and actually worshiping on your instrument.

Have you ever noticed when Don is playing (and of course Don sings too), that his worship comes out through his hands? He’s actually joyful when he plays. And I watch him; his feet do this funny thing; you know the thing that he does? (*Laughter*) But Don is a worshiper.

A lot of guys that play—and we understand that in our churches that we need volunteers to get people to play—but it’s a beautiful thing to worship on your instrument. And it takes being connected to the God you serve and the message that’s coming forth and the words of the song. Go ahead, Don.

Don: Michael, I have to say that that can be a challenge, because particularly on Sunday mornings when I’m playing,—

Michael: Mm-hmm.

Don: Particularly if it’s a hymn that I don’t know all that well and that we haven’t done all that often, I’m so focused on concentrating on getting the right notes or whatever that I have to say, wait a minute! Focus on the Lord!

Michael: Right.

Don: Focus on the Lord, whether I’m singing or worshiping, playing an instrument or whatever, I have to keep that in mind. So thank you for your encouragement.

Michael: Yeah.

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Don: But that’s a challenge for a person who is playing.

Michael: Amen. A very good point by Don. You know, he brings up a good point.. When we sing a new song sometimes we think about other things. You can have a spirit of praise and yet look at the people; the looks on their faces can kind of do a number on you. But they might really be worshipping; our minds play tricks on us. So Don brings up a good point.

So let’s go to this next one: *towdah*. This is extension of the hand. Now you might have remembered that our first one—*yadah*—was also was an extension of or lifting of the hands. *Towdah* is specific because it is a lifting of the hands in thanksgiving—giving thanks to the Lord. So it says that *“it has that element of a sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving to things not yet received in a choir of worshipers.”*

Thanksgiving is a powerful thing. You know, we’re all familiar with it. I think it’s funny that so many times we quote the Scripture out of Philippians 4:6 and 7: *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, with prayer and supplication, ... make your requests known to God.”* I’ve heard that so many times. In between it says, *“with thanksgiving.”* I think it’s amazing how many times those two words are left out when people say that. I don’t know why that is. I think there’s a reason, because I think that so often at times when we talk about God and we’re thinking about God that we forget to give thanks.

So this particular form of praise—*towdah*—is an extending of the hands in giving thanks, not only for what He’s done, but in confidence for what He’s going to do, praising Him in advance.

We have heard that statement before: I praise Him in advance. Now we don’t want to praise Him for things that aren’t His will. And a lot of times we’ll say, “Just praise Him in advance for that husband you’re going to have.” I’ve heard women tell other women that. You don’t do that because you don’t know that, unless you’ve got some kind of hotline to God at the white throne.

But we can praise Him for things that He has told us that He is going to do in His word. We know that by His Spirit He is going to sanctify us, that we’re going to grow in the Lord, that He’s going to take us home, amen? He’s going to come back. So we can praise Him for the already but not yet.

I’m going to read something about this. You know, technology is nice, but it can also be a pain in the butt sometimes. Okay, here we go.

“So as the Hebrew word it means extension of the hand and thanksgiving for what God has done, it also means a sacrifice of praise for things not yet received. It’s praising God with expectation. The Psalmists used towdah as an expression of confession, a way to convey Christ and the goodness of God; a word of thanksgiving, a word often raised by a choir of worshipers.”

In Psalm 50 the Psalmist Asaph records a stanza for the wicked, for those who had forgotten their God. *“The stanza culminated with a promise for those who practiced towdah.”* It says this:

*“Now consider this, you who forget God,
Lest I tear you in pieces,
And there is none to deliver:
‘Whoever offers praise’—towdah—‘glorifies Me.*

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*And to Him who orders his conduct aright
I will show the salvation of God.’*

Asaph’s song makes it plain. Sometimes the sacrifice of praise, the act of showing God honor and praise even before the realization of His promises, precedes salvation.”

So this is another place where it gets personal for us individually. As we grow in the Lord and we’re sanctified, what kind of persons are we? Are we the kind of believers that when things go awry, or when things are taking a little longer than when we had hoped, do we get discouraged to the point where we doubt? We all have them; don’t get me wrong. But is it your normal practice? Or is it your normal practice to have this confidence in God that He’s going to do what He said?

