

7 Words of Praise as Used in Psalms



Yadah (yaw-daw’):

- To revere or worship with extended hands. To hold out the hands.
- *May the nations praise you, O God. Yes, may all the nations praise (yadah) you. Psalms 67:3*
- Think of all the reasons you raise your hands in excitement. It comes so natural that often we don’t even think about it. It’s automatic. Why is it we can do it at a sports event but not for God? Isn’t He more important and worthy of our yadah?

Halal (haw-lal’):

- To boast. To rave. To be clamorously foolish.
- *Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord! Praise (halal) the Lord! Psalms 150:6*
- The Hebrew word here means that we should lay aside our self-consciousness and inhibitions. Often when we don’t raise our hands or completely give into worship, it’s that we’re more worried about what others will think about us than we are about what God feels when we don’t.
- We often use the word hallelujah in worship. Hallelujah is based on the Hebrew words halal and Yahweh.

Zamar (zaw-mar’):

- To make music. To celebrate with song. To touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument.
- *I will sing a new song to you, O God! I will sing your praises (zamar) with a ten-stringed harp. Psalms 144:9*
- The songs we listen to and sing become the soundtrack of our life. Shouldn’t it be one of praise to God? Shouldn’t the songs we sing bring glory and honor to God?

Barak (baw-rak’):

- To kneel. To bless God as an act of adoration. To praise. To salute. To thank.
- *Praise (barak) the Lord, everything he has created, everything in all his kingdom. Let all that I am praise (barak) the Lord. Psalms 103:22*
- When going back even further in Hebrew, it is believed that barak actually meant to bow low in reverence while keeping the eyes fixed on the king.

Shabach(shaw-bakh’):

- To address in a loud tone. To shout. To commend, glorify and triumph.
- To pass on to the generations
- *One generation shall praise (shabach) Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. Psalms 145:4*
- We need to pass the love of the Lord and the love of worshipping on to the next generation and the next and the next, as long as we have breath.

Tehillah (teh-hil-law’):

- A hymn. A song of praise. A new or spontaneous song.
- *Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises (tehillah) of Israel. Psalms 22:3*
- “Enthroned on the praises...” This means that God lives on our praise. Is your praise loud, heartfelt, genuine and frequent?
- The Hebrew name for the book of Psalms is Tehillim.

Towdah (to-daw’):

- Extension of the hand. Thanksgiving for things not yet received. A choir of worshippers.
- *In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God; I will render praises (towdah) to You. Psalms 56:11-12*
- David wrote those words when a prisoner of the Philistines. He didn’t wait to praise God when he was delivered. He offered towdah because he had faith that God would deliver him.