

Creation Unites in Praise

By Don Green

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Bible Verse: Psalm 148
Preached on: Tuesday, August 9, 2022

Truth Community Church
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

Well, we come this evening to Psalm 148 as we near the end of this magnificent worship book in the Bible. Psalm 148. I'd like to read it as we begin and then we will go through it verse by verse as we love to do. Psalm 148,

1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! 2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! 3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! 4 Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created. 6 He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away. 7 Praise the LORD from the earth, Sea monsters and all deeps; 8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word; 9 Mountains and all hills; Fruit trees and all cedars; 10 Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and winged fowl; 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth; 12 Both young men and virgins; Old men and children. 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven. 14 And He has lifted up a horn for His people, Praise for all His godly ones; Even for the sons of Israel, a people near to Him. Praise the LORD!

Well, as we have seen the last five Psalms call us to praise the Lord in the climax and the ultimate finish of the entire Psalter. All of the Psalms are leading to this point. Psalms 1 through Psalms 145 all contribute a thread in the overall tapestry that leads us to this magnificent closing picture of all created united in praise of Yahweh. And so as we close the Psalter with these five Psalms, 146 through 150, the multiple Psalms with their multiple calls lead us and point us inexorably to the great, overarching theme that underlies all of the Psalms: to honor God, to praise Yahweh, or as it reads in the Hebrew, simply Hallelujah.

Commentator Derek Kidner has says this about Psalm 148. "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." This Psalm is unique in the way that it brings every aspect of creation under the call and the command to praise the Lord.

Now the word "praise" occurs 13 times in this Psalm, and interesting the word "all" occurs 10 times in this text, so you just get a sense just from the lexical use of terms in this Psalm, "all praise Yahweh," is the sense. And even in the structure of the Psalm, we're going to break it into two sections, the Psalm itself, by its structure comprehensively calls all of the universe to praise God. In verse 1 you read this, "Praise the LORD from the heavens." And so he looks, as it were, into the atmosphere, into the stratosphere and beyond into the observable universe and calls for praise to God from there, and then he details it individually in the verses that follow. In verse 7 you see the call going out to a different realm, a distinct realm when he says, "Praise the LORD from the earth." And so you see praise him from the heavens. praise him from the earth, even the introductory sections of the Psalm show how comprehensive this call to praise is.

And so the psalmist here, he's not designated, the Psalm is not named by its author. He calls heaven and all of its hosts to praise God for the fact that God appointed their existence, you might say, and then he calls the earth to praise God in response to his exalted name and for his blessing to his people. And once again, we find in this Psalm, as we found in the prior two and we'll see in the past two, all of the issues of life are laid aside. There are no complaints in these Psalms. There is no discussion of life circumstances in a negative sense. The focus is on God. The focus is on his character, on his works, on his goodness to his people, and it's a pure response to the person and the character of God.

And so let's look at it briefly here this evening. Our first section we could title: the praise in the heavens, the praise in the heavens as creation unites in praise. The call to praise in Psalm 148 begins in the heavens. Look at verse 1, "Praise the LORD!" Three words in English, one word in Hebrew, Hallelujah.

1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights!

And so the psalmist is looking up into the skies, as it were, and from a position of writing the word of God calls on creation from that perspective and summons everything in the sky to join in the praise to God. It's as if he personifies all of the heavenly host and calls upon them from that position of personification to join in the praise that is filling his heart as he writes this Psalm.

And so he looks into the sky, looks into the invisible realm even, you might say, and summons everyone to praise. Verse 2.

2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!

Hosts there being another term for angels, and they're all summoned to the great task of praise.

Now you know that in the world there is a corrupt tendency among men to have an undue fascination with angels, sometimes wanting to worship angels and spiritual beings and neglecting the fact that they are simply part of the created order rather, and not objects of worship. Even John in the book of Revelation wanted to fall down before an angel in worship and the angel told him, "No, don't do that. Praise God instead." But if you look over in the New Testament book of Colossians just to emphasize this point, Colossians 2. Scripture warns us in the negative sense about an undue fascination and veneration of angels. In Colossians 2:18 you read this speaking to people in the church, speaking to men, as it were, the Bible says, "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind."