We know with the enemy that one of his titles is “the deceiver of the brethren.” And we don’t want him to deceive us when we start doubting what God has committed to men. So this is where this particular form of praise comes in handy. I would recommend that we use it. The Psalm for that is 56:11-12: *“I will render praise to You.”* This is *towdah*.

This next one is the word *barak*. This is *“to kneel, to bless God as an act of adoration, to praise, to salute, to thank.”* To kneel can be a hard thing for people who are older, because you might not get up again. So a lot of times I sit. But to kneel is a good thing.

It’s a form of praise that is pretty standard, because it shows a knowledge of the authority of God over our lives, amen? It is in direct contrast to self-sufficiency and arrogance, to a lack of trust and faith in God. It’s a unique posture for religious people. We know for example that with Muslims part of their worship is kneeling. So how much more for us, who serve the one true and living God, the only blessed God, that we might take a posture of worship!

Now it’s not only in the physical sense, but in the heart sense. We might bow before the Lord in praise and worship for what He has done and what He is doing and who He is; it’s important.

For example, we know that at Christ Church they have the kneeling rails, the prayer rails. One of the things with things like that is that this is prayer time—prayers of confession and things like that. The one thing that we don’t want to do is to get to the point where we just do exercises which are just rote; you know what I mean. They’re just things we do. We’re on our knees and we’re looking at the clock, trying to steal the Creator’s time.

We don’t want to do that. We want to have a heart of kneeling in adoration for the Lord, amen? Our confession to the Lord is an act of praise that we all should partake in. It’s a posture of praise.

For the rest of my life, when I read Psalm 100, this is what I have here:
*“Enter His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.”*

That word for *praise* is the next word we’re going to look at: *tehilla*. And then there is the last part: *“Give thanks to Him and praise His name.”* It’s to be in posture. *Tehilla* is another part of this: it’s a hymn of praise or a song of praise. It’s a song of praise—singing from thanksgiving. It’s the idea of falling on your knees in adoration and gratitude.

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“This fifth word commonly translated as praise—barak—is a word of humility. Barak embodies the notion of kneeling before God, of blessing and adoring Him, of recognizing one’s position in relation to Him.” Listen to this. “It’s a word used 289 times in the Psalms alone. And in each occurrence it’s used to describe worshipers falling on their faces before God in reverence, adoration and thanks.

“Scholars in ancient Hebrew provide additional insights into the word barak. They believe that in its original context the term did not simply mean bowing down. Instead it carried the connotation of bending low while keeping one’s eyes fixed on the King. To barak is to be transfixed. In Psalm 72 the Psalm of Solomon uses barak to describe the ways the kings of the nations bow to the one true King. Solomon wrote it this way:

*‘Yea, all the kings shall fall down before Him;
All the nations shall serve Him, and He shall live.
And to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba.
Prayer also shall be made for Him continually,
And daily shall He be praised.’ (Barak)
Psalm 72 verse 11, also verse 15.*

“In barak, even the most powerful lay aside their egos, their power, their desires. They offer all they have—their gold, their prayer, their honor, their gains. In Psalm 103 David used the phrase barak as repetitive writing of praise. ‘Bark the LORD, O my soul! All my inmost being, praise His holy name.

*Praise’ (barak) ‘the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits.*

*Praise’ (barak) ‘the LORD, you His angels,
You mighty ones who do His bidding,
Who obey His word.*

*Praise” (barak) ‘the LORD, all His heavenly hosts,
You His servants who do His will.*

*Praise” (barak) ‘the LORD, all His works,
Everywhere in His dominion.’*

And lastly:

‘Praise” (barak) ‘the LORD, O my soul!’”

That’s from Psalm 103. Most of us are familiar with that. So with humility and adoration let us *barak* the Lord.

