

When we approach Psalm 113, there is not much difficulty seeing the main theme of the Psalm—**“Praise the LORD.”** That point is clearly stated three times in **verse 1**, one time in **verse 3** and one time in **verse 9**. Spurgeon said this Psalm is one of pure praise and it requires very little exposition on that point. John Calvin said the repetition is not superfluous because we tend to become cold and calloused to actually praising God, so this Psalm challenges us to be fervent and faithful.

This is part of the Hallel Psalms. A Hallel Psalm used the word “Hallelu Yah” which literally means “praise the LORD or praise Jehovah.” Psalm 113 is called the beginning of the “Egyptian Hallel” psalms (Psalm 113-118). These Psalms were used in connection with the feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, Booths, and Dedication after Israel had come out of Egypt.

The English word “praise” is actually the Hebrew word “Hallel.” The meaning of this word is to show something as brilliant and bright. The idea is to shine forth a bright light. The meaning of the praise is to shine forth or show forth the brilliant majesty of God (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 226). This Psalm truly does assert the greatness of God.

The real service of praise is one in which people walk away with a better understanding of the greatness and majesty of God. A real Biblical praise service is one that causes people to think very seriously about God to the point that He is elevated because of what He has done.

Psalm 113 is a praise Psalm and **the particular theme that shines forth from this Psalm is the theme of the Holy and High God humbling Himself to have anything to do with humble and hurting humanity.** This has immediate application to Israel and it is also applicable to us.

It is an amazing thing to think that the Holy, Majestic, Sovereign God would actually lower Himself to have anything to do with people like us.

The point of the Psalm is that:

GOD’S SERVANTS SHOULD CONTINUALLY PRAISE THE LORD FOR THE FACT THAT HE, IN ALL OF HIS GREATNESS AND MAJESTY, HAS GRACIOUSLY LOWERED HIMSELF TO HELP US IN ALL OF OUR SINFULNESS AND DEPRAVITY.

Sometimes as a believer you can feel low. But we need to remember this point. No matter how low we feel or how we have lowered ourselves for the sake of God’s Word or work, and no matter how humiliated and stepped on we have been, it will never compare to how much God has lowered Himself in condescending to us.

Now there are three main praise themes that show up in this Psalm:

PRAISE THEME #1 – God is to be praised by His people. **113:1-3**

Make no mistake about this point—as people of God we have been called by God to elevate God in our own personal lives and in our corporate worship. We should be gaining more and more of a perspective of God that exalts Him. When we first come to faith in Christ we may tend to think more like an Arminian, but as we learn and grow we should praise God as a Calvinist. Now there are three main parts to this opening praise theme:

Part #1 - The Lord is to be praised. **113:1a**

One would think you would not even need to make this statement, but it is obviously one God knows we need.

When God’s people gather they are to offer praise to the Lord. They are to think of the greatness of God and of the grace of God. The truth is if God’s people don’t praise God, who will? The rest of the world doubts God, questions God, mocks God and curses God. Very few trust God and those who do need to praise God.

Part #2 - The Lord is to be praised by His servants. **113:1b**

You will notice that the noun “servants” is plural so this has reference to all who are the chosen of God. All who trust in God have the responsibility to worship and praise God. Servants of God have the responsibility to praise and worship God. Faithful servants of God will shine forth the greatness and glory of God brighter and brighter.

Part #3 - The Lord’s name is to be praised by His servants. **113:1c-3**

The names of God reveal many things about God. Borrowing from James Boice, we suggest that the names of God establish: 1) God is a Person; 2) God is Sovereign; 3) God is self-existent; 4) God is self-sufficient; 5) God is eternal; 6) God is unchangeable. What God was yesterday, He is today and what He is today, He will be tomorrow.

Now the names of God teach us that we do not have any right to form our own concept of God according to our own delusional fancy. God’s names reveal God’s character and if we form our own concepts of God, not based on His revealed names, we are, in all reality worshipping a nameless God.

In this Psalm there are two names used for God—**LORD** (Jehovah) (v. 1 (2x), 2, 3, 4, 5, 9) and “**God**” (Elohim) (v. 5). It is clear that the name used the most for God in this Psalm is LORD (Jehovah, YHWH) which refers to the self-existing, covenant God of Israel who can do whatever He wants to do.

