

PRAISE THE LORD IN PSALM 150:1-3

Jones Ted Lauda Woy

Universitas Klabat

lwoy@unklab.ac.id

Edgar Willem Melko Tauran

Universitas Klabat

edgar@unklab.ac.id

Abstract

The book of Psalms, or Psalter, contains some of the most cherished Bible passages, derived from its title in the Septuagint as Psalmoi, meaning songs to be sung with stringed instruments. It is attributed to various authors, including David, Asaph, Korah, Moses, Heman, Ethan, Solomon, and Jeduthun. This study aims to explore the possible meanings and translations of the text by applying morphological and syntactical analyses. It will examine the context, the role and function of the text, analyze each word's lexical meaning, and ultimately provide a literal translation and interpretation based on these findings.

Keywords: *Psalm, Worship, Music, and Hallelujah.*

Introduction

The book of Psalms, or Psalter, has provided to believers some of their best-loved Bible passages. Nichol state, “The book of Psalms, or the Psalter, takes its English title form the LXX title of the collection, *Psalmoi*, the plural of *psalmos*, which designates a song to be sung to the musical accompaniment of stringed instruments.”¹ This book is written by several authors. Nichol continued, “Eight names of persons occurring in the superscriptions to the psalms appear to be the names of authors, contributors, compilers, musicians, or others associated with the

¹Francis Nichol, ed. Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary. Rev. ed. Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-1980., 3:615. One of manuscript has the title *Psalterion*, from which the word “*Psalter*” is derived. *Psalmoi* is the Greek translation of the Heb. *Mizmor*, a technical designation for many of the psalms. The root of *mizmor* is *zamar*, which means “to sing with instrumental accompaniment,” or simply “to sing” or “to praise.”

composition, compilation, and use of the sacred lyrics. The names are David, Asaph, Korah, Moses, Heman, Ethan, Salomon, and Jeduthun.”²

The primary aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive interpretation and translation of the selected text by employing a detailed morphological analysis. This approach will facilitate a more accurate and literal translation, grounded in the linguistic and grammatical data of the text. The study begins with an exploration of the text's broader context, focusing on its role and function within the passage.

Through an in-depth morphological analysis, each word will be examined to derive its lexical meaning, utilizing lexicon resources for precision. Additionally, a syntactical analysis will be conducted to elucidate the structural composition of the sentence. This will be supplemented by an examination of each word's original meaning, general connotations, and its contextual usage. Ultimately, the study will synthesize these findings to present a well-supported translation and interpretation of the text.

Context of the Pericope

Psalms 150 represents the culmination of the entire Psalter, serving as its climactic expression of praise. According to Nichol, the book of Psalms has historically been divided into five distinct sections, a structure that may have been modeled after the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. This division reflects an intentional literary design, suggesting a parallel between the foundational texts of Mosaic law and the Psalms' spiritual reflections, emphasizing both their theological and liturgical significance in the Hebrew tradition.³

Nichol asserts,

Book One, Ps. 1-41, closing with a doxology and double “Amen” (Ps. 41:13). Book Two, Ps. 42-72, closing with a double doxology, double “Amen,” and the inscription “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended” (Ps. 72:18-20). Book Three, Ps. 73-89, closing, as Book One, with a doxology and double “Amen” (Ps. 89:52). Book Four, Ps. 90-106, closing with a doxology, an “Amen,” and a hallelujah (“Praise ye the Lord,” Ps. 106:48). Book Five, Ps. 107-150, closing with Ps. 150, which begins and closes with a hallelujah (“Praise ye the Lord”), and is itself an extended hallelujah.⁴

This paper concentrates on an in-depth analysis of three selected verses from Psalm 150. The decision to limit the discussion to these verses stems from the need to manage the scope of the study, ensuring a more focused and thorough examination of the text. By narrowing the range of verses, the paper aims to offer detailed insights into the linguistic, contextual, and theological aspects of these passages, rather than providing a broader, less detailed overview of the entire

²Ibid., 3:616

³Nichols., 623, 626.

