

SABBATH THOUGHT 2025-08-16—PRAISE GOD!

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

This past week a brother in Christ asked me about praising God. It is a topic we have all thought about but it is something we usually feel are inadequate to the task. Much of the issue is our limitations. Flesh and blood cannot see God and our imaginations fall far short of His majesty and greatness. But WHAT is praise? HOW do we praise Him? WHY do we praise God?

Our minds can produce only a limited image of God. From Scripture¹, we know God is the Great King² sitting upon a throne at the north end of Mount Zion encircled by an emerald-colored rainbow. At His right hand³ is His Son, the Lord and King, Jesus The Messiah (Christ). In front of God's throne is a sea of glass, translucent and shiny, like the finest crystal and shimmering with fire. Originating from God's throne are sounds of lightning, thunder, and voices. Before His throne are seven spirits who wander the earth whose appearance is as flames of fire.

At God's throne are four Living Creatures. They do not have thrones themselves but are over and around God's throne. They praise and worship God saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." These are cherubim who cover God's throne as portrayed by the two statues on the mercy seat in the temple of Solomon.

Nearby to His throne are twenty-four Elders, part of a celestial council who have their own thrones. These are, perhaps, located along both sides of the sea of glass, half on each side, facing toward each other but in front of God's throne. In their hands are harps and bowls of incense that are mixed with the prayers of the saints that are sacrificed upon the altar before God's throne.

What can anyone offer to God who is so unimaginably majestic and magnificent? To even attempt to understand, it is important to bear in mind that God IS love⁴. Have you ever wondered why He chose to be LOVE over evil like the wicked tyrant Satan? Imagine what horrors life would have if God were like Satan and created mankind for his 'amusement'. Truly, mankind should be thankful above all else that God IS love and not a god of evil!

Recognize, too, that we should be thankful for The Law of God. In this less-than-perfect world, mankind is assuredly NOT agape love—not even the most kindhearted of people. Imagine if God had not revealed from the beginning that murder, adultery, theft, false testimony, and coveting are wrong. How long would this world have lasted? These days many have abandoned those righteous and universal statutes and the result is a bleak picture of things to come.

¹ Rev. 4-7; 8:3; 11:16-17; 14:3, 5; 15:7; 19:4; 20:11; 21:1-3.

² Matt. 5:35.

³ Ps. 110:1.

⁴ 1 John 4:8, 16.

However, God gave His Law so that people can strive for a peaceful relationship and doing GOOD for others. It is a framework for this life when dealing with the shortcomings of imperfect people as well as with those who are evil. The judgments in The Law specify punishments for crimes in order to maintain peace to the extent possible.

Revealing agape love to a sinful world is a monumental task, but God did it with His *Users Guide For Mankind* called The Law. It is SO MUCH more than the 10 Commandments and it covers all manner of situations from agriculture to war⁵. The genius behind The Law cannot be denied although many simply ignore it outside of the 10 Commandments, especially among the *ekklesia*. The wisdom of The Law is beyond measure and something to thank God for every day.

Thanksgiving to God for good things is a natural expression of appreciation and gratitude for the blessings He gives. These include our calling and election, eternal life, fellowship with brethren, wisdom and understanding, gifts and talents for serving others, abundance to enable us to do Good Works, health and healing, the necessities of life, spouses and children, relief from trials and afflictions, etc.

However, there was a terrible price that ENABLED God to bestow blessings upon us—the suffering and death of His Son Jesus The Christ! God paid a blood-ransom to redeem us because He hoped that we would be worthy of becoming His children. Only those perfected in agape love will receive such a gift, but have you considered the WORK that God must do to save people?

ISAIAH 64:5-6, 8 You [*the LORD*] meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, *who* remembers You in Your ways. ... **we need to be saved.** 6 But **we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;** we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. ... 8 But now, O LORD, You *are* our Father; we *are* the clay, and You our potter; and all **we are the work of Your hand.**

Repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, and striving to obey The Law are basically personal AFFIRMATIONS—declarations—of our desire to be SAVED. The real work to save us is done by GOD. If we consider just how far short all of the *ekklesia* fall of God's glory, it is a wonder that it is possible even for God to perfect someone. But it is something He PROMISED:

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that **He [God] who has begun a good work in you will complete it** until the day of Jesus Christ;

WHAT is God doing to perfect us? He is writing His Law of LOVE in our hearts:

PROVERBS 7:2-3 Keep **my commands** and live, and my law as the apple of your eye. 3 Bind them on your fingers; **write them on the tablet of your heart.**

⁵ Refer to the booklet "[Laws of God—Purpose, Application, & Topical List](#)" for a list of many of the statutes, precepts, testimonies, and judgments.

PROVERBS 3:1, 3 My son, do not forget **my law**, but let your heart keep my commands; ... 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, **write them on the tablet of your heart**,

JEREMIAH 31:33 “But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

The Law of God is instruction in agape love and agape love IS perfection:

PSALM 19:7 **The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul [into agape love]**; the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

1 JOHN 2:5 But whoever **keeps His word [The Law]**, truly the love of God is **perfected** in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

The big question is HOW does God perfect agape love in us?

1 PETER 5:10 But may the **God** of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after **you have suffered a while, perfect**, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

Agape love is perfected through sufferings! It is also something more to be thankful for. Really? Yes! Note this verse:

1 PETER 2:19 For **this is [thankworthy]**, if because of conscience toward [*recognition of*] God one **endures grief, suffering wrongfully**.

