

THE THUNDERSTORM PSALM

(Sermon Summary)

Preacher: Josiah Bell, Melbourne Hall, Leicester.

Reading: Psalm 29.

We can call this Psalm 'The Thunderstorm Psalm.' For it describes the effects of a thunderstorm. In this way it shows to us the greatness of God. We are to behold our God as we are instructed in Isaiah 40:9.

1. A call to worship.

How often do we think about angels? Probably they do not feature as a main point in our theology. We are not conscious of their reality on a daily basis. The Bible is balanced. It speaks about them but does not speak about them a lot. But these are the mighty ones of v1. And they exist for the glory of God. They are to give glory and strength to God. What does this mean? For the truth is we can give nothing to God and can add nothing to Him. In a sense we praise Him because he does not need anything! Glory is given to Him in Nehemiah 9:5. If someone is needy it does not call forth our admiration. We admire people who are more gifted or intelligent than we are. We look up to God and admire Him precisely because He is not needy and does not need praise.

So if angels, mighty in power and un-fallen, are called to give glory to God, how much more we! How can we take pride in anything in ourselves? Angels are willing to comply with the instruction as we see in Revelation 5:11. They sing 'Worthy is the Lamb.' I live in Leicester, and when Leicester City are playing at home and score a goal, the united roar of the crowd can be heard across the City Centre. The sound of giving glory in heaven is vastly more important and regards a far more significant happening. These angels have never fallen and yet they praise. We praise as we have been saved from our sins.

Exodus 34:6-7 gives us in the Old Testament reason to praise. This is a revelation of God's Name, who He is. There is the unflinching justice of God but also the kindness and mercy. If David called people to worship, how much more should we heed this who have the benefit of knowing of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

The life of holiness spoken of in v2 is the response to what we behold in God. It is called forth because of the revelation of the Name of God as we see it in the Jesus Christ.

2. Reasons to praise God.

These are found in vv5-10. This is the part where we see the thunderstorm, which is to be found in the frequent references to the 'voice of the Lord.' In this section we can follow the thunderstorm, developing out over the sea, and then going inland with all the powerful effects it has. All of the works of the thunderstorm are under the command of God. It is a big event, but it is God who upholds it. These big events speak of the glory of God, but they are not the glory itself. God is a living God and is always working. We are puffed up and think that we are everything. Here is the thunder reminding us to say 'Glory' to Him. We would not be able to see God and live, and so God gives us hints of who He is in nature, and these are meant to humble us.

3. A surprising conclusion.

Vv10-11 are a surprising conclusion to what we have been learning about the glory of God. The thunder has pushed us down into our proper place. We might expect to be told that we are unworthy or that we should be more crushed than we are by the vision of the greatness of God. This is not what He does here. Instead, He has shown us His Son who has acted for us. He is the reason that we are able to get up and to carry on. It is the Lord who gives strength and peace to His people. We walk in discouragement more than we should. But here is God giving us mercy. We deserve the stick, but He gives us supper instead.

This promise of strength and peace is not just for heaven but is for now. Through this we are able to face everything that comes at us. Peace comes into our lives. Strength comes to us when we are unhappy with who we are and with our sin.

We should not, in the face of difficulty, just bunker down. We should be confident in the promises of God. So whom will we trust? The promises of God or our feelings?