

Psalm 29 – The Sovereign over the Storm

Intro:

1) Storm Chasers

- a. We love watching that show
- b. Something about the magnitude and magnificence of those storms are enticing
- c. Truth – we love to watch those storms on TV
 - i. We would not want to experience them in reality
 - ii. It would no longer be enticing, it would be frightening

2) Did you know – astraphobia (the intense fear of thunder and lightning) ranks in the top 10 phobias in the US

- a. Data tells us its somewhere around the 4th or 5th top fear
 - i. Coming behind – animals, heights, enclosed spaces, and flying

3) Many people find thunderstorms to be a thing of fear

- a. Rightfully so – storms can produce a mass amount of damage to property and life

4) As children, many of us struggled with the fear of thunderstorms, but as we grew into adulthood, our struggle with storms have shifted

- a. Atmospheric storms are no really a major struggle for many of us
- b. Now – our struggle is found in the storms of life
- c. Life-storm: a situation, struggle, or issue you face that comes up against you
 - i. Many of you are either facing these storms right now or have recently faced one

5) In Ps 20 it appears that David is recording the effects of a storm that he is watching

- a. The thematic picture of the chapter is that of a storm
- b. The uniqueness of this chapter – David isn't merely watching the weather and recording it, he is interpreting the weather and giving insight into Who is sovereign over the storms
- c. Another way to say it – David is not interpreting the storm atmospherically or situationally – he is interpreting it theologically
 - i. The unbeliever sees this sight and says – “Oh what a storm!”
 - ii. David sees this sight and says – “Oh what a God!”

6) In this passage David is using the reality of this storm to remind us of the steadfastness, security, and sovereignty of God

- a. This is interesting – up to this point, most of David’s writings in the Psalms were focused on pleas of help, concerns over his enemies, cries for deliverance, petitions for intervention
 - i. But in Ps 29 – the sole focus is on the praise of God
 - ii. David is penning Ps 29 to bring to mind the reasons we have to praise God
 - 1. Even in the storm
- b. “This Psalm has no other elements. It is pure praise. It does not call upon us to do anything because the Psalm itself is doing the only thing it is concerned about. It is praising God.” – James Montgomery Boice
- c. The uniqueness about Psalm 29 is that the very thing which causes significant fear in many people – the thunderstorm – is what David uses to display the overwhelming power and majesty of God who is worthy of praise
- d. “This Psalm is meant to express the glory of God as heard in the pealing thunder, and seen in....a tornado....The verses march to the tune of thunderbolts.” – Spurgeon

7) Q – Why compare the loving, merciful, gracious God of Scripture to a violent and roaring thunderstorm?

- a. Because of One, True God is not a God you and I can lead around on a leash
- b. He is not a puny God – He is the God of glory that thunders (V3)
- c. Truth - This psalm helps correct any low view of God we might be carrying into the storms of life

8) Psalm 29 teaches us that focusing on Who God is in the storms that are happening can prompt praise rather than panic

- a. Sermon: The Sovereign over the Storm
- b. Text: Psalm 29:1-11

A Reverence for the Supremacy of God – V1,2

1) In the opening verses of this text, David is giving a call to glorify and worship the LORD

- a. It is in these verses that we are first reminded of the supremacy of God
- b. Notice – David issues a repeated word in these verses 3 times – “give”
 - i. Give – ascribe or attribute
 - 1. Stated as an imperative
 - ii. Why issue such a command?
 - 1. David opens this Psalm by specifying, with clarity, the who, what, and why of giving glory to God

We see the supremacy of God in the Persons that are Summoned to Worship – V1a

1) “O ye mighty” – Lit. sons of God- Heb. Ben + El

- a. Strange phrase to interpret
- b. Could be a reference to – those who think of themselves as mighty
 - i. People with a puffed up view of themselves
 - ii. The “high and mighty” people
- c. Could be a reference to the pagan gods and idols of the surrounding lands
 - i. “El” is a Hebrew word for deity, not an exclusive name for Israel’s God.
 - 1. Context determines who is being referenced
 - 2. Example – Ex. 34:14 – “For thou shalt worship no other god.”
 - ii. The phrase carried a reference to “pagan gods, the idols worshiped by Israel’s neighbors. David calls these foreign gods to bow down and worship YahWeh, the God of Israel. David puts these foreign gods in their place.” – James Johnston
 - iii. This may be a way in which David is correcting the temptation of Israel to pursue idols and pagan worship
- d. Could be a reference to angelic/heavenly beings – probable interpretation
 - i. Psalm 89:6 uses same phrase in context of angelic beings
- e. Regardless of how one interprets the phrase – the contrast is being made it clear
 - i. Whoever the “mighty ones” are – their “might” becomes insignificant when compared to the God of heaven

2) It’s fascinating to me that David starts this great Psalm of praise with this audience

- a. He doesn’t call first on Israel to praise God
- b. He doesn’t call on the nations to praise God
- c. He isn’t making the general call for “everything that hath breath” praise the Lord
- d. Rather – David says “Angels, praise Him!”
 - i. The Psalm is calling on those who sang at the dawn of creation to lead the way in praising the worth and omnipotence of the Creator – Job 38:7

3) The storm had not yet even been written about and David has already established the rightful position of God – Above all!

