

ADVENT 2020



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Who is like the Lord our God, who humbles Himself to behold? (Psalm 113:5-6)

The event we celebrate at Christmas—the Incarnation—is the central event of history from God’s perspective. Though the word *incarnation* does not appear in Scripture, the “in-fleshing” of God is predicted, announced, reported, explained, and celebrated from Genesis to Revelation. At the moment the eternal second Person of the Trinity (*the Word*, John 1:1) took on Himself humanity (*became flesh*, John 1:14), God initiated His only ever plan to rescue the world from sin and death.

As you might imagine, not only did God specifically predict this occasion through His promises (Genesis 3::15; 2 Samuel 7:1-14) and His prophets (Isaiah 9:6; 7:14), but He also hinted at the wonder of the Incarnation through the songs of His people, the Psalms.

One of the most remarkable of these is Psalm 113, a call to praise the exalted Lord who stoops to help His people. A part of the Egyptian *Hallel* (Hebrew: *praise*) collection (113-118) of songs sung along with the Great Hallel collection (120-136) at the great festivals of Israel—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (113 was traditionally the song the family would sing before the Passover dinner). Christians have rightly seen the parallels between these stanzas and Paul’s description of Christ who left glory to suffer on the Cross.

The wonder of Christ’s humility, demonstrated on the First Christmas, offers the only lasting hope to our world. Praising Him for His willingness to come down soothes our souls during the hopelessly hurtful times of life:

**When I feel hopeless and helpless,
I will praise Christ for coming to earth to give me hope.**

May the Lord use the words of Psalm 113 to lift our hearts in worship of the One who is worthy of our praise, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I. Praise the exalted Lord who lowers Himself to exalt the oppressed (Psalm 113).

Prologue: *Hallelu-Yah*, “Praise the Lord!”

A. Call to praise: The Lord is worthy to be praised (1-3).

1. The psalmist calls upon the servants of God to praise His name (1).

Note: The name of the Lord speaks of His revealed attributes, how He describes Himself.

2. The name of the Lord is worthy to be praised for all time (2) and in all the universe (from east to west, 3).

B. Cause for praise: Praise the Lord for His exalted greatness and His condescending grace (4-9).

1. His greatness: He is the glorious, exalted ruler over all the earth (4-5).

2. His grace: He does not cling to His greatness but condescends to extend grace to the lowly (6-9).

a. He “stoops to see all.” The Lord condescends, or comes down to intervene graciously in human affairs (6).

b. Proof of His grace: The Lord exalts the lowly (7-8).

c. Proof of His grace: The Lord gives babies to barren women (9).

Epilogue: *Hallelu-Yah*, “Praise the Lord!”

II. God used Psalm 113 to “pre-teach” the coming of His Son.

A. Psalm 113 anticipates the *Magnificat* of Mary (Luke 1:46-55).

1. When Mary submitted to God’s plan to honor her as the mother of Messiah, the Savior, she called herself *the Lord’s servant* (Luke 1:48).

2. As the Lord’s servant, she praised God’s favor on her and her people in a song heavy with allusions to Psalm 113. This hymn of praise has become known as the *Magnificat* (Latin: *magnifies*) of Mary.

B. Psalm 113 anticipates the *kenosis* of Christ, Jesus’ emptying Himself of glory when He came to earth (Philippians 2:7).

1. Christ became a man so that the exalted God could “behold” life as a lowly man and rescue humanity from the hopelessness of sin and death (Philippians 2:5-8).

2. In His incarnation, Christ was fully God and fully man at the same time (John 1:1-14).

3. In the *kenosis* (Greek: *emptying*), Christ emptied Himself of retaining and exploiting His status in the Godhead and took on humanity in order to die.

Questions for this week of the Advent Season: When you feel hopeless and helpless, praise the Lord Jesus for His Incarnation. Christ came to earth to give you hope.

1. Have you received the hope Christ came to give you? Have you believed in the Christ of Christmas who came down to give you hope? If you believe, He will give you eternal life. He promises: “Most assuredly, I say to you, He who believes in Me, has everlasting life.” --Jesus Christ, John 6:47

2. If you have received the hope Christ came to give you, let Psalm 113 guide your worship of Him this Christmas. Praise the exalted God who came down. He is worthy to be praised in all the earth and forever.