



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

God’s Masterpiece

Central Truth: God’s masterpiece in creation merits praise.

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Topic: Creation; Praise: Of God.

Praise the Lord! That's what *hallelujah* means. It is a most fitting response to a view of God's work in our world. It opens and closes Psalm 148. We would agree with the sentiment with which the book of Psalms closes: *“Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD”* (Psalm 150:6).

Psalm 148 looks at the work of God in the created universe and calls for humanity to praise Him. God's work of creation is His masterpiece. It merits praise.

For the Bible doctrine of creation, look to Genesis 1 and 2. But understand that the Bible explanation of creation is religious, not scientific. It is not unscientific or anti-scientific; it is religious. That is to say, the Bible deals with creation from the standpoint of “who?” while science approaches it with the question of “how?” Genesis 1 refers to God as the Creator more than thirty times. But it does not explain to us how He did the creating. It simply says that He spoke and the creation came to be.

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3).

Look about you at the material universe, including your physical body, and praise the Lord!

I. PRAISE GOD IN HEAVEN (Psalm 148:1-6)

A. The agents of heavenly praise are manifold. Read the text and

make a list of those things which praise Him there. So the call is issued, *“Praise ye the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights”* (Psalm 148:1). Who praises Him there?

1. *“Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts”* (Psalm 148:2). Picture all the hosts of angels, so many that they could not be numbered, joined in unanimous praise of God. What a glorious thing! Isaiah saw the heavenly beings about the throne of God crying out, *“Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory”* (Isaiah 6:3). The Judean shepherds heard a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God in saying, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”* (Luke 2:14). The apostle John saw an angelic throng which numbered *“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing”* (Revelation 5:11, 12). Falling on their faces they ascribe *“blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might”* to God our Father (Revelation 7:12). What a worthy exercise for the angelic hosts!

2. *“Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light”* (Psalm 148:3). Even the inanimate objects which have no voice can praise their Creator. *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge”* (Psalm 19:1, 2). So the command goes forth, *“Sing, O ye heavens; . . . shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein”* (Isaiah 44:23). The revelation of God through nature is so great that people who reject Him are without excuse in their sin (Romans 1:20). Look at the heavenly bodies and the world about you, and your heart will rejoice in the Lord.

3. *“Praise him, . . . ye waters that be above the heavens”* (Psalm 148:4). Even the clouds in the sky praise God. Think of that when you look up at them! It was a pillar of cloud which guided Israel through the wilderness, to the praise of God (Exodus 19:9). Clouds of glory will attend the Lord Jesus when He returns (Revelation 1:7). The Bible says the clouds are as the dust of the Lord's feet as He walks through the heavens (Nahum 1:3). Look at their beauty, their turbulence, their rains, and rejoice in the Lord.

B. The reasons for heavenly praise are evident. Psalm 148:5, 6 gives two great reasons that nature should praise God.

1. *“Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created”* (Psalm 148:5). They owe their very existence to Him.

“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” (Nehemiah 9:6). Read Psalm 102:25-28 on your knees before God and worship the Creator.

2. *“He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass”* (Psalm 148:6). Not only did God create the world, but He also preserves it. Ancient Israel proclaimed, *“Thou preservest them all”* (Nehemiah 9:6). Early Christians believed, *“He is before all things, and by him all things consist”* (Colossians 1:17).

He who created and preserves all things deserves our praise. *“Praise ye the LORD”* (Psalm 148:1, 14).

II. PRAISE GOD ON EARTH (Psalm 148:7-12)

A. The agents to praise God on earth are manifold. Psalm 148:7-12 lists twenty-three different persons or things which are to praise God on earth. Look at that list; then join your name to it!

1. The weather praises God. Psalm 148:7, 8 mentions lightning, hail, snow, fog, and windstorms as praising God and fulfilling His word. He who has gathered the wind in His fists and bound up the waters in a garment (Proverbs 29:4) is worthy of praise. Even the winds and the waves obey Him (Mark 4:36-41). What praise that gives to our God!

2. The geography praises God. Psalm 147:7, 9 lists the deep places of the sea and the mountains and hills as giving praise to God. The psalmist spoke of the mountains skipping like rams and the little hills like lambs before the Lord (Psalm 114:4, 6). Of course, that is figurative language, but they might well respond with such delight before Him. Have you seen the grandeur of the mountains, or the beauty of a valley and marveled at the handiwork of God? So does the very topography of the land magnify the Creator.

