

Psalms 148:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:

Analysis

Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: The psalm's summons climaxes with humanity, specifically addressing political leadership. The Hebrew pairs rulers and subjects: "**kings of the earth**" (malkhei-eretz, מַלְכֵי־אֶרֶץ) and "**princes**" (sarim, שָׂרִים, leaders or officials), alongside "**all people**" (vekhoh le'ummim, וְכֹל־לְאֻמִּים, all nations/peoples) and "**all judges of the earth**" (vekhoh shophetei aretz, וְכֹל־שֹׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ).

This is politically subversive. Earthly rulers often demand worship, claiming divine status (Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Roman emperors). The psalmist declares even the most powerful monarchs are themselves worshipers, subordinate to Yahweh. Psalm 2:10-12 warns kings: "Be wise... Kiss the Son, lest he be angry." Daniel 4 records Nebuchadnezzar's humbling, forced to acknowledge "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Daniel 4:25, 32).

The inclusion of "all judges" emphasizes accountability—those who render verdicts will themselves be judged. Romans 13:1 declares "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Earthly authority is delegated, not inherent. Revelation 19:16 depicts Christ as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS"—every earthly throne is subject to His ultimate kingship. Political leaders who refuse to worship God face judgment; those who acknowledge Him fulfill their created purpose.

Historical Context

Israel's history involved interaction with many kingdoms—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome. Some rulers showed respect for Yahweh (Cyrus, who decreed temple rebuilding); others persecuted His people (Antiochus Epiphanes). Post-exilic Judaism lived under foreign rule (Persian, then Greek, then Roman), making this call for kings to worship Yahweh particularly poignant—it asserted that even Gentile rulers owed allegiance to Israel's God. This anticipates the Great Commission's call to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) and prophecies of nations streaming to Zion (Isaiah 2:2-3).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge contemporary ideas about separation of church and state or religion's role in public life?
2. What does it mean for political leaders today to 'praise the LORD,' and how should Christians pray for those in authority?
3. In what ways does recognizing Christ as 'King of kings' affect how believers relate to earthly governments and legal systems?

Interlinear Text

מְלִכֵי	אֲרֶץ:	וְכָל	לְאֻמֹּת יָם	שָׁרֵי יָם	וְכָל	שְׂפָטֵי
Kings	of the earth	H3605	and all people	princes	H3605	and all judges
H4428	H776		H3816	H8269		H8199

אֲרֶץ:
of the earth
H776

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 102:15 (Kingdom): So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

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