

## **All Creation Praise The Lord Psalm 148**

**Introduction:** 1) Psalm 148 is a magnificent psalm of Creation that calls on the “Choir of Creation” to “praise the name of the Lord” (v. 5, 13) for His magnificent work of Creation. Concerning this psalm Charles Spurgeon writes, “The song is one and indivisible. It seems almost impossible to expound it in detail, for a living poem is not to be dissected verse by verse. It is a song of nature and of grace. As a flash of lightning flames through space, and enwraps both heaven and earth in one vestment of glory, so doth the adoration of the Lord of this Psalm light up all the universe and cause it to glow with a radiance of praise” (*TOD*, vol. 3, 437).

2) The psalm naturally divides into two even and equal parts. Verse 1-6 call on the heavens and all that are in them to “praise the Lord.” Verse 7-14 call on the earth and all that are in them to “praise the Lord.” The word “praise” (also “hallelujah” in verses 1 and 14) occurs 13 times in 14 verses. Those who rightly perceive the vastness and greatness of what God has made cannot help but join in singing of this majestic hymn.

### **I. Praise the Lord from the heavens      148:1-6**

That there is only one Creator God who reigns sovereignly over and outside his Creation is a theme that resonates from Genesis to Revelation. Genesis 1-2, Job 38-42 especially stand out, (see also Psalm 19) and our anonymous psalmist

follows the basic pattern and order of both. And, in the process, he raises and answers two questions concerning the praise that is rightly due the Lord.

1) Who Praises Him? 148:1-4

Psalms 146 -150 all begin the same way, “Hallelujah!” (*ESV*, “Praise the Lord”). Then the psalmist draws attention to who praises the Lord beginning in the highest possible realm, “the heavens...the heights” (v. 1). And who in the heavenly and stellar realms should praise the Lord? Everyone and everything! Animate and inanimate. Those who can give verbal expression, “His angels...His hosts,” should praise Him (v. 2). Those who cannot speak, but can still declare His praise by their beauty and design, should praise Him. This includes the “sun and moon ...all you shining stars” (v. 3). It includes “the highest heavens...you waters above the heavens” (v. 4). In context Kidner notes “*Highest heavens* is literally ‘heaven of heavens’, a similar superlative to ‘holy of holies’, ...the *waters above the heavens* are a poetic or popular term for the rain clouds; cf. Genesis 1:6-8 (Psalms 73-150, TOTC, 487-88). All of this echoes Psalm 19 and is a beautiful polemic to counter the pagan religions of the ancient world that defied creation worshiping the things of Creation rather than the Creator (cf. Rom 1:18ff). Allen Ross hits the nail on the head, “a fine piece

of craftsmanship brings glory to the one who made it. Each part of creation tells of the sovereign power and glory of the creator” (*Psalms*, vol. 3, 946).

2) Why Praise Him?            148:5-6

Verses 5-6 tells us why we should “praise the name of the Lord.” The answer is grounded in His powerful word. “He commanded, and they were created.” He spoke and it was done. But not only is He the Creator, He is the Sustainer. “He set them in position forever and ever.” He established them, fixed and placed them, causes them to stand and stay in place “forever and ever.” And, He is the Ruler. “He gave an order (ESV, “decree”) that will never pass away.” He sovereignly and providentially is in charge over all that He has made. John Piper makes a very helpful application of all of this at this point:

“[An] implication of the doctrine of creation is that everything that exists has a purpose, a goal, a reason for being. If God did not create the world then any man’s goal is as good as another. There are no absolutes and everything is aimless and absurd. The only meaning in life is what you arbitrarily create by doing your own thing. But if God did create the world then it has an absolute purpose and goal, for God is not whimsical or frivolous. Nor is his purpose ever in jeopardy for he says in “Isaiah 46:10, “My counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.” (John Piper, “He Commanded and They Were Created,” 10-4-81).

This is what God has done and is doing. This is why the heavens praise Him.

## **II. Praise the Lord from the earth 148:7-14**

Those on earth are now invited with those in heaven to join creation's choir. No one or thing is to be left out. Like verses 1-6, verses 7-14 raise and answer both the "who" question and the "why" question.