This sixth and next to the last word is *tehilla*. It’s another form of praise. It is described as *“laudation; a hymn; a song of praise; a new song, a spontaneous song.”*

The Scripture reference is from Psalm 22:3. It says:

*“But You are holy,
Enthroned in the praises” (the tehilla) ‘of Israel.”*

So we talk about a song of praise. It’s pretty self-explanatory. How many guys here sing or can sing? Every hand should be raised. (*Laughter*) Everybody can sing; it just depends on how we do it.

Ted: My range is greatly reduced with age.

Michael: All right; that happens. But you know, when we praise from our hearts, we lift up a song of praise. And it doesn’t always matter how we sound, because the Lord loves it when we come the right way.

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That’s what I was talking about earlier when I was talking about the guys that I sang with. They weren’t great singers. But they were great worshipers. When they lifted up a song it was from the heart.

“Tehilla is a Hebrew word meaning a hymn, a song of praise, a new song, a spontaneous song.” The book of Psalms is replete with these. If you know Psalms, you know that this is what *tehilla* is. The Psalms are actually called “The *Telillim*.” *Tehilla* is a word that is used 57 times in the Scriptures, with over half of these occurrences being found in the Psalms.

The notion of Psalm 22:3, which we just read here, is beautiful. *“When we offer new songs of praise—our spontaneous tehilla—the Lord steps from His heavenly courts and takes residency among the congregation. This is where we get the term ‘God inhabits the praises of His people.’”* When we *tehilla*, God joins in and with us, amen? This is a form of praise.

A lot of times when we think about praise, we almost think about this one the most, because we think about it in terms of singing praise. It goes beyond singing, but this is a major part of it. I would say as men that we need to say this. On Sunday mornings I sit in front of a bunch of people. And in my former church I sang in front of a bunch of people. And if you told me that I would be doing that years prior, I would have told you that you were nuts.

My mother said that I was in a chorus in elementary school one time. I was in a choir, a school chorus, and I sang one time. And I never wanted to do that again because of stage fright, or whatever.

I’m a guy that likes hitting stuff, and I’m not proud of that. I like punching stuff, I like hitting stuff; I like rough stuff. I like kicking stuff. When somebody on the football field gets blasted I sometimes run out and shout. So I’m one of those kinds of guys.

And yet, because of what the Lord has done, He has changed my heart to the fact that I now love to sing His praises unashamedly. Amen! As men we’re to remind everybody that there is nothing feminine about singing praises to God. As a matter of fact, I would say it’s the most masculine thing you can do, because there’s power when we sing in praise to the Lord. You know, there’s power in it.

And I think that our paradigm needs to shift. In contemporary Christian music there are a lot of young male worship leaders that are coming forth. And I think that’s a good thing, because I think that helps.

When I was growing up I don’t know about you guys, it was the women who were at the church; you know what I mean? It was the women who were in the choir with one or two guys; it was the women. And what that does—

David Miller: Remember the Promise Keepers?

Michael: I do.

David: Fifty thousand men showed up.

Michael: Oh, thank you so much! Tell me your name again.

David: Dave Miller.

Michael: Dave, right. I’m sorry, Dave.

Ted: The famous Dave Miller.

Michael: The famous Dave Miller. Amen. *(Laughter)* It’s so amazing that you brought that up because I wanted to mention that Promise Keepers was part of my re-entry back

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into church. When I first came back into the church, Promise Keepers was coming to the stadium, right? So the guys from our church were going, and they said, “You should go to Promise Keepers.”

“Well, what’s Promise Keepers?” They told me what it was and I went with them. And a couple of things happened that day. It was really hot. They had this carpet on the stage. It was a 90-plus degree day; man, it was hot in there. But it was beautiful.

As Dave said, there were all these men. Some of you may have been there. It was in the mid-’90s, I think, somewhere around there.

There are two things I remember. I realized at that point that I had never listened to a white guy preach. (*Laughter*) I went to a Catholic church one time when I was in Boy Scouts. We were at Wright Air Force Base in Ohio, and on Sunday we went to church; it was a Catholic church. I liked that; it was only a half hour long! (*Laughter*) In my church you weren’t getting out; the sermon was a half hour away where I grew up. So I remember that. And I’d never seen white guys preach, and it hit me.

