

# “Praise Ye the LORD!”

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## Psalm 148

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### **Introduction:**

Hallelujah! We shout it out during worship.

Hallelujah! We sing as we raise our hands in holy surrender.

Hallelujah! We express with joy as our hearts cry out. But do we really know the significance of that “praise” word? Is it just something that rolls off the tongue out of habit during a celebration of praise or do we really realize that we are actually lifting with high exaltation; the highest praise, as some have called it, to the name of the LORD?

Hallelujah translated in the Hebrew tongue means to “Praise ye the LORD” or just “Praise the LORD.” In that, every time that word comes out of our mouth we are ascribing glory in the highest form to God Almighty.

The last five books of Psalms are what I like to call the Hallelujah Hymns. These psalms open and close with the command to “Praise ye the LORD;” or Hallelujah! Whether it is the soul of the psalmist that is commanded to praise God for the great things He does in Psalm 146 to an all-out instrumental ensemble celebrating His power in Psalm 150, no stone is left unturned in who or what in creation is to give God the praise: everything and everybody! “Let them praise the name of the LORD,” our lessons states, “for he commanded, and they were created,” (Psalm 148:5).

**Psalm 148:1-4 “Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.”**

In viewing creation as a whole the psalmist in this particular psalm itemizes the responsibility of praise according to different sectors or different parts of creation. If it were books or music we would label these differing sections as genres (they are all books or music, just different categories). The same with creation, they are all parts of creation just in different categories. With that, the psalmist looks into these varying sections or categories and gives the command and reason for one to **“Praise ye the LORD.”** Simply put, because He is the Creator of all.

**Please note:** The beginning and ending “Praise ye the LORD” this psalm opens and closes with, it has a period on the end. This statement tense is declaring as a command the edict to praise the LORD. It is not predicated on whether one wants to or not. The order is issued for all of creation to join the celebration of praise.

With seemingly eyes looking upward and thinking on the vastness of the universe, all that is in seen in the sky and even further than what the naked eye can take in, even venturing to think in terms of the supernatural realm, the psalmist demands praise to God **“from the heavens: praise him in the heights,”** (which are practically synonymous in meaning).

**“Praise him, all his angels: praise him, all his hosts.”** To me, it appears the psalmist is beginning at the highest or first order of creation and working his way down the line. **“Angels/hosts”** of heaven appears to have been created before any part of the physical order or things seen to us in this world, including humanity.

The command for the heavenly host to praise God is very similar to what David wrote in Psalm 103:20-21 to “bless the LORD, ye his angels . . . ye ministers of his.” Oh, what a sound that must be to hear the multitude of angelic voices

coming together in praise. Revelations peels back a remarkable number of “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,” (Revelation 5:11). The number simply can’t be calculated but there they are seen before the throne of God, raising their voices and joining together in worship.

Do you remember when they broke through the realm of this earth to sing their heavenly chorus at the birth of Christ (see Luke 2:13-14)? The songs may be different but the praise is still the same there. Nehemiah 9:6 declares, “Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; *and the host of heaven worshippeth thee,*” (emphasis mine).

**“Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.”** Moving from the supernatural beings of heavenly ministering spirits, the psalmists, while still keeping his view directed upward, now commands the cosmic portions of the universe to join in the celebration of praise.

I must admit I don’t know what their praise would like. I am assuming, as with other nonliving portions of creation, their praise is simply exalting Him in doing what He purposed and designed for them to do. Regardless, as elements of creation fashioned also with just a spoken word from God they too are commanded to praise.

Last week we touched on the vastness of just the “observable universe” and how many billions of galaxies there are, and how many billions of stars are in each galaxy. Be it what we call planets, sun, moon or stars; comets, meteors, asteroids – our closest neighboring planets or objects hundreds of light years away, all are created by God and all are commanded to praise. “The heavens declare his righteousness . . .” (Psalm 97:6).

**“Praise him ye heaven of heavens.”** As with all other aspects of creation, Deuteronomy 10:14 reminds us, “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD’s thy God . . .” Everything in the entire universe from God’s highest and holy place where He resides on the throne on down belongs to Him and

should worship with proper adoration. There is not a nook or cranny of any place where He does not have dominion. Therefore, praise is the appropriate response from the highest to the lowest.

**“And ye waters that be above the heavens”** refers to the atmospheric realm discussed in last week’s lesson. There I stated, *“In dealing with the story of creation Genesis 1:6-8 gives us a layout of the term **“waters.”** He created the “firmament” to separate the two waters that appear in those verses: waters above and waters beneath. It is upon the upper **“waters”** which we would think in terms of being above our current skyward view; more toward the atmospheric realm. This is what the psalmist was referring to.”*

Again, with no stone left unturned or leaving any order of creation out of the mix of things above and things below – everything is to honor God and bring glory to His name. “Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth . . .” (Isaiah 44:23).

**Psalm 148:5-6 “Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.”**

**“Let them praise the name of the LORD”** is also a phrase we will visit again in verse 13. The **“them”** in this verse is referencing back to all that was just discussed that are located in the heavens, both spiritual and natural.

God’s name is the highest name there is to be praised. **“LORD”** in all caps stands for Yahweh, the name Israel identified as the holiest of all in reference to the only true God alone. “Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore,” Psalm 113:2; see also Daniel 2:20). God is God, and His name is to be honored, adored, worshipped, and praised from all!