⁴Ibid., 626.

chapter. This approach allows for a more rigorous exploration of the themes and literary elements present in these verses.

Morphological and Syntactical Analysis

The first verse is divided by atnah⁵ to point out the Hebrew clause. And the first part is divided by two clause. The first clause of the first part have only one verb that is the verb הַלְלוּ This verbs occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural from the root הָלַל Which is means to praise, to sing Hallelujah.⁶ This verse begun with a verb as usual happen in the Hebrew text. This verb is a predicate occurs in the form of piel imperative and the subject of the sentence is imply in verb or predicate. And the word הַיְיָ it is noun proper. This word derived from the root הָיָה as alternate form of יהוה which means the God of Israel, Yah.⁷ This word is the object of the sentence.

הַלְלוּ יְהוָה

יְהוָה	הַלְלוּ
Direct Object	Subject - Predicate

The second part of the first clause of the first part of text is begun with a verb הַלְלוּ this verbs occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural from the root הָלַל which is means to praise, to sing Hallelujah.⁸ This verb is a predicate of the sentence and the subject imply in verb or predicate in the Piel imperative masculine plural. The second word is אֱלֹהִים this word is occurs as noun common masculine singular absolute from the root אָלַף which means the high god El, God.⁹ This word is a direct object of the sentence. And the third word is בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ this word is noun common masculine singular construct plus suffix third person masculine singular and this word has particle preposition. This word from the root קָדַשׁ which means sacredness, holiness, the temple.¹⁰ This third word is a direct object of the sentence.

⁵William R. Scott, *A Simplified Guide to BHS: Critical Apparatus, Masora, Accents Unusual Letters & Other Markings* (Berkeley: Bibal Press, 1987), 30. Atnah is a sign that be understood as marking of second half of a verse in Hebrew Bible.

⁶William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 81.,

⁷Ibid., 129.

⁸Ibid., 81.

⁹BDB., 16.

¹⁰Ibid., 871.

הַלְלוּ-אֵל בְּקִדְשׁוֹ

בְּקִדְשׁוֹ	אֵל	הַלְלוּ-
Indirect object	Direct object	Subject - Predicate

The second clause of the text is begun with the verb. The verb הַלְלוּ This verbs occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural plus suffix third person masculine singular from the root הָלַל which is means to praise, to sing Hallelujah.¹¹ This verb is the predicate of the word clause and the subject and the object are imply in it. And the second word בְּרִקְיעַ it is noun common masculine singular construct and has particle preposition. This word derived from the root רָקַע which is means extended surface, expanse, firmament.¹² This word is indirect object of clause. The third word is עֲזֹן it is noun common masculine singular construct plus suffix third person masculine singular. This word derived from the root עָזַן which means strength, might.¹³ This word is the compliment of the clause.

הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרִקְיעַ עֲזֹן

עֲזֹן	בְּרִקְיעַ	הַלְלוּהוּ
Compliment	Indirect object	Subject – Predicate - Object

The second verse is divided in to two parts based on the atnah in the text. The first half of the text have only one verb that is the verb הַלְלוּהוּ this verbs occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural plus suffix third person masculine singular from the root הָלַל which means to praise, sing Hallelujah.¹⁴ This verbs is the predicate of the clause and the subject and direct object are imply in it. The second word is הַלְלוּהוּ this word is noun common feminine plural construct plus suffix third person masculine singular and has particle preposition which attach to it and this word from the root הָלַל which means might, strength, valour.¹⁵ This word is indirect object of the sentence.

הַלְלוּהוּ בַּגְּבוּרָתוֹ

בַּגְּבוּרָתוֹ	הַלְלוּהוּ
Indirect object	Direct object – Subject - Predicate

¹¹Ibid., 81.

¹²F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, eds. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2016), 956.

¹³BDB., 738.

¹⁴BDB., 237.