The second thing was how many men were there. And at the time, what was his name, McCartney? He was talking about how men needed to worship together—all races.

And I remember this. This is off topic, but it’s 7:30 anyway. But I’ll never forget. There were these guys standing next to me with big flannel shirts on. It was hot out and they had flannel shirts on. Man, these cats looked like Mountain Men from West Virginia. And if you know anything about black people, we don’t do Mountain Men from West Virginia. (*Laughter*) I mean, there’s just something about going through those mountains. And it’s night time, and it’s just not a good vibe.

And I remember that they told guys to pair up, or triple or whatever, and to pray. There were these two big Mountain Men; it was like Z. Z. Top. (*Laughter*) We were holding hands; it was beautiful! It was beautiful; it was absolutely beautiful! Don?

Don: Yeah. This is off topic too. But I might have been at the same conference you were at, with Tony Evans on stage.

Michael: Yes, he was there.

Don: He was talking about sexual purity.

Michael: Mm-hmm.

Don: And he was talking about “I saw this woman. And she was a mamma jamma.” (*Laughter*) And then he said, “You white guys would say, ‘She’s pretty.’” (*Laughter*)

Michael: Amen, amen! Yes, I was at that. Dave, you wanted to say something about Promise Keepers. I’m sorry; I took your thunder.

David: It was just something to hear fifty thousand men singing, “I Lift Your Name On High.”

Michael: Yes. And I remember that, because at the time, as I said, God had just ushered me back. He grabbed me and said, “Come here, boy! Get back into the household!” (*Laughter*) So when those men were singing it was a whole new thing for me. And it set a precedent because I got to see the power of God and how He works through men through praising the Lord. Hands were raised. Every form of praise you saw that I talked about today was witnessed that weekend at Promise Keepers. I actually went the next year too.

And the last one is the word *shabach*. And it means “to shout, to commend glory and triumph.” I’m going to reference Don Maurer here on this last one. (*Laughter*) At the

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closing. “*Shabach is to address with a loud sound; to commend glory and triumph.*” The Scripture reference is Psalm 145:4:

*“One generation shall praise”—shabach—“Your works together,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.”*

How many have shouted for the Lord? In Psalm 63 David penned a song of praise while in the wilderness of Judah. He wrote:

“You, God, are my God.

Earnestly I seek You;

I am athirst with You.

My whole being longs for you in a dry and parched land

Where there is no water.

Because Your love is better than life,

My lips will glorify You.

I will praise”—shabach—“You as long as I live,

And in Your name I will lift up my hands.”

“Even in dry places, desert places, David resolved to live out his days lifting a shout of praise to God. The shout of praise, this shabach, is not simply a personal declaration. The shortest Psalm, Psalm 117 calls all the nations to raise a holy roar. In the simplest shabach found in all of Scripture the Psalmist wrote:

‘Praise the LORD, all ye nations;

Praise Him, all ye people!’”

Psalm 117 goes like this. I’m going to sing this, and then I’m going to give a Don Maurer reference, and then I’m done. Psalm 117 goes like this. It goes:

Transcriber’s Note: Michael sings:

“Oh praise the LORD, all ye nations!

Praise Him, all ye people!

For His merciful kindness is great toward us,

And the truth of the LORD endureth forever.

Praise ye the Lord!”

(Applause)

Lastly, the last time I was here, Don gave a *shabach* at the end of a song. I don’t think he was praising the Lord, though. John Gratner was getting ready to speak. *(Laughter)* You know where I’m going.

Don: Yeah, I know where you’re going.

Ted: I don’t know.

Michael: You weren’t here.

Ted: I was here.

Michael: John was going to teach on Jude, from the book of Jude, right? So he sang a song called “Hey, John.”

Don: Yeah.

Michael: You might remember that song. “Don’t make it bad. Make it better, better, better, better, better, better, owhh!” *(Laughter)*

Thank you, men, for your time. And my prayer is that these things would resonate in your hearts today. Amen? Amen. *(Applause)*