

Psalm 113:1-9 From Sunrise to Sunset Falls Ch. AM 7/2/2023

This Psalm is the third in a trio that each begin with the words “Praise The LORD.” Psalm 111, Psalm 112, and Psalm 113 all begin with Praise, and they all begin with the Hebrew word Hallelujah!

For the yearly Passover celebrations for the worshippers always included a short run of Psalms from 113-118. By custom, Psalms 113 and 114 were sung first, then the Passover meal was celebrated, then they would sing four Psalms - 115, 116, 117, and 118. Because of this, we know that Jesus sang our Psalm 113 when He celebrated the Passover, and turned it into The Lord’s Supper! The salvation of God for His people began when He brought them up out of Egypt, and it has continued in Christ when God saved us from our sins, and has continued still, while salvation in Christ has spread to the nations through Christian missions.

The LORD calls all people to worship Him, and we gladly do so!

1. The LORD’s call for worshippers is timeless and limitless. (v.1-4)

The initial word Hallelujah, is the match that ignites the flame of worship.

Verse 1 continues as the priest who was leading the worship addressed all the people, “*O servants of The LORD,*” and calls upon everyone to praise God.

The phrase “*servants of The LORD*” is significant. This phrase was used in Leviticus 25:55, when God was referring to helping poor people come out of financial slavery to others. Later, the people of God came to be more frequently called the servants of The LORD after they returned home from exile. (see Ezra 5:11-12), “*We are servants of the God of heaven and earth...*”

The prophet Isaiah brought it even more into prominence for God’s people to be called God’s servants in the sections of Isaiah called “Servant Songs,” in chapters 42, 44, 49, 50, 52 and 53. The servant songs primarily pointed to the prophesied and coming Messiah, Christ Jesus. But what Isaiah showed was that being servants of The LORD included both suffering and praising, just like the Messiah Himself, the Suffering Servant who sings praise to God!

We even read word “servants” in the New Testament, such as Philippians 1:1, where we read, “*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus...*”

Back to Psalm 113, we see an emphasis on the name of the LORD. “*The name of the LORD*” occurs three times in the first 3 verses, here in verse 1, again in verse 2, and again in verse 3. Since God is consistent with His own prior actions, and since God is true to His own name, and since God calls us to praise His name, we see this call to praise His name as a significant and important response for us to have.

The call to praise is a command! We must praise! We are to praise God for what God has revealed about Himself. That is, that He is God, and He is The LORD, the mighty and faithful One who has shown Himself to be true to His own name. The God who promised restoration from captivity in Egypt, provided that

restoration! The God who promised a homecoming from being stuck in Babylon, provided that homecoming. The God who promised healing from the damage of our sins, has provided that healing. The temple in Jerusalem was the place where God was to be worshipped, but at the fall of Jerusalem, the temple had been destroyed. So now, in order for God to be faithful to His name and promises, God was ordering the re-erection of the temple, where the people could gather to meet with God and once again offer to Him praises due to His name.

Such a God deserves praise, and for how long? He deserves praise that is both now and forevermore. Perpetual praise! And should this praise for God be restricted to just God's nation? No, all nations should praise this God! God's praise should be universal to all people. Verse 3 puts it in the language of our everyday life, "*From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of The LORD is to be praised!*"

Since the word Hallelujah sparked the fire of worship, now the name of The LORD and His character, are the fuel to keep the fires of worship going!

Our author builds on all of that now by adding verse 4, where God's glory and transcendence are described in extreme words. God is supreme over all the earth. Verse 4 says, "*The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory is above the heavens!*"

God is above all nations, including Egypt. Yes, God was over Egypt, even at the very time when Egypt was holding God's people in slavery, and God was over Babylon, even while Babylon held God's people as prisoners in exile.

And furthermore, God's glory is above the heavens! That brings us to pt.2.

2. The LORD looks down from above the heavens. (v.5-6)

This Psalm is one of the best descriptions of God in just a few words in all of the Bible. Our God is the God of the heavens. Our God oversees the invisible sphere of the supernatural beings, and all who exist within that realm. Whatever glory those angels and any other beings there, God outshines them all.

SI – whenever I see a small child with a sparkler, saying, "Mommy, Mommy, look at my sparkler!" I think to myself, oh, child, do you realize what is soon coming above you? And then when I see the fireworks display, I think to myself, "oh, child of God, do you realize what is soon coming above you?"

God sits enthroned above as the sovereign king over all of the universe.

Please let your mind consider God Himself, as I read His Words revealing Himself to us verses 3-6, "*From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised! The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?*"

Who is like that? No one else is like Him. God is beyond compare.

Verse 5, “*Who is like the LORD our God.*” The uniqueness of God is not just in His high and mighty position and power. That is true of God, but that is not what is being emphasized again and again. What is being emphasized is that God is BOTH above the heavens, and nearby us.

Consider the NIV translation for verse 6, that God “...*stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?*” Who stoops to look at the heavens? Only our God!