A preoccupation with spiritual beings is not an evidence of biblical spirituality. Scripture teaches us about them, we're to learn what Scripture says, but our preoccupation, what gathers our fascination, what gathers us in as an object of praise is God, the uncreated Maker of heaven and earth, not the spiritual beings that he has made. The fascination years ago with Frank Peretti's books and, you know, and whatever the titles of those were, it was all badly misplaced, badly mistake. There's not to be this preoccupation with angels. What Psalm 148 does is it completely reverses that human propensity to look at angels as an object of veneration and fascination and says instead that angels should not receive worship but rather angels should actually join with men in giving praise to God. And so rather than angels being something that we look at to ascribe spiritual worth to, they are commanded by this Psalm to join in the praise of God.

Now as he goes on in verse 3, he personifies the heavenly bodies and calls them to join in the praise. Verse 3,

3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! 4 Praise Him,
highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens!

Now it's always fascinating to me to realize how Scripture in such a short summary, in just a few clauses, can repudiate and refute entire ways of thinking and entire worldviews. If you think about what verses 3 and 4 say, calling the sun and moon and the stars of light to praise God, it is saying that those heavenly beings are subject to the rule of God. They receive their existence from God. They are sustained in their course by God. God established them. God appointed them, appointed their circuits, and God is responsible for them staying and being suspended in the sky.

Well, what does that tell us? What does that say to us? This verse alone repudiates all forms of astrology which suggests that the stars somehow determine our destiny or direct our fate. No, they have no such power whatsoever. They are created bodies. They are subject to the rule of God and whatever their courses are, are determined by God and they have no effect whatsoever on the course of human life. And so in this call to praise, we are entering into that which does away with false religion, does away with false worldly philosophies, puts even spiritual beings into their place, and everything is slotted into its order that its purpose of existence is to give praise to God.

Now that gives you a sense of how lofty God must be. We look at the stars, we look at what the most recent telescopes can do peering into the outer reaches of the universe from our perspective and we are astonished at the magnitude and the glory of them all. Well, understand that we are looking at that which is simply a reflection of the greater Creator who put them into place and sustains them in their routes. And so look back at Psalm 19 for a moment and realize that these heavenly bodies, these heavenly beings, these spiritual beings, they are leading us not to themselves as objects of the affections of our heart, they were pointing beyond themselves to the one who made them. Psalm 19:1-2, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world." This is sufficient testimony to all men everywhere that there is a Creator God with eternal power, and that there is evidence that men should seek after this God even though that they routinely refuse it. They stubbornly refuse it, as Romans 1 says. Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened." The attributes of God, his eternal power, his eternal existence, his omnipotent rule, is displayed and diffused throughout all of creation, and that is sufficient cause for men to know of his existence and to respond to him and men's failure to honor him through what is seen is culpable enough to send them to hell. And conversely for the reader of Scripture, you see that their display of the glory of God is sufficient to cause us to praise him and to be beckoned to worship him and to be responsible for our response.

And so, you know, we take all of these things for granted, but every time we walk out under the display of the sun and a bright sun is shining, we walk out at night and the stars are displaying their glory and all points in between, there is this ongoing testimony from the heavens that beckons us to praise God, to acknowledge his existence and to give thanks to him, and so much is their glory revealing the greater glory of God that they themselves are called to contribute to his praise. And so we are living in an environment, we are living in a realm that Scripture says displays the glory of God and calls us to the worship of him.

Now, as you read on in verse 4, "Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens!" The waters that are above the heavens could be a reference to rain clouds. Some people speculate that perhaps it refers to water in deep space. that would account for ice on planets and comets. But whatever the case may be, there is this recognition of the elements of nature being diffused throughout all of creation, and even they are identified and singled out as being responsible and personified to come and join in the praise of God, this God who is the subject and the object of all 150 Psalms. And so it is just expansive in its call to praise.

