Psalms 148:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.

Analysis

This verse continues the expanding call to praise, now addressing heavenly bodies: 'Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.' The shift from imperative 'praise ye' to descriptive 'let them praise' suggests that the psalm is articulating what should be true rather than commanding conscious beings. However, the phrase 'praise the name of the LORD' attributes to these cosmic objects a function: their existence and operation constitute praise. The phrase 'he commanded, and they were created' (tziva venivrau) asserts God's creative power through speech. This echoes Genesis 1, where God speaks ('Let there be...') and creation obeys. The theological claim is that creation itself is an act of praise - the very existence of the heavens and celestial bodies demonstrates God's power and worthiness. The stars and planets, operating according to laws God established, glorify God through their existence and function. This democratizes praise: one need not be conscious or volitional to praise God. Obedience to God's created order is itself a form of praising Him.

Historical Context

The theology expressed here resonates with Psalm 19:1 ('The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork'). This represents what later theologians called 'natural revelation' - creation itself testifies to God's existence and character. During the Second Temple period, particularly influenced by Greek philosophy, Jewish thinkers integrated the concept that creation reveals God's design and intelligence (what later became called 'natural theology'). The

Wisdom of Solomon (composed in Hellenistic Judaism) extensively develops the theme that creation's order and beauty reveal divine purpose. The reference to God's command and creative act connects to the opening of Genesis and to Psalm 33:6-9, where God's word and breath create. In medieval Jewish philosophy (Maimonides and others), the concept that creation 'praises' God through perfect obedience to natural law became a sophisticated theological principle. The verse suggests that even the inanimate creation glorifies God - it neither rebels nor claims credit for its existence, but simply manifests what God commanded.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. In what sense can inanimate creation 'praise' God, and what does this imply about the nature of praise?
2. How does God's command ('he commanded') relate to creation's origination ('they were created')?
3. What does it mean that creation glorifies God through obedience to natural law?
4. Why does the psalm attribute praise-function to celestial objects that lack consciousness?
5. How should understanding creation's participation in praising God affect our stewardship and care for the natural world?

Interlinear Text

צִוָּ֣ה ה   ה וּא כִּ֣ י יְהוָ֑ה שֵׁ ם אֶת יְ֭ הָלְלוּ

for he commanded   H1931 H3588 **of the LORD** **the name** H853 **Let them praise**

H6680   H3068   H8034   H1984

וְנִבְרָֽאוּ׃

and they were created

H1254

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 4:11 (Creation): Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Genesis 1:6 (Parallel theme): And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

Psalms 95:5 (Creation): The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

Amos 9:6 (References Lord): It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name.