

## KING FOR EVER

Last Lord's Day, the One-hundred Seventeenth Congress of the United States of America began its session. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver of Missouri, a Methodist minister, gave the opening prayer, and he ended his prayer with these words: "Amen and a-woman." Cleaver's play on words was childish and irreverent, and many rightly mocked him for it. Lost on many, however, was the sinister nature of his invocation. He prayed, "We ask it in the name of the monotheistic God, Brahma, and gods known by many names by many different faiths." A congressman and Methodist minister opened the Congress by invoking heathen gods. Three days later, an angry mob stormed the Capitol building and occupied it for several hours, and a man known as 'QAnon Shaman,' tattooed with heathen symbols, stood triumphantly on the dias of the House Chamber. QAnon Shaman, whose legal name is Jacob Chansley, has called himself "a shamanic practitioner and energetic healer," and "a multi-dimensional or hyper dimensional being." He has said of himself, "I have been on the shamanic path for over a decade and have numerous different capabilities and gifts at my disposal." Among those gifts, he claims, is the ability to see pedophiles lurking in other dimensions. Congress invoked demons, and demons appeared. Our nation is in turmoil. Wicked men rule it, and those wicked men were elected by wicked people. This is a dark time for the nation, and signs indicate that a storm is coming. God is the God of storms, however, and he brings His faithful people safely through every one.

There is only one true God, and everything else that exists He created. The Scriptures begin with the words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) God alone is worthy to be worshipped, and throughout Israel's ancient history He labored to impress upon them this simple fact. Moses told them, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5) Jesus, the Son of God, taught that this is the first and great commandment. (Matthew 21:38; Mark 12:29)

God is almighty, and as God Almighty He sometimes made Himself known. When God appeared to Abraham to give him the sign of circumcision, He said to Abraham "I am the Almighty God." (Genesis 17:1) When Isaac blessed Jacob, he said to him, "God Almighty bless thee." (Genesis 28:3) When God appeared to Jacob at Luz, He said to him, "I am God Almighty." (Genesis 35:11; see also 48:3) God told Moses that He appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty. (Exodus 6:3) God is Almighty. He is all-powerful. He is, in theological terms, omnipotent. This does not mean that God can do anything, for the Scriptures quite clearly teach that there are some things God cannot do. God cannot do anything contrary to His own righteous nature. Saint James taught that God cannot be tempted to sin, nor tempt a man to sin. He wrote, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." (James 1:13) God cannot lie. (Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 6:8; Titus 1:2) Louis Berkhof defined the Ordered Power of God as, "that perfection of God whereby He, through the mere exercise of His will, can realize whatsoever is present in His will or counsel." In simple terms, that God is omnipotent means that "He can do all his Holy will." (*The Children's Catechism*)

God is the Almighty who created the heavens and the earth, and so owns and governs them. When Abraham liberated his nephew Lot from his captivity to pagan kings, Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and said to him, "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. (Genesis 14:19, 20) When Sarah doubted God's promise to give her a child in her old age, she scoffed. God asked her, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14) When God renewed His covenant with Israel, Moses said to them, "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is... For the LORD your God is

God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.” (Deuteronomy 10:14, 17) King David wrote in the Book of Psalms, “For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.” (Psalms 95:3-5) In the Book of Psalms it says, “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.” (Psalm 115:3) And again, it says, “For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.” (Psalm 135:5, 6) Shortly before King David died, he prayed to God:

Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. (1 Chronicles 29:11:12)

When the Moabites and the Ammonites attacked Jehoshaphat king of Judah, he prayed to the Lord, “O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?” (2 Chronicles 20:6)

The Scriptures do not teach that God created the world with some inherent power to sustain itself. God created the world, and He also sustains it. Saint Paul wrote of the Son of God, “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Colossians 1:17; see also Hebrews 1:3) God sustains the world, and He causes it to function as it does. He causes nature to operate with uniformity, which is to say, consistently and predictably. The entire One-hundred Fourth Psalm tells of God’s control of nature, even causing food and drink to nourish man and animal. It says, “He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.” (Psalm 104:14, 15) God, after destroying the world with a flood, made a covenant with Noah and his descendants in which He promised this uniformity. He said, “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” (Genesis 8:22) Jeremiah the prophet said that God “giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar.” (Jeremiah 31:35; see also 33:25) God controls nature, and causes it to serve His purposes, and for His glory. In the One-hundred Forty-eighth Psalm, it says, “Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word.” (Psalm 148:8)

