

Psalm 148

This psalm is paired with **Deuteronomy 32:44 - 34:12** - Moses blessing of the tribes and the death of Moses.

The condition reflected is a universe at rest and in peace under the sovereignty of King Messiah. All elements of nature and creation are called on to praise the Lord.

The same scene is on view in **Revelation 5:11-12** - "Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels and living creatures and elders encircling the throne, and their number was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands. In a loud voice they said: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!'"

Psalm 148:1-2 - "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."

The anthem of praise begins in the heights above the heavens by the angelic hosts (**Psalm 148:1-6**), is echoed by celestial thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, finally and to be answered from the earth below (**Psalm 148:7**).

Targum: "praise the Lord, ye holy creatures from heaven; praise him, all the hosts of angels on high"

- **Colossians 1:15-17** - "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

Psalm 148:3 - "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light."

These as well as the planets were worshipped as gods by the heathen, but are shown to be serving the Creator.

The sun, moon and stars praise the Lord by continuing to do what they were created to do - to be signs, and to provide light and heat and seasons.

Psalm 148:4 - "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens."

- **Deuteronomy 10:14** - "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S your God, the earth also, with all that is in it."

- **1 Kings 8:27** - "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"

"waters that be above the heavens" - The ancients called clouds "the celestial waters"

Targum: "ye waters, that by the Word (of the Lord) hang above the heavens"

The ancient cosmology was first the air, then above that clouds resting upon it, above that the heaven or sky containing the sun, moon and stars, above that a series of heavens, etc. until you reach God himself, who is above it all.

Also, a great reservoir of waters was supposed to exist above the 'firmament,' which was the source of rain (**Genesis 1:7**).

Psalm 148:5 - "Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created."

The Septuagint has, "He spake the word, and they were made."

Again emphasizing they are created and not gods. God is called "the Father of lights" meaning the heavenly or celestial lights (**James 1:17**).

- **Psalm 136:6-7** - "To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever"

Psalm 148:6 - "He has also established them for ever and ever: he has made a decree which shall not pass."

Rashi - He issued a decree: to them, that this one should serve by day and that one should serve by night.

"for ever and ever" = *olam* - eternity, the vanishing point,

The Earth Echoes the Praise

Psalm 148:7 - "Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:"

"dragons" = *tanniyn* - serpent, dragon, sea monster, crocodile, whale, leviathan

Even cruel and poisonous beasts - often portrayed as representing God's enemies, like Pharaoh or Babylon - are still mystically fulfilling God's plan.

- **Genesis 1:21** - "And God created great whales (*tanniyn*) and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind..."

Psalm 148:8 - "Fire, and hail; snow, and vapor; stormy wind fulfilling his word:"

Lightning and hail are naturally coupled, as hail most commonly falls in thunderstorms. Vapor is smoke.

These powerful natural elements were also considered to be gods by pagan peoples, or originating with gods (Baal the storm god, Thor god of thunder, Zeus casting lightning bolts, etc). Here they are creations praising their Creator.

Fire consumed Sodom and Gomorrah. Lightning and thunder accompanied the giving of the Law at Sinai. Hail fell as a plague on Egypt and later the Canaanites. The *tanniyn* swallowed Jonah. All were "fulfilling His word."

- **Matthew 8:27** - "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"

Psalm 148:9-10 - "Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: "

"creeping things" - again, even insects deemed unclean praise Him

- **Isaiah 43:20** - "The beast of the field shall honor me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen."

Psalm 148:11 - "Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:"

This psalm follows the creation account in **Genesis 1-2** - reframing it as each batch of created beings praises God. Here at the end, like in the Genesis account, man comes last as the 'crown of creation.' But humans can choose not to love and obey God.

- **Proverbs 29:2** - "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."

Not all rulers or judges are righteous and dispense justice. But still the obligation to do so is there, nevertheless. And God is sovereign over all:

- **Daniel 2:21** - "And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding"

- **Psalm 2:10-11** - "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

Psalm 148:12 - "Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:"

- **Matthew 19:14** - "Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

- **Matthew 21:15** - "Have you never read: 'From the mouths of children and infants You have ordained praise'?"

- **Acts 2:17-18** - "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

Psalm 148:13 - "Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven."

"his glory is above the earth and heaven" - This summarizes the call to praise from the heavenlies as well as those people and natural powers and creatures of earth below.

Psalm 148:14 - "He also exalts the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near to him. Praise you the LORD."

The "horn of His people" means the glory or power of His people. It also can refer to Christ Himself, with "horn" implying kingship, as it sometimes does in scripture.

- **Luke 1:68-69** - Zechariah's song: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and redeemed His people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David."

"the children of Israel, a people near to him" - This is the tie-in to Moses' blessing of the tribes in **Deuteronomy 32-33**. Having received those blessings, they in turn should praise Him.