We see the Supremacy of God in the Praise that is demanded – V1

1) These high and mighty angels are called to give the proper glory due unto the name of God

- a. To give glory means to give renown and honor
 - i. Glory – weight/heavy (by extension – to be important), honor, esteem, majesty

2) Notice what is commanded

- a. Give – Yahab – ascribe, acknowledge, attribute
 - i. David is not calling on the mighty ones to somehow add to the glory and strength of God
 - ii. Rather – they are being commanded to rightfully acknowledge and ascribe God the glory that is already His
- b. Key insight to worship – worship doesn't make God glorious, worship is rightly recognizing the glory God already possesses

3) Notice Who is being worshiped

- a. V2 – the glory due unto His name
 - i. Name – not just what a person is called, it's a reference to who a person is
- b. One of the unique aspects about this Psalm is how many times David references the name of God
 - i. 18x's in 11 verses – God's personal, covenantal name is used - LORD
 - ii. If you add the use of pronouns and the mentions of God and King, you have God mentioned no less than 25 x's in these 11 verses
 - iii. David was getting at something – it is the God of the Bible and Him alone that should receive our praise and worship of His creation
- c. They are to worship Him rightly – according to His glory, strength, name, and beauty of holiness
 - i. Beauty of holiness – a reference to the visual splendor of God as a king in His robes
 - 1. When the Lord appears in glory, power, and holiness – the only right response is worship

Before David addresses the storm – He addresses the supremacy of God as high above all

1) Cultural reference – the imagery of the storm in the text being linked with the LORD God makes a statement on the supremacy of God

- a. In that region, the pagan god Baal was known and worshipped as the “storm god”
 - i. He was associated with storms, thunder, rain, and fertility
- b. By attributing the storm to the Lord and calling on Him name alone to be glorified, we are reminded that God is and always will be greater than all
 - i. Even the storms belong to Yahweh

A Realization of the Strength of God – V3-9

1) This Psalm is broken up into 3 main parts

- a. V1-2: Opening
- b. V3-9: Record of the storm
- c. V10-11: Conclusion

2) In the main section, V3-9, we are brought to behold the strength of God in the midst of the storm

3) What's unique here – the phrase “the voice of the Lord” is used poetically as a name for the thunder David is hearing in this storm

- a. Q – why?
- b. Many times in Scripture, thunder is likened to God's voice
 - i. Ex. 19:16-19 – At Sinai where God spoke to Moses “there were thunders and lightnings”
 - ii. 1 Sam. 7:10 – battle against the Philistines “the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day”
 - iii. Ps. 18:13 – “The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice...”
 - iv. Job 37:4,5 – “After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of His excellency; and he will not stay them when His voice is heard. God thundereth marvelously with His voice....”
 - v. John 12:28-30 – The people equated God's voice to thunder
- c. It's clear by the David referred to the thunder as “the voice of the LORD” that what he heard reminded him of the mighty voice of God

4) Also fascinating – there is a deliberate sevenfold repetition of the phrase “the voice of the LORD”

- a. 7 is the biblical number of completion
- b. Speaking on the mightiness of the storm and the glory and strength of God – there is an undertone of the omnipotence of God (complete strength) seen here in the format
- c. IOW – in David's mind, this mighty storm is dominated by one sound: God's mighty voice
- d. By calling the thunder “the voice of the LORD” we are reminded of God's strength to speak over and through the storms in our life

The Voice of the Lord RISES over the water – V3,4

1) “upon the water”

- a. Literally – could be a reference to the fact that this storm David is hearing and watching is currently over a body of water getting ready to make land fall
 - i. That’s actually the movement of the storm we see in the text

2) It is made clear in V3 the position of God in the midst of the storm – UPON the waters

- a. Upon – Heb word used as a marker of relationship
 - i. Shows you where one thing is in relation to another
 - ii. Preposition – a word that denotes a relationship between a noun/pronoun and another word

3) The lesson here – the waters are not over Him, He resides over the waters

- a. Significant – many times in scripture, water is used as imagery for something uncontrollable, dangerous, and chaotic
 - i. Ps. 46:2,3
 - ii. Ps. 65:7
 - iii. Ps. 93:3,4
- b. Even what appears to be chaotic in our life – God is still over it

4) Notice how David characterizes the voice of God in V4

- a. Powerful – strength, power, might, ability
- b. Full of majesty – splendor, glory, used of an object that is beautiful and instills awe
- c. Notice there’s a balance presented here
 - i. God’s voice isn’t just mighty, it’s majestic
- d. Statement –God exercises power while possessing the character worthy of that power

The voice of the Lord RIPS through the forest – V5,6

1) V5 speaks again to the strength of God over the storm

2) Evidently this storm was so mighty that is shattered mighty trees

- a. Cedars of Lebanon – iconic and symbolic trees that grow in the forests of Lebanon
 - i. The trees often represented: strength and durability
 - ii. They could grow to 130ft. high
 - iii. Have base trunks 8-10ft in diameter
 - iv. Known for their ability to deter bugs by their oil making them durable and resistant
- b. David’s palace used cedar – 2 Sam. 5:11
- c. Solomon imported them for his temple – 1 Kings 5