The LORD our God stoops down to see You with eyes of grace and mercy!

When we are watching fireworks from below, God is watching them from above!

What does He see? He sees you.

He sees you in your suffering, and He sends you mercy and helpers.

He sees you in your sin, and He convicts, and drives you back to the cross.

He sees you in your worship, and He receives You because of Jesus’ cross and resurrection.

Isaiah 57:15, “*For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*”

He is high up, and also nearby. Bible scholars say that God is both transcendent and immanent. God is both above the heavens, and close to us. God is above the fireworks, and God is closer than the sparkler in your hand.

He could send fireballs, and your life is all over.

But He sends showers of blessings, and your life is all different.

3. The LORD lifts up those in need. (v.7-9)

Verses 7-9, “*He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with princes of His people. He gives the barren woman home, making her the joyous mother of children. Hallelujah! Praise the LORD!*”

The more we study the Bible, the more we see a pattern of how God deals with little people like us. God has a track record of ALWAYS helping the lowliest people, who are neglected by everyone else.

Consider back in the day of the judges, when Old Testament Hannah lived. I Samuel 2:8, “*He raises up the poor from the dust; He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world.*”

Remember Hannah’s suffering? In ancient times, a woman was regarded as a second-class citizen, as less important. And if that woman had no children, she was regarded as cursed by God for some hidden sin in her life. When God gave Hannah a child, it was seen by Hannah as God raising her within her social circles from the dust and from the ash heap, and made her sit in a seat of honor. She had a

seat next to the prince. She was favored among all the people. Why? Because she was favored by God. Just as God changed the life of one ancient woman, so God could change the national life of one ancient nation – His people Israel. Samuel came not just raising his mother from the dust, but giving honor to the country. Hannah whole-heartedly praised the LORD, and Hannah gave honor to the role of mother, when Hannah taught her son Samuel to whole-heartedly praise the LORD, and to serve the LORD, despite the evil priest nearby. The priest Eli falsely accused her of being drunk, but she was not. She was a woman overcome with prayer. She was overjoyed at being a mother. 1 Samuel 2:1, she did not say, My heart exults in my child, but rather, Hannah sang these words, “*My heart exults in the Lord...*” Just like our Psalm says in the final words, “*He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise The LORD!*”

Hannah needed her disgrace removed. God provided a baby. She praised the LORD in song! The Song of Hannah is quoted here in the Song of Psalm 113. The Song of Hannah became the Song of Mary. The Song of Mary was sung to Jesus, until Jesus sang it. The Song of Hannah, Mary, and Jesus, has become the Song of the church. The Lord Jesus’ death and resurrection fulfilled our need for rescue!

SI - There is a story of a tool company that manufactured drill bits. Faced with financial losses, company executives gathered to discuss the problem: a declining demand for drill bits. The CEO challenged his men: "How can we revive the bit market?" After an embarrassing silence, one member of the team dispelled the fog: "Sir, the market isn't for bits--its for holes!" They correctly saw the market was for holes, not drill bits.

God knows how sinners become worshippers. Worshippers are people who previously had a need, a need that God filled. If you are not worshipping God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, then you do not yet realize how God is the fulfillment of your deepest need.

Where is your need? Where is your pain? Where is your disappointment and anger? Maybe your body does not work right, or your car doesn't work right, and parts of your home don't work right, and your relationships aren't right, and your job is not right, and your neighbors are not right, and your extended family is not right, and your marriage is not right, and the world around you is not treating you right, and your prayer life is not right, and your attitude is not right. Your biggest need is for your sin to be forgiven, and this God does by the death of Christ for our sins.

Conclusion: three things to remember from Psalm 113.

1. Be careful to worship God, not your nation. In September, 1781, as the last delegates were signing the United States Constitution in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin pointed toward the sun carved into the back of the Convention president's chair. Observing that wood carvers had

found it difficult to distinguish in their art a rising sun from a setting sun, he went on to say: "I have often ... in the course of these meetings... looked at that sun carved into the chair behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting. But now at length I have the happiness to know it is a rising and not a setting sun." We are all blessed by the existence of the United States of America, and patriotism is encouraged. However, let me call on you as the people of God, that even if the nation sets and ends as we know it, we are called to worship God, not our nation. Same is true while the nation continues – be careful to worship God alone.

2. God forgives us. The name Micah means “Who is like the LORD our God?” What amazed Micah the most was that God forgives. Listen to Micah 7:18, “*Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgressions, for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*”

3. God knows our needs, and He provides. Jesus said in Luke 12:7, “*...even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.*” Paul wrote in Philippians 4:19, “*and my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*”

From sea to shining sea, we worship God, not our country.

From sunrise to sunset, this is the God who in compassion forgives our sins.

From the sunrise to the sunset of our lives, this God provides for our needs!

Hallelujah! We praise the LORD our God from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Isaiah 45:6, “*that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides Me; I am The LORD, and there is no other.*”