

Shout It Out

by J. W. Jepson

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I once heard a man testify that he was converted to Christ when he heard a minister shouting praises to God in a church service. If Jesus Christ could give a person that much joy, he wanted Him too!

God created us with the ability to express ourselves in a variety of ways. Among them is the ability to shout. Rare is the person who has never shouted about something.

Imagine what life would be like if we couldn't shout. At the winning touchdown, basket or home run, all we could do would be to stand up, applaud, and state our approval. The man who just landed a big promotion or a substantial raise couldn't kick up his heels and shout "Yes!" Life would be less exciting. And we would also lose a means of expressing ourselves openly and fully to God.

Expressing ourselves in response to God's presence, grace and blessings is the highest use of our God-given abilities. God wants us to exercise those abilities fully and in balance. There is a time for singing, a time for praise and quiet adoration, a time for shouting. Yes, God has given His people a shout. Let's not lose it.

There are many kinds of highest volume and sustained vocal expressions besides shouting: bawling, bellowing, crying, screaming, shrieking. In the specifically human sense, shouting is different. *Shouting uses words.*

The Bible recognizes different kinds of shouts: shouts of praise, shouts of joy, shouts of victory.

God Himself is said to shout. "God has gone up with a shout" (Psalm 47:5). It is a shout of triumph.

Jeremiah 25:30 says that "The LORD ... will give a shout ... against all the inhabitants of the earth." This is the shout that calls the nations to judgment.

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout." This shout will be the command for the dead in Christ to rise first and for those who "are alive and remain" to join them "in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). That is the shout believers are listening for.

At the creation of the earth "the angels shouted for joy" (Job 38:7 NIV). The awesome spectacle was so dramatic that the mighty hosts of heaven burst into wave after wave of thunderous shouts.

In Leviticus we have record of the first offering made by Aaron and his sons. Suddenly the fire of God fell. "When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces" (9:24). The congregation was so moved by the sudden demonstration of the glory of the Lord that a mighty shout rose spontaneously. It was the natural and the only proper response.

At Joshua's great victory at Jericho, God had His own unique strategy. The people marched around the city once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day, uttering not a word as they marched. Then at a long blast from the trumpets, the people raised a massive shout, and the wall collapsed (see Joshua 6). It was a shout of triumphant faith uttered in concert with the power of God. *That* is the believers' shout.

King David brought up the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem with shouting (2 Samuel 6:15).

Later, in the days of Asa, king of Judah, the people renewed their covenant with God, "with a loud voice, with shouting" (2 Chronicles 15:14).

In the time of Ezra, when the foundation of the new temple was laid, many of the people shouted aloud for joy (Ezra 3:11 - 13).

There are times when we should shout out our faith in God and utter aloud His glorious praise. We should do it whether we feel like it or not. In fact, a biblical shout can free a believer's spirit and help clear out any stagnation in the soul. It can broaden the dimensions of our worship and keep it from becoming prosaic.

This is not a call for fanaticism or disorder, but an appeal to employ a God-given function of our being in a scriptural manner for God's glory and our edification.

The Word of God urges us to open up and shout for joy. "But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them" (Psalm 5:11). "Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for you, all you upright in heart!" (Psalm 32:11). "Let them shout for joy" (Psalm 35:27). "Let Your saints shout for joy ... and her [Zion's] saints shall shout aloud for joy" (Psalm 132:9, 16).

In the foregoing passages from the Psalms, the Hebrew word *ranan* is translated "sing" in some of the modern versions. Although the word is broad enough to include "sing," it retains its basic meaning, "shout." It is the shout of joy.

"Shout, O Israel" (Zephaniah 3:14). "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!" (Zechariah 9:9).

"Sing for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has done this; shout aloud, O earth beneath" (Isaiah 44:23 NIV). This is the shout of joy because of redemption.

Akin to the shout of joy is the shout of victory. We have already noted its place in Israel's victory at Jericho. We find it again in Psalm 47:1: "Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!"

There is also the shout of praise. "Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Selah sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare His praise in the coastlands" (Isaiah 42:11, 12).

Most of what we have been considering is Old Testament worship. If that was worship under the old covenant, what should the Church today be doing? How should we respond to the blessings of grace? As the angels rejoice when one sinner repents, how should we be acting?

The need is urgent for a manifestation of the power and glory of God of the magnitude that set the people of God to shouting. It is harvest-time, time "in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God" (Romans 15:18, 19). That is God's agenda for us today.

If you are laboring, praying and believing for a genuine revival; for the operation of the miracle-working power of God; for the blind to see, the lame to walk, the maimed to be made whole, the sick to be healed; for the triumph of the truth, and for a harvest of souls—get ready to shout!
