

Psalm 148:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

Analysis

Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: The final category called to praise encompasses all humanity across age and gender. The Hebrew uses four groups in two pairs: "**young men and maidens**" (bachurim vegam betulot, בָּחוּרִים וְגָמְבָתּוֹלִות) represents youth in their prime, while "**old men and children**" (zeqenim im-ne'arim, זָקְנִים עִמּוֹנָעָרִים) brackets life's extremes—the aged and the very young. The inclusio is comprehensive: all ages, both sexes, every stage of human life.

This universal call demolishes all barriers to worship. Ancient cultures often restricted religious participation—women excluded from certain rituals, children considered too young, elderly past active service. Yet God's cosmic choir includes everyone: vigorous youth, mature elders, innocent children, men and women equally. Joel 2:28-29 prophesies the Spirit's outpouring on "all flesh... sons and daughters... old men... young men... servants and handmaids," fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-18).

The structure emphasizes corporate worship—not isolated individuals but "young men AND maidens," "old men WITH children." Generational and gender diversity enriches praise. Psalm 8:2 declares "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength"—even infant praise silences God's enemies. Revelation 7:9-10 envisions the ultimate fulfillment: "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" worshiping together.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite worship included all ages and both sexes at major festivals (Deuteronomy 16:11, 14). Women participated in temple worship (Anna, Luke 2:36-38), sang in victory celebrations (Exodus 15:20-21; 1 Samuel 18:6-7), and prophesied (Deborah, Huldah). Children learned torah in family and synagogue settings. The psalm's inclusivity reflects covenant community encompassing every member, anticipating the New Testament reality where "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does your faith community include and value the worship contributions of all ages—children, youth, adults, elderly?
2. What unique perspectives and expressions of praise do different generations and genders bring to corporate worship?
3. In what ways does this verse challenge cultural or religious barriers that exclude certain people from full participation in worship?

Interlinear Text

נֶעֱרִים:	בְּחוֹרִים	בְּתַהוּלָה וְתַּיִגְמָה	בְּקָרִים יִם	עַם	יְלָכֵד יִם	בְּחוֹרִים	נֶעֱרִים:
Both young men	H1571	and maidens	old men	H5973	and children		

