

# THE GOSPEL PROJECT<sup>®</sup> FOR ADULTS



FALL 2014: *Personal Study Guide* ESV

**Ed Stetzer** General Editor  
**Trevin Wax** Managing Editor

LifeWay | Adults

### Ed Stetzer

General Editor—*The Gospel Project*  
PRESIDENT, LIFEWAY RESEARCH



Jesus taught His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount to pray like this: “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven...” (Matt. 6:9-10, KJV). Sounds innocuous enough, but is it really? To the ears of any self-conscious authority on this planet, Jesus’ model prayer would be the sound of sedition—“Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.” Furthermore, to any honest heart, this prayer should challenge the core of our being, for who wholeheartedly asks to be ruled?

What is the nature of this kingdom that we ask to come? That’s the focus of this study of *The Gospel Project*—“The Story of God’s Kingdom.” Tracing the theme of God’s kingdom through the Scriptures, we will see as clearly as possible what it is we are asking for, or better yet, *who* we are asking for. Because when you get a kingdom, you are going to get a king. And if you want God’s kingdom, then you must expect the coming of God’s King.

Jesus said God’s kingdom—His kingdom—is not of this world...yet, but there will come a day, and it has already started, when all wrongs will be set right and all injustices will meet with justice. We as Jesus’ followers live now as kingdom citizens in a world not our own, proclaiming His coming and calling others to His side, but we pray for the day—“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

### Trevin Wax

Managing Editor—*The Gospel Project*  
AUTHOR OF MULTIPLE BOOKS, INCLUDING *Gospel-Centered Teaching*, *Counterfeit Gospels*, AND *Clear Winter Nights: A Young Man’s Journey into Truth, Doubt, and What Comes After*



The story of Scripture is a story of war—a cosmic battle between a good King who loves His broken creation and the Evil One whose kingdom is marked by rebellion and suffering. Miss the drama between these two kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness—and you miss a major part of the tension of the Bible.

But wait, there’s more. This battle of kingdoms isn’t just the story of our world; it’s your story, and mine. There is a battle for our souls. What kind of people will we be? Whose kingdom will we belong to? We will worship; we will bow down; it’s in our nature as human beings to live under someone or something’s authority. The question is who gets our loyalty? Will we bow the knee before the King of kings, or will we pursue our own kingdoms and live as if we are in charge?

In this issue of *The Gospel Project*, we take a journey through the story line of Scripture once again, this time looking at the theme of God’s kingdom. I pray this study reveals the hidden idols of your heart, magnifies the greatness of King Jesus, and transforms you into a herald of the returning King. May God make us a people who live under the lordship of Christ and speak of His excellency to those around us who have not yet bent the knee. The King has a mission, and we are His messengers.

# EDITORS



# THE GOSPEL PROJECT® FOR ADULTS

## **The Gospel Project®**

Adult Personal Study Guide HCSB  
Volume 3, Number 1 Fall 2014

### **Eric Geiger**

Vice President, Church Resources

### **Ed Stetzer**

General Editor

### **Trevin Wax**

Managing Editor

### **Daniel Davis**

Content Editor

### **Josh Hayes**

Content and Production Editor

### **Philip Nation**

Director, Adult Ministry Publishing

### **Faith Whatley**

Director, Adult Ministry

### **Send questions/comments to:**

Managing Editor,

*The Gospel Project: Adult Personal Study Guide*,  
One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0102;  
or make comments on the Web at  
[www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com).

Printed in the United States of America

*The Gospel Project®: Adult Personal Study Guide* HCSB  
(ISSN 2162-7207; Item 005461524) is published  
quarterly by LifeWay Christian Resources,  
One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234,  
Thom S. Rainer, President. © 2014 LifeWay  
Christian Resources.

For ordering or inquiries, visit [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com),  
or write LifeWay Church Resources Customer  
Service, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN  
37234-0113. For subscriptions or subscription  
address changes, e-mail [subscribe@lifeway.com](mailto:subscribe@lifeway.com), fax  
(615) 251-5818, or write to the above address. For  
bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address,  
e-mail [orderentry@lifeway.com](mailto:orderentry@lifeway.com), fax (615) 251-5933,  
or write to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author;  
salvation for its end; and truth, without any  
mixture of error, for its matter and that all  
Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To  
review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit  
[www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline](http://www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline).

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are  
taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible®,  
copyright 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman  
Bible Publishers. Used by permission.

All Scripture quotations marked (MSG) are taken  
from *The Message* by Eugene H. Peterson, copyright  
© 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002.  
Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.  
All rights reserved.

