

# PSALM 148

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 148

This psalm seems to have been written about the same time, and by the same person, as the preceding; even by the psalmist David, when he was in profound peace, and at rest from all his enemies; and the kingdom of Israel was in a well settled and prosperous condition, both with respect to things civil and ecclesiastical, as appears from (~~4814~~ Psalm 148:14). And as it may respect future time, the times of the Messiah, of whom David was a type, it will have its accomplishment in the latter day, when there will be just occasion for all creatures, in heaven and earth, to praise the Lord; and which the Evangelist John, in vision, saw and heard them doing, (~~4851~~ Revelation 5:11-13). Aben Ezra says, this psalm is exceeding glorious and excellent, and has deep secrets in it; in which the psalmist speaks of two worlds, the upper and the lower. As for the title of this psalm, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and Apollinarius, entitle it as the two preceding.

**Ver. 1.** *Praise ye the Lord*, etc.] Or, hallelujah: which, in some versions, and with some interpreters, is the title of the psalm; expressive of the subject matter of it, the praise of the Lord; and is an exhortation of all creatures to it;

*praise ye the Lord from the heavens*; that is, those that are of the heavens; let their praises of the Lord, of his perfections, works, and benefits, resound from thence; the angels of heaven particularly, who have their habitation and residence there, and sometimes descend from thence on special business, by the order and appointment of their great Creator and Master: so the Targum,

“praise the Lord, ye holy creatures from heaven.”

Though some take the phrase, “from heaven”, to be descriptive of the Lord, the object of praise, who is the Lord from heaven; the character of Christ, the second Adam, (~~4857~~ 1 Corinthians 15:47); who is from above; came down from heaven to do the will of God; and was in heaven, as to his divine Person, while here on earth in human nature, working out the

salvation of men; for which he justly deserves the praise of all in heaven and in earth. But as all creatures are distinguished in this psalm into celestial and terrestrial, called upon to praise the Lord; this seems to be the general character of the celestial ones, persons, bodies, and things; as the phrase “from the earth”, (<sup><BEB7></sup>Psalm 148:7), includes all in the terraqueous globe;

*praise him in the heights*; either in the highest heavens where he dwells, or with the highest notes of praise that can be raised; see (<sup><BEB6></sup>Psalm 149:6 <sup><BEB4></sup>Luke 2:14). The Targum is,

“praise him, all the hosts of angels on high:”

or the high hosts of angels: but these are particularly mentioned in (<sup><BEB2></sup>Psalm 148:2).

**Ver. 2.** *Praise ye him, all his angels*, etc.] The Targum adds, who minister before him: the ministering spirits, the angels of Jehovah, even of Christ, who are his creatures, and at his command; and whom he sends forth to minister to others, (<sup><S007></sup>Hebrews 1:7,14). And great numbers there are of them, thousands and tens of thousands, yea, an innumerable company; and all of them are under obligation to praise the Lord for their creation: for invisible spirits, as well as visible bodies, even the celestial thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, were created by him, by Christ, (<sup><S016></sup>Colossians 1:16). And for their preservation in their beings, and confirmation in that happy estate in which they were created; being chosen and secured in Christ, the head of all principality and power, and so stood while others fell: and also for the various excellent powers, and faculties and properties, they are endowed with; they excel in strength, are possessed of great agility and swiftness; have a large share of knowledge, of things natural, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelical; are perfectly holy, and without sin; and happy in the enjoyment of God, in whose presence they always are, and whose face they continually behold; and will ever remain in this state, being immaterial and immortal beings. And as praise is their duty, it is their work; in this they were employed at the creation of all things, then these sons of God and morning stars sang and shouted for joy; and at the incarnation of Christ, when they worshipped him; at the conversion of every sinner; and frequently join the church in this service, and will be concerned in it to all eternity: and when the psalmist calls upon them to engage in it, it does not suppose that they were deficient in it, or backward to it, or that he had any authority over them to require it of

them; but it shows his great desire that the Lord might be praised by the noblest creatures, and in the best manner that could be, and how much his heart was in this work; and he does it to stir up himself and others the more unto it, from this consideration; that if those heavenly creatures should praise the Lord, then much more such as he and others, who were so very unworthy of the divine favours, and so much beholden to the Lord for them;

*praise ye him, all his hosts*; meaning either the angels as before, sometimes called the hosts of heaven, and the heavenly host; there being armies and legions of them, and these encamping about the saints in a military way; (see <sup><12195></sup>2 Kings 19:35 <sup><10113></sup>Luke 2:13 <sup><10163></sup>Matthew 26:53 <sup><19847></sup>Psalms 34:7); or else the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, as follow, sometimes called the host of heaven; and who are represented as militant, (<sup><10001></sup>Genesis 2:1) (<sup><12103></sup>2 Kings 21:3 <sup><10151></sup>Judges 5:20).