Some versions use commendable, favorable, or acceptable in place of *thankworthy* but only here is the Greek word reduced to something less than heartfelt, grateful thanksgiving. The word for *thankworthy* is *grace*. When it is from God, it is a blessing of His favor and love but when it is TOWARD God it is **thanksgiving**. Why would we give thanks for suffering? God has called the elect to an eternal and unimaginable life and reward. To that end, He ALLOWS us to suffer for the sake of His Son who was the blood-ransom for our lives! When God allows us to suffer, we should be thankful because we partake of some of Jesus Christ's sufferings and in doing so will receive the some of the honor He received from His Father:

2 CORINTHIANS 1:5-7 **For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ**. 6 Now **if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation**, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation. 7 And our hope for you *is* steadfast, because we know that **as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation**.

Suffering is God WORKING in us the perfection of His agape love! It is a gift that He considers us WORTHY to suffer. Yes, there is pain, grief, sorrow, sadness, anguish, frustration, fear, and even anger at times because the work of God to save us

produces all of these. But all we must do is ENDURE during this life while God does the hard work:

JAMES 5:10-11 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as **an example of suffering** and patience. 11 Indeed **we count them blessed who endure**. You have heard of the perseverance of Job **and seen the end intended by the Lord**—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

We complain about and resist sufferings, but there is much that God must do in a short time to perfect us. God suffers long with us because of our weaknesses and that is also something we should be thankful for.

ROMANS 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of **His [God's] goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering**, not knowing that **the goodness of God leads you to repentance**?

HEBREWS 12:7 If **you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons**; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

Suffering is hard but it is worthy of thanksgiving for the perfection and eternal promises it will bring. Up to this point I have talked about thanksgiving to God. My friend, however, asked about PRAISING Him so why focus on thanksgiving? Because they are hard to separate. Here are a few of many scriptures that both praise and give thanks to God:

PSALM 106:1 **PRAISE the LORD!** Oh, **give thanks to the LORD**, for **He is good!** For His mercy [*hesed = covenant loyalty and devotion*] *endures* forever.

PSALM 69:30 I will **praise the name of God** with a song, and will **magnify Him with thanksgiving**.

PSALM 79:13 So we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture, will **give You thanks** forever; we will **show forth Your praise** to all generations.

PSALM 92:1 *It is* good to **give thanks to the LORD**, and to **sing praises to Your name**, O Most High;

The connection between praise and thanksgiving is evident in this next psalm that praises God's name, His covenant loyalty and devotion (*hesed*)⁶, and faithfulness and then gives thanks to Him for His works:

PSALMS 92:1-2, 4-5, 10-11 *It is* good to **give thanks to the LORD**, and to **sing praises to Your name**, O Most High; 2 **to declare Your lovingkindness /hesed = covenant loyalty and devotion**⁶ in the morning, and **Your faithfulness** every night, ... 4 For You, LORD, have made me glad through **Your work**; I will triumph in **the**

⁶ For more information about *hesed* refer to the Sabbath Thought articles "[2025-02-22 – Compassion & Chesed](#)" and "[2023-04-15 – Hesed = Covenant Loyalty & Devotion.](#)"

works of Your hands. 5 O LORD, **how great are Your works!** Your thoughts are very deep. ... 10 But **my horn You have exalted** like a wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil. 11 My eye also has seen *my desire* on my enemies; my ears hear *my desire* on the wicked who rise up against me.

PRINCIPLE: THANKSGIVING is for blessings from God and PRAISE acknowledges His majesty, goodness, and love by which He bestows those blessings!

Here is one of several deeply heartfelt prayers in the Bible that first acknowledge the greatness and goodness of God and then thank Him for His works:

ISAIAH 63:7, 9 I will mention **the lovingkindness [hesed = covenant loyalty and devotion]**⁶ of the LORD and the praises of the LORD, according to **all that the LORD has bestowed on us**, and **the great goodness** toward the house of Israel, which **He has bestowed** on them according to **His mercies**, according to the multitude of **His lovingkindnesses [hesed] [covenant loyalty and devotion]**⁶. 9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in **His love and in His pity He redeemed them**; and **He bore them** and carried them all the days of old.

PRAISE acknowledges who God IS. Though His magnificence is beyond our capacity imagine, we can praise God for His greatness, eternity, majesty, beauty, holiness, sovereignty, honor, power, authority, righteousness, justice, wisdom, knowledge, grace, mercy, goodness, faithfulness, loyalty, devotion, longsuffering, and love.

Because God is all these things and more, it is astounding that He even considers our lowly estate⁷. David asked what is man, that God is mindful of him⁸. But you know the answer: God created mankind to become His children! Though we fall far short of glorifying (public praise⁹) Him, God has gifted to us blessings of abundance and need, fellowship and loneliness, food and want, joy and pain, happiness and grief, strength and weakness, peace and strife, wisdom and foolishness, knowledge and ignorance, and more. All of them, whether a joy or trial, are a WORK of God to perfect us! And for THAT we should always PRAISE His name and GIVE THANKS to the Most High merciful God above!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>
sabbathreflections@gmail.com

⁷ Psalm 136:23.

⁸ Psalm 8:4; 144:3.

⁹ Sabbath Thought "[2025-08-02 – Glory to God.](#)"