¹⁵BDB., 150.

The second clause of the second verse is begun with verb הִלְלוּהוּ this verbs occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural plus suffix third person masculine singular from the root word הָלַל which means to praise. This verb is predicate of the clause and the subject and direct object are imply in it. Then the other word is כָּרַב this word is noun common masculine singular construct and particle preposition attach to it. This word derived from the root רֹב which means abundance, great number, magnificence, multitude.¹⁶ This word is compliment of direct object. The other word is גְּדֹלוֹ it is noun common masculine singular construct plus suffix third person masculine singular. This word derived from the root word גָּדַל which means greatness, magnificence.¹⁷ This word is indirect object of the sentence.

הִלְלוּהוּ כָּרַב גְּדֹלוֹ

גְּדֹלוֹ	כָּרַב	הִלְלוּהוּ
Indirect object	Compliment	Object – subject - Predicate

Verse three is divided in to two part because of the atnah in the text. The first word is the verb הִלְלוּהוּ this verb is occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural plus suffix third person masculine singular. This verb derived from the root הָלַל which means to praise. This verb is predicate of the clause and the subject and direct object are imply in it. The other word is בְּתִקְעָה the word is noun common masculine singular construct and particle preposition has attached in it. This word derived from the root תָּקַע which means sound, blow, clap.¹⁸ As syntactical analysis this word is compliment of the sentence. Then the other word is שׁוֹפָר as noun common masculine singular absolute. This word is derived from the root שָׁפַר which means horn, trumpet, shophar.¹⁹ This is indirect object of the sentence.

הִלְלוּהוּ בְּתִקְעָה שׁוֹפָר

שׁוֹפָר	בְּתִקְעָה	הִלְלוּהוּ
Indirect object	Compliment	Direct object – Subject- Predicate

The second clause of verse three is begun with the verb הִלְלוּהוּ this verb is occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural with suffix third person masculine singular. This verb is derived from the root הָלַל which means to praise, sing Halleujah, boast.²⁰ This word is predicate of the clause and the subject and direct object is imply in it. The other word of this clause is בְּנִבְּלָה this

¹⁶Hollday., 54.

¹⁷BDB., 913.

¹⁸TWOT., 2541

¹⁹ TDOT., 14:541.

²⁰TWOT., 499.

verb is noun common masculine singular absolute and has particle preposition. This word derived from the root **נָבַל** which means lute, harp.²¹ This word is indirect object of the clause. The last word of this clause is **נִכְנֹר** this word derived from the root **כָּנַר** which mean lyre.²² This word is indirect object of the clause.

הִלְלוּהוּ בְּנֶבֶל וְכִנּוֹר

נִכְנֹר	בְּנֶבֶל	הִלְלוּהוּ
Indirect object		Direct object – Subject - Predicate

Semantic Analysis

The word **הִלְלוּ** is from the root **הָלַל** and is performed as piel imperative masculine plural. The meaning of this word is praise, sing Hallelujah, praiseworthy.²³ There are three different roots *hll* in Hebrew. The first root is cognate with Arab. This word *halla* means “appear on the horizon”, “shine”, *hilal*, “new moon.”²⁴ The second root *hll* means praise, it is associated etymologically with Ugar, *hll*, “shout”Syr. *Hallel*, “praise”; and Akk. *alalu*, a laborer’ shout or song, *elelu*, “jubilationextol, shout. And *halla* means sing joyfully to someone.²⁵ The third root is occurs 19 or 20 times in the Hebrew OT, 14 times as a verb (qal, poel, poal, hithpael), 5 times as a noun.²⁶ This word appears mostly in piel. In piel is appeared 113. In pual occurs 10 times and 19 in hithpael.²⁷ The other context of the root, “This root can be used of exalting human beauty (Gen 12:15; 2Sam 14:25) or human understanding (Prov 12:8). The noun *hillâ* is used of the renown of cities (Jer 48:2). Also *halal* can bespeak the praise given to a good homemaker (Prov 31:28, 31), a wise diplomat (1Kings 20:11), which comes from a king (Psa 63:11 [H 12]), etc. However, our root usually refers to praising deity, even false deities (Jud 16:24).”²⁸

The range of meaning of the verb can be determined more or less accurately with the aid of its “secular” occurrences. The princes of Pharaoh “praise” Sarah for the beauty (Gen. 12:14).