**Ver. 3.** *Praise ye him, sun and moon*, etc.] The sun praises the Lord, the Creator of it, by doing the work constantly it is appointed to do; to rule by day, and give light and heat to the earth, and the inhabitants of it; and so is the cause of man's praising the Lord for the benefits they receive from it; for its enlightening, warming, and refreshing rays; and for the precious fruits brought forth by it and so the moon likewise doing its office, ruling by night, and reflecting the light of the sun upon the earth, and producing precious fruits, also praises its Maker, and is the occasion, of others praising him; (see <sup><19301></sup>Psalms 136:1,7-9) (<sup><16314></sup>Deuteronomy 33:14);

*praise him, all ye stars of light*; which are very beneficial in the night season, especially to mariners and travellers, and shed their benign influences upon the earth and things in it; which are a means of praising the Lord, and in their way they do it, (<sup><19301></sup>Psalms 136:1,9 <sup><14271></sup>Acts 27:20) (<sup><18383></sup>Job 38:31). The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read it, "stars and light", wrongly; the stars are luminous bodies, and shine in their own light<sup>f1966</sup>, though the moon with a borrowed light from the sun.

**Ver. 4.** *Praise him, ye heaven of heavens*, etc.] All the heavens, the airy and starry heavens; and the third heaven, the residence of God, angels and saints: these are made by the Lord, and declare the glory of his power, wisdom, and goodness, and show forth his handiwork, (<sup><19301></sup>Psalms 19:1). A voice was heard from heaven, praising Jehovah the Son, when on earth in our nature; a cloud of the lower heavens received him when he went from

hence, and in the clouds thereof he will come again: the highest heavens opened to receive him, and will retain him until the restitution of all things; and from hence he will descend to judge the world in righteousness, (<sup><41816></sup>Matthew 3:16 17:5 <sup><4000></sup>Acts 1:9 3:21 <sup><6007></sup>Revelation 1:7);

*and ye waters that [be] above the heavens*; divided by the firmament from the waters below; and are no other than the thick clouds, in which the waters are bound up, and not rent, but at the pleasure of God, (<sup><0000></sup>Genesis 1:7 <sup><830></sup>Job 26:9); so Seneca <sup>f1967</sup> calls the clouds the celestial waters. And these give men occasion to praise the Lord, that those vast bodies of water that are over their heads are not let down in such large quantities upon them as would destroy them; and that are carried about from place to place, and let down and gentle showers, to water and refresh the earth, and make it fruitful, so that it brings forth food for man and beast. The Targum is,

“ye waters, that by the Word (of the Lord) hang above the heavens;”

in which is displayed the glory of amazing power, wisdom, and goodness. The most ancient Syrians and Arabians were thoroughly persuaded, that beyond the bounds of the visible heavens there was a great sea, without any limits; which some <sup>f1968</sup> suppose to be the waters here meant.

**Ver. 5.** *Let them praise the name of the Lord*, etc.] Set forth the glory of the nature and perfections of God, and celebrate the praise of them; even all celestial creatures, the angels, the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars; the heavens, and the haven of heavens, and the waters above them; and that for the following reasons;

*for he commanded, and they were created*; they are all his creatures, and therefore should praise him: he is the “Father of spirits”, of angelic spirits, as well as the spirits of men; and the “Father of lights”, of all the luminaries of the heavens; and he has made the heavens themselves, and all their hosts, and the firmament dividing the waters above and below; and all this by an almighty “fiat”, at a word of command; he spoke, and they came into being at once, (<sup><820></sup>Hebrews 12:9) (<sup><5017></sup>James 1:17 <sup><4336></sup>Psalms 33:6,9).

