

Psalm 148

All creation to praise the Lord

Psalm 148:

Since nothing in heaven above or on earth below is left out in this praise psalm, it may appropriately be designated as the psalm of universal praise.

Its structure is quite distinct: there are two calls to praise, each ending with a cause for praise.

The psalmist first calls on the heavenly beings and the heavenly bodies to praise the LORD (verses 1-4), because of His creative power (verses 5-6).

Then the psalmist issues a second call to praise addressed to the earthly beings and earthly substances (verses 7-12), because of the glory of the LORD and of His people (verses 13-14).

Verses 1-14 (see note on Psalm 146-1-10).

There is a connection between the creation praising God and His involvement with Israel.

I. Heaven's Praise (148:1-6).

A. Who? (148:1-4);

B. Why? (148:5-6).

II. Earth's Praise (148:7-14).

A. Who? (148:7-12);

B. Why? (148:13-14).

Verses 1-14:

A representative sample of God's creation in the skies and heavens.

The universe praises God because God spoke it into being (148:5).

God did not need an evolving series of events or cosmic explosions to create the "heavens" and "earth" and all their inhabitants.

God spoke- and they were.

In return, they praise Him.

Psalm 148:1 "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights."

Or, hallelujah:

Which, in some versions, and with some interpreters, is the title of the psalm.

Expressive of the subject matter of it, the praise of the LORD.

And is an exhortation of all creatures to it.

"Praise ye the LORD from the heavens":

On the part of the heavens.

Let those who dwell in heaven begin the song.

"Praise him in the heights":

All that are in the heights.

Meaning, in the highest parts of the universe, or the heavens.

There is nothing so high above that it should not praise the LORD.

He is the Creator of even the heavens and all they contain, as well as the earth and all it contains.

This praise is not just to be limited to the heavens but also should extend to the angels, and the cherubim, and seraphim.

The archangels, as well, should praise Him.

We know that one of the things that the angels do always in heaven, is cry Holy, Holy, Holy.

Psalms 148:2 "Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts."

The Targum adds, who minister before him.

The ministering spirits, the angels of Jehovah, even of Christ, who are his creatures, and are at his command.

And whom he sends forth to minister to others (Heb. 1:7).

And great numbers there are of them, thousands and tens of thousands.

Yea, an innumerable company; and all of them are under the obligation to praise the LORD for their creation.

For invisible spirits, as well as visible bodies.

Even the celestial thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, were created by Christ (Colossians 1:16).

And for their preservation in their beings, and confirmation in that happy estate in which they were created.

Being chosen and secured in Christ, the head of all principality and power, and so stood while others fell.

And also for the various excellent powers, and faculties and properties, they are endowed with.

They excel in strength, are possessed of great agility and swiftness and have a large share of knowledge, of things natural, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelical.

They are perfectly holy, and without sin; and happy in the enjoyment of God, in whose presence they always are, and whose face they continually behold.

And will ever remain in this state, being immaterial and immortal beings.

And as praise is their duty, it is their work.

In this they were employed at the creation of all things, then these sons of God and morning stars sang and shouted for joy.

And at the incarnation of Christ, when they worshipped him; at the conversion of every sinner.

And frequently join the church in this service, and will be concerned in it to all eternity.

And when the psalmist calls upon them to engage in it, it does not suppose that they were deficient in it, or backward to it.

Or that he had any authority over them to require it of them.

But it shows his great desire that the LORD might be praised by the noblest creatures, and in the best manner that could be.

And how much his heart was in this work.

And he does it to stir up himself and others the more unto it, from this consideration.

That if those heavenly creatures should praise the LORD, then much more such as he and others, who were so very unworthy of the divine favors, and so much beholden to the LORD for them.

"Praise ye him, all his hosts":

Meaning either the angels as before, which are sometimes called the hosts of heaven, and also the heavenly host.

There being armies and legions of them, and these encamping about the saints in a military way (see 2 Kings 19:35).