Now look at the language there in verse 5 where it says,

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.

Look down at verse 13, you see that that's a little bit of a refrain, a refrain in this Psalm. Verse 5, "Let them praise the name of the LORD." Verse 13, "Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted." And so we praise God, as we've said in the past, we praise God by recognizing his attributes and in honoring him for that. We exalt him for his perfections and deeds. We recognize his greatness and we declare it, we affirm it, we submit to it, we join joyfully in acknowledging it and recognizing and declaring that, "God, You alone are the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and everything that is under Your gaze should join in returning thanks to You". We exalt him for his perfections which have no limits. The character of God, the existence of God is preexistent. He is uncreated. He has always existed, he will always exist, and he is unchanging in the entire course of human time.

And so we look at these things, we look at these immutable attributes of his. We look in the heavens and see the majesty of creation. We look around us and we see his works in providence. We look into the New Testament and we peer into the matchless glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, God in human flesh. We contemplate the glory of his humiliation coming from heaven to earth in order to give his life as a ransom for many. We look at the glory of his words and that authority which caused men who heard him speak say, "No man has ever spoken in this way." We look at his miracles. We look at his compassion on sinners. We look at his strength and courage and judgment on an apostate religious order of his day. We look at him going boldly and courageously to the cross. We look at him hanging on the cross bearing the weight of the sins of his people, and as he does, praying that God would forgive the ones who were unjustly crucifying him. We look at his glory as he commends his mother to the care of the Apostle John. We look at his glory as he looks to the thief on the cross and says, "This day you will be with Me in Paradise." We look on him as he is buried in the tomb and then three days later he comes out in resurrected glory, displaying that his sacrifice for sinners has been accepted, that he is Lord not only of life, not only of creation, but he is Lord over death, Lord of life. We see him ascending into heaven. We see as we read in Scripture that he is at the right hand of God eternally praying for his people and preserving us through his intercession on our behalf. We see his tender care of providence as he cares for the birds of the air, and numbers the hairs on our head and determines and directs the course of our day, and causes all things throughout all of the universe to work out according to his purposes, he directs them to accomplish his will, he causes all things to work together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose. He inspired the writers of Scripture to give us a perfect book, 66 books in the English Bible. He sent his Spirit to indwell us and his Spirit is now the down-payment that guarantees that we will receive the fullness of our salvation. He comforts us in our affliction. He looks upon the weak and the sorrowing and the grieving and he cares for them and he sympathizes with them. He stands next to the grieving believer at the graveside of a loved one and is there and comforts them with his promises and with his presence. He's there alongside the one ailing in a hospital bed, not having abandoned them. He's there with parents anxious over

the spiritual direction of their children. He's there alongside those who are praying and interceding for the people of God, for their spouse, for their children, for their parents, for other loved ones. He's next to the heart anxious for the salvation of that one that he's just witnessed too. He's next to the young man charting the course of his life. He's next to and loving the person lying on their deathbed anticipating an entrance into glory.

All of these things, beloved. So easy with just a basic familiarity with the Bible in the course of the life of Christ for us to just see that there is this endless scroll that we can just turn and see new displays of the glory of God in creation, in providence, in the church, in our salvation, in glory to come. All of it collectively surpassing our understanding in its display of the glory of God, each one individually being capable of fulfilling our mind with meditative for days on end, never to exalt it. Remembering the kindness that he showed to us in our salvation delivering you from your sin, delivering you from guilt, restoring you, renewing you, causing you to be born again, giving you a sense of the forgiveness of sin and making the word of God come alive to you. Don't you see, beloved? Don't you see that everywhere we look in the world around us there is a call and a beckoning to praise God? That every aspect of his work in your life as a believer is beckoning you to respond with praise, "O God, thank You for what You've done. Thank You for being with me even in this hardship. Thank You for loving me in Christ. Thank You for Your faithfulness. Thank You for Your glory, Your grace, Your goodness." Beloved, we have an infinite fountain from which to drink that would enable us and empower us to respond to this Psalm and to join in the praise that it calls us to. Review the scroll of things that we just considered and take your choice, take your pick and realize that right there you have that which is sufficient to beckon you to praise.

