

Israel's Hymnal  
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### PSALM ONE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT

[Pss 148:1] Praise ye Jehovah. Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens: Praise him in the heights.  
 [Pss 148:2] Praise ye him, all his angels: Praise ye him, all his host.  
 [Pss 148:3] Praise ye him, sun and moon: Praise him, all ye stars of light.  
 [Pss 148:4] Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, And ye waters that are above the heavens.  
 [Pss 148:5] Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For he commanded, and they were created.  
 [Pss 148:6] He hath also established them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass away.  
 [Pss 148:7] Praise Jehovah from the earth, Ye sea-monsters, and all deeps.  
 [Pss 148:8] Fire and hail, snow and vapor; Stormy wind, fulfilling his word;  
 [Pss 148:9] Mountains and all hills; Fruitful trees and all cedars;  
 [Pss 148:10] Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying birds;  
 [Pss 148:11] Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth;  
 [Pss 148:12] Both young men and virgins; Old men and children:  
 [Pss 148:13] Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For his name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and the heavens.  
 [Pss 148:14] And he hath lifted up the horn of his people, The praise of all his saints; Even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye Jehovah.

### THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS OF THE UNIVERSE CELEBRATING MESSIAH'S CORONATION

- I. The exhortation to the heavenly host (vss. 1-6)
- II. The exhortation to the earthly host (vss. 7-12)
- III. The establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth (vss. 13, 14)

Psalm 148, like the two preceding and the two following it, begins with the word "Hallelujah." This is a note that is sounded throughout the Book of Psalms, as well as in many other portions of the Scriptures. The basic assumption underlying this exhortation is that God is very praiseworthy, and that we have occasion to render such adoration to Him.

The entire psalm is an exhortation to the beings throughout the entire universe to render praise and adoration to God for some great Blessing. What is that event? The last two verses of the psalm reveal it clearly:

Let them praise the name of Jehovah;  
 For his name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and the heavens.  
 And he hath lifted up the horn of his people, The praise of all his saints;  
 Even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him.  
 Praise ye Jehovah ( vss. 13,14).

According to this quotation the time here foreseen by the prophet is one in which God alone is exalted; in which His glory is placed above the earth and the heavens; in which the horn of His people is lifted up—the praise of all His saints; and in which Israel is brought near to God. When these statements are read in the light of parallel utterances from other psalms and the prophets, it is seen that the hymn writer was speaking of the great millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the glory of God encircles the earth as the waters cover the sea. With this key to the proper understanding of the psalm, let us now turn to the exhortation addressed to the heavenly host:

#### I. The exhortation to the heavenly host

Praise ye Jehovah.  
 Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens: Praise him in the heights.  
 Praise ye him, all his angels: Praise ye him, all his host.  
 Praise ye him, all his angels: Praise him, all ye stars of light.  
 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, And ye waters that are above the heavens.  
 Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For he commanded, and they were created.  
 He hath also established them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass away (vss. 1-6).

Following the word, hallelujah, is the exhortation, "Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens." This is a very unique statement and at first sounds rather strange. We know that "the heavens are the heavens of Jehovah; But the earth has he given to the children of men" (Ps. 115:16). Moreover, "Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Ps. 103:19). The great multitude of angels, who are the ministers of Jehovah, are round about His throne in the heavens of the heavens (Ps. 103:20; Dan. 7:9,10). In view of these facts the exhortation, "Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens," does not refer to the praise of Jehovah in the heavens, who is there seated upon His throne. Language like this would be inappropriate. But when we remember, as stated above, that the time here foreseen and the events for which praise is to be rendered to God are the millennial reign of our Lord and His sitting enthroned in Zion upon earth, we see that the expression is indeed the normal one. The psalmist in vision sees Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, seated upon His glorious throne in Jerusalem. (Cf. Jer. 3:16-18). He therefore looks to the heavens and calls upon the seraphim, the cherubim, and all ranks and orders of angels to burst forth into praise, from the heights above, of Israel's King, who begins His earthly reign in Zion. They thus are called upon to look down from the heaven of the heavens to Jehovah upon earth and to praise Him for what He has begun to do—to establish a reign of righteousness, justice, and a permanent peace. This thought is repeated in the parallel exhortation, "Praise him in the heights." Our writer sees these hosts in the heights of heaven and calls upon them to look at what is going on upon the earth and to praise Jehovah who has come to earth and who has introduced such a blessed

reign among men. That all of the created angels in the heavens are included in the exhortation is seen from verse 2. There will therefore swell, like the rolling of the sea billows, the praises of Jehovah when He thus inaugurates His earthly reign.

In verse 3 the psalmist personifies the sun, moon, and stars and calls upon them to render similar praise to Jehovah because of His having established His reign upon the earth. Of course, being inanimate objects, they cannot render vocal praise, but at that time they will be in such a condition that they will perfectly reflect glory upon Jehovah who, as we see from other passages, creates the heavens above anew and the earth anew.