## About the Writers



**Unit 1: Kendell Easley** is a professor of biblical studies at Union University, in Memphis, Tennessee, and is the director of the Master of Christian Studies and Doctor of Ministry programs for Union's Stephen Olford Center. He has written ongoing curriculum for more than 20 years. Kendell is married to Nancy, and they have one married young adult son.



**Unit 2: Halim Suh** and his wife, Angela, have three kids and live in Austin, Texas, where he is pastor of teaching and theology at The Austin Stone Community Church. He is the author (with Matt Carter) of two Threads studies: *Creation Unraveled* and *Creation Restored*. Halim has a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.



**Unit 3: Jason C. Dukes** is married to Jen, and they have six children. He helped start *WestpointChurch.org* and *ReproducingChurches.com* and now pastors First Baptist Church, Booneville, Mississippi. He's the author of *Live Sent* and *Beyond My Church*, and he periodically blogs at *SENTkids.com*.

# WRITERS

## Table of Contents

### Suggested for the week of

#### Unit 1: The King and His Kingdom

September 7	<b>8</b>	<b>Session 1</b>	The King of All: God, the King of Heaven and Earth, Is Worthy to Be Praised
September 14	<b>17</b>	<b>Session 2</b>	The Rebellion of Heaven: Pride Leads to Rebellion and Judgment
September 21	<b>26</b>	<b>Session 3</b>	The Kingdom on Earth: God Planned for People to Live in His World Under His Loving Rule
September 28	<b>35</b>	<b>Session 4</b>	The Rebellion on Earth: Rejection of God's Good Rule Throws All of Creation into Turmoil

#### Unit 2: Longing for the King

October 5	<b>45</b>	<b>Session 5</b>	And There Was No King...: We Need Deliverance from Ourselves
October 12	<b>54</b>	<b>Session 6</b>	Looking for a King: We Are Inclined to Settle for Lesser Saviors
October 19	<b>63</b>	<b>Session 7</b>	A Glimpse of the King: We Need a Chosen King Who Honors God and Fights for His People
October 26	<b>72</b>	<b>Session 8</b>	The Promise of the King: We Must Cultivate a Hunger for the Right King

#### Unit 3: The Kingdom Comes

November 2	<b>82</b>	<b>Session 9</b>	The King's Presence: The Upside-Down Nature of Christ's Kingdom
November 9	<b>91</b>	<b>Session 10</b>	Kingdom Power: The Power of the Kingdom Comes Through Sacrifice
November 16	<b>100</b>	<b>Session 11</b>	Kingdom Proclamation: The Message of the Kingdom Spreads Through Bold Messengers
November 23	<b>109</b>	<b>Session 12</b>	Kingdom People: The Church Is a Sign and Instrument of the Kingdom
November 30	<b>118</b>	<b>Session 13</b>	Kingdom Perfection: Jesus Will Return as Conquering King to Make Everything Right

## How to Use The Gospel Project

Read the lesson in preparation for group discussion. Record any insights or questions you may want to discuss during the group experience.

Gather with your group to discuss and learn together what God has to say. Contribute to the conversation and activities.

Apply the truths of the session by working through “His Mission, Your Mission” with your group or by yourself.

[illegible]

In ancient days, people believed that "heaven" (the first heaven) was the sky with clouds and birds and stars. The second (higher) sky was the sun and moon and planets and so on. The third (supernatural) is the dwelling place of God and angels (see Job 1:6).

**Third Heaven (3rd Heaven):** This palace gives entrance to all those believers, beginning with the highest heaven and ending with 72 levels that the "angelic" hierarchy encompasses in the "New Jerusalem" created after the fall of the great city of Babylon. It is the fulfilled faith of God and angelic immortality—contemplating eternity and enjoying its eternal reality—therefore this 3rd Heaven.

**Second Heaven (2nd Heaven):** Now, the stars move to the second heaven, that of the "sun and moon" and "dwelling star" (i.e., the 60,000+ names of constellations, those stars we see on the fourth day (Gen. 1:14-16)). Here, the sun, moon, and stars are created in order to give the 3rd the whole star.

So, fully, heaven here also contains the creation for the birds, the twelfth and twelfth moon, to complete the planet of the sun and moon, the moon then, the moon then, where all of this sun we produce the planet to satisfy the sun, moon, and stars.