And so it's just so important, it's just so important for us to remember that we are to read this Psalm in light of the prior 147 that came before us. There is a cumulative impact beginning in Psalm 1 and going all the way to this climax, there is just, you could think about it that there is this great staircase leading us into the very throne room of heaven, step by step walking us up into the throne room so that we are on this exalted height peering, as it were, by faith into the glory of God and responding in praise to him. It's really breathtaking. It's just stunning in its magnificence so that there is rightly, as we're considering these things together, there's rightly a sense of a holy hush that falls upon us, recognizing that God through his word has brought us into a holy realm where his glory is on display, where earthly matters have been put into their place and set aside for a time and forgotten, and we are swept up in a contemplation of the glory of God, and all we can do is fall down in response and say, "O God, I worship You. O Christ, I honor You. I worship You. With Thomas I say, 'My Lord and my God!'" To the Spirit of God, we give him equal honor and equal reverence with the Father and with the Son. It's a Triune display of glory.

And, you know, beloved, one thing that I would say here at this point is that contemplating these things in a worshipful way is that which transforms us from glory to glory, that which conforms us to the image of Christ. It's contemplating these things, meditating on these things, these glories of God, these glories of Christ that as we peer by faith into the glory of Christ in this way, that is what transforms us into greater

conformity with his image. It's what the Apostle Paul referred to in 2 Corinthians 3:18, you don't need to turn there, but he said this, "we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." As we reverently peer into the glory of God in the contemplation of these things revealed in his word, as we respond in obedience to Scripture and worship him in response, and we acknowledge these things and we embrace them with our affections, that is the driving force in your sanctification. God conforms you to the image of Christ as you reverently behold his glory revealed in the word, give honor to him in response. God through the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart. conforms you and step by step makes you more like Christ. This is how we are conformed to the image of Christ. Not through obedience to external human rules but by beholding the glory of Christ revealed in the word and praising him in response to it.

It's magnificent. That is the power of Christ, the power of the word of God unleashed in your life is by contemplating it reverently, submissively. Worshipfully and saying, "Lord, I look at this call, 'Praise Him. Praise Him. Praise Him. Praise Him. Praise Him. Praise Him. Praise Him. Praise Him,' and Lord, my heart says, 'Yes. I agree. I embrace. I submit. I praise You. I need nothing else. I ask for no changes in circumstances. Lord, I praise You for who You are. I set aside my fears, my worries, my anxieties, Lord, and I just praise You. Lord, I contemplate the besetting sins in my life and I repent of them yet again, and I pray that You would cleanse my heart so that I could praise You more thoroughly in a more pure manner. I hold on to no sin. I hold on to no rebellion against You, Lord. I want to give myself as completely, fully and wholeheartedly to worshipping you in response to who You are. I want to join with the heavens, I want to join with the things on earth and simply praise You."

And so we just pause for a moment, we let all of that sink in and give our hearts time to respond thoughtfully and, as it were, to give your mind an opportunity to speak to your soul and say, "Yes, my soul, that is where you are to go." And let your mind and the intellectual comprehension you have of these things become the basis upon which you call upon your soul to respond in obedience and say, "Yes, soul, this is where you belong. This is your rest. This is your place of repose. This is your responsibility. This is where you, my heart, you, my soul," you speak to yourself in that way and call your own heart to praise.

The majesty of this is that the external created order is called to praise, heaven and earth, and now what's being addressed here is the inner man of the reader saying, "You join in on this praise." And what will you do with that? And so going back to verse 6, verses 5 and 6 we read,

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created. 6 He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.

