

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School
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Psalm 113 — Praise Him! Praise Him!

1.0 Introducing Psalm 113

- Psalm 113 is the final psalm of the Hallelujah psalms (Pss 111–113), unless the final “Hallelujah” (v. 9) should be at the beginning of Psalm 114.
- This is the first of six psalms in the so-called “Egyptian Hallel” that is sung at the time of the Passover by the Jewish community. Jews observing the Passover sing Psalms 113 and 114 before the meal and Psalms 115–118 following it.
 - ✓ These may be hymns that Jesus and His disciples sang in the upper room (“After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives,” Matt 26:30).
 - ✓ The same psalms were also sung at all three major Israelite festivals of Passover (*Pesach*), Dedication (*Hanukkah*) and Booths (*Shavuoth*).

2.0 Reading Psalm 113 (NAU)

113:1 Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD,
Praise **the name of the LORD.**

113:2 Blessed be **the name of the LORD**
From this time forth and forever.

113:3 From the rising of the sun to its setting
The name of the LORD is to be praised.

113:4 The LORD is high above all nations;
His glory is above the heavens.

113:5 Who is like the LORD our God,
Who is enthroned on high,

113:6 Who humbles Himself to behold
The things that are in heaven and in the earth?

- 113:7** He raises the poor from the dust
And lifts the needy from the ash heap,
113:8 To make *them* sit with princes,
With the princes of His people.
113:9 He makes the barren woman abide in the house
As a joyful mother of children.

Praise the LORD!

3.0 Understanding Psalm 113

3.1 Outline

- I. The Lord's Great Name (vv. 1-3)
- II. The Lord's Grand Majesty (vv. 4-6)
- III. The Lord's Gracious Mercy (vv. 7-9)



3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “The name of the LORD”
 - “Name” includes all the concepts of reputation and character. It is not a reference to a mere title.
 - “LORD” (= Yahweh), as a title, identifies God as the eternal “I Am,” the covenant-keeping God, Who has a special relationship to His people.
 - *Who is the God Whom we worship?*
- **v. 3** “From the rising of the sun to its setting”
 - Since verse 2 speaks of constant praise (“from this time forth and forever”), this phrase must speak of its universality—from east to west, everywhere.
 - Malachi 1:11 echoes the phraseology and indicates that it refers to universality.
- **v. 5** “Who is like the LORD our God”
 - “Our God” represents a personalization. The psalmist and all other singers identify Yahweh as their God.
 - Our God is incomparable. No other being or concept can come close to being all that our God is or doing all that our God has done.
 - See Micah 7:18. Also, Isaiah 40:12–41:4.
- **v. 6** “Who humbles Himself to behold”
 - Although God is transcendent and most highly exalted, He stoops down to care and provide for earth's lowest and most oppressed people.
 - The Most High King cares for even the individual slave.
 - Compare Philippians 2:1-8.

- **vv. 7-8** The Theme of Great Songs
 - Compare the Song of Hannah, 1 Samuel 2:8.
 - See, also, Mary’s Song, Luke 1:46-55.
 - *How could you relate Psalm 113 to your celebration of Christmas?*
- **v. 7** “poor . . . needy”
 - Such terminology in the Old Testament can refer to the penniless, but it also refers to the oppressed and humiliated.
- **v. 8** “To make *them* sit with princes”
 - “This is one aspect of the ideal that Yahweh’s own characteristics be reflected among his chosen people. Divine grace is the impartation of divine glory; it bestows a measure of divine power and honor.”—
Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), 101.
 - See the same concept in the New Testament as God chooses the lowly (1 Cor 1:26-29) and raises them up and seats them in the heavenly places (Eph 1:19–2:7).
- **v. 9** “He makes the barren woman abide in the house”
 - Here is the most individual and personal setting. God cares for the barren woman.
 - ✓ Sarah (Gen 11:30; 18:10)
 - ✓ Rebekkah (Gen 25:21)
 - ✓ Rachel (Gen 29:31; 30:22-23)
 - ✓ Samson’s mother (Judg 13:2-3)
 - ✓ Hannah (1 Sam 1:6, 19-20)
 - ✓ Elizabeth (Luke 1:7, 13, 36)
 - Compare the national analogy in Isaiah 54:1-3 and how Paul employs it in his allegory in Galatians 4:21-31.



4.0 Singing Psalm 113

Praise God, Ye Servants of the Lord

(Tune: “I Will Glory in My Redeemer”)

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| <p>1 Praise God, ye servants of the Lord,
O praise His Name with one accord;
Bless ye the Lord, His Name adore
From this time forth forevermore,
From this time forth forevermore.</p> | <p>2 From rising unto setting sun
Praised be the Lord, the Mighty One;
He reigns o’er all, supreme in might,
Above the heavens in glory bright,
Above the heavens in glory bright.</p> |
| <p>3 On whom but God can we rely,
The Lord our God Who reigns on high,
Who condescends to see and know
The things of heaven and earth below,
The things of heaven and earth below?</p> | <p>4 He lifts the poor and makes them great,
With joy He fills the desolate;
Praise ye the Lord and bless His Name,
His mercy and His might proclaim,
His mercy and His might proclaim.</p> |

5 The barren woman feels His power
And comes to sacred motherhood,
Adorns with grace the home of man.
Sing hallelujah! God is good,
Sing hallelujah! God is good.

— *The Psalter*, 1912

5.0 Praying Psalm 113

- Praise the LORD! [vv. 1, 9]
- Oh, God, there is no one like You. [v. 5]
- How I praise You, Father, for Your care and provision. [v. 7]
- Lord, thank You for giving me the joy of a wife and children. [v. 9]
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6.0 Applying Psalm 113

- My life ought to be saturated with and characterized by praise for the Lord.
- God, Who is higher than the heavens, cares for even the lowest on earth.

In regard to the six psalms of the Egyptian Hallel:

“Only the second of them (114) speaks directly of the Exodus, but the theme of raising the down-trodden (113) and the note of corporate praise (115), personal thanksgiving (116), world vision (117) and festal procession (118) make it an appropriate series to mark the salvation which began in Egypt and will spread to the nations.”

— Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 401

The music concludes upon its key-note. The Psalm is a circle, ending where it began, praising the Lord from its first syllable to its last. May our life-psalm partake of the same character, and never know a break or a conclusion. In an endless circle let us bless the Lord, whose mercies never cease. Let us praise him in youth, and all along our years of strength; and when we bow in the ripeness of abundant age, let us still praise the Lord, who doth not cast off his old servants.

— C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (reprinted; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 3/1:32