**Q** *What is the purpose of the 3rd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of God and angels.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the 2nd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the sun, moon, and stars.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the 1st Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the 0th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -1st Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -2nd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -3rd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -4th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -5th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -6th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -7th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -8th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -9th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -10th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -11th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -12th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -13th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -14th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -15th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -16th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -17th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -18th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -19th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -20th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -21st Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -22nd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -23rd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -24th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -25th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -26th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -27th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -28th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -29th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -30th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -31st Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -32nd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -33rd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -34th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -35th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -36th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -37th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -38th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -39th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -40th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -41st Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -42nd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -43rd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -44th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -45th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -46th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -47th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -48th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -49th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -50th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -51st Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -52nd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -53rd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -54th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -55th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -56th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -57th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -58th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -59th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -60th Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -61st Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -62nd Heaven?*

**A** *It is the dwelling place of the earth and the living creatures.*

**Q** *What is the purpose of the -63rd Heaven?*

## His Mission, Your Mission

*"The angel, pastor and service of God give us an example of how we are to conduct ourselves: how and what our activity will be in the heavenly realm."  
—Miles J. Erickson*

Imagine?

### Live on Mission

1. How can we join in the praise that goes on in the highest heavens?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In what ways can we praise God as we are in the world—among  
English, with doctors, surrounded by the enemy?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How can we use creation to point others to the Creator who is worthy of all  
our praise?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10 Personal Study Guide 1 (Fall 2015)

Visit [GospelProject.com/Blog](https://GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content related to the study.  
Visit [GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources](https://GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources) for links to podcasts, articles, blog posts, and parental resources for joining your family together in discipleship.





# UNIT

# 1

## *The King and His Kingdom*

### **Memory Verses**

*Come, let us shout joyfully to the LORD, shout triumphantly to the rock of our salvation! Let us enter His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout triumphantly to Him in song. For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods.*

*—Psalm 95:1-3*

### **Writer**

**Kendell Easley** is a professor of biblical studies at Union University, in Memphis, Tennessee, and is the director of the Master of Christian Studies and Doctor of Ministry programs for Union's Stephen Olford Center. He has written ongoing curriculum for more than 20 years. Kendell is married to Nancy, and they have one married young adult son.

# The King of All

*God, the King of Heaven and Earth, Is Worthy to Be Praised*



“And the Oscar goes to...” The audience holds its collective breath. The speaker pauses dramatically. The winner pretends to be surprised, struts to the podium, and thanks everyone involved in this remarkable outcome.

Something in all of us longs to give praise where praise is due. (We love to receive praise as well.) The trouble is praise for human success is so fleeting. Even the most celebrated films eventually make their way to the bargain bin in a supermarket. It’s the

same with sports. Rarely do you find someone who remembers the winner of the past few World Series or World Cup events, much less the winning teams of 20 years ago.



Think of a time you praised someone else who really deserved it. What had they accomplished? What emotions did you feel as you praised that person?

---

---

---

What should we learn from this desire to praise? What does this tendency toward worship tell us? Perhaps it’s a clue to reminds us that Someone does deserve praise, not for temporary success that fades but for goodness and beauty and truth that is everlasting. What if that Someone wants us to know Him? What if He invites us to join with others in offering praise forever? What if it’s true that the one main reason we are alive is to offer praise?

In this volume, we will trace the story of God's kingdom through the Scriptures. This is the story of a Creator worthy of praise, of an enemy bent on destroying the world, of sinful humans redirecting their praise in all the wrong places, of a King stepping into the chaos to restore His fallen world, and of a people redeemed and set free to live with and for the King forever.

In this session, we will look to Genesis, but we will ground our study in the Psalms. We will see that before the world existed, God was always there—Father, Son, and Spirit united in love and glory forever. In love, God created everything in heaven and on earth for His glory. As Creator, He is worthy to receive praise from everything in heaven and on earth. The mission of God's people today is driven by a vision of His power and love, both of which He displayed in the creation of the universe.



### Voices from Church History

"You are matchless, O Lord. So our praise of You must rise above our humanity... You awaken in us a delight at praising You. You made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds its place of rest in You."<sup>1</sup>

—Augustine (354–430)

## 1. God is to be praised in the highest heavens (Ps. 148:1–6).

<sup>1</sup> *Hallelujah!*

*Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise Him in the heights.*

<sup>2</sup> *Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts.*

<sup>3</sup> *Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all you shining stars.*

<sup>4</sup> *Praise Him, highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens.*

<sup>5</sup> *Let them praise the name of Yahweh, for He commanded, and they were created.*

<sup>6</sup> *He set them in position forever and ever; He gave an order that will never pass away.*

How does the place of praise shift from verse to verse? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---



In ancient days, people identified three “heavens.” The first (atmospheric) heaven is the sky of birds and clouds and wind and rain. The second (planetary) is the sky of sun and moon and planets and stars. The third (supernatural) is the dwelling place of God and angels (see 2 Cor. 12:2-4).