**“For he commanded, and they were created.”** The reason given in this verse is simply put: He is the one who **“commanded,”** referring to His speaking creation into existence in the book of Genesis – and, as a result of His works in speaking, **“they were created.”**

God is the reason they or any of us are here. Back then, now, and in the future; all that exist, existed, or ever will exist is because of God. “For in him we live, and move, and have our being . . .” (Acts 17:28). We, as well as those heavenly references in the above verses, are nothing in and of ourselves. When the sun rises it’s not because of its own power to rise, but because God created it to do what it does. The same is true for the angels that praise, the stars that twinkle, and us – all are here because we **“were created”** and called forth by God’s command.

**“He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.”** In the book of Job God asked, “Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?” (38:33). In Jeremiah it states, “Thus saith the LORD, which giveth light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night . . .” (31:35). God gave the command and they came forth (as stated above). The heavenly bodies and all creation are bound by the ordinances of God. He **“established”** them. He gave the **“decree”** and they all fall in line with those holy orders.

They exist because of Him (we’ve established this truth over and over again). They are upheld because of Him. They are sustained because He commanded it to be so and He does not take it back; it **“shall not pass.”** They shall remain where they are, fixed to fulfill their purpose as He instructed, **“for ever and ever.”**

**Psalm 148:7-12 “Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children.”**

**“Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps.”** Moving from commanding heavenly exaltations the psalmist brings his focus a little closer to home, down here where we currently reside on **“earth”** and commands the things therein to **“praise the LORD.”**

As with angels, sun, moon, stars, etc., everything on earth was created by God. As such, He deserves the exaltation of His name from them as well.

With that, the psalmist metaphorically dives into the waters of the **“deeps”** (ocean depths, if you will) and calls for praise from those dwelling therein: **“dragons,”** fish, and **“every living creature that moveth which the waters brought forth abundantly,”** (see Genesis 1:21; compare Isaiah 43:20). God is to receive glory from these as well.

**“Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word.”** Weather is something that has stumped mankind and brought fear and wonder to hearts through the course of life here on earth. Men and women gear up yearly to chase storms to gain a greater understanding of their workings. We test the seas, we test the air, we test all the ins and outs of weather – yet, all are already fully understood by God because they are created and commanded by Him as well. And, as all other aspects of creation, they too are called to praise.

Remember Jesus, as God’s Son and God incarnate, had no problem commanding and controlling the forces of nature that frighten man so (see Mark 4:39). Be it lightening (**fire**), **“hail; snow, and vapour”** or **“stormy wind”** (as shown in the above reference in Mark 4), all are here because of Him, all follow His will, and all are commanded to praise.

**“Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars.”** Do the **“mountains”** rise up and clap their hands with rejoicing? Do the **“trees”** lift voices to the sky and sing? No. God is most glorified; receives the most praise when what He created does what it was designed to do. Mountains may stand tall, but God stands higher and is worthy of praise.

Being under the Creator’s power, the Bible reminds us that all **“the earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein,”** (Psalm 24:1). As such, the strength of the mountains and the productivity of the trees, each in their own way, are commanded to give God praise. For, **“In his hands are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also,”** (Psalm 95:4).

Without God; without the Creator nothing that exists now would be here including objects as great as mountains. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God,” (Psalm 90:2); thus they recognize the need to praise.

**“Beasts, all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl.”** Every part of creation was designed to fulfill a God-ordained purpose. Even the animals and insects; whether they have two legs, four legs, or many more legs – or, no legs at all, there is not one living organism that is here without a purpose. When they rise up and fulfill God’s design for their lives, they are praising Him with their all.

The psalmist then moved his command to praise to the apex of God’s creation; the last item on God’s creation list: man. As a human race when we praise God we are recalling, recounting, and narrating back to Him His greatness. We are opening our mouths and our hearts to fall in line with one another in the telling of His wonderful attributes. When we praise we are glorifying God by declaring His sovereignty and awesomeness in our lives. Here, and in other areas of the Bible, we are to “Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious,” (Psalm 66:2).

Beginning with **“kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth,”** people who are considered the leaders and rulers of the world, are the first called to give God the praise.

Albert Schweitz is quoted as saying, “Example is leadership.” People follow more what you do than what you say, therefore anyone who mimics your actions does so because they saw it in you first; they saw your example. As leaders people look to them for demonstration. Those who hold high offices, make laws, and impact the land are to freely, and of their whole heart, praise God. When leaders submit their hearts to God it propels other to hopefully follow in their footsteps such as, **“young men, and maidens; old men, and children.”**

Worship is universal. There is not an age, sex, status, or ethnicity that is exempt from the duty to render honor to God through praise. As all creation joins together with joyful rejoicing, humanity is to join the chorus also.

**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.”**

Leaving the commonality of all people, the psalmist hones in on the **“children of Israel,”** as God’s chosen people.

Israel became the people they are because of their relationship with God. “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth,” (Deuteronomy 7:6). Due to their special relational position, God has **“exalteth the horn of his people.”** This could be a reference to a symbol of victory found in His people. He has lifted His people, and has been their source of strength (see Psalm 89:17). God not only strengthens them, He is the one that prospers and favors them, He is the one that has given His people power, and He is the one that has raised them up from obscurity to make them the nation they are.

If anybody should praise the LORD it is those who have been taken under His wing and called His chosen; those in covenant relationship with Him.

**Please note:** Although the above reference is geared toward the children of Israel, if you are in Christ you too are in a special relationship with God. You are now considered to be in the number of the saints of God.

**Conclusion:**

All creation – **“Praise ye the LORD!”**