**The perfectly glorious voice of the King**

Text: Psalm 29

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**Scriptures:** Psalm 29; Mark 4:35-41

**Songs Chosen:** [SttL] 359, 83, 328, 531+532

**Series:** Kingship psalms (#1)

**Theme:** In Psalm 29, David praises the LORD, the covenant God of Israel, the eternal King whose voice powerfully rules over His whole creation, giving life and blessing His people with strength and peace.

**Proposition:** Praise the Lord for the power of His Word and ask Him for strength and peace.

**Introduction**

Early in the morning of 9 April 1968, Cyclone Giselle hit Cape Reinga. Wind gusts of up to 160 kilometres an hour caused massive damage to houses and other buildings. With the wind came torrential rain, flooding the farmlands of Northland, and drowning hundreds of farm animals. The cyclone moved south, repeating the pattern of damage as it travelled across the North Island and down the East Coast. Ships were driven ashore, and landslips closed roads. The torrents of rain caused massive flooding, and the wind left a wake of torn-off roofs and broken windows. By the time Cyclone Giselle hit Wellington on the morning of 10 April, another storm had driven up the West Coast of the South Island from Antarctica. The two storms met over the capital city, causing huge amounts of damage and wrecking the inter-island ferry, [the Wahine](https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/wahine/), with the loss of 51 lives. As the storm moved onto the South Island hundreds of houses, in Christchurch lost their roofs and both the Avon and the Heathcote rivers flooded. Throughout Canterbury over 500 hectares of forest were destroyed.

Storm systems can be incredibly powerful today, as in times past.

Psalm 29 uses the vivid poetic imagery of a storm which begins forming over the Mediterranean Sea (v3), and then crosses over the hill country of Israel (v5-7) before expending the last of its force in the eastern desert (v8). This psalm praises, not this creation which displays the potent ‘forces of nature’, but the Creator whose universal power is made evident through a great thunderstorm as it sweeps across the sea to make landfall in the Middle East. We are going to see three truths about this psalm this afternoon:

1. This is a psalm about Divine rule
2. This is a psalm about God’s Word
3. This is a psalm about Christ

### This is a psalm about Divine Rule

We know that in this ‘post-COVID-19’ world there has been a huge upheaval globally. Many national leaderships have struggled to make good, timely decisions and to communicate these adequately to their populations. Even in a country like our own which is blessed with having almost eliminated the virus, questions still remain about how much ongoing ‘control’ our government can of the virus, the economy, and the wellbeing of New Zealanders. All human rulers are ultimately weak because none have complete control and authority of this creation. The world is fundamentally broken due to the effects of sin, the Apostle Paul expresses this reality in these words: “*we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth*” (Rom 8:22).

This world needs a ruler who has the power to sort out all the problems which face us. That ruler is the King who is the subject of Psalm 29. This psalm, together with the other seven psalms (47, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99) which I plan to preach on in this short series is often termed a ‘Kingship psalm’ because it especially focusses on the Kingship of the LORD. You can see how prominent the LORD’s name is in Psalm 29. If you count, you’ll find this name of God appears no less than 18 times in 11 verses!

This is the Hebrew name ‘YHWH’ – the name of the covenant God of Israel as first revealed to Moses from the burning bush. "*I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'*" (Ex 3:14). ‘I am who I am’ expresses the truth that God knows His own self-existent nature as the One who has sovereign authority over all else and who alone is the ultimate source of revelation. The name YHWH derives from the Hebrew verb ‘to be’ and is the personal name of the self-existent God being composed of four Hebrew consonants -YHWH. Reverence for the divine name of God led to the practice of using the word ‘Adonai’ which means ‘Lord’ to translate and speak His holy name. In most English translations you can easily recognise that the original Hebrew Scriptures refer to the name YHWH when you see the word ‘LORD’ in capitals.

Psalm 29 begins with a call to the heavenly beings to praise to the LORD who is glorious in His strength and holiness. *Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendour of holiness.* (v1-2). The Hebrew word translated ‘ascribe’ literally means ‘give’. It is not that God’s creatures give to Him glory or strength that He lacks, but rather that they attribute or render to Him what He is most worthy of; praise for His glory, strength, and splendid holiness.

We can see that this Psalm is about Divine Rule from verse 10: “*The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever*”. The flood is likely a reference back, firstly to the Creation where God rules over the watery mass of the earth (Gen 1:2), transforming chaos into an ordered world fit for life to flourish. Secondly, the flood brings to mind the judgement of God in the days of Noah when He caused the whole earth to be covered again with water (Gen 7:19) and then to recede leaving only eight people alive: Noah and his family.

