

Thoughts From Other Minds:

7. In all approaches to God we should see that our hearts and behaviour be humble. In God's worship we cannot make too prostrate obeisance of our faculties of soul or body. If we regard any posture in prayer or praise more lowly and reverent than another, let us assume it. All the forms of expression in v. 7, teach us humility not only of mind but of body also. ... Let all our worship be solemn, not frivolous, awful not familiar, humble not arrogant. Yet acceptable worship has been offered to God in every posture. David sat before the Lord and offered an acceptable prayer, 1 Chron. 17:16-27. The ancients often stood with the hands lifted up towards heaven and their service was acceptable, Ps. 141:2. The publican stood, and lifted neither his hands nor his eyes to heaven, and yet he was heard. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, as he lay on his bed, and prayed, and God heard him.
8. Let us exhort and encourage ourselves to all right worship, by often thinking of the covenant relation of God to all his people. If we indeed adore him, he is our God, v.7.
9. Especially should we cherish right thoughts of the divinity of our Saviour, who is our Maker and our God, John 1:1, 3; 20:28; Col. 1:16.
10. In the Scriptures amazing urgency is manifest that men should pay immediate attention to the concerns of their souls, and that they should to-day hear God's voice, v.7. Compare 2 Cor. 6:1, 2; Heb.3:13. Nor is such urgency uncalled for. Many are so much like Pharaoh that even when they are suffering and in great distress, and the proposal is to pray for the removal of the plague, and they are called on to name a time, they say "to-morrow," Ex. 8:10. Jehovah now calls tenderly; to-morrow you may be in the land of silence. THE NIGHT COMETH WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK.
11. The voice of God, which it most behoves us all to hear, is the glorious gospel of the blessed God, v.7. In it the Father, Son and Holy Ghost send us messages of mercy, which it chiefly concerns us to know and embrace and which none can defer even for a moment, but at extreme peril and with great guilt. Compare v. 11; Heb. 10:28,29.
12. Many rest quite satisfied with themselves, because they are not revilers, blasphemers, drunkards, or otherwise openly profane and immoral, and think themselves in little danger. They forget that the very core of depravity is a hard heart, v.8. It is of itself just cause of everlasting banishment from God.
13. If men persist in sin, it must be in the face of many and awful examples of vengeance. ... Here we are told of nearly a whole generation who set out from Egypt and never reached the promised land. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Oh that men would be warned.

W S Plumer, Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on Psalm 95, *Psalms*, pp. 875-877.

Camperdown Noorat Terang Presbyterian Charge

10 January 2016

Sermon: 'Worship Him who is our Creator' (text: Psalm 95)

Scripture: Psalm 95:1-11; Hebrews 3:1-14:13

Sermon Notes

Introduction: Last Lord's Day we began a series of studies in some psalms that call us to worship God; I said then that in the Bible the words translated 'worship' mean 'to prostrate oneself as an act of submission to a recognised superior'.

We submit to God and then we serve him (cf. Matt 4:10). So 'worshippers' were sometimes called 'servers' - but clear translation into English sometimes requires 'worshippers', and sometimes 'worship' translates 'service' (e.g. Rom 12:1).

So: 1. *sometimes* 'worship' means 'service'; but usually it means 'to prostrate oneself'; 2. we must grasp the distinction between 'worship' and 'service'; and 3. it is never wise to build a teaching on only one English version of the scriptures.

1. Worship commanded

Our psalm is psalm 95: 1. because this psalm calls us to worship God as our Creator; and 2. because it calls us to test our worship. The first part of the psalm (vs. 1-7a) is a series of 'let us's' (vs. 1-2, v. 6); commands in which the speaker includes himself; David spoke with authority, by the Holy Spirit ('his' (v. 7b) with 'me' (v. 9)).

The first thing we are to hear from it is that God commands us to do these things together; we are to worship and read the scriptures and pray and sing praises alone and with our families—but we are also to do them together.

It may not always be easy for us to gather at the appointed time—but should put aside what we might otherwise want to do to do as God commands because :

1. He is the LORD, the rock of our salvation (v. 1b); 'LORD' is the covenant name of God; as 'the LORD' he delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt, and covenanted with them at Mt Sinai; he would be their God and they would be his people—and that covenant was ratified by the blood of animals killed as sacrifices.