Now in **verse 2** it is stated that the name of God is to be praised from this point of time on forever and ever. So God expects His servants to start praising Him now because this will continue for the rest of time.

By using the word “Jehovah,” we know that God is to be praised as the majestic, covenant, sovereign, self-existent God of Israel who can do whatever He wants to do.

In **verse 2** the emphasis is on praising Him now and forever and in **verse 3** the emphasis is on praising Him daily all over the world, “from the rising of the sun to its setting.”

The implication of these two verses is that there will come a day when God will be praised every moment of every day all over the world. So we may as well praise Him now.

It is our responsibility to praise God for His sovereign greatness every day of our lives. The fact that He is the covenant God of Israel and the covenant God of each one of us is something for which we may always praise God.

PRAISE THEME #2 – God is to be praised for His sovereign majesty. **113:4-5**

There are four “God is” statements in these verses that elevate the sovereign majesty and glory of God.

Statement #1 - God is high above all nations. **113:4a**

This statement is similar to that of Isaiah who said that “the nations are like a drop from a bucket and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales...all nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless” (Isaiah 40:15, 17).

God’s people need to remember this fact in the world in which we live. In any dispensation, at all times, God is above all nations.

Statement #2 - God’s glory is above the heavens. **113:4b**

There is no higher realm than the heavens and God’s glory is above that.

Statement #3 - God is like no other. **113:5a**

No one is like God. It is a shame that the Buddhists and the Islamists and the Mormons and the Jehovah’s Witnesses and all the political leaders of the world do not get this point. Whatever the attribute, none is like God. No other being is as majestic as God.

Notice what is stated in question form: “Who is like the LORD our God.” The sovereign LORD is our God.

Statement #4 - God is enthroned on high. **113:5b**

The idea here is that God reigns and rules over everything. He is the God of the Highest. No one outranks Him and no one overrules Him. He is the sovereign, majestic God and He is to be praised.

PRAISE THEME #3 – God is to be praised for humbling Himself to help humanity. **113:6-9**

We may all praise God for these verses, because these verses present another side to God. In the previous verse we see that God is a majestic, holy, sovereign God. But these verses teach us that even though He takes His seat so high that none can match Him, He has regard for the lowest of the low. This High and Majestic God actually lowers Himself to associate and deal with people like us.

There are three key facts brought out about this:

Fact #1 - God humbles Himself to behold things in heaven and on earth. **113:6**

No wonder God hates pride. How humble should we be when we read this about God? God lowers Himself to look at things in heaven and on earth.

To think that Almighty God would condescend to take an interest in miserable, vile, despicable, vicious wretches like us is amazing. God must lower Himself when He looks at anything in heaven or on earth because He is the One who created it all.

When we get into a relationship with God, it was because God lowered Himself, not because we elevated ourselves.

Fact #2 - God raises those who are nothing and transforms them into something. **113:7-8**

Verse 7 describes us. We are poor people from the dust. We are needy people from the ash heap of sin. It is God who gives us royalty and status. We do not save ourselves; it is God who saves us. God does bless poor people. He does exalt the needy. We have come from the dung-hill of sin. We are loathsome creatures.

Fact #3 - God changes that which is barren into that which is fruitful. **113:9**

God has literally physically done this:

- 1) He did this with Sarah. (Gen. 11:30; 18:10)
- 2) He did this with Rebekah. (Gen. 25:21)
- 3) He did this with Rachel. (Gen. 29:31; 30:22-23)
- 4) He did this with Samson's mother. (Judges 13:2-3)
- 5) He did this with Hannah. (I Sam. 1:6, 19-20)
- 6) He did this with Elizabeth. (Luke 1:7, 13, 36)

God did this for barren women. He will do this with a barren nation Israel and He does this with us. God takes us in our barren, miserable state and lets us “abide in His house.” God doesn't only look at miserable broken down people; He lifts them and blesses them and lets them have fellowship with Him. Let us do what this Psalm says—Let us praise the Lord now and forevermore!