

Thoughts From Other Minds:

1. Right affections will find matter of adoration and praise in all the works of God, in all the aspects of nature. If "an undevout astronomer is mad," so is an undevout meteorologist, or geologist, or sailor, or warrior, or artisan, or husbandman. God is everywhere. His wonders are everywhere. All but the blind or perverse see and worship.
2. No creature, however exalted, is too high to acknowledge his absolute dependence on God for all that has given him ... v. 1. *What hast thou that thou hast not received?* is the universal and awful challenge.
3. Dickson: "Of all men, princes should be most careful to glorify God, and yet it is most rare to see them humble themselves before him." To this duty they are loudly called by the multitude of their blessings, and the solemnity of their account. "To whom much is given, of him shall much be required." But earthly potentates are greatly tempted by their high station, by the flatteries of courtiers, and by the corruption of the natural heart, which rejects God's easy reign.
4. Nor is there any danger that man or angel in the worship of God will exceed due bounds in ardour, humility or reverence, v. 1. Absolutely all perfection should be ascribed to him, who made us. Right worship is founded on the divine nature. To God belong *glory and, strength*, every excellence in an infinite degree.
5. It is as right that God should have all his dues as that men or angels should have theirs, v.2. To deny God's rights is most dangerous; nor should we pay him merely a part and not the whole of what he claims. He is infinitely amiable, and so should be unspeakably loved; he is infinitely powerful and majestic, and so is entitled to the most awful reverence.
6. We have made but little progress in religion till we see that there is a transcendent beauty in holiness, v. 2. ... it is the beauty of the Lord, and makes us like him. The superiority of angels over devils consists preëminently in the purity of the former and the corruption of the latter. Let our worship be to God, to God alone, ... full of humility, simplicity, reverence and confidence.
7. God should be recognized in all the works of his hands, both in creation and providence, in the greatest and in the least things, in the uniform and in the unusual course of nature, in the *waters* above the earth and under the earth, in the calm and in the storm, when he *thundereth*, v.3.
8. It is very marvellous that all sinners do not foresee and bewail the terrors that shall overtake them. If the thunder of God's power moves them so mightily here, can they hope to be unshaken in the day of wrath? v. 3. Experience shows that none are more easily overwhelmed with terror than those poor deluded souls, who commonly in the land of peace affect the greatest contempt of God and of heavenly things.

W S Plumer, Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on Psalm 29, *Psalms*, pp. 373-374.

Camperdown Noorat Terang Presbyterian Charge

17 January 2016

Sermon: 'Worship Him who is our King' (text: Psalm 29)

Scripture: Psalm 29:1-11; ; 2 Peter 3:1-18

Sermon Notes

Introduction: We have seen that generally speaking, 'worship' translates words that mean 'to prostrate oneself', this being 'worship' if to a divine person. Worship is the inner prostration of ourselves to God that leads to obedience (1 Jn 5:3).

Psalm 29 calls us to worship God as King, and sets before us the only worship acceptable to him: worship in the splendour or beauty of holiness (vs. 1-2, 10).

Sometimes in scripture 'mighty ones' ('sons of God') are angels (cf. Job 1:6), or rulers (Ps 82:6-7), or the people of God (Gen 6:2, 4; Deut 32:5-6, 8). God's Old Covenant people were his sons; if our faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are his New Covenant sons (Gal 3:26) - and so this psalm calls us to worship God.

While the NIV's 'his holiness' could be correct, 'his' is not in the Hebrew text. I take it as the holiness he requires of those who worship him.

1. God's glory worshipped

Psalm 29 is an extended call to worship; the first part (vs. 1-2) climax with the call to worship; the second part (vs. 3-9) tell of a revelation of the glory of God; and the third part (vs. 10-11) affirm that the Lord is King and gives strength and peace to his people—those who worship him in the splendour of holiness.

'Glory' is clearly important; we are to 'ascribe', or 'give' to the Lord glory and strength, the glory due to his name. Basically, 'glory' is 'heavy' or 'weighty'; a 'weighty' person was someone worthy of honour—a 'Mr Big'! Ascribing or giving glory was acknowledging someone was worthy of respect, attention and obedience.

God is the ultimate 'weighty person'; he is sovereign head of the universe, its Creator and King; he has made a name [reputation] for himself in the salvation of his people; therefore he is to be recognised as glorious (Ps 66:2-3, 79:9).

