

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

An exhortation to bless God for his own excellencies, Psalm 113:1-6; and for his great mercy to the poor and necessitous, Psalm 113:7-9.

Psalm 113:1-9, Psalm 114:1-8, 115, 116, Psalm 117:1-2, and 118, form the great Hallel, and were sung by the Jews on their most solemn festivals, and particularly at the passover. To these reference is made by the evangelists, Matthew 26:30, and Mark 14:26, there called the hymn which Jesus and his disciples sung at the passover, for the whole of the Psalms were considered as one grand hymn or thanksgiving. It was probably composed after the return from the captivity. It has no title but Hallelujah in the Hebrew and ancient Versions.

Verse 1

Praise, O ye servants - Probably an address to the Levites. The Anglo-Saxon has praise the Lord, ye knaves. Knapa or knave signified among our ancestors a servant; sometimes a male, a young man.

Verse 3

From the rising of the sun - From morning to evening be always employed in the work. Or it may be a call on all mankind to praise God for his innumerable mercies to the human race. Praise him from one end of the world unto the other. And therefore the psalmist adds,

Verse 4

The Lord is high above all nations - He governs all, he provides for all; therefore let all give him praise.

Verse 5

Who is like unto the Lord - Those who are highly exalted are generally unapproachable; they are proud and overbearing; or so surrounded with magnificence and flatterers, that to them the poor have no access; but God, though infinitely exalted, humbleth himself to behold even heaven itself, and much more does he humble himself when he condescends to behold earth and her inhabitants; (Psalm 113:6). But so does he love his creatures that he rejoices over even the meanest of them to do them good.

Verse 7

He raiseth up the poor - The poorest man, in the meanest and most abject circumstances, is an object of his merciful regards. He may here allude to the wretched state of the captives in Babylon, whom God raised up out of that dust and dunghill. Others apply it to the resurrection of the dead.

Verse 8

With the princes - נְדִבִּים (nedebim), very properly translated by the Anglo-Saxon, the aldermen, the most respectable of his people.

Verse 9

He maketh the barren woman to keep house - This is a figure to point out the desolate, decreasing state of the captives in Babylon, and the happy change which took place on their return to their own land. These are nearly the words of Hannah, 1 Samuel 2:5.