Mention is made in verse 4 of the "heavens of heavens" and of the "waters that are above the heavens." The expression "heavens of heavens," is parallel in structure to the term, holy of holies, an expression that referred to the most holy place in the Tabernacle and also in the Temple at Jerusalem. The holy of holies was the most sacred place where the Shekinah of glory, the symbol of God's presence, resided. The word, heavens, indicates the great expanse of the universe; but the heavens of the heavens refers to what we usually call "the very presence of God." Thus the very heavens of the heavens are here personified and are called upon to render praise to Jehovah, as He begins His reign upon earth. Also the waters that are above the heavens are urged in like manner to render praise to Jehovah because of His marvelous reign. In Genesis, chapter 1, we are told that waters submerged the earth. On the second day of reconstruction part of these waters that were upon the earth were removed and placed above the expanse of heaven. This is a literal statement of an historical fact. There may be other waters, and doubtless are, in addition to these that were removed from the earth. We have every reason to believe that there were such waters in the heavens, and that they will likewise reflect glory and praise upon Jehovah as He reigns in Zion.

In verse 5 our hymn writer declares that God "commanded, and they were created." To what is reference here made? To all of the angelic hosts in the heavens? Or simply to the heavens of the heavens and the waters above the heavens? Or are all, both the intelligent beings and the material universe, included in this statement? It is difficult for us to say. I am inclined, however, to believe that he was speaking of the material universe, which Jehovah, who is reigning upon earth, created as is shown in John 1:1-4. They have their being solely because He brought them into existence. He at that time, who was rejected by His people when He came to earth the first time, will be enthroned in glory, reigning among His ancient people. The material universe is therefore called upon to break forth into praise and celebration that the long-rejected, despised Messiah has come unto His own.

According to verse 6 the material universe has been established forever and ever by "a decree which shall not pass away." If this passage were the only one which we had to consider, we would of necessity be forced to understand that the material universe is to remain always. But when we turn to Psalm 102:23-28, we see a contrast drawn between Messiah, the Creator of all things, and the visible creation. They are to be changed and pass away, but He is to remain forever and ever. The Lord Jesus in His Olivet Discourse declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Was Jesus mistaken? Absolutely not! His prediction will find fulfillment in the passing away of the material universe. But when will this occur? The answer is found in Revelation 20:11 "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." At the end of the Millennium, when the judgment of the great white throne is established, the material universe will pass out of existence. John said that the heavens and earth fled away, as he saw in vision, at that future time. They did not pass away into some corner of the universe where they will be

relegated to oblivion throughout eternity. No. *They pass away and there is found no place for them—they pass out of existence.* Then God creates the eternal heavens and the eternal earth which will last forever and ever.

Let no one conclude that there is a contradiction between the psalmist's statement concerning the material universe and its abiding forever and the statements of our Lord and of John concerning their passing away. As I showed in my exposition of Psalm 145 (Biblical Research Monthly, Sept., 1946) the word and phrases in the original rendered "for ever" or "for ever and ever" do not connote what the English term "forever" signifies. These mean *perpetuity, continuity*. If there are no limits placed by the context or by parallel passages, we are to understand that the thing about which the affirmation is made is to continue without limitation, and that it means *forever* in the English sense of the term. But when there are limitations in the immediate context, or in parallel passages, then we must recognize said limits and understand the term or terms accordingly. Since other passages tell us that this material universe is not to remain forever but is to pass away, we are to understand that this set up which will be established upon this earth when Messiah returns will continue on without any interruption until He will have completed His reign upon the earth, at the conclusion of which, as we learn from New Testament passages, the material universe will pass away and will give place to the new one which God will create and which will exist forever and ever.

## II. The exhortation to the earthly host

Praise Jehovah from the earth, Ye sea-monsters, and all deeps:  
 Fire and hail, snow and vapor; Stormy wind, fulfilling his word;  
 Mountains and all hills; Fruitful trees and all cedars;  
 Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying birds;  
 Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth;  
 Both young men and virgins; Old men and children: (vss. 7-12).

The psalmist, turning from the heavens and their hosts, looks upon the entire world and the fullness thereof, calling upon them likewise to render praise to Jehovah, who has come as King to establish His reign of righteousness upon the earth.

In verse 7 he addresses "sea-monsters and all deeps," calling upon them to render praise to God. Of course marine life as a whole is included in this exhortation and is addressed as if it were human, capable of rendering praise to the Lord. In verse 8 "fire and hail, snow and vapor" are likewise addressed, being thus personified, and are urged to render this universal adoration to Messiah for His glorious reign. The psalmist then addresses the "stormy wind, fulfilling his word." God has His way in the storm and in the whirlwind. They are but the servants of the Almighty in the carrying out of His beneficent plans and purposes for the world: "Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear *the guilty*: Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet" (Nahum 1:3).

*God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm.  
His voice sublime is heard afar; In distant peals it dies;  
He yokes the whirlwind to His car, And sweeps the howling skies.*

God works everything together for the good of those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose.

"Mountains and all hills: Fruitful trees and all cedars" are called upon (vs. 9) to join in the universal ascription of praise to Messiah. "Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying birds" are also exhorted to join in with this praise of triumph in celebration of Messiah's reign.

"Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth" are next invited to join in this chorus of exaltation. Together with the mighty ones of earth, "young men and virgins; Old men and children" are urged to come and render their praise and adoration to earth's illustrious King.

The Apostle Paul, In Philippians 2:9-11 was given a glimpse of this period when universal ascription of praise will be rendered to Messiah: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth and *things* under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. "According to the inspired Apostle every intelligent creature in the heavens above, on the earth beneath, and underneath the earth will bow the knee and will confess with the tongue that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This passage includes all angels, cherubim, and seraphim in the heavens; all the saved, whether in heaven or upon the earth; all the lost, who at that time will be in Hades; and Satan and all his hosts. Thus all intelligent beings will see facts and truths as they are and will confess that God is a righteous, just, and true Sovereign, that He was holy and righteous in creating spirits and men with the power of free choice, and that the redemption which the Lord Jesus Christ purchased for all who believe is absolutely in keeping with the principles of righteousness, justice, and truth; and that the condemnation of all who reject the mercy extended to them through our Lord Jesus is just and righteous—hence all are to the glory of God through our Lord Jesus. Obviously the devil and his cohorts and all the lost will *voluntarily* admit that the plan of the ages which find its fulfillment in the redemption wrought by Christ and in His exaltation are to God's praise and glory. When we interpret our psalm at its face value and in the light of related passages and compare Paul's statement in the Philippians Letter with it, we see that both were talking about the same thing—the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ here upon earth as Lord of lords and King of kings, after His long period of being dishonored and rejected.

### III. The establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth

Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For his name alone is exalted;  
His glory is above the earth and the heavens.  
And he hath lifted up the horn of his people, The praise of all his saints;  
Even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him.  
Praise ye Jehovah (vss. 13,14).

In these concluding verses the psalmist addresses both the heavens with their hosts of intelligent beings and the earth with its teeming population, urging them to join in with his ascription of praise to "the name of Jehovah; For his name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and the heavens." The "name of Jehovah" in many passages of the Old Testament is equivalent to Jehovah himself. That our passage has this connotation is clear from the fact that it is His name that is exalted. In the honoring of His name Jehovah himself is exalted. "His glory is above the earth and the heavens." This expression can be taken literally, indicating that His glory is emblazoned above the earth and the heavens. Everything will be scintillating with the radiance of His glory. In other words, for the first time in all the millenniums of the earth's existence created beings will be able to see the reflection of His glory throughout the material universe. God hides Himself behind the clouds of darkness (Ps. 97:2) and robes Himself in garments of light (Ps. 104:2). Thus His creatures have been unable to see the wonderful manifestation of His glorious being. But when the time arrives here foreseen by the prophet, then the glory of God, the Messiah, will be reflected above the earth and throughout the whole universe.

Not only are the thoughts just expressed set forth in these words, but also the idea that Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ alone, during that wonderful era will be exalted. Should I speak figuratively, and yet reverently, in this connection, I would say that the idea is that the spotlight is focused upon Him. He, the long-rejected King of Israel, will be occupying the central position on the stage of the universe, and the white light of the glory of the Eternal Being will be shining upon Him.

What a contrast to the history of the Messiah for the last twenty centuries! He came to earth, but His own did not receive Him; only a few, comparatively speaking, did accept Him. But He has been in rejection and in humiliation from the time of His coming until the present. He will still be relegated to a place of insignificance until the day of which the psalmist is speaking. Then He will be the center of attraction for the entire universe of intelligent beings. He will be exalted to the highest position of glory and power.

At that time God the Father will have "lifted up the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; Even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him." The word "horn" when it is used symbolically, as is evident in this connection, always signifies either power in the abstract sense of the term, or a king. In this context it cannot be the former, but the latter only. This horn of His people can only be the Messiah himself. At that time He will be the praise of all His saints. The psalmist here is speaking of the same subject mentioned in Psalm 110:2,3:

"Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.  
Thy people offer themselves willingly In the day of thy power, in holy array:  
Out of the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of thy youth."

Messiah's people will offer themselves most willingly in the day of His power. He will be the object of all their praise. The people of Israel, whom God created for His own glory, will then be placed in their rightful position among the nations. At the present time she is the tail of the nations, as Moses stated in Deuteronomy, chapter 32; but when this vision is fulfilled, she will be the nearest to the Messiah himself— "a people near unto him."

Messiah will reign in Mount Zion, which will at that time be the joy of the whole earth. Israel will be the head of the nations. This people will be the priestly race. She will attend to all spiritual matters throughout the Messiah's glorious reign, such as the Temple service at Jerusalem and the proclamation of the Word

of God to the teeming millions of earth's population of that era. Glorious things are foretold for suffering Israel.

On the other hand, the believers of the present age, both Jews and Gentiles, will have their spiritual bodies and will be reigning with Christ for a thousand years. Thus there will be glory enough for all. Great things are in store for those who know and who love the Lord Jesus Christ. With this vision before us, let us exclaim, as did the psalmist, in the last line of his psalm, "Hallelujah." —*Praise ye Jehovah!*