3) These trees were seen a symbols of might and power

- a. Yet notice what God’s voice does – breaks them
 - i. Break – to smash into pieces

- 4) **V6 furthers this imagery of the power of God's voice revealing how it impacts even the mountain ranges**
 - a. Lebanon – could still be a reference to the cedars
 - b. Sirion – the Sidonian name for Mount Hermon
 - i. Explicitly stated in Deut. 3:9
 - ii. Hermon rising more than 9,000 feet above sea level
- 5) **So David's imagery escalates**
 - a. First the trees break
 - b. Now the mountains shake
- 6) **Notice how David describes the impact of God's voice on these seemingly immovable objects**
 - a. Skips like a calf – if you've never seen it, it's a sight – all clumsy, awkward, all over the place, yet joyful
 - b. Unicorn – some one-horned animal, great and mighty
 - i. Probably turns slow – as it is equated to the mountains
- 7) **Sentence – the things that appear immovable to you and I are movable to God's voice**

The Lord's voice RENDS the heavens – V7

- 1) **Divides – to hew out, to cut out, refers to a lightening strike as it cuts the sky**
 - a. Poetically – the voice of God cleaves the sky with fire
- 2) **V7 is fascinatingly short – it almost flashes across this text like a burst of lightning**

The Lord's voice ROCKS the wilderness – V8,9

- 1) Shakes the wilderness – turn in a circle, to twist, to revolve, word used to describe labor pain**
 - a. Could be a reference to a tornado or at least rotational winds
 - b. This storm is mighty – you can almost feel it in the text
 - c. Hinds to calf – storm is so terrifying that it induces premature labor in does
 - i. Connection to the word “shake”
- 2) Notice the geographical movement of this storm**
 - a. It was over a body of water – probably the Mediterranean sea
 - b. Moves north across Lebanon/Hermon
 - c. Now – reaches south to Kadesh
- 3) Look at the impact of this storm**
 - a. Discoverth the forest
 - i. Uncover, expose, make clean, to strip bare, clear it out
 - b. Imagery of this storm ripping leaves, branches, and vegetation away until the forest stands bare

The Lord's voice RESULTS in worship – V9

- 1) What a transition**
 - a. Outside – thunder, lightning, violent wind, bare forest
 - b. Inside the temple – GLORY!
 - i. The Hebrew is extraordinarily compact: And in His temple, all of it says: Glory!
- 2) Picture before us**
 - a. To the world – storms seam chaotic, uncontrollable, and cause massive damage
 - i. All they can see is the damaging effects
 - b. To the worshipper – our gaze goes beyond the storm and looks to God in praise

A Resting in the Sovereignty of God – V10

1) V10 seems to be the theological climax of the Psalm

- a. It is a reminder of God's sovereign control over all the earth

2) Understand the picture

- a. This phrase comes after the devastating effects of the storm
 - i. The storm blows things over, breaks the forest, bows the trees and mountains
- b. Yet – where is God?
 - i. Sitting upon the flood
 - ii. Keep a mindful watch when Scripture talks about the position of God
 - 1. Sitting – either completed action or at rest
 - 2. IOW – This storm which shakes all of creation does not remotely shake the Lord
 - iii. To heighten the image – notice where God is sitting
 - 1. As King forever
 - 2. He is not just arbitrarily sitting – He is seated as King!

3) V10 simply speaks the truth that no matter how high the water rises around you – it never overtakes the throne of God

- a. IOW – What overtakes us, doesn't overtake God
 - i. "When the water is over your head, it's still under His feet"

A Regard for the Supply of God – V11

1) In Verse 11 we see the supply of God towards His people

- a. Give – not the same word as in V1,2
 - i. Means – to add, to send forth
 - ii. IOW – God is supplying something here
- b. What does God supply – strength
 - i. He gives us what we need to weather the storm and make it through
 - 1. Q – What do you run to when the storms of life come?

2) Notice how this Psalm concludes

- a. Bless – in one sense, it refers to the benevolent greeting from one person to another
- b. How does God greet His people in the storm?
 - i. Peace – Shalom – to be in good health, security, comfort, wholeness

3) Fascinating that the final word in this Psalm is "Peace"

- a. Not what you would expect from a damaging thunderstorm
 - i. Normally we are left to salvage from the damage
 - ii. Yet – when we reverence the Supremacy of God, when we realize the Strength of God, when we rest in the Sovereignty of God, we can regard the Supply of God – PEACE

Closing

- 1) This whole Psalm is about a raging, violent, damaging, panic-causing storm, yet through it all, God brings peace**
- 2) Your life may resemble this Psalm**
 - a. Unsettled, ravaged, overwhelming floods, uncontrollable winds
 - b. But God gives peace
- 3) Most of the time, the encouragement you receive when facing troubled waters is – Hold on**
 - a. 18 x's here David directs our gaze to the Lord
 - b. Where you look effects what result you have
 - c. Ephesians 2:14 – For He is our Peace – Gospel