### 1) Who praises Him? 148:7-12

Those called to praise the Lord in these verses are representative of that which Yahweh has created in the earthly sphere (Ross, 947). "All sea monsters" (*ESV*, "you great sea creatures") and ocean deeps are called to praise the Lord (v. 7). Elements under God's control like "lightning and hail, snow and cloud, powerful winds that execute His commands (*ESV*, fulfill his word") are called to Praise the Lord (v. 8). "The mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars" are called to praise the Lord" (v. 9). "Wild animals and all cattle" (*ESV*, "Beasts and all livestock"), "creatures that crawl and flying birds" are likewise called upon to praise the Lord. But then in verses 11 and 12 there is a shift to the pinnacle of God's creation. Now those who bear His image, the divine imprint, are called to praise the Lord. Human beings of various types are called to join the angelic choir in heaven. This includes "kings of the earth and all peoples." This includes

“princes and all judges of the earth” (v. 11). The “young men as well as the young men, old and young together,” all are called to praise the Lord who brought them into existence. No thing is left out. No being is left out.

Angels in heaven and humans on earth unite in a chorus of praise to the great Creator God. Derek Kidner says its well, “Starting with the angelic host, and descending through the skies to the varied forms and creatures of earth, then summoning the family of man and finally the chosen people, the call to praise unites the whole creation. If any notion of a colourless or cloistered regime were associated with the name of God, this glimpse of His tireless creativity would be enough to dispel it” (487).

2) Why praise Him?            148:13-14

The reason for the praise of verses 7-12 is now given. All of creation is to “praise the name of the Lord.” Why? First, “for His name alone is exalted.” There is no God like our God. Second, “His majesty covers heaven and earth.” *The Message* says, “His radiance exceeds anything in earth and sky.” There is a splendor about our God that covers all of creation like a beautifully woven quilt. Third, “He has raised up a horn for his people” (v. 13). The horn is a symbol of power (cf. Rev. 5:6). Ross notes, “In many places it refers to kings who had power (see Ps. 78:6 and 132:17)” (948). In fact Psalm 132:17 says, “There I will make a horn grow for David.” Is there

a Davidic Messianic hint we should not pass over too quickly? If there is a missions impulse in verse 11, there may be a Messianic impulse here in verse 14. The horn of strength and power the Lord will raise up in Messiah Jesus is a horn of salvation all the earth is called upon to praise and exalt. Indeed the horn God has raised up for His people evokes “praise from all His godly ones” (*ESV*, “his saints”). Especially is this praise the appropriate response for “the people of Israel who are near to him” (*ESV*). Theirs is a particularly special and tender relationship. They, of all people, should praise the Lord and exalt His name of all that He has done to make them His covenant people. John Piper again puts it so very well:

“The foundation of all redemptive history is that God the Father, through the agency of his eternal Son created out of nothing all that is not God by his word of command, and by that same word he upholds all things so that the emergence of every new being is his peculiar creation. Therefore, God owns everything that exists. We and all our so-called possessions are his to do with as he pleases. What pleases him is the achievement of his ultimate purpose to fill the earth with his glory. Therefore, the all encompassing life-goal of every creature should be to display the value of God’s glory. But since we are helpless and absolutely dependent on God for everything, the only way this can be done is by becoming like little children who are not anxious for anything, but entrust their souls to the faithful creator (1 Peter 4:19).” (*Ibid*).

To this there is just one thing left to say: “Hallelujah!” Praise the Lord!”

## **Conclusion**

It is one of the most beautiful songs in our hymnal. It is anonymous, appearing “in 1796 in a collection put together for use in one of the charitable institutions of the day, the Foundling Hospital in London”, a home for abandoned children (Michael Wilcox, *The Message of Psalms 73-150*, BST, 282). Its inspiration clearly was Psalm 148. Its title:

“Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens, Adore Him.”

Praise the Lord! Ye heav’ns, adore Him; Praise Him, angels, in the height.

Sun and moon, rejoice before Him; Praise Him, all ye stars of light.

Praise the Lord! For He hath spoken; Worlds His mighty voice obeyed.

Law which never shall be broken For their guidance hath He made.

Praise the Lord! For He is glorious; Never shall His promise fail.

God hath made His saints victorious; Sin and death shall not prevail.

Praise the God of our salvation! Hosts on high, His power proclaim.

Heav’n and earth and all creation Laud and magnify His name.

Worship, honor, glory, blessing, Lord, we offer unto Thee.

Young and old, Thy praise expressing, In glad homage bend the knee.

All the saints in heav’n adore Thee; We would bow before Thy throne.

As Thine angels serve before Thee, So on earth Thy will be done.