

The

# Hallelujah

Life

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

*The Hallelujah Life: Authentic Praise*

*Sermon Dr. Mary Craig February 10, 2019*

There's a lot of talk currently about this or that being "authentic." Maybe it's because people search for something real, something beyond virtual reality. The word "authentic" has gained popularity. So what does it mean? Something authentic is something that is:

genuine, original, real, actual, bona fide, true, and/or veritable.

So let's think about authenticity and praise.

Hallel consists of six Psalms (113–118), which are recited as a unit, on joyous occasions. Psalm 136, the Great Hallel, is a hymn that opens with a call to praise God because of God's great deeds in nature and God's gracious historical actions in the history of Israel. It continues expressing God's mercy toward all and ends with another call to praise God. Each verse of *Psalm 136* concludes with the refrain "for his mercy endures forever" and it contains mention of twenty-six acts of Divine kindness and sustenance for the world. Hallel psalms formed an integral part of the Passover.

The term Hallelujah is used 24 times in the [Hebrew Bible](#) (in the book of [Psalms](#)), twice in [deuterocanonical books](#), and four times in the Christian [Book of Revelation](#). Rev. 19:1-6.

The word *hallel* in Hebrew means a joyous praise in song, to boast in God. It can even mean acting madly, like a mad man. (e.g. 1 Samuel 21:14)

"Halal" connects with the concepts of praise, shine, and boast. Praise be to the Covenant LORD. The Covenant LORD shines. He shines on me with favor. We boast in the Covenant LORD. Shout for joy in the Covenant LORD. Sing to the Covenant LORD.

Shine: Get into the Word—Ezekiel 43:2; Numbers 6:24; Matthew 17:2; Luke 17:24; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Matthew 13:43.

And the LORD spoke unto Moses saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise you shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

The LORD bless you, and keep you:

The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you:

The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

And they shall put My Name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them. Numbers 6:22-27

Boast - [1 Corinthians 1:31](#) so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

[2 Corinthians 10:17](#) But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.

[Psalm 34:2](#) My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.

[Psalm 44:8](#) In God we have boasted all day long, And we will give thanks to Your name forever. Selah.

[Psalm 20:7](#) Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.

[Romans 15:17](#) Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

[Galatians 6:14](#) But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

So when we sing Hallelujah, let's think about boasting in the Covenant LORD and our reasons for such boasting. Let's think about His shining upon us, remembering and praising Him for His favor and graciousness to us. Let's think about His splendor and worth and glorify Him by praising Him. Let's sing "Hallelujah!"

We say that authentic prayer is more than just words. It is talking to the Living God, the Creator/Redeemer. It is listening as God talks with us. It is praying with an understanding that God works in our lives. Like what I heard in seminary: "Prayer changes things."

Hallelujah! Amen. Praise the Covenant LORD. "So let it be." "Amen" affirms our belief that God has heard us. Amen states our faith in the power of God; we submit our will to Him as we say it. We want His will accomplished, what Jesus Christ has accomplished through His Incarnation, life, death on the Cross, burial, resurrection, and ascension, applied to us.

We are encouraged and see in Scripture that praise is a great way to start our prayers. Speak well of God. Bless Him. Bless His holy name. We enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Enter joyfully. In praise we shout His praises, we extol, and we honor Him.

Worship includes praise. Worship acknowledges the Living God, the Living Word, Jesus Christ, and the Living Spirit, the Holy Spirit. God knows what we are experiencing. Worship, praise, singing, blessing the LORD, singing praises to Him for who He is, raises us up above our circumstances. It needs to become a positive habit in our lives. The positive practical result of this in times of trouble is this lifting us up above what we're going through, lifting us up above our "selves", to El Elyon, the Most High God, to Yahweh, the Covenant LORD. Philippians 4:8. God is in charge. He loves us with stability.

Real praise, authentic praise, requires total involvement.

*Praise the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious: and His righteousness endures forever. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion. He has given food unto them that fear Him: He will ever be mindful of His covenant. He has showed His people the power of His works, that He may give them the*

*heritage of the heathen. The works of His hands are verity and judgment, all His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto His people: He has commanded His covenant forever; holy and reverent is His Name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments; His praise endures forever. Psalm 111*

We are to sing to the LORD with our whole being. We praise God with our whole being, in the company of the upright. This psalm promises that praise is a lasting work and will not vanish. “His praise endures forever.” (v. 10). Praising needs to be natural to us, though it is supernatural. The Holy Spirit wants to lift us up to the highest heaven.

People stand when Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” is sung. So let’s get a taste of this. And before we do, I’ll mention a few things about George Frideric Handel. A contemporary of Bach, Handel lived from 1685 to 1759. He was 64, depressed and in debt, when he wrote “Messiah” in 23/24 days. It premiered in 1742 in Dublin for Easter. On the original manuscript he wrote, “To God alone the glory.” It covers the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the United States, it began being heard in December, for Christmas. For the massive size of its 259-page score, it has remarkably few mistakes.

In April of 1737 at 52 Handel seems to have suffered from a stroke which incapacitated him, making it impossible for him to perform (he played the spinet or keyboard) or conduct, because it had paralyzed his right arm and he was right handed. He also complained of blurred vision. The truth was as well, that falling in and out of favor with royalty left him alternately in and out of money, and because he was not a wise businessman he in fact lost a fortune in the opera business and, depressed and in debt, gave it up in 1740.

It was only shortly after these calamities in Handel’s life that he came across a libretto composed by Charles Jennens. Composed entirely of Scripture portions, mainly from the OT, Handel was deeply affected when he read this libretto. “Handel’s Messiah: The Story Behind the Classic” by Ben Witherington

Handel is said to have laughed at adversity. He recovered quickly after each of two strokes. He lost his eyesight, but carried on. “Handel was known for being a generous man, even in death. Having never married or fathered children, his will divided his assets among his servants and several charities, including the Foundling Hospital. He even donated the money to pay for his own funeral so that none of his loved ones would bear the financial burden. Handel was buried in Westminster Abbey a week after he died. Following his death, biographical documents began to circulate, and George Handel soon took on legendary status posthumously.” <https://www.biography.com/people/george-handel-9327378>

Read more at:

<https://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/bibleandculture/2009/12/handels-messiah-the-story-behind-the-classic.html>

<https://www.biography.com/people/george-handel-9327378>

Be inspired praising the LORD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXh7JR9oKVE> You may have seen this “flash mob” in a mall rising to sing Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” back on November 13, 2010; worth it!

Handel’s *Messiah* puts Scriptures to music. It’s glorious authentic praise to God’s glory in sending His Son Jesus Christ as His provision for salvation and eternal life in Him forever.

Rejoicing in the riches of His glory,

## *Mary Craig*

Mary Craig, D. Min.

*He that spared not His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things. Romans 8:32*



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