

“All Together Now...”
Songs of the Heart 7
Ps 148

A psalm of total praise

Ps 148 is the third of five “Hallelujah” psalms that finish off the book of Psalms.

“Hallelu” = “praise”

“yah” = a shortened version of “Yahweh,” the personal name of God, a word that Jews consider so holy they never speak it. Instead they substitute “The Lord” in its place; which is why we translate “hallelujah” as “praise the Lord.”

After the opening “Hallelujah,” the first seven lines all begin with the word “praise,” or “hallelu” in Hebrew.

Seven is symbolic in scripture of completeness and totality. The message of Psalm 148 is simple, “the purpose of everything is to give praise to God.”

Heavenly praise

The psalmist pulls in various sections of an “orchestra” to praise God; heavens, stars, angels, etc.

Because... *he commanded and they were created. 6 He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away.*

Earthly praise

After calling the heavenly creation into the orchestra, the psalmist turns his attention to the earthly section. *Praise the Lord from the earth,*

This isn't nature poetry. It doesn't see nature as divine or redemptive.

The psalms were written by people close to the earth, but who didn't worship it. They give us some good direction in how to value creation (because God made it) but not worship it, as some sections of the environmental movement do.

Know who you're praising

Most of creation praises God simply by being what they were created to be. But human beings are different.

1. We're the only part of God's earthly creation that has ever rebelled against him.
2. We're the only part of creation that is capable of conscious worship. So the psalmist makes it clear who it is that we're to praise.

Because of our rebellion against God, the earth is a place of competing claims for praise and worship. That's why the psalm says, *for his name alone is exalted*

We can't just praise any old idea of God, “God as you understand him/her/it/them to be.”

This is a very specific God that we worship.

- The God who created everything that exists.
- The God who revealed himself to Moses and the people of Israel in the exodus. (v14)
- The God who is revealed in Jesus, who came to live and die in our place that we might be restored to relationship with him.

No wonder the last word of the psalm is “Hallelujah!”