**Ver. 6.** *He hath also stablished them for ever and ever*, etc.] The angels are made immortal, and shall never die; and they are confirmed in their state of happiness by Christ, and shall always continue in it; the hosts of heaven being created by him, consist in him, and will remain as long as the

world does; hence the duration and never-failing state of other things, even of good men and their felicity, are expressed by them; (see <sup><1972B></sup>Psalm 72:5,7 89:36,37);

*he hath made a decree which shall not pass*; concerning those creatures and their duration, which shall never pass away, or be frustrated or made void; but shall always continue and have its sure and certain effect; (see <sup><2615></sup>Jeremiah 31:35,36 33:25); and is true of every decree of God, which is eternal and not frustrable, and is always fulfilled, (<sup><2347></sup>Isaiah 14:27 25:1 46:10).

**Ver. 7.** *Praise the Lord from the earth*, etc.] Let his praise resound from all creatures on earth, and reach him in the highest heavens; this phrase comprehends all terrestrial beings afterwards particularly mentioned; all in the terraqueous globe, all that arise from it, are upon it, or within it;

*ye dragons, and all deeps*; either land dragons, or rather sea dragons, the water or sea being the proper place of them, (<sup><1949></sup>Psalm 44:19 74:13,14); these, as cruel, as poisonous, and pernicious as they are, are made to honour and praise the Lord, (<sup><2363></sup>Isaiah 43:20); and such as are mystically signified by, them, as Satan, tyrannical and persecuting princes, and antichristian ones, as Pharaoh king of Egypt, Rome Pagan and Papal; out of whom the Lord has or will get himself praise in the deliverance of his people from them, and in the destruction of them, and in the confessions they have been obliged to make of him, (<sup><6623></sup>Revelation 12:3,9,10,16,17 13:2 <sup><2371></sup>Isaiah 27:1 <sup><1196></sup>Exodus 9:16); these seem to be set in contrast with the angels. The word is used for the great whales the Lord made, which are thought to be the same with the “leviathan” of Job; of whom so many things are said, which declare the power and wisdom of God in the formation of it, (<sup><1002></sup>Genesis 1:21 <sup><1810></sup>Job 41:1), etc. and these may be put for the innumerable creatures in the sea, which in their way show forth the praise and glory of God, (<sup><1923></sup>Psalm 102:24-26); as “all deeps” do, deep waters, especially the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants of them; where the wonders of God are to be seen, and give occasion to those that go down to the sea in ships to praise his name, (<sup><1973></sup>Psalm 107:23,24).

**Ver. 8.** *Fire, and hail*, etc.] These, and what follow in this verse, are in the air, but are what are exhaled or drawn up from the earth or water; “fire” is lightning, which is very swift in its motion, and powerful in its effects; this is the fire which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain; which in Elijah’s time came down and destroyed the captains and

their fifties; and which attended the Lord's appearance on Mount Sinai; when "the voice of his thunder was in the heaven, the lightnings lightened the world, and the earth trembled and shook", (<sup>39718</sup>Psalm 77:18); and by which the power, majesty, and glory of God are greatly displayed; (see <sup>49218</sup>Psalm 29:3-9); "hail", which is water frozen in the air and congealed; this was one of the plagues of Egypt; and with hailstones many of the Canaanites were slain in the times of Joshua; and by these God has shown his power, and has got himself praise from his people by destroying their enemies, though they have blasphemed his name on account of them, as they will when the great hailstorm of all shall fall, (<sup>61621</sup>Revelation 16:21);

*snow, and vapour*; the former is a gift of God, and very beneficial to the earth, and the cause of praise and thankfulness to God; (see Gill on <sup>49716</sup>Psalm 147:16"); the word <sup>f1969</sup> for "vapour" signifies smoke, and is what rises out of the earth like smoke, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and is hot and dry, and forms lightnings and winds, and has its place among things that occasion praise;

*stormy wind fulfilling his word*; which is raised up by a word of his command; he creates it, brings it out of his treasures, holds it in his lists, and lets it go out at his pleasure to fulfil his will; either, as at some times in a way of mercy, as to dry up the waters of the flood, to make a way for Israel through the Red sea, to bring quails to them in the wilderness, and rain to the land of Israel in Ahab's time; and sometimes in a way of judgment, to drown Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, to break the ships of Tarshish, to fetch Jonah the disobedient prophet back, and to distress him afterwards; see (<sup>39475</sup>Psalm 107:25); to do all this is an argument of divine power, and a proof of deity, as it is of our Lord's, (<sup>41827</sup>Matthew 8:27). The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read it in the plural number, "which do his word"; referring it not to the stormy wind only, but to fire and hail, snow and vapour; but the Hebrew text restrains it to the stormy wind.

