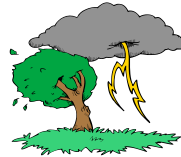


Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School
Placerita Baptist Church
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Psalm 29 — The Thunder of the LORD

1.0 Introducing Psalm 29

- Theophany means “an appearance of God.” In the Old Testament, a theophany was often accompanied by phenomena like thunder, lightning, dark clouds, fire, and earthquake. See Exodus 19:16-20 for the theophany at Mount Sinai.
- Repetition is the primary literary device used in Psalm 29. It “effectively builds excitement and intensity as the reader along with the poet is caught in the midst of the shattering pyrotechnic display of a rattling thunderstorm with repeated flashes of lightning and ear-splitting thunderclaps.”—Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms Volume 1*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 503.
 - ◆ **The LORD** (18x)
 - ◆ **The voice** (7x)
 - ◆ **Glory** (4x)
- According to W. Graham Scroggie (*Psalms* [Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1973 reprint of 1948 rev. ed.], 173), some of the 17th-century versions of the Psalter arranged a number of the psalms according to the month of the year. It was intended to provide a calendar of praise. Some of the months were as follows:
 - ◆ January: Psalm 147:16-17
 - ◆ April: Psalm 65:9-13
 - ◆ May: Psalm 104:13-14
 - ◆ July: **Psalm 29**
 - ◆ December: Psalm 90
- Psalm 29 should cause us to realize that our understanding of God as our Friend and Shepherd has too often deteriorated into a “buddy” relationship. We need to realize Who God truly is as the Creator, the Holy One, and Almighty God. It’s time to be overwhelmed by the power of His presence so that we shout (or whisper?) “Glory!” May Psalm 29 drive us to our knees before the Most High God.

2.0 Reading Psalm 29 (NAU)

29:1 A Psalm of David.

Ascribe to **the LORD**, O sons of the mighty,
Ascribe to **the LORD** **glory** and strength.

29:2 Ascribe to **the LORD** the **glory** due to His name;
Worship **the LORD** in holy array.

29:3 **The voice** of **the LORD** is upon the waters;
The God of **glory** **thunders**,
The LORD is over many waters.

29:4 **The voice** of **the LORD** is powerful,
The voice of **the LORD** is majestic.

29:5 **The voice** of **the LORD** breaks the cedars;
Yes, **the LORD** breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

29:6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
And Sirion like a young wild ox.

29:7 **The voice** of **the LORD** hews out flames of fire.

29:8 **The voice** of **the LORD** shakes the wilderness;
The LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

29:9 **The voice** of **the LORD** makes the deer to calve
And strips the forests bare;
And in His temple everything says, "**Glory!**"

29:10 **The LORD** sat *as King* at the flood;
Yes, **the LORD** sits as King forever.

29:11 **The LORD** will give strength to His people;
The LORD will bless His people with peace.



3.0 Understanding Psalm 29

3.1 Outline

- I. Prelude: Call to Worship (vv. 1-2)
- II. The Song of Seven Thunders (vv. 3-9)
- III. Postlude: Call to Praise (vv. 10-11)



3.2 Notes

- v. 1 "sons of the mighty"
 - Literally, "sons of gods." These are angels.
 - Cf. Psalm 89:6-7; Job 38:7.

- **vv. 1-2** “Ascribe ... Worship”
 - Derek Kidner says that “the former enlists the mind—indeed ‘hearts and hands and voices’—to declare the greatness of God, while the latter enlists the will to take the humble attitude of a servant.” — Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 125.

- **v. 2** “due to His name”
 - “The ‘name’ of the Lord, Yahweh, was his seal on the covenantal relationship between the Great King and his people Israel. ... The ‘name’ of God is a respectful reference to Yahweh in the demonstration of his ‘glory and strength.’” — Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. by Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 5:254.

- **v. 2** “in holy array”
 - Literally, “the splendor of holiness” (cf. “beauty of holiness,” KJV).
 - Occurs also in Psalm 96:9; 110:3; 1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Chronicles 20:21.
 - The picture is probably best taken as a reference to the angels’ garments (cf. Ezek 28:13; Dan 10:5; Acts 1:10).
 - Similar terminology is used in Proverbs 14:28 (“a king’s glory” — which could be a reference to the splendid robes of a king).

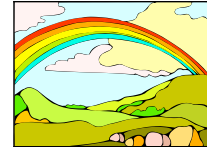
- **v. 3** “thunders”
 - Baal was the Canaanite storm god and god of war.
 - “Although the emphasis throughout vv. 3-9 is on the thundering voice of the Lord, the allusion throughout is to the weaker thunder of Baal.” — Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), 246.
 - Cf. Revelation 10:3-4.