Or else the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, as follow, sometimes called the host of heaven; and who are represented as militant (Gen. 2:1; 2 Kings 21:3).

The few glimpses that we have had into heaven, has also told of the praise and worship that goes on continually.

Even the 24 elders bow down before Him and cry out in praise.

Revelation 19:4 "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

Psalm 148:3 "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light."

The "sun" praises God in its brilliance all day long.

And when the sun goes down, the "moon" rises and continues praising God all through the night.

The light of His praise never goes out.

The sun and moon have been the object of pagan worship.

They should not be worshipped, because they are God's creation.

We spoke of the fact that they are fixtures that we see the Light in.

They are not the source of Light.

Jesus is the source of Light.

He is the Light.

Psalm 148:4 "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that [be] above the heavens."

"Waters ... above the heavens"

Compare Genesis 1:7.

This is speaking of the vastness above the heavens.

Even this vastness is in God's control.

We know that there are at least three heavens, because Paul was carried to the third heaven.

Verses 5-6:

He emphatically ascribes creation to God alone.

Psalm 148:5 "Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created."

Set forth the glory of the nature and perfections of God, and celebrate the praise of them.

Even all celestial creatures, the angels, the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars; the heavens, and the heaven of heavens.

And the waters above them; and that for the following reasons.

"For he commanded, and they were created":

They are all his creatures, and therefore should praise him.

He is the "Father of spirits", of angelic spirits, as well as the spirits of men.

And the "Father of lights", of all the luminaries of the heavens.

And he has made the heavens themselves, and all their hosts, and the firmament dividing the waters above and below.

And all this by an almighty "fiat", at a word of command.

He spoke, and they came into being at once (Heb. 12:9; James 1:17).

This is reason enough for all of these things to praise God, He is Creator.

They owe their existence to their Creator.

Psalm 148:6 "He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass."

Jeremiah 31:35-37; 33:20-22 might be in mind in the sense that the certain, fixed order of creation was a witness to God's unbreakable covenants with Abraham and David.

Not only did God create all of the heavenly things, but he established an order where they would stay in orbit and not fly off into space and burn up.

They are like people here on the earth in that the life of the sun, moon, or stars is determined by the usefulness it has to God.

When He tells the sun to stop shining, it will.

Psalm 148:7 "Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:"

Let his praise resound from all creatures on earth, and reach him in the highest heavens.

This phrase comprehends all terrestrial beings afterwards particularly mentioned.

All in the globe, consisting of land and water, all that arise from it, are upon it, or within it.

"Ye dragons, and all deeps":

Either land dragons, or rather sea dragons.

The water or sea being the proper place of them (Psalm 44:19).

These, as cruel, as poisonous, and pernicious as they are, are made to honor and praise the LORD (Isaiah 43:20).

And such as are mystically signified by them, as Satan.

Tyrannical and persecuting princes, and antichristian ones, as Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Rome, Pagan and Papal; out of whom the Lord has or will get himself praise in the deliverance of his people from them, and in the destruction of them.

And in the confessions they have been obliged to make of him (Rev. 12:3).

These seem to be set in contrast with the angels.

The word is used for the great whales the LORD made, which are thought to be the same with the "leviathan" of Job.

Of whom so many things are said, which declare the power and wisdom of God in the formation of it (Gen 1:21).

And these may be put for the innumerable creatures in the sea, which in their way show forth the praise and glory of God (Psalm 102:24).

As "all deeps" do.

Deep waters, especially the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants of them.

Where the wonders of God are to be seen, and give occasion to those that go down to the sea in ships to praise his name (Psalm 107:23).

Even the devil himself, is a creation of God.

When the praise is commanded to go forth, it does not even exclude the evil things of the earth.

The devil will operate his little lying, cheating, deceiving ministry here on the earth, until the Lord says it is enough.

We read that Satan will be locked up in chains for one thousand years and will not be able to deceive during that time.

The praises from up in the heaven can join with the praises floating up from the earth.

This just means that all of God's creation will praise Him.

Psalm 148:8 "Fire, and hail; snow, and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling his word:"

The “wind” and the “Word” praise God.

The word wind in the Old Testament Scriptures is the same word translated “Spirit”.

There are two things which without, none can ever come to know Jesus Christ: The Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

“Fulfilling His word”:

Another way of saying that God sovereignly oversees weather.

A strange phenomenon happened in the days of Pharaoh, because God commanded it to.

Fire mixed with hail fell on the Egyptians.

These two elements generally are not together.

This just shows more clearly that all elements must obey God.

In the snow and vapors, we see opposite elements cooperating again.

Vapor comes from heat and snow from cold.

The winds must obey His voice, as well.

They blow, when He gives them permission to blow.

Psalm 148:9 "Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:"

Which are originally formed by the LORD, and set fast by his power and strength.

These are the highest parts of the earth, and are very ornamental and useful.

They include all in them and upon them.

The trees and herbage that grow upon them, gold, silver, brass, and iron in them.

All very beneficial to mankind, and afford matter of praise to God for them (see Isa. 55:12).

"Fruitful trees, and all cedars":

Trees bearing fruit are the fig trees, pomegranates, vines, and olives, with which the land of Canaan abounded.

And such as bear lemons, oranges, plums, pears, apples, cherries, etc.

Which produce fruit for the use, pleasure, and delight of man, and so a means of praising God.

And "cedars", the trees of the LORD which he hath planted.

Though they bear no fruit, yet were very useful in building, and were of great service in the temple at Jerusalem.

And which are put for all others of like usefulness, and minister just occasion of praise (see Psalm 96:12).

We seldom think of something as big as a mountain stopping to praise God.

We do know, that when the presence of God was on the mountain the mountain quaked.

Fruit trees bear fruit, because they are commanded of God to do so.

Even the cedar, which is thought to be the strongest tree in the forest, must praise its Creator.

Psalm 148:10 "Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:"

Wild and tame.

The beasts of the field, and the cattle on a thousand hills, which are all the Lord's.

Made, supported, and supplied by him.

He gives them their food and drink, which they wait for and receive from him.

And in their manner, praise him for the same.

And these are useful to men for labor or for food.

And therefore, should praise the LORD for them (see Isa. 43:20).

"Creeping things, and flying fowl":

Of "creeping things" some belong to the sea and others to the land (see Psalm 104:25).

And there is not the least creature on the sea or land, the meanest reptile or worthless worm, but is of such exquisite workmanship as gives praise and glory to the Creator.

And so does every fly and every insect, as well as "flying fowl" of the greatest size.

As the eagle, vulture, etc.

These, though they fly in the air, had their origin from the waters (Gen. 1:20).

This is just saying that even the animals that were thought to be ferocious on the earth, are part of God's creation and must praise Him, as well.

It may soar above the earth like a bird, but it cannot soar above God.

Psalm 148:11 Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:"

This would embrace all, as all are included in the idea of the rulers and the ruled.

"Princes, and all judges of the earth":

Those of exalted rank and those high in authority.

This is proper in itself considered, as they are people like other people.

And proper as an example to the rest.

None of any rank are exempt from the obligation to praise God; therefore none are cut off from the privilege.

The kings and judges of this earth who have much authority, will someday stand before the Judge of all the earth and be judged themselves.

They too, are part of God's creation and must praise Him.

They have been placed in a place of authority on the earth, because God ordained it.

They will be dealt with the same as the rest of God's creation.

Psalm 148:12 "Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:"

Those in the morning of life, just entering on their career or just forming their character.

With ardor, elasticity, cheerfulness and hope; let them consecrate all this to God.

Let all that there is in the buoyancy of their feelings, in the melody of their voices, and in their ardor and vigor, be employed in the praise and the service of God.

"Old men, and children":

Old men, with what remains of life.

And children, with all that there is of joyousness.

Let all unite in praising God.

Life, as it closes, life, as it begins, let it all be devoted to God.