**Ver. 9.** *Mountains, and all hills*, etc.] Which are originally formed by the Lord, and set fast by his power and strength; these are the highest parts of the earth, and are very ornamental and useful; they include all in them and upon them, the trees and herbage that grow upon them, gold, silver, brass, and iron in them; all very beneficial to mankind, and afford matter of praise to God for them; (see <sup>28512</sup>Isaiah 55:12);

*fruitful trees, and all cedars*; trees bearing fruit are the fig trees, pomegranates, vines, and olives, with which the land of Canaan abounded; and such as bear lemons, oranges, plums, pears, apples, cherries, etc. which produce fruit for the use, pleasure, and delight of man, and so a means of praising God: and “cedars”, the trees of the Lord which he hath planted; though they bear no fruit, yet very useful in building, and were of great service in the temple at Jerusalem; and which are put for all others of like usefulness, and minister just occasion of praise; (see <sup><3962></sup>Psalm 96:12).

**Ver. 10.** *Beasts, and all cattle*, etc.] Wild and tame; the beasts of the field, and the cattle on a thousand hills, which are all the Lord’s, made, supported, and supplied by him; he gives them their food and drink, which they wait for and receive from him, and in their manner praise him for the same; and these are useful to men for labour or for food, and therefore should praise the Lord for them; (see <sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 43:20);

*creeping things, and flying fowl*: of “creeping things” some belong to the sea and others to the land; (see <sup><3945></sup>Psalm 104:25); and there is not the least creature on the sea or land, the meanest reptile or worthless worm, but is of such exquisite workmanship as gives praise and glory to the Creator; and so do every fly and every insect, as well as “flying fowl” of the greatest size, as the eagle, vulture, etc. these, though they fly in the air, had their original from the waters, (<sup><0000></sup>Genesis 1:20).

**Ver. 11.** *Kings of the earth, and all people*, etc.] The order of the creation is pretty much observed throughout the whole of this account; and as man was made last of all, so here he is called upon last to praise the Lord; and the chief among men are begun with, “the kings of the earth”, of the several nations of the earth divided into kingdoms, over which some are set as supreme: and these have reason to praise the Lord, who has raised them to such dignity, for promotion comes not by chance, but by the Lord, who sets up kings and puts them down at his pleasure; and also for those gifts bestowed upon them, qualifying them for government, for it is by him kings reign and princes decree justice; and likewise for the preservation of them, for it is he that gives salvation to kings, and continues them for usefulness, notwithstanding all plots and conspiracies against them, (<sup><3949></sup>Psalm 144:9,10); (see <sup><3976></sup>Psalm 75:6,7 <sup><0185></sup>Proverbs 8:15,16); “and all people”; their subjects, as they should submit unto them and pray for them, so should praise the Lord on their account, when they rule well, protect and defend them in their persons, property, and liberties, (<sup><0192></sup>Proverbs 29:2);

*princes, and all judges of the earth*: the sons of kings, princes of the blood, heirs of the crown; or nobles, ministers of state, counsellors, and, all subordinate magistrates, who are in high places of honour, profit, and trust, and so should praise the Lord, by whom they are brought to such honour; and when they fill up their places, and discharge their trust aright, the people have reason to be thankful for them; and especially for the “judges of the earth”, when they are men fearing God and hating covetousness, and impartially minister justice and judgment; (see <sup><4920></sup>Psalm 2:10,11).

**Ver. 12.** *Both young men, and maidens*, etc.] These should praise the Lord, the one for their strength, the other for their beauty; and both should remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and fear, serve, and worship him; so they will praise and glorify him, as did Obadiah, Josiah, Timothy, and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist;

*old men, and children*; the former have had a large experience of the providential goodness of God, and, if good men, of the grace of God, and are under great obligation to praise the Lord for all that he has done for them; for they have known him that is from the beginning, and have seen many of his wonderful works, which they should not forget to declare to their children, to the honour and glory of God; and even out of the mouth of “children”, of babes and sucklings, who have less knowledge, and less experience, God sometimes does ordain strength and perfect praise to himself; (see <sup><4902></sup>Psalm 8:2); compared with (<sup><4215></sup>Matthew 21:15,16).