God created all things, he assigned their position in the universe, he appointed their functions, he appointed their existence and for you and me he even appointed the day of

our birth and the day of our death. God has sovereignly appointed you for the life that he has given to you. He sovereignly directs all of the details of it in the process and spiritual growth is found and measured by your daily recognition of that, your daily embrace of that, your daily dependence on the God who gave you life, and your response of praise. You know, we have been profoundly blessed and I'm not talking at all about any of our external possessions or our relationships, or our health or anything like that. Contemplate the fact that a God like this created you, in Christ redeemed you, and that by his sovereign appointment you have an existence that he has given to you, you have a Christ that he has given to you, you have a place in heaven reserved for you, Peter says, and it's just overwhelming. We're brought back to Psalm 8, "God, what is man that You have regard for him? Who am I? Who am I, a mere creature of dust. Who am I, a sinful creature. Who am I, an often lukewarm, indifferent worshiper of You, that You have bestowed such grace, such eternal meaning on my existence, that You have blessed me in all of these ways and given me the capacity to not know You exhaustively but to know You truly and to join in all of creation in worshipping You?"

This is revolutionary to understanding our position and our existence in life. You just kind of want to just, we need like 150 corners in this room where we could all just go off into a different corner and just sit down and contemplate it. As we contemplate before we close this section on the heavens, giving praise to God, I just want to point you to a couple of passages in the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah that lend to this, to the significance of the praise of the heavens because in Jeremiah in particular, the fixed orbits of the heavenly bodies are a testimony to something else, they are a testimony to the faithfulness of God so that you could say that no one understands astronomy at all, no matter how deeply they've studied it or how deep their doctorates are in it until they understand that the purpose of those bodies that they observe and study are to give glory to their Creator. You don't understand the first thing about astronomy until you understand this. How can you understand a heavenly body unless you understand the purpose for which it exists and who put it there?

Jeremiah 31, verses 35 and 37, "Thus says the LORD," Jeremiah 31:35, "Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: 'If this fixed order departs From before Me,' declares the LORD, 'Then the offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever.' Thus says the LORD, 'If the heavens above can be measured And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done,' declares the LORD." If you can measure the span of the heavens, if you can measure the depths of the earth, then perhaps the Lord would consider abandoning his faithfulness to his covenant people. But since you can't do that, since the heavens are beyond that kind of measurement, then understand that the faithfulness of God to his people will never cease.

He makes a similar statement in chapter 33, verse 20 of Jeremiah. Verse 20, chapter 33, "Thus says the LORD, 'If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, then My covenant may

also be broken with David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me." God takes the heavens and says, "Measure My faithfulness to My people, measure My faithfulness to My promises by the certainty of the fixed nature of their orbits. And trust Me, praise Me, wait on Me." We look at these heavens, they are called to praise God, they reveal the faithfulness of God to us, and we praise in response to it. That's the praise in the heavens.

Go back now to Psalm 148 and we'll consider briefly the second section: the praise on earth. The praise on earth because as we look at verses 7 and 9, he now calls on the created order on earth to give praise to the Lord. Look at verses 7 through 9,

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, Sea monsters and all deeps; 8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word; 9 Mountains and all hills; Fruit trees and all cedars;

Giving praise to God.

Now in the first aspect, the first section of the Psalm, the praise from heaven, the praise started with conscious beings and then moved down into the inanimate or unconscious realm. So in verse 2 you see, "Praise Him all his angels. Praise Him all his hosts," conscious intelligent beings, and then moving into the inanimate aspects of creation, sun and moon, stars of the light. Here in verse 7 he starts with sea monsters in the deep, and then he addresses the inanimate creation and moves up to conscious being. He starts at the lower order of creation, in other words, in the opening part of this second section of the Psalm, he starts with the lower order of creation and moves up. In the first section, he started at the high end and moved down, as it were, from conscious intelligent beings down. Here he starts with the unconscious beings and moves up as we will see.

