

Psalm 148:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. This verse reaches to the highest cosmic realms. The phrase "**heavens of heavens**" (shemei hashamayim, שְׁמֵי הַשָּׁמָיִם) uses Hebrew superlative construction, meaning "highest heavens" or "heaven of heavens"—the ultimate celestial realm beyond visible sky. This is the "third heaven" Paul mentions (2 Corinthians 12:2), God's dwelling place, the apex of created reality.

The phrase "**waters that be above the heavens**" (hamayim asher me'al hashamayim, מְאַל הַשָּׁמָיִם) reflects ancient Hebrew cosmology based on Genesis 1:6-7, where God separated waters above the firmament from waters below. While modern cosmology differs, the theological point remains: every level of creation, including realms beyond human observation or comprehension, exists to glorify God. These highest waters symbolize creation's furthest reaches—even what transcends human experience must praise its Maker.

Paul echoes this cosmic scope in Philippians 2:10-11: "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." The ultimate fulfillment of universal praise awaits Christ's return, when all creation acknowledges His lordship.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cosmology envisioned a three-tiered universe: heavens above, earth in the middle, waters below. The 'firmament' (raqia) separated heavenly waters from earthly seas. While this reflects pre-scientific understanding, Scripture uses this framework to teach theological truth: God created and sustains all levels of reality. Post-exilic Jewish literature developed elaborate descriptions of multiple heavens (eventually numbering seven), but biblical emphasis remains on God's sovereignty over all creation, however conceived.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the concept of 'heavens of heavens' expand your understanding of God's transcendence beyond the observable universe?
2. What does it mean that even realms beyond human comprehension exist for God's glory and participate in cosmic worship?
3. How should Christians engage with ancient cosmological language in Scripture while holding modern scientific understanding?

Interlinear Text

מְלָא קָדְשֶׁךָ יְהוָה כְּלֹמְדָךְ כְּלֹמְדָךְ כְּלֹמְדָךְ כְּלֹמְדָךְ כְּלֹמְדָךְ כְּלֹמְדָךְ כְּלֹמְדָךְ

Praise him ye heavens him ye heavens and ye waters H834 H5921

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בְּשָׁמָיִם:
him ye heavens
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Additional Cross-References

Genesis 1:7 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Kings 8:27 (Parallel theme): But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

Deuteronomy 10:14 (Parallel theme): Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.

Nehemiah 9:6 (Worship): Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

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