God in His great power did create mighty beings, variously known as gods, sons of God, angels, and demons; but the might of those gods is subject to the Almighty. Saint Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (1 Corinthians 8:4-6)

Moses sang of the Israelites and their relation to God: “They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew

not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.” (Deuteronomy 32:16, 17) Saint Paul, writing to the Corinthians, referred to this passage from the Song of Moses. He wrote, “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.” (1 Corinthians 10:20)

In the Twenty-ninth Psalm, David sees the power and glory of God in something as mundane, and wonderful, as a thunderstorm. The first two lines read:

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

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

(Psalm 29:1, 2)

The mighty ones here are the sons of God, the angels, those mighty beings which God created, and which form His divine council. (1 Kings 22:19) They are mighty, for so God has created them; yet, they are not almighty, and David calls upon them to “give into the Lord glory and strength.” That is to say, he calls upon them to acknowledge God’s magnificence and power, and to praise Him for those attributes. God’s name is sacred to Himself, and He would have all men know it. So, David calls upon the host of heaven to give God’s name the glory it is due, which is to say, to give God the praise He deserves; they must worship Him in the splendor of His holiness. In the Ninety-seventh Psalm, it says, “Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.” (Psalm 97:7) To worship is “To adore; to pay divine honors to; to reverence with supreme respect and veneration.” (Webster) The word means ‘to acknowledge one’s worth.’ In the One-hundred Forty-eighth Psalm, it says, “Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. (Psalm 148:1, 2) The gods are great, but God is infinitely greater, and they ought to recognize the fact.

In the next seven lines, the main body of the Psalm, David refers to the voice of God in the thunderstorm seven times, the number of perfection.

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

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

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

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

The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

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

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. (Psalm 29:3-9)

When the thunderstorm comes, God comes with it. He is upon the waters of the storm, and the thunder is His voice, speaking of His awesome power and great majesty. The force of His wind is great enough to break apart the great cedar trees of Lebanon. He causes even the great mountains of Lebanon and Sirion shake. He brings the lightning from heaven to earth. As the storm moves south from Lebanon, it shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. It terrifies the animals, and causes them to go into labor prematurely. It strips the forests bare. The host of heaven in the temple of God glorify Him for His great power.

In the final lines of the Psalm, David concludes:

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

The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.  
(Psalm 29:10, 11)

In the Great Flood of Noah, God showed that he rules the world, and that He will tolerate the rebellion neither of men nor of gods. He was the cause of the Great Flood, and He is the one that rules the world always. After the Great Flood, there was calm, and there was the rainbow which was God's token of peace. When after the Exodus God appeared to Israel at Mount Sinai, He appeared to them in thunder and lightning, and smoke, and they were afraid. Moses said to them, "Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." (Exodus 20:18-20) God meant them no harm, but He did reveal to them His fearsome power so that they might obey Him. God brings the storms of life, and His people are not exempt. However, in the midst of those storms, He does not abandon His people; far from it. He gives them strength to endure, and He gives them peace of mind. When one observes a thunderstorm, he ought to be reminded of God's great power, and he ought to fear Him. But he ought also to be reminded that the storms of life come and go, and that God is the one that causes their beginnings and their ends, and for His own good and wise purposes. During a terrible thunderstorm, it is natural to have a sense of fear, but also to have a sense of fear of God, knowing that He is the almighty sovereign of the world. Yet, the one who trusts in God knows that God is neither capricious nor cruel, and that He has good reason for all that He does.

In the Year of Our Lord Seventeen-hundred Seventy-three, William Cowper wrote the hymn, *God Moves in a Mysterious Way*, a hymn about God's wisdom and power in creation and providence, which is understood by faith:

God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill;  
He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust him for his grace;  
Behind a frowning providence,  
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding ev'ry hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,

But sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make it plain

Let us always remember that God is on His throne, and the Son of God is at His right hand. Let us remember that God is working His wise will in the world, and the Son of God is subduing His enemies. Let us thank God that in the storms of life, God gives us strength and peace of mind.

Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.