3. The vegetation praises God. Psalm 148:9 speaks of *“fruitful trees, and all cedars”* showing forth the praise of God. So the prophet called, *“Break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein”* (Isaiah 44:23). *“The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands”* (Isaiah 55:12). Do you see the handiwork of God in the flowers and fruit of trees? That is how it praises God.

4. The animals and fowl praise God. *“Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl”* alike declare the majesty of Him who created them

(Psalm 148:10). They came from His hand (Genesis 1:21, 24) and it is natural that they show His glory in their living and dying. *“Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created”* (Revelation 4:11).

5. The people praise God. *“Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all the judges of the earth, both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven”* (Psalm 148:11-13). If any creature should praise the Lord, it should be those made in the image and likeness of God, should it not? That is you and I! Like a mirror reflects the image of your face, so should we reflect the glory of our wonderful Lord. *“Who shall not fear thee. O LORD, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy”* (Revelation 15:4).

B. The reasons to praise God on earth are manifold. Four reasons are given in Psalm 148:13, 14. Examine them.

1. God's name is a cause for praise. A “name” in the Bible is not simply the title by which one is called. One's name refers to his nature. To praise the name of the Lord is to praise Him for who He is, what He is like. Praise to the name (nature) of God is appropriate every waking moment (Psalm 113:3). His name (nature) is a safe refuge for the righteous (Proverbs 18:10). Praise His holy name!

2. God's glory is a cause for praise. *“His glory is above the earth and heaven”* (Psalm 148:13). Manifest in nature, it is shown to all the people of the earth (Psalm 19:1-6). One of the blessings of being Christians is that we are changed into the likeness of His glory as the Spirit of God works in us (II Corinthians 3:18). Think about that! We are being made like Him who is *“glorious in holiness”* (Exodus 15:11).

3. God's blessings are a cause for praise. God exalts the horn of His people (Psalm 148:14). That is a way of saying He provides, protects, and promotes the welfare of His saints. Can you number God's blessings on your life this very week? As Johnson Oatman, Jr. wrote, “Count your many blessings, name them one by one, / And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.” Count your blessings in view of James 1:17 and you will want to fall on your face before God in praise and thanks. Try it and see.

4. God's person is a cause for praise. Read Psalm 148:13, 14 again and make notes of what it says about God as a person.

a. He is LORD (verse 13). The use of solid capital letters in spelling LORD means that the reference is to God as Redeemer and Savior. Praise Him for His salvation.

b. He is glorious (verse 13). He is full of glory. There is no way that we

can add to His glory, but we can reflect it and praise Him thereby (Exodus 15:11).

c. He is helpful. He “exalteth the horn of his people” by lifting up those who need help. He guides them as a shepherd cares for his flock (Psalm 78:52). He deals lovingly and tenderly with us all (Isaiah 40:11).

d. He is near. He has chosen us as a special people because of our redemption in Jesus, His only begotten Son. He has chosen us to himself as His very own (Psalm 4:3), selecting us because of His love to us (Deuteronomy 7:7). We are never away from His presence (Hebrews 13:5, 6).

Do you feel your heart filling with praise to God? If so, express it. Praise God in private devotions (Daniel 2:23; Psalm 149:5). Praise God in public worship (Psalms 100:4; 107:32; 149:1; 150:1). Praise God at all times (Psalms 35:28; 119:164; Hebrews 13:15). Praise God in the presence of your children (Psalm 145:4). “*Praise ye the LORD*” (Psalm 148:1, 14). “*Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious*” (Psalm 66:2).

God said, “*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me*” (Psalm 50:23). And we respond, “*Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD*” (Psalm 150:6).

Stop now and praise the Lord as the Bible commands.

Questions

1. How is hallelujah related to praise?
2. How does Psalm 150:6 relate to this study?
3. How do angels praise God?
4. How do the heavenly bodies praise God?
5. How can people praise God?
6. Why should all creation praise God?
7. How can plants and animals praise God?
8. How can one praise the “name” of God?
9. How does Psalm 50:23 call you to praise God?
10. What can you do today as an act of praise to God?