

The theme of this psalm is “Praise the LORD” and the psalmist urges all of the LORD’s creation to praise their creator. In vs. 1-6 he calls on the heavenly creation to bring glory to the LORD, and in vs. 5-6 he gives us the reasons why the LORD is worthy of such praise. Then in vs. 7-14 the psalmist calls on the earthly creation to give glory to the LORD and supplies more reasons in vs. 13-14.

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1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

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Verses 1-6 call on the heavenly creation to praise the LORD.

**“Praise ye the LORD”** – The psalmist begins and ends this psalm with a statement that expresses its theme.

**“Praise ye the LORD from the heavens”** – The psalmist then turns to the first place where praise should come from. “The heavens” refers to the sky, outer space, and the abode of God. Everyone and everything occupying these regions should praise the LORD.

**“praise him in the heights [elevated places]”** – Using the Hebrew poetic tool of parallelism, the psalmist again calls on the heavens to praise the LORD by referring to that which is elevated above the earth (the heavens). Even the most elevated places in heaven (in glory, power and authority) should give praise to the LORD, because He is superior to all of them.

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2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

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**“Praise ye him, all his angels”** – The occupants of heaven, with all their power and glory, are still created beings and pale in comparison to the power and glory of the LORD. They owe praise to their creator.

**“praise ye him, all his hosts [an army; large assembly]”** – The word “hosts” refers to the angels in another example Hebrew poetic parallelism.

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3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

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The psalmist now calls on the heavenly bodies that the LORD has created to praise the LORD. Some cultures worship these things but the psalmist recognizes them as merely objects created by the LORD that bring Him glory. **Psa. 19:1** “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*” These objects have no verbal ability to praise God but mankind ought to recognize these things as evidence that an Almighty God had to be responsible for their existence. Only the rebellious heart of man can reject the truth that these things bring glory to their Creator.

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4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

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**“Praise him, ye heavens of heavens”** – The “heavens of heavens” may refer to the heaven that is above all other heavens: the abode of the LORD. Alternatively it may refer to the highest regions of the physical heavens. We must remember that in ancient times the distinction between earth’s atmosphere and outer space was unknown to men. When looking up into the sky, men could see birds, clouds and the heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars, etc.). They could discern the relative heights of these things (the sun, moon and stars were obviously above the clouds, and the clouds were above where the birds could fly), but they did not comprehend the distances between these heavenly objects. The “heavens of heavens” could refer to the area of the heavens where the clouds or the sun, moon and stars resided.

**“and ye waters that be above the heavens”** – This apparently refers to the water mentioned in **Gen. 1:7** (“*And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so*”). Some commentators believe that the psalmist is referring to the clouds, the source of water falling to earth as rain. The earth’s ecological system brings glory to the LORD since it was His design.

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5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. 6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

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**“Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created”** – The psalmist collectively urges everything that he’s mentioned so far (the heavenly creation) to praise the LORD and he gives them a compelling reason: the LORD is their Creator. He gave the command for each thing to be created (see the repeated commands of “let there be” in Gen. 1) and then they came into being.

**“He hath also stablished [to set up; to cause to stand firm; to appoint; ordain] them for ever and ever”** – The phrase “for ever and ever” points to the permanency of the heavenly creation. The psalmist didn’t have the benefit of being able to read 2 Peter 3:10 and Rev. 21:1, which tells us that the LORD is going to replace the current physical creation with a new heavens and earth that will be untainted by sin. The heavenly abode of God is eternal and, as far as the psalmist could tell, the physical creation was eternal since it had been here long before he was born and would be here long after he died. The point being made is that God has established His creation to remain until He is ready to remove it. No human, angel, demon, or laws of physics can change that because the LORD is sovereign over His creation.

**“he hath made a decree which shall not pass”** – The LORD has decreed that the creation will last until the time He has appointed for it to be replaced. Until then, it will not pass away or cease to exist.