- **v. 6** “Sirion”
 - Sirion is another name for Mount Hermon (see Deut 3:9).
 - The storm or theophany sweeps through all Israel from Lebanon and Sirion (in the far northern section of Israel) to Kadesh (in the far southern section of Israel).

- **v. 9** “makes the deer to calve”
 - The NIV has “twists the oaks.” This is the translation of a change in the Hebrew text which some suggest in order to make the parallel portions of this verse more consistent in a context filled with geographical and botanical allusions.



- There is no need to alter the Hebrew text. The same phraseology is found in Job 39:1 (“the calving of the deer”).
- v. 9 “Glory!”
 - “The organizing motif is ‘glory,’ which occurs at the beginning and end of the proclamation of God’s voice (vv. 3, 9). Glory summarizes the divine attributes. The ‘God of glory’ (v. 3, a unique variant of ‘king of glory’; see Ps 24:7-10) is a term for the display of God’s divine majesty in the world. Both the heavenly palace and the earthly temple chant ‘glory.’ The effect is sound rather than speech, but sound that communicates.” — Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001), 73.
- v. 10 “the flood”
 - This particular Hebrew word for “flood” is used only here and in Genesis 6–11 concerning the great flood of Noah’s day.
- v. 11 “with peace”
 - The psalm thus concludes with the power of God employed in judgment (the Flood) and in salvation (v. 11).
 - “With peace,” as the closing word of this psalm, “spans the Psalm like a rain-bow. . . . *Gloria in excelsis* is its beginning, and *pax in terris* its conclusion.” — Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 vols., trans. by Francis Bolton, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch (reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 1:373.
 - “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace” (Luke 2:14).



4.0 Singing Psalm 29

Storm and Thunder

(Verse 1: *Doxology*; Verses 2-6: *O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee*)
(Alternate Tune: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

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|---|--|
| <p>1 Give to the Lord, ye sons of fame,
Give to the Lord renown and power,
Ascribe due honors to his name,
And his eternal might adore.</p> | <p>2 The Lord proclaims his power aloud
Over the ocean and the land;
His voice divides the wat’ry cloud,
And lightnings blaze at his command.</p> |
| <p>3 He speaks, and tempest, hail, and wind,
Lay the wide forest bare around:
The fearful hart and frightened hind
Leap at the terror of the sound.</p> | <p>4 To Lebanon he turns his voice,
And lo, the stately cedars break;
The mountains tremble at the noise,
The valleys roar, the deserts quake.</p> |

5 The Lord sits sovereign on the flood,
The Thund'rer reigns for ever king;
But makes his church his blest abode,
Where we his awful glories sing.

6 In gentler language there, the Lord
The counsels of his grace imparts;
Amidst the raging storm, his word
Speaks peace and courage to our hearts.

— Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Wonderful Peace

1 Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight
Rolls a melody sweeter than psalm;
In celestial strains it unceasingly falls
O'er my soul like an infinite calm.

Refrain:

*Peace, peace, wonderful peace,
Coming down from the Father above!
Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray,
In fathomless billows of love!*



2 What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace,
Buried deep in the heart of my soul,
So secure that no power can mine it away,
While the years of eternity roll!

3 I am resting tonight in this wonderful peace,
Resting sweetly in Jesus' control;
For I'm kept from all danger by night and by day,
And His glory is flooding my soul!

4 And I think when I rise to that city of peace,
Where the Anchor of peace I shall see,
That one strain of the song which the ransomed will sing
In that heavenly kingdom will be:

5 Ah, soul! are you here without comfort and rest,
Marching down the rough pathway of time?
Make Jesus your Friend ere the shadows grow dark;
O accept of this peace so sublime!

— Words by W. D. Cornell
Music by W. G. Cooper

5.0 Praying Psalm 29

- Lord, help me to worship You in holiness (v. 2).
- O God, teach me to listen to You in Your Word and in the world around me (vv. 3-10).
- Father, thank You for strength and for peace (v. 11).
- O praise You, Lord, for Who You are.
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-
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Just as the eighth Psalm is to be read by moonlight,
when the stars are bright,
as the nineteenth needs the rays of the rising sun
to bring out its beauty,
so this can be best rehearsed beneath the black wing of tempest,
by the glare of the lightning,
or amid that dubious dusk which heralds the war of elements.

— Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols.
(reprint; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 1/2:29