²¹BDB., 237

²³Holladay., 81.

²⁴Ringgren, TDOT., 3:404.

²⁵ Ibid., 3:404.

²⁶Cazelles, TDOT., 3:411.

²⁷Ringgren., 3:405

²⁸ TWOT., 500

The people praise Absalom, likewise for his beauty (2 Sem. 14:25).²⁹ Further, “in the majority of passages, God is the object of the verb. In one single instance the verb is used of non-Israelite: the Philistines praise their god on account of their victory over Samson (Jgs. 16:24)³⁰

Another context which the most frequent use of the root relates to praising the God of Israel. The largest number of these are imperative summons to praise. The frequency and mood emphasizes the vital necessity of this action. The centrality of the cultus to Israel's national élan further confirms that necessity, as does the fact that psalmody in Israel's religion was so strongly linked to David the idyllic king. The themes surrounding and included in the verbal expressions of praise (the psalms) show that it is imperative that God in his deity (Psa 102:21)³¹

The next word is יָהּ which means yah. A contracted form of Yahweh. Occurs fifty times. Also numerous proper nouns compounded with shortened forms of the divine name “Yahweh,” e.g.: y^honatan, Jehonathan, “Yahweh has given”; abbreviated yônatan “Jonathan,” a substitute name for the same person (compare 1Sam 13:2-3 with 1Sam 14:6, 8; 2Sam 17:17, 20 with 1Kings 1:42-43); and y^hôshapat, Jehoshaphat, “Yahweh has judged”; alternatively yôshapat, “Joshaphat,” applied only to two subordinates of David (1Chr 11:43; 1Chr 15:24).³²

Furthermore the shortened independent form of the divine name, Yah, occurs primarily in poetry and in the exclamation, Hallelu-yah, praise Yahweh. It serves also as a terminal element in proper nouns like Elijah: “elîyâ (or °elîyahû), “God (is) Yahweh.”³³ In the west Semitic sources the various forms of the divine name in personal sentence names are not uniformly attested. Early occurrences are also limited.³⁴ The use of Yahweh as a divine name goes back to earliest times (Gen 4:1, 26; Gen 9:26), although the documentation for its employment among other early cultures appears questionable (IDB, II, p. 409). In Exo 6:3 the Lord explains to Moses that by his name Yahweh he had not been “known” to the patriarchs, meaning “know” in its fullest sense: the name was in use (Gen 12:8; Gen 15:2, 7, 8) but was not appreciated in the redemptive significance that it acquired under Moses (J. A. Motyer, *The Revelation of the Divine Name*).³⁵ Thus the first clause in verse one of the text can be translated as : “Praise God.”

The second part of the first clause of the first part of text is begun with a verb יִפְתָּח this verb occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural from the root פָּתַח which means to praise, to

²⁹ TDOT., 405

³⁰ Ibid., 406

³¹ Ringgren, TDOT., 406.

³² TWOT., 484.

³³ Ibid., 484.

³⁴ Freedman, TDOT., 506.

³⁵ TWOT., 484.

sing Hallelujah.³⁶ This verb is a predicate of the sentence and the subject imply in verb or predicate in the Piel imperative masculine plural. This word has the same meaning with the previous word in the first clause.