**Third Heaven (God’s Dwelling).** This psalm gives attention to all three heavens, beginning with the highest heaven and moving downward. Verse 2 recalls that the “angels” (heavenly messengers) and the “hosts” (heavenly armies) of the Lord were designed to praise their Maker. As they fulfilled their God-ordained responsibilities—communicating messages and engaging in spiritual warfare—they brought Him praise.

**Second Heaven (Space).** Next, the writer moves to the second heaven, that of the “sun and moon” and “shining stars” (v. 3). In the Genesis account of creation, these were made on the fourth day (Gen. 1:16-19). No less than the angels, the sun, moon, and stars were created to extol the One who made them.

Sadly, human beings have often mistaken these creations for deities. Sun worship and moon worship or honoring the planets as gods mocks the Lord of heaven who made them. In our fallen state, we humans all too often turn our penchant for praise into idolatry.

 In what ways do the sun, moon, and stars bring praise to God?

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Voices from the Church

“Creation draws us to look at something beyond ourselves and marvel at it. All of creation has been given to us so that we behold the awesome God who has made it all and made it all good.”<sup>2</sup>

—Matt Chandler

**First Heaven (Sky).** Every line of Psalm 148:1-4 begins with the Hebrew “*hallelu*” (“praise”). In verse 4 the “waters” in the heavens are called on to praise Him. Clouds, rain, hail, and snow call forth God’s praises. (From a meteorological perspective, we understand that such waters are “above the heavens” in the sense that they farther “up” than we can reach out and touch.)



How does the creation of entities in the three heavens show God's power? In your experience, what elements in each of the three heavens especially display the majesty of their Creator?

---

---

---

---

## 2. God is to be praised by everything on earth (Ps. 148:7-14).

The second half of Psalm 148 opens with a call for the earthly portion of God's creation to praise Him. Notice that the imperative verb "praise" extends throughout the rest of the psalm to include all earthly beings, whether animate or inanimate. Observe also a correlation between these verses and the days of creation in Genesis 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Praise the LORD from the earth, all sea monsters and ocean depths,*

<sup>8</sup> *lightning and hail, snow and cloud, powerful wind that executes His command,*

<sup>9</sup> *mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,*

<sup>10</sup> *wild animals and all cattle, creatures that crawl and flying birds,*

<sup>11</sup> *kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all judges of the earth,*

<sup>12</sup> *young men as well as young women, old and young together.*

<sup>13</sup> *Let them praise the name of Yahweh, for His name alone is exalted.*

*His majesty covers heaven and earth.*

<sup>14</sup> *He has raised up a horn for His people, resulting in praise to all His godly ones, to the Israelites, the people close to Him. Hallelujah!*

Day 3 (Gen. 1:11-13)	Day 5 (Gen. 1:20-23)	Day 6 (Gen. 1:24-25)



What elements of God's majesty do you see displayed in the earthly part of creation? How does observing these elements help us in witnessing to others about God's greatness and love?

---

---

---

Verses 11-12 describe a kaleidoscope of human diversity—humans made in the image of God—all of whom are called to praise Him. It includes those with power (“kings,” “princes,” and “judges”). It includes ordinary individuals (“all peoples”). It includes all age groups. It includes male and female. All are exhorted to praise Yahweh.

Watch, then, how the psalmist moved beyond the mere fact of creation to the reasons for worship (vv. 13-14):

- Earth is to praise “the name of Yahweh” because God has the most exalted name and reputation in the universe. Among other things, “name” stands for character and reputation.
- Earth is to praise Him because of “His majesty” in all the earth. The grandeur of earth, and therefore its Creator, can be seen in every crevice in the world. Like a blanket, His creative splendor covers everything.
- Earth is to praise Him because He has “raised up a horn” for His people. The horn, a biblical symbol of strength and power, probably stands for salvation, both from sin and from enemies.

Don’t miss this. The people especially called to praise God are those who have received His wonderful salvation! “His people,” “all His godly ones,” the people “close to Him” understand His love and power the best. Therefore, they are exhorted to praise. No wonder the psalmist concluded with a final “Hallelujah!”



### Voices from Church History

“Oh, but surely, everything that comes from the hand of such a Master-artist as God has something in it of himself!... There are lovely spots on this fair globe which ought to make even a blasphemer devout. There are things that God has made which overwhelm with a sense of his Omnipotence: how can men see them, and doubt the existence of the Deity?”<sup>3</sup>

—Charles Spurgeon  
(1834-1892)





What is the connection between our worship and our witness? How can observing the universe's praise encourage us to praise God?