'Weighty' persons will appear as 'weighty', 'glorious'; God is 'weighty', and the visible revelation of his presence is his glory (Ex 40:34; Jn 1:14, 2:12, 11:40). We are to ascribe to the Lord the glory 'due to his name' (lit. 'the glory of his name'); we are to worship him in the splendour or beauty of holiness.

'Holy' is that which is 'set apart'; God is holy firstly because he is separate from his creation; he is not created; he is holy. Secondly, God is holy because he is separate from evil—and so holiness is firstly God's moral perfection; God shows himself 'holy' by his righteousness, by his doing what is right (Isa 5:16).

Everything associated with God is holy—set apart for him; so as his covenant people we are his saints, his 'set apart ones', and so we are to be holy (1 Pet 1:14-

16). So our submission to God, our worship of him, our acknowledging his 'weightiness', his glory, his majesty, is to be in the 'splendour' of holiness.

Traditionally, 'splendour' has been translated 'beauty' (cf. Rej 328, 'Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness'); the word comes from a root meaning 'ornament, splendour, honour'; so to say the 'splendour' or 'beauty' of holiness is not merely to say that holiness is attractive (which it is), but that it is fitting for the worship of him.

Homage without holiness is hypocrisy, bowing our body without bowing our heart, honouring him with our lips, but not with our lives. Under the Old Covenant this 'splendour' was represented in the forms of worship that God gave his people—but they mistook the form for worshipping in the splendour of holiness.

It is easy for us to make the same mistake; to suppose that beautiful buildings and splendid liturgy and beautiful music and singing make for worship in the beauty of holiness—but it is not so, for the beauty of holiness is not in such things; rather, it is in separation from evil to God (1 Thess 4:1-8; 1 Cor 6:18-7:1).

2. God's glory revealed

We should worship the Lord in the splendour of holiness because of his glory, his weightiness, his majesty—but he is in heaven; how do we *know*, how do we *feel* his glory, so as to work at being holy, to tremble before him? (Ps 96:9). David answers, "because his glory is revealed in his resistless power in the thunder storm" (vs. 3-9).

If we say 'this would have impressed the superstitious, but we know thunder is noise made by lightning, and lightning is only electricity, not God speaking' we reveal that we have lost our grip on God as ruler of his creation and the ultimate cause of all the secondary causes we can 'explain' by observation and experiment.

Our culture no longer recognises that God is actively involved in his world, and this mindset has penetrated the Christian community, so we tend to think naturalistically, rather than Biblically, looking to God as the ultimate cause of all things (Ps. 104:14-15); thinking naturalistically will lead to idolatry, the worship of creation.

3. God's glory trusted

Storms bring floods—but the Lord whose glory is revealed in storms rules over the flood; this word 'flood' used here is only used elsewhere in the scriptures of Noah's flood; perhaps the thought is that no storm, no matter how great, can bring another 'Flood' to destroy the earth, or us, because the Lord reigns over all, and he has promised, "Never again!" (Gen 9:15).

Whether our floods are of water or of trouble, we may rest in the certainty that they are under his control, for 'the Lord sits over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever', for he is weighty, his is the Lord of glory. If we respond to his glory by worshipping him in the splendour of holiness, the Lord will give us strength and peace—strength to endure the storm and peace afterwards.

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My Notes:

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can singing God's praises, praying and reading the bible read and preached both lead to worship of God and flow from the worship of God? Do these things 'work' this way in your experience of Christian living?
2. How may we be confident that although psalm 29 calls on the 'mighty ones' (sons of God) to worship God that we are included in that call? (Gal 3:26)
3. How does the fact that the basic meaning of the Hebrew word 'glory' is 'heavy' or 'weighty' help us understand 'glory' as 'worthy of worship' and as 'the visible revelation of God's presence'? (cf. Jn 1:14, 2:12, 11:40)
4. How did God give his Old Covenant people forms of worship to help them understand holiness? How did they misunderstand these forms and the reality of holiness? (1 Thess 4:1-8; 1 Cor 6:18-7:1).
5. How does David in this psalm show us that God has revealed his glory? (vs. 3-9). How do we answer those who say this is for the superstitious?
6. How do the closing verses of this psalm breath comfort and hope into our hearts in times of storm and tempest?