So this section starts low, raises to mankind generally, and then reaches its climax in those people who are in covenant relationship with God. And so he starts in the sea, verse 7, "Praise the LORD from the earth, Sea monsters and all deeps." He starts in the sea with brevity, and then he moves to the air, "Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word." From sea to the air and then to land itself, "Mountains and all hills; Fruit trees and all cedars." And so we see here, we see again, we get another display of the spectrum of the comprehensive nature of the call to praise. You look at the sea, you look at the air, you look at the land, everything in them, everything that populates those different realms on earth called to praise God, and we get a sense that God is sovereign over climate, sovereign over calamities because even weather events are personified and called to praise him.

And so Christians should be very careful about getting caught up in climate hysteria. God is directing it all. God is sovereign over it all. We should not be brought into the fearful realm of men when we see that Scripture tells us that God is sovereign over that with which they are trying to cause us to fear, and to fear and to control us and to take our

money in response. We should not be driven by that but rather finding our comfort, finding our grounds for praise in the fact that the sovereignty of God is displayed in the motions of the clouds, that the sovereignty of God is displayed in the morning sunrise and the evening sunset as he paints on the canvas of the skies with his inestimable power and beauty and creative might.

We sing a hymn that says, and this isn't in my notes, so I'm going by memory and that's always a little bit dangerous.

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green;
Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen."

You look at the sunrise, you look at the sunset, you look at them differently as a believer. You look at them differently through this perspective. This changes your entire perspective on life and every glimpse at the sky above becomes a conscious recognition of the glory of God being displayed before you.

He moves on from verse 9, he moves on to wild animals and domesticated ones. Verse 10,

10 Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and winged fowl;

So he goes from the elements of the landscape and the topography into the animals that move on it, and through all of this he is calling all of these elements, he's personifying these elements so that there would be nothing at all in all of creation that is excluded from the call. And really the extended sense of understanding this on a spiritual plane is that he's wanting us to see that in everything in creation is a display of the glory of God that causes us to praise him because ultimately the Psalm is directed to sentient thinking beings who have the capacity to understand and respond. These other elements are personified in order to expand the basis of our own praise.

And then he moves from animals and rises to the height of men from a human perspective. We saw the animals in verse 10, verse 11, he goes immediately to the highest men on earth. Verse 11,

11 Kings of the earth [you praise Him, in other words] and all peoples
[you praise Him]; Princes and all judges of the earth; 12 Both young men
and virgins; Old men and children.

I just get lost in the majesty of the word of God. I just get lost in the majesty, in the splendor of everything that it is saying and how far-reaching it is. If there are seven billion people on the earth today, every single one of them on all seven of the continents are beckoned and commanded by this Psalm to praise God. Believer and unbeliever alike received the same command. And whether you're old or young, whether you're a man or a

woman, a boy or a girl, everyone. The scope of this stretches around the entire sphere of the globe and calls everyone to praise but if we can somehow speak in these terms, it encircles the entire created universe and calls all of the universe to praise. Breathtaking. Every age, each sex, every social position from the highest to the lowest is under biblical obligation to praise him.

It reminds me of Psalm 100:1, "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth." And understand, beloved, that as we read these things, that even in the Old Testament Scriptures addressing man beyond the Jewish nation. This call goes out to all. This goes to Jew and Gentile alike. This eliminates the possibility of any other God having any competing existence. This call to worship the biblical God is a command for all men everywhere to leave their false religion and to bow in submission to the God of the Bible, which is another way of calling men to bow and submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, to repent and to receive him as Lord because he is the Creator of heaven and earth, Colossians 1, John 1, and many other places as well.