---

---

---

---

### 3. God was praised by angels as He created the world (Job 38:5-7).

At the beginning of creation, God first lavished creative energy on His heavenly home and its inhabitants. This is what we have called earlier in this study “the third heaven.”

Why create the angelic beings before He created other intelligent life? At least part of the answer is that in this way God made it possible for an adoring audience to observe the rest of His creative acts and to praise Him for them. We can find evidence for this in an astonishing passage in Job 38:

*<sup>5</sup> Who fixed its dimensions? Certainly you know!*

*Who stretched a measuring line across it?*

*<sup>6</sup> What supports its foundations?*

*Or who laid its cornerstone*

*<sup>7</sup> while the morning stars sang together  
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

Insights or questions? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

These verses come near the beginning of God’s response to Job, a man who had greatly suffered and who had called out to God for answers.

God began with a series of rhetorical questions designed to bring Job (and us, the readers) to an awareness of God the King—the Sovereign Lord who is the greatest, always right and beautiful and good. The answers are obvious once the questions are asked.

God’s laying out of the earth did not occur in a vacuum. The observers were “the morning stars” and “the sons of God.” Because these phrases occur in parallel lines of poetry, both likely refer to angelic beings. (In Job 1:6; 2:1, “sons of God” are intelligent heavenly beings in God’s presence. Job 3:9 is the only other passage in the Bible to mention “morning stars” [plural].)

God’s heavenly court was watching Him as He created the earth with its kaleidoscope of staggering beauty. Their response? They “sang together” and “shouted for joy.” They praised the One who had created them because this fulfilled God’s purpose in calling them forth.

### Voices from the Church

“Just as millions of angels participated in the dazzling show when the morning stars sang together at creation, so will the innumerable hosts of heaven help bring to pass God’s prophetic declarations throughout time and into eternity.”<sup>4</sup>

—Billy Graham

 What images come to mind when you think of angels? How do these images correspond to the biblical teaching about angels?

---


---

---

Scripture provides significant information about angels:

- Angels are personal spirit beings created by God. *Personal* means they have intellect, emotions, and will; they can have a relationship with God. *Spirit beings* means their primary mode of existence is not bodily (as we understand it). They are ordinarily invisible to human beings (2 Kings 6:17).
- Angels have both wisdom and strength. They do not know everything and are not all-powerful. As God’s messengers, they carry out His commands (Ps. 91:11).
- The number of angels is fixed but huge. Angels (a general term) exist in many different orders, such as the cherubim and winged seraphim (Gen. 3:24; Isa. 6:2; Rev. 5:11).

- The “host of heaven” or “heavenly host” refers to angels who are God’s warriors. One of His names is “the LORD of hosts,” or “Yahweh Sabaoth” (1 Sam. 17:45; Luke 2:13; Jas. 5:4).
- Angels are presented as male (and when they are visible to humans, they look like human men). They are incapable of sexual intimacy or reproduction as humans are (Matt. 22:30).
- Some angels are assigned by God as “ministering spirits” to serve God’s people (Heb. 1:14).
- Like the rest of God’s creation, angels exist to bring glory and praise to God. Revelation 5–6 portrays angels as worshiping both God on His throne and the Lamb of God.

 What are some ways our culture misrepresents angels? What role do angels play in the mission of God?

---



---




---

## Conclusion

“And the greatest is...” No question about it, God the King of heaven and earth is the greatest. He is the most beautiful, the most righteous, the most everything good and pure. He created the heavens in all their complexity, visible and invisible, so that they would praise Him. This began with the angels, who praised Him as He created and filled the earth. But He also created the earth, including humanity, so that His praise will resound eternally.

Because Jesus’ followers have been made alive to this reality, we are driven by the vision of God’s power and love on display in the creation of the universe. What a privilege it is to praise the One who made us for His glory. Our mission is to spread the fame of His name.

 What difference would it make in your life if you acted fully on your belief in the truth that God is the King of heaven and earth, worthy of all your praise?

---



---



---



---



# HIS MISSION, YOUR MISSION

“The angels’ praise and service of God give us an example of how we are to conduct ourselves now and what our activity will be in the life beyond in God’s presence.”<sup>5</sup>

—Millard J. Erickson

Insights? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Live on Mission

1. How can we join in the praise that goes on in the highest heavens?

---

---

---

2. In what ways can we praise God as we are out in the world—among neighbors, with coworkers, surrounded by strangers?

---

---

---

3. How can we use creation to point others to the Creator who is worthy of all our praise?

---

---

---