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7 Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

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Verses 7-14 call on the earthly creation to praise the LORD. This verse calls on the “deeps” (the abyss; the depths of the sea) to praise the LORD. The psalmist calls on the “dragons” (sea creatures; sea monsters) to also praise the LORD. Even these creatures from the depths of the sea which man fears must submit themselves to the LORD in obedience and give Him glory and praise. The LORD asked Job if he could subdue “leviathan,” a sea creature feared by men but was easily subdued by the LORD (Job 41).

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8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

**“Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind”** – The psalmist mentions various features of the weather. “Fire” likely refers to lightning, as it does in other scriptures. The LORD has used hail in judgment against Israel’s enemies. Fire (lightning) and hail seem to reflect summertime weather while snow and “vapour” tend to come from winter weather. “Vapour” may refer to fog, clouds, or perhaps the mist rising up when the sun hits a body of water on a cold winter morning. “Stormy wind” could refer to tornadoes, hurricanes and other severe storms. These weather examples are things over which man has little or no control.

**“fulfilling his word”** – However, the weather operates in obedience to the LORD’s commands. It operates the way He designed and He has the power to intervene as He sees fit. The weather praises the LORD because of how it obeys His word.

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

**“Mountains, and all hills”** – The psalmist turns his call to praise the LORD to the geological features of the earth. He chooses mountains and all hills to represent these geologic features of the earth, perhaps because they are elevated above the other geologic features of the earth.

**“fruitful trees, and all cedars”** – The psalmist chooses the more beneficial and majestic examples of plant life that God has created to represent the botanical features of the LORD’s creation.

**“Beasts [wild animals], and all cattle [livestock]”** – The psalmist addresses all of the animal kingdom that walks on the earth, both wild and domesticated.

**“creeping things, and flying fowl”** – “Creeping things” likely refers to insects and perhaps small creatures such as lizards, snakes, salamanders, etc. that crawl on the ground. Finally the psalmist includes the birds that fly above the earth to cover all the land creatures that the LORD has created.

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11 Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: 12 Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

The psalmist now moves to the human race, including all from the greatest to the least.

**“Kings of the earth, and all people”** – He includes the leaders of nations and the people that they rule over.

**“princes, and all judges of the earth”** – The princes serve under the king and help administer the affairs of the kingdom. The judges serve under the princes and help enforce the laws of the kingdom.

**“Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children”** – The psalmist includes the entire human race, whether they be male or female, young or old.

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

**“Let them praise the name of the LORD”** – The psalmist summarizes the earthly creation that he’s mentioned in vs. 7-10 as “them” and calls on them collectively to praise the name of the LORD.

**“for his name alone is excellent [to be on high; to be exalted]”** – Why should the earthly creation praise the name of the LORD?

The first reason listed is that the LORD’s name excels all others. There is no other name is above the LORD’s:

**Eph. 1:19-21** *“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:”*

**Phil. 2:9-10** *“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”*

**“his glory [splendor; majesty] is above the earth and heaven”** – The psalmist has listed both the heavenly creation and the earthly creation, and he again declares that the LORD’s glory is above them all.

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14 He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

**“He also exalteth [to lift up] the horn of his people”** – This second reason listed for praising the LORD is because of what He does for His people. A horn represents strength and prosperity, which the LORD lifts up for Israel, His chosen people.

**“the praise of all his saints”** – The strength and prosperity that the LORD gives His people brings them praise, which, in turn, brings praise to Him.

**“even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him”** – The psalmist elaborates on those who are the LORD’s saints: the children of Israel, who are a people “near unto Him.” This expression speaks of a people who are near to the LORD in relationship and familiarity. We often say that we are “close” to someone with whom we have a very friendly relationship. This is what the psalmist is saying about Israel: they and the LORD are “close.”

**“Praise ye the LORD”** – The psalmist ends the psalm as he began it. Like bookends, he begins and ends the psalm with “Praise the LORD,” the theme of entire psalm.