The second word is לַיְיָ this word is occurs as noun common masculine singular absolute from the root לַיְיָ which means the high god El, God.³⁷ This word is a direct object of the sentence. It is the assumed root of *°ēl*, *°šlāah*, and *°šlāhîm*, which mean "god" or "God." The Ugaritic term for "god" or the "chief god" is *ʿil*, plural *ʿilm*, occasionally plural *ʿilmh*. The Phoenician term is *ʿl* "El"; the plural is *ʿlm* which seems to be construed sometimes as a singular (cf. Z. Harris, *Grammar of the Phoenician Language*. The Aramaic is *°šlʿh*, plural *šlʿhîn*. The Akkadian form is *ilu*.³⁸

And the third word is *יְהוָה קָדֵשׁ* this word is noun common masculine singular construct plus suffix third person masculine singular and this word has particle preposition. This word from the root *קָדֵשׁ* which means sacredness, holiness, the temple.³⁹ The word occurs in several dialects of Akkadian with the basic meanings "to be clean, pure, consecrated." In the Canaanite texts from Ugarit, the basic meaning of the word group is "holy," and it is always used in a cultic sense.⁴⁰ And because of his holiness, God is above the weaknesses and imperfections of mortals and thus can accomplish the deliverance of his people (Exo 15:11-12). Only those who are holy will dwell in God's holy hill (Psa 15 :lff). Because God is holy by nature and separate from moral imperfections he can be trusted to be faithful to his promises (Psa 33:21).⁴¹ And addition the meaning of the individual words, however, can be determined from the context, which for all the *qds* derivatives is a religious one. The focus is never on ethical or moral issues, but rather on an act of consecration, surrender, or dedication to a deity.⁴² The title "The Holy One of Israel" is applied to God numerous times in the OT, but is especially frequent in the prophecy of Isaiah (in all parts). It serves to place the sins of Isaiah's society in stark contrast to God's moral perfection (Isa 30:11) and expresses God's absolute separation from evil (Isa 17:7).⁴³ So the second clause of the first text can be translated as: Praise God in His holy place.

³⁶Ibid., 81.

³⁷BDB., 16.

³⁸TWOT., 93.

³⁹Ibid., 871.

⁴⁰TWOT., 1990.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1990

⁴² Kornfeld, TDOT.,12:526.

⁴³TWOT., 1990

The second clause of the text is begun with the verb. The verb הָלְלוּהוּ This verbs occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural plus suffix third person masculine singular from the root הָלַל which is means to praise, to sing Hallelujah.⁴⁴ It was discussed above.

And the second word עֲרֶקְיָע it is noun common masculine singular construct and has particle preposition. This word derived from the root עֲרַקְיָע which is means extended surface, expanse, firmament.⁴⁵ The basic concept in עֲרַקְיָע is stamping, as with the foot, and what results, i.e. a spreading out or stretching forth. In the OT the foot-stamping connotation of עֲרַקְיָע may be understood literally, indicating either a malicious glee (Ezek 25:6) or a threatening excitement (Ezek 6:11). It may be used figuratively to describe beaten and crushed enemies (2Sam 22:43).⁴⁶ The *r'qîa±* is the most important derivative of *r'qîa±*. It identifies God's heavenly expanse. The Mosaic account of creation uses *r'qîa±* interchangeably for the "open expanse of the heavens" in which birds fly (Gen 1:20 NASB).⁴⁷

The third word is יָעֹץ it is noun common masculine singular construct plus suffix third person masculine singular. This word derived from the root יָעַץ which means strength, might.⁴⁸ Primarily this word is related to God. Strength is an essential attribute of God (Psa 62:11 [H 12]; Psa 63:2 [H 3]), his voice (Psa 68:33 [H 34]) and his arm (Isa 62:8; cf. Isa 51:9; Psa 89:10 [H 11]) are mighty. While the ark is a symbol of his power (2Chr 6:41; Psa 78:61; Psa 132:8; cf. Num 10:35, 36), it is also observable in the skies (Psa 150:1).⁴⁹ Thus this clause can be translated as: Praise Him in the firmament of His mighty.