He has delivered us from bondage to sin and Satan and he has covenanted with us to be our God, and this covenant is ratified by the blood of Jesus, his Son, shed on the cross—so why should we not as far as possible put aside everything else to come together to sing his praises and to worship him as his blood bought people?

2. He is the Creator who rules his creation (vs. 3-5); our culture has rejected God as Creator in favour of Darwinian Evolution, an 'explanation' intended to make the Creator unnecessary; Evolution says to the psalmist, "There is no God who made the sea or formed the dry land; they just happened, the result of time and chance."

Evolution parades as 'science', but it not science but an anti-God, anti-Christian philosophy. Evolution is assumed true, and the 'evidence', the data, is fitted into an

evolutionary framework to appear to support Evolution. Evolution is defined as 'change' and then all 'change' is used to 'prove' that Evolution 'created' all.

Evolution rules in our educational institutions and in the media; from the moment children begin to watch television they are indoctrinated in Evolution. Evolution has great power in our culture; to express 'doubt' about it ends careers and is the end of respect; unbelievers in Evolution are ridiculed as 'flat-earthers' or worse!

Evolution holds that the past can be explained by present processes—but the Bible teaches that God created in a miraculous way, by processes no longer operating. The Bible says 'God said 'and it was so'; no need for millions of years; he great power brought a fully functioning universe into being in only six days.

Many Christians have compromised by teaching that God used 'Evolution' to 'create' - but we have no need to be ashamed to believe the Bible's teaching about creation, for Evolution is unreasonable and unscientific, esp. in assuming that matter has always existed, and that life spontaneously emerged from non-living matter.

3. He is our Maker; he made us his people, his flock (v. 6-7); the psalm begins with joyful singing and shouting and thanksgiving and music and song—but it climaxes by calling us to cease our noise and worship God. Just as creation was a supernatural event, so God's making us his people, his flock, is a supernatural work.

He made us so by his word and Spirit; true, we were not asleep while it happened—we were listening to the gospel, learning that Jesus died for us, so that through faith in him we might be forgiven and reconciled to God, and we believed in Jesus—but it was God who gave us light and a new creation (2 Cor 4:6, 5:17).

2. Worship tested

Some might say, "But if God has so loved us, how can the climax of the response he asks of us be worship? Surely more is needed than worship?" No—and Yes: 'No', because worship is the first and foundational attitude we ought to have towards God, and 'Yes' because we can have the attitude of worship without worship.

Outwardly the people David was speaking to were the people of God, as we are; outwardly, they worshipped, as we do—but they were not really worshipping, and they were not really the people of God. They thought they were the sheep of his pasture, but they didn't hear his voice or follow him; hence the warning (vs. 8-11).

The rest God refused them was the rest of the Promised Land—but the *real* rest of God is the rest of heaven—and he gives this rest to all who persist in believing in Jesus his Son. That generation bowed its knee, but not its heart, and unbelief and rebellion followed (Ex 17:1-7, Num 13:26-14:35).

Are we really the sheep of his pasture? Jesus said, 'my sheep hear my voice and follow me' (Jn 10:27). He speaks by his word and Spirit; are we listening by daily reading of the Bible and obediently following him? Are we making every effort not to fall as those who (Heb 4:11) bowed without worshipping and fell by disobedience?

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My Notes:

Questions for Reflection:

1. How do we know from psalm 95 that God expects Christians to gather together to worship and serve him? Why isn't it enough for us to do it by ourselves, and/or in our families? (Cf. Hebrews 10:25).
2. What difference should the fact that the Lord is the rock of our salvation make to our willingness gather at the appointed hour for public worship?
3. Why is it not possible to believe in Darwinian Evolution and to worship and praise God according to this psalm? How does the world-view of the evolutionist differ from the biblical world-view? Why is the biblical world-view more reasonable and more scientific than that of Evolution?
4. What sort of 'making' does the psalmist have in view in verses 6-7? Reflect on 2 Corinthians 4:6 and 5:17 and the connections they draw between this creation and the first creation; how are they the same? how are they different?
5. How may we know if we are really the sheep of his pasture, the flock under his care? (John 10:27). Where and how do we hear the shepherd's voice so as to make every effort to enter the rest that God has provided for his people?