**Ver. 13.** *Let them praise the name of the Lord*, His nature and perfections, and celebrate the glory of them; and his wonderful works, and the blessings of his goodness, both of providence and grace; even all the above creatures and things, celestial and terrestrial, for the following reasons;

*for his name alone is excellent*; the name of the Lord is himself, who is excellent in power, wisdom, goodness, truth, and faithfulness, and in all other perfections of his nature; his works, by which he is known, are excellent, both of nature and of grace, and proclaim his glory; his Son, in whom his name is, and by whom he has manifested himself, is excellent as the cedars; and so are all his precious names by which he is called; and such is the Gospel, by which he is notified to the world: nay, the Lord’s name is alone excellent; all creature excellencies are nothing in comparison of him, in heaven or in earth, those of angels and men; and therefore should be praised by all, and above all;



*his glory [is] above the earth and heaven*; there is the glory of celestial and terrestrial bodies, which differ; the glory of the sun, moon, and stars, and of one star from another; but the glory of the divine Being, the Creator of them, infinitely exceeds the glory of them all: his glorious Majesty resides above heaven and earth; the heaven is the throne he sits upon, and the earth the footstool he stands on; and Christ, who is sometimes called his glory, and is the brightness of it, (<sup><495D></sup>Psalm 63:2 <sup><800B></sup>Hebrews 1:3); is exalted above every name on earth, and is made higher than the heavens, and so is exalted above all blessing and praise; (see <sup><498E></sup>Psalm 8:1 <sup><460B></sup>Nehemiah 9:5).

**Ver. 14.** *He also exalteth the horn of his people*, etc.] Which is done when he increases their strength, their spiritual strength especially; makes them strong in the Lord, in his grace, and in the power of his might; when their dominion and authority is enlarged, and victory given over all their enemies; particularly when the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to them, and when they shall reign with Christ on earth; for this phrase denotes the honourable as well as the safe state of the people of God; the horn being an emblem of power, authority, and dominion, on; the Targum renders it, the glory of his people; (see <sup><495D></sup>Psalm 75:10). Some interpret this of Christ the Horn of David, the Horn of salvation, and the author of it, (<sup><4D27></sup>Psalm 132:17 <sup><4D69></sup>Luke 1:69); who is King over his people, as a horn signifies; and is the strength, safety, and security of them; has gotten them the victory over all their enemies, and is now exalted in heaven at the right hand of God, and that “for his people”<sup>f1970</sup>, as it may be rendered; he is both raised up and exalted for them;

*the praise of all his saints*; that is, the Lord is the object of the praise of all his saints, to whom he has showed favour and kindness, and on whom he has bestowed the blessings of his grace; it is matter of praise that they are saints, set apart by God the Father, sanctified by the blood of Christ, and by the Spirit of God; and that their horn is exalted, or they raised to dignity and honour; and that Christ is raised and lifted up as an horn for them, (<sup><40E3></sup>1 Corinthians 1:30,31 <sup><460B></sup>Revelation 1:5,6) (<sup><4D68></sup>Luke 1:68,69);

*[even] of the children of Israel*; not literal but spiritual Israel, such who are Israelites indeed, whether Jews or Gentiles;

*a people near unto him*; in respect of union, being one with him, in the bond of everlasting love; in respect of relation, being near akin, he their father, they his children, not by creation only, but by adopting grace; and Christ their near kinsman, nay, their father, brother, head, and husband; in

respect of access unto him, which they have through Christ, with boldness and confidence, being made nigh and brought near by the blood of Christ; in respect of communion and the enjoyment of his gracious presence; and in respect of inhabitation, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, dwelling in them, and making their abode with them: or, as it may be rendered, “the people of his near one”<sup>f1971</sup>; that is, of Christ, who is near to God his Father, is one with him, was with him from everlasting, was as one brought up with him, yea, lay in his bosom, drew nigh to him as the surety of his people, and offered himself a sacrifice to him as their Priest, and now is set down at his right hand as their King; and where he also appears for them, is their advocate, and ever lives to intercede for them;

*praise ye the Lord:* even all creatures, especially his saints, his people, the children of Israel, the last spoken of.