The second verse is divided in to two parts based on the atnah in the text. The first half of the text have only one verb that is the verb הָלְלוּהוּ this verbs occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural plus suffix third person masculine singular from the root הָלַל which means to praise, sing Hallelujah.⁵⁰ This verbs is the predicate of the clause and the subject and direct object are imply in it. The second word is הָלְלוּהוּ this word is noun common feminine plural construct plus suffix third person masculine singular and has particle preposition which attach to it and this

⁴⁴Ibid., 81.

⁴⁵F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, eds. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2016), 956.

⁴⁶TWOT., 2217.

⁴⁷Ibid., 2217

⁴⁸BDB., 738.

⁴⁹TWOT., 1596.

⁵⁰BDB., 237.

word from the root word הָלַל which means might, strength, valour.⁵¹ This word is indirect object of the sentence.

The second clause of the second verse is begun with verb הָלְלוּהוּ this verbs occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural plus suffix third person masculine singular from the root word הָלַל which means to praise. This verb is predicate of the clause and the subject and direct object are imply in it. Then the other word is פָּרָב this word is noun common masculine singular construct and particle preposition attach to it. This word derived from the root רוּב which means abundance, great number, magnificence, multitude.⁵² This word is compliment of direct object. The other word is גְּדֹלוֹ it is noun common masculine singular construct plus suffix third person masculine singular. This word derived from the root word גָּדַל which means greatness, magnificence.⁵³ This word is indirect object of the sentence.

Verse three is divided in to two part because of the atnah in the text. The first word is the verb הָלְלוּהוּ this verb is occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural plus suffix third person masculine singular. This verb derived from the root הָלַל which means to praise. This verb is predicate of the clause and the subject and direct object are imply in it. The other word is בְּתִקְעַתְּ the word is noun common masculine singular construct and particle preposition has attached in it. This word derived from the root תָּקַע which means sound, blow, clap.⁵⁴ As syntactical analysis this word is compliment of the sentence. Then the other word is שׁוֹפָר as noun common masculine singular absolute. This word is derived from the root שָׁפַר which means horn, trumpet, shophar.⁵⁵ This is indirect object of the sentence.

The second clause of verse three is begun with the verb הָלְלוּהוּ this verb is occurs as Piel imperative masculine plural with suffix third person masculine singular. This verb is derived from the root הָלַל which means to praise, sing Hallelujah, boast.⁵⁶ This word is predicate of the clause and the subject and direct object is imply in it. The other word of this clause is בְּנִיבָל this verb is noun common masculine singular absolute and has particle preposition. This word derived from the root נָבַל which means lute, harp.⁵⁷ This word is indirect object of the clause. The last word of this clause is וְכַנּוֹר this word derived from the root כָּנַן which mean lyre.⁵⁸ This word is indirect object of the clause

⁵¹BDB., 150.

⁵²Hollday., 54.

⁵³BDB., 913.

⁵⁴TWOT., 2541

⁵⁵ TDOT., 14:541.

⁵⁶TWOT., 499.

⁵⁷BDB., 237

Conclusion

This paper applies Hebrew language analysis to the text of Psalms 150:1-3 to uncover its meaning and explore its translation. Each verse in this passage contains the same verb, *לְלַבֵּן*, which appears in the *Piel* imperative form, expressing a direct command that calls for immediate action from those being addressed. In this form, the verb means "to praise," specifically referring to praising God. The second masculine plural form is used, indicating that the command is directed at human beings, who are called to praise the Creator. The reason for this call to praise is rooted in God's role as the Creator of the earth, with authority over all things in the universe and on earth. He dwells in His holy temple, possessing the power to protect, bless, and save His people. No one can be compared to Him.

The subject, implied by the second masculine plural form, refers to human beings who are commanded to perform the action of praising God (the object). The second and third verses describe how people should respond to God's actions. The author outlines the specific actions that people must take in response to God, both through their attitudes and through musical expressions. The theological insight derived from these texts is that, as human beings, we are called to praise God in all aspects of our lives, not only for what He has done for us but also for what He calls us to do in the future.

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