

Psalm 150:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Analysis

Praise him upon the loud cymbals—*תְּלַלְּוָהוּ בְּצָלָצְלִי שָׁמָעַ* (Tseltsley shama) (cymbals of hearing/sound) emphasizes volume and resonance. Cymbals marked climactic moments in temple worship (2 Samuel 6:5, 1 Chronicles 15:16), their crashing sound symbolizing the breaking forth of joy. The Hebrew shama (to hear) suggests cymbals loud enough to be heard at a distance, worship that refuses to be private or subdued.

Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals—*תְּלַלְּוָהוּ בְּצָלָצְלִי תְּרוּעָה* (Tseltsley teruah (cymbals of shouting/alarm) uses the term for trumpet blasts announcing holy days or battles (Numbers 10:5-6). The double mention of cymbals intensifies the crescendo to maximum volume. This concluding instrumental command presents worship as joyful noise unashamed of its enthusiasm, anticipating the heavenly throne room where praise is neither quiet nor restrained (Revelation 4-5). The Psalter ends not with whispered meditation but with crashing, exuberant celebration.

Historical Context

Cymbals were exclusively Levitical instruments (1 Chronicles 16:5), used by worship leaders like Asaph to regulate the tempo and signal transitions in corporate singing. Their loud sound unified the congregation and punctuated key liturgical moments. This final verse of the Psalter brings the entire collection to a climactic conclusion—150 psalms spanning creation to consummation, lament to

celebration, all resolving in unrestrained praise. Early church fathers saw the Psalter's structure (five books like the Pentateuch, ending in crescendo) as intentional theological architecture pointing to worship's eschatological fulfillment.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the Bible's unapologetic call for loud, exuberant worship challenge contemporary preferences for cool detachment?
2. In what ways might quiet, reserved worship become a cultural preference masquerading as spiritual maturity?
3. How should worship reflect both God's transcendent holiness (which might evoke reverent silence) and His redemptive grace (which evokes jubilant celebration)?

Interlinear Text

בְּצִלְצֵלِ יְהוָה לְלָל מִעַן כְּצִלְצֵלِ יְהוָה
Praise cymbals him upon the loud Praise cymbals

H1984

H6767

H8088

H1984

H6767

תְּרוּעָה:

him upon the high sounding

H8643

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 15:16 (Parallel theme): And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.

1 Chronicles 25:1 (Parallel theme): Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was:

1 Chronicles 15:28 (Parallel theme): Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

1 Chronicles 15:19 (Parallel theme): So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass;

1 Chronicles 25:6 (Parallel theme): All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.

1 Chronicles 16:5 (Parallel theme): Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom: and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals;

2 Samuel 6:5 (Parallel theme): And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.