

"Worship the LORD"

Psalm 29

We hear a great deal about worship in Christian culture today but it's not often that time is taken to show from God's word what worship is. This psalm gives a couple thoughts on the idea of worship that will help us in painting a biblical picture of worship. This isn't all inclusive, but it does give us a foundation upon which to build our understanding of worship.

This Psalm has the same title as previous ones - "A Psalm of David." There is nothing in the title nor in the content of the psalm to give any real incite into the occasion for its writing other than it could be David observed the power of an approaching storm. All we know for sure is that it is a Psalm of Praise and demonstrates the wonder of the God we serve, and why.

Some of the same notes of praise and worship in the psalm are found in 1 Chron. 16 in the psalm of thanksgiving that David sang when they brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. I don't believe that this psalm was written then nor do I believe that that is the occasion for the psalm. What I do believe is that it shows how often this subject of worshipping the Lord was on the mind of David.

I. BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS - vs. 1-2

A. We need to acknowledge ("give") the LORD in His glory and in His strength - vs. 1.

1. "O ye mighty" - בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים - literally translated as "the sons of the gods" or "the sons of the mighty ones." The grammatical structure of the text does not point exclusively to angelic beings, but also includes the mighty and

powerful men on earth that are revered as gods by many.

Even they are to give the LORD the glory He is due. Giving God "glory" is to recognize His overwhelming greatness and reverence His commands.

2. As He is given glory, recognizing His greatness and honoring Him because of it, His absolute might and sovereignty over all is to be equally recognized - "give unto the LORD...strength." Not that we can add anything to Him - it is in recognition of His strength that is spoken of here.

B. We need to acknowledge all the attributes of the LORD - "the glory due his name" - vs. 2.

1. "Due unto his name" - the "name" of God represents His essence, His character. It signifies all that God is - His power, holiness, love, and sovereignty.
2. "Worship the LORD in the beauty of his holiness."
 - a) There are only three times in the Old Testament (and two in the New) where the command to "worship the LORD" are found, and each time the words "in the beauty of his holiness" are connected.

1 Chronicles 16:29

²⁹ Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Psalm 96:9

⁹ O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

b) This can be seen in two parts:

- (1) First, we worship the LORD in the beauty of "His" holiness - that is, because He is holy and perfect.
- (2) Second, because He is holy, we are to worship Him in "our" holiness - with purity of thought and life. Worship is far more acceptable to God by His children if done out of inward purity and outward holiness (Spurgeon).

"O for grace ever to worship with holy motives and in a holy manner, as becometh saints! The call to worship in these two verses chimes in with the loud pealing thunder, which is the church bell of the universe ringing kings and angels, and all the sons of earth to their devotions." (Spurgeon)

II. BECAUSE OF WHAT HE IS - VS. 3-9

This psalm has the majority of its content given to showing the power and majesty the LORD has, especially over creation. In this particular case, the emphasis is on the fierceness of a storm showing that the LORD is in control of all.

A. The phrase "the voice of the LORD" is found seven times in this psalm. Some say it's because seven is the number of perfection and completion in the Bible, and as used here shows the perfection of God's authority over creation. I would agree with that view, for the most part.

B. The use of anthropomorphism (giving of human traits to God) here in the “voice of the LORD” is used for the thunder of the storm and is, at least in part, a means to engender fear in the enemies of the LORD and to demonstrate the reason He is to receive all the glory for Who He is and What He can do – What He is.

1. He is great – vs. 3 – He is higher than the tops of the highest clouds (“upon the waters”), His glory is in the loudest sound of nature (thunder), He is upon all the powerful waters of the earth.
2. He is “powerful” – vs. 4a – self-explanatory
3. He is “full of majesty” – vs. 4b

The term “majesty” (קֶדֶר) pictures the beauty, dignity, and regal splendor of the mighty God we serve. The use of “the voice of the LORD” being “full of majesty” is to be seen as a compounding of that beauty and splendor. Everywhere we look, all of creation is full of His majesty!

4. He is victorious – vs. 5-6 – nothing can stand in His way, not even the most magnificent, powerful trees of the then-known world.

Verse 6 uses hyperbole to show how complete the LORD’s victory over His enemies can be. He makes the giant cedars of Lebanon skip like a playful animal.

The use of the “unicorn” here (a wild ox, most likely) refers to a large animal with a horn that is

a very formidable force. No creature of any kind can stand against the LORD and be victorious.

5. He is vengeful - vs. 7 - the only One who can be righteous in vengeance is the LORD for it belongs only to Him. This is seen in other portions of Scripture where "fire" is used.

Leviticus 10:2

² And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Numbers 16:35

³⁵ And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

2 Kings 1:10-12

¹⁰ And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

¹¹ Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.

¹² And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

6. He is inescapable - vs. 8 - even in the wilderness where it doesn't seem like there is much life, God's voice can be felt.

Psalms 139:7-10

⁷ Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall

I flee from thy presence?

⁸ If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

¹⁰ Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

7. He is Sovereign over creation – vs. 9a.

Animal and plant life recognize the voice of the LORD and in measure, fear Him because of it. They have no choice but to react to His power.

This shows to some degree what the fear of the LORD is, especially for mankind.

III. BECAUSE OF WHERE HE IS – vs. 9B-11

A. He is on the throne – vs. 9b-10.

1. Although the second part of verse nine belongs with that verse and the context of “the voice of the LORD,” I’m including it with this point because of what it demonstrates.

The LORD is seen “in his temple” – this isn’t speaking of the Temple in Jerusalem, although He is there, and it isn’t referring to the world, as some scholars have it, but it is speaking of heaven, His eternal dwelling place, where all of its inhabitants, including angelic beings, “speak of his glory.”

2. “The LORD sitteth upon the flood”

a) This is the only time this particular Hebrew word

(מבול) is used outside of Genesis 6-11, where in every case it is speaking of the great flood of Noah's day - the deluge of the earth.

- b) The most powerful demonstration of the authority of God over creation is the Flood, and He is seen "sitting" on it in this text.
 - c) Being on the throne indicates He is sovereign over all creation, pointing back to verse nine.
3. "The Lord sitteth King for ever" - this is a parallelism, restating the first line of the psalm, showing it's speaking of the throne of the King of kings.

B. He is on time - vs. 11a.

"The LORD will give strength unto his people" - He is always right on time to supply whatever it is we need for the task He has given to us.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

⁸ For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

⁹ And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

C. He is on target - vs. 11b.

"The LORD will bless His people with peace" - He blesses those that are His with the blessedness of not only peace with God but also the peace of God - that peace that passes all of our ability to understand.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Conclusion: Worship is commanded in both the Old and New Testament. It's commanded because it is essential to our walk with the Lord.

As we begin the new year, remember to worship the LORD.

I believe that if we are to be and to do for others what God means us to be and to do, we must not let Adoration and Worship slip into second place, "For it is the central service asked by God of human souls; and its neglect is responsible for much lack of spiritual depth and power."

Perhaps we may find here the reason why we so often run dry. We do not give enough time to what makes for depth, and so we are shallow; a wind, quite a little wind, can ruffle our surface; a little hot sun, and all the moisture in us evaporates. It should not be so.

-Amy Carmichael in "Edges of His Ways"