And so, as we've seen this comprehensive call, in verse 13, he summarizes the call to all of humanity, to all of those on earth and gives the reason why this praise must be ascribed to God. Verse 13,

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,

The "them" coming from the immediate context, kings of the earth, all peoples, princes, all judges of the earth, in other words, men of any rank, young men and virgins, old men and children. Providentially, it reminds me of Titus 2 which we've been studying on Sundays. Titus 2 addressing old men, young men, older women, younger women in the church, well, in a different realm, in a different way here you see once again all those different segments being addressed and called to the honor of God in obedience to him. They're all called. Let them, let them all praise the name of the Lord." And here's why,

For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven.

That word "exalted" means that the name of God, the character of God, a full understanding of his infinite eternal essence, it's exalted, meaning that it is out of our reach. We cannot fully comprehend the infinite greatness of God, it is simply too high for us. And yet we're called to praise him. We can praise him according to truth, even if we cannot do it exhaustively we can do it truly. God can be known truly even if he cannot be known exhaustively.

And so all creation, the things in heaven, all creation, the things in earth, must join in the effort because God is worthy of the praise of all of it. His splendor, beloved, his majesty, his glory, his greatness, is beyond the combined parts of his creation. You look at the fullness of all that we've considered here in these 14 verses and you add it all up and at its best, it still falls infinitely short of the glory of God because God is distinct from his creation, his existence is independent of his creation, and yet he is the author of creation and creation which owes its existence to him, owes its continual provision to him, the

only proper response is to praise him. And to refuse the call to praise is to commit a sin of unimaginable treachery and treason against our Maker. But the praise must be universal, because everything derives from him. The book of Acts 17 says, "In Him we live and move and have our being."

And so we are obligated to confess these truths, we are obligated to praise God in response just by being members of the human race. But he saves his climax for the very end of the Psalm. He concludes at the pinnacle, the people who should most be responsive and receptive to this call to praise, and he calls the people of God to praise him. Verse 14,

14 And He has lifted up a horn for His people, Praise for all His godly ones; Even for the sons of Israel, a people near to Him.

The horn was a symbol of strength and vigor. God gave strength and prosperity to the nation of Israel. Read the Old Testament, read the narrative history in Joshua and Judges in 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles. Read through that history and see God blessing and keeping his people even in their times of disobedience. See him responding to them in their times of repentance. And recognize that he is giving strength and prosperity to his chosen nation. They knew God not only as Creator but also as their Redeemer in the same way that you and I as Christians know God not only as our Maker, as the one who gave us life, but the one who has redeemed our souls, who has loved us and given himself up for us. And we, of all people, beloved, you and I as believers in Christ, in this call that goes out to all of the universe, that goes to the galaxies, that goes to the supernovas and beckons them to praise, that goes to the depths of the sea and the heights of the mountains and beckons them to praise, that looks at the clouds and the orbits in the sky and calls them to praise, of all of those exalted aspects of creation, beloved, what this Psalm is telling us as the people of God is that we should be at the front of all of them leading the parade because of the particular special mercy that he has shown to us in Christ. All rational beings should be ready to glorify him and his people, the redeemed who've been the personal objects of special electing redemptive love should be all the more ready to praise him. Leading the band, standing, as it were, on a platform before the universe lifting our hands and saying, "All sing. All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing. Hallelujah. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Beloved, look beyond yourself, look beyond life today, look up and see the majesty of God. Look to Christ, look to the cross and see it all personified in redemptive love and then bow your hearts low and praise the Lord.

Let's pray together.

Father such a magnificent theme for the unworthy minds of men to contemplate and the unworthy lips of men to speak, and yet, Father, here we are under divine call, divine obligation, Hallelujah, praise the Lord that this would be the call upon our hearts. O Father, may it be true and found of each one under the sound of my voice a tender, receptive, repentant, grateful, joyful heart joining with the heavens, joining with all

things on earth, joining with humanity, joining particularly with the people of God in fullness of heart with uplifted voices, with energy, with enthusiasm, with earnestness from the bottom of our heart, soul, strength and mind, responding to You, O Father, responding to You, O Christ, responding to You, O Holy Spirit, in unison crying out, "Praise the LORD!" In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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