There is no male or female with God, because He deals in the spirit and not in the flesh.

It is only in the flesh that we are male and female.

There is neither young or old with God either.

The time element in heaven is just one eternal day.

All of God's creation must praise Him.

Mankind who is made in God's image, should be even more apt to praise Him.

Christians even more than sons of men, should praise Him.

He is our Father, and we have been adopted into His family.

Verses 13-14:

Two reasons are given for earth's praise:

(1) His name alone is exalted in heaven (148:13); and

(2) He has exalted Israel on earth (148:14).

Psalm 148:13 "Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory [is] above the earth and heaven."

His nature and perfections, and celebrate the glory of them.

And his wonderful works, and the blessings of his goodness, both of providence and grace.

Even all the above creatures and things, celestial and terrestrial, for the following reasons.

"For his name alone is excellent":

The name of the LORD is himself, who is excellent in power, wisdom, goodness, truth, and also his faithfulness.

And in all other perfections of his nature.

His works, by which he is known, are excellent.

Both of nature and of grace, and proclaim his glory.

His Son, in whom his name is, and by whom he has manifested himself, he is very excellent as the cedars.

And so are all his precious names by which he is called.

And such is the Gospel, by which he is notified to the world.

Nay, the Lord's name is alone excellent.

All creature excellences are nothing in comparison of him, in heaven or in earth, those of angels and men.

And therefore, should be praised by all, and above all.

"His glory is above the earth and heaven":

There is the glory of celestial and terrestrial bodies, which differ.

The glory of the sun, moon, and stars, and of one star from another.

But the glory of the divine Being, the Creator of them, infinitely exceeds the glory of them all.

His glorious Majesty resides above heaven and earth.

The heaven is the throne He sits upon, and the earth the footstool he stands on.

And Christ, who is sometimes called his glory, and is the brightness of it (Psalm 63:2).

Is exalted above every name on earth, and is made higher than the heavens, and so is exalted above all blessing and praise (see Psalm 8:1).

Now we see another very good reason to praise Him.

LORD in this, is Jehovah.

There is none greater.

There is none even close to as good.

His glory exceeds all others in heaven, in earth, and under the earth.

If there is any other place that exists, He is above that, too.

He is God.

He is Highest Supreme God.

Psalm 148:14 "He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; [even] of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD."

“The horn”:

Refers in general to the strength and prosperity of the nation, which became the cause of praise for Israel.

This suggests that Israel will enjoy better times than in the past, e.g., during David’s and Solomon’s reigns or after returning from the Babylonian Captivity.

“A people near unto him”:

Compare also “My chosen people” (Isa. 43:20), and “His own possession” (Psalm 135:4).

Notice that we should not lift ourselves up, He lifts us up.

He lifted us up so high that we are His family.

The horn symbolizes strength; He is our strength.

The praise that we lift to Him should be continuous.

It should never end.

We of all of God's creation, are the most blessed.

He sent us a Deliverer, our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise Ye the LORD.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Spiritual Israel and Physical Israel Praise with all that is within you.

Psalm 148 Questions

1. Name some of the heavenly beings that should praise the LORD, as well.
2. What is one of the things the angels do in heaven?
3. In verse 3, what are to praise Him?
4. What are the sun and moon?
5. Who is the Light?
6. What is verse 4 speaking of?
7. Why should they praise Him?
8. Why do they stay in orbit?
9. When will the sun stop shining?
10. What kind of ministry does the devil have?
11. When did fire and hail fall to the earth together?
12. Vapor comes from _____, and snow comes from _____.
13. When did the mountain quake?
14. What causes a fruit tree to bear fruit?
15. What is thought to be the strongest tree in the forest?
16. Who will judge the kings and judges?
17. Why were they placed in high authority on earth?

18. There is no _____ or _____ with God.
19. Why is this so?
20. Why should mankind be more eager to praise Him?
21. He exalteth the _____ of His people.
22. How high has God lifted up the Christians?