

Psalm 29

Written by K B Napier
Wednesday, 04 May 2011 09:42

Many of David's Psalms or songs plead for help, for David, for the nation and for personal reasons. Very clearly, this Psalm is one of praise for God and His power, with a sub-title of "The voice of the LORD". (See Outline O-222)

It is a salutary lesson to us all, that we must praise God simply because of Who He is, and not just because He helps us and gives us blessings. He is our creator and supreme Master; He is worthy of praise because He is God and in ourselves we are nothing. We are His creatures who, though loved and saved in Christ, must recognise God's greatness and 'otherness'. If we do not have this kind of awe and fear, then our attitude and perception will all be wrong.

Today, many Christians run amok spiritually, doing what they think is right in their own eyes. They ignore God's teachers and ignore scripture, preferring their own versions of what they think the Bible says, often with damaging, sinful results.

The emphasis in this Psalm is not man's own ideas, but the "voice of the LORD" which is mighty, powerful and the only source of authority.

Verses 1&2

1.

Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

2.

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

The "mighty" in this text are the whole nation of the Hebrews and not just the elect of the nation (true believers). Today, Christians think that only they must obey God – this is untrue. God expects EVERY creature to obey Him, regardless of being saved, or not. The people MUST praise God because He is all-powerful and all-mighty, their Creator and Lord. Not all have Jesus as Saviour, but ALL have him as their Lord!

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They must give God glory because of Who He is, whether they wish to or not! It is due to Him because He is the great "I AM". No-one may reject this demand, whether they are atheist, or if they practise wickedness. Of course these people refuse and offer instead the filth of their own making. Though they KNOW God exists they prefer to adhere to their own evils. The praising of God is holy and holiness is beautiful... the praising and practising of sin is dark, black and foul.

To worship can have many meanings. In this text it is *shachah* – to bow down or to be prostrate before a superior – God. But, today's wicked people bow down to their own image, which is to bow before false gods. There is only ugliness in this.

Verses 3-6

1.

The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.

2.

The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

3.

The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

4.

He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

"The voice of the LORD" is a repeated phrase in this Psalm, showing the total devotion of David to God. Jehovah's voice is his word or sound, from a root meaning to call out loud. The same voice is used to describe God calling someone to salvation, in eternity.

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It can also be used of God's voice at other times, like thunder (symbolic of his power, but can boom just like thunder). His voice is associated with an authoritative proclamation, so listening to it is not an option as so many think... it is always a command.

The voice is "upon the waters", *mayim*, indicating in this context, refreshment, but also a reference to all nations (He will be known to everyone). "The God of glory thundereth" (causing people to quake in fear), and he is "upon many waters" (repeating the earlier part of the verse). It is a fallacy that God is not known to everyone in every age, but it

is
true they ignore Him.

His voice is powerful and full of majesty. If you believe that, then you will honour and obey Him! There is nothing powerful or majestic in sin! The same voice of God "breaketh the cedars... of Lebanon". The cedars have strong roots, and the tree is unusually tall; it rarely rots and has a fine sturdy structure. For this reason it was used extensively for royal palaces and other monumental buildings, because it was sturdy. Yet, what man thinks is strong is nothing to God. God will destroy and render to crushed powder all the schemes of wicked men and women.

The Lebanon used to be full of wooded mountains on the northern border of Israel. But, even this strength and desirability could be broken violently by God's mere word. Solid and strong though these cedars were, God made them "skip like a calf". This is a reference to the people, not the trees. He made them jump about gleefully – a total difference from their usual sturdiness, pomp, and deep roots in self.

And, God made Lebanon and the people of mount Hermon (lived in by the Sidonians) to jump about "like a young unicorn". Note the everyday language used here – proving that the unicorn was an actual animal. It is thought they were young wild bulls, now extinct.

It is saying that when God controls, people change and can be made to be different from their natural state. This is a fact and people who belong to God and who glorify His name by living righteously, alter greatly, being better and more holy.

It is popularly believed in psychiatry that a personality or character can only change with mental illness. This is nonsense – a person who becomes saved changes to show peace, quiet,

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soundness, balance, right thinking, etc. This means that if no change is seen, we may doubt the salvation.

On a personal note, many years ago, I took a 'psychometric' test when applying for a job. Interestingly, the psychologist commented that I was mentally and emotionally stable and showed a remarkably balanced personality and thought pattern. He admitted it was because I was a Christian!

Verses 7-10

1.

The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

2.

The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

3.

The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.

4.

The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

The voice of the Lord, His greatness, "divideth the flames of fire". That is, God divides the spears of war, which glint in the sun like fire; that is, He destroys or quells our enemies. His voice "shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh". Thus, He causes the deserts of Kadesh to fear and quake (a city in the far south of Judah), indicating the universal reach of God.

The voice of the Lord even makes deer to give birth; and the forests to be cut down bare. The people in His Temple speak about God's glory and worthiness to be praised. The sum total of all this is simply that God is King over all, and everyone must obey Him, including inanimate

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objects and animals.

Do you see God in this way? He is Lord of your life, whether or not you wish it to be, and whether or not you even believe He exists! Never give in to the unbelievers of this world, those whose sin is paramount in their lives, those who desecrate God's word and bring Him into disrepute.

Verse 11

1.

The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

God will give strength to His people and bless them with peace. In this verse, the "people" are not everyone, but only those who are elect. God does not give strength to the unbeliever – except when He uses them to punish His elect for straying away from His path. And only the elect will ever know peace of soul.

The "peace" here is *shalowm*. From the root *shalam*, it means not only to have peace but to be at peace with God, to be acceptable to God, Who promises to protect and love His people. It can also mean peace from war and things that disrupt, and peace with people. It does not mean we will be at peace with wicked men and women, those who are perverse, and those who hate God. However, God can and does place a barrier between us and the wicked at times, to give us refuge.

When we are faced with the wicked, we must speak truth and stand firm as believers, no matter what the cost. Then, God gives us inner peace so that we are not inwardly harmed or brought down, but made stronger spiritually. The ungodly fear this kind of peace and hate it, for they know they cannot destroy us. We must trust God implicitly, and then He will protect us.

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