YHWH, the covenant God of Israel, is the gloriously strong sovereign King who is forever enthroned in might over all His creation. Brothers and sisters, friends, He is most worthy of all praise! Psalm 29 is a psalm of about Divine rule. This is also a psalm about God’s Word.

1. **This is a psalm about God’s Word**

Big storms are very loud. There is the deafening sound of rushing wind, waves crashing on the shore, peals of thunder and the noise which trees and houses make when they are broken by the strong forces of a gale. The middle section of Psalm 29 is full of noise. The Hebrew word translated ‘voice’ in this psalm can also be rendered ‘sound’. It is the word which is used of the LORD God just after the fall from holiness of our first ancestors. “*And they heard the* ***sound*** *of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden*” (Gen 3:8). The very sound or voice of God had a profound effect on Adam and Eve. Hearing the sound their Creator made on this earth brought fear, shame and guilt as Adam says: "*I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself*".

The sound or voice of the LORD is likened to the sound of a huge storm in Psalm 29:

1. His voice is ‘over many waters’ (v3).
2. His voice is powerful (v4).
3. His voice is majestic (v4) – it is honourable, full of splendour and glory.
4. His voice breaks the tall cedars of Lebanon (v5) – symbols of strength in the Old Testament (e.g. Ps 92:12; Song of Songs 5:15; Isa 2:13; Eze 31:3)
5. His voice is bright like fire (v7) - a symbol of His holy presence (e.g. Ex 19:18; Rev 1;14)
6. His voice causes the earth to tremble (v8)
7. His voice gives life to the deer a graceful gentle creature (Prov 5:19) full of energy (Isa 35:6), able to climb up to high places (Hab 3:19)

Notice that the ‘voice’ of the LORD appears **seven times** in this Psalm. In Scripture, the number seven symbolises completeness or perfection. The King who is revealed in this psalm has a perfectly glorious voice.

As you read this psalm, you’ll notice that there are a number of place names: Lebanon, Sirion (another name for Mount Hermon (Deut 3:9)) and the desert of Kadesh. These geographical references are all located **outside** of the area of land controlled by Israel. The message is then clear. The LORD is the mighty creator who has all the forces of nature completely under His control, both within and outside of the promised land.

How does this Almighty King rule over the entire universe? By means of His voice, His Word. His Word is the means by which He first created all things visible and invisible (Heb 11:3). God reveals Himself through this Creation, as the product of His Word, as the Apostle Paul explains in Romans 1:20: “*His invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made*”.

His Word itself, as enscripturated in the Bible, is the special means by which God reveals Himself to mankind. This psalm is part of God’s breathed out Word, ‘*profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*’ (2 Tim 3:16). It is a psalm about God’s Word. This is also a psalm about Christ.

1. **This is a psalm about Christ**

Big storms are terrifying events. When a great windstorm arose on the Sea of Galilee, as recorded by Mark (4:35-41), Matthew (8:23-27) and Luke (8:22-25), the disciples of Jesus woke him up and said “*Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?*” (Mark 4:38). When the powerful voice of Jesus rebuked the wind and sea by simply saying ‘*Peace! Be still!*’, Christ completely calmed the storm. His disciples were ‘*filled with great fear and said to one another “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?*’ (Mark 4:31).

The effect of the command of Christ on the storm was terrifying to his disciples, just as the voice or sound of God was terrifying to Adam and Eve, because it exposed what they had really become; rebels who had no rightful place in God’s good world. They had resisted God’s rightful rule. They had not obeyed His Word of warning: “*of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*" (Gen 2:17).

Later in history, God made a promise to David, the author of Psalm 29. Like Adam and Eve, David was a rebel who had no place in God’s Kingdom, yet the LORD made this promise to a man who was a forgiven sinner: “*When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*” (2 Sam 7:12-13).

Christ Jesus is the promised great descendant of David who is ‘enthroned forever’. It is because Jesus willingly submitted Himself to His Heavenly Father’s rule, always obeying the voice of God the Father, even unto death, that “*God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil 2:9-11).

It is **in Christ** that David’s prayer at the end of this psalm is answered. “*May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!*” (v11). It is because of Jesus, that the LORD God does give strength to His people and blesses them with peace. He is the King who has conquered sin and death and who reigns over the whole universe. His rule is not acknowledged by many people today, but the time is coming when all will see Him for who He is, and all will confess that ‘Jesus Christ is Lord’ (Phil 2:11). When a storm is approaching, the wise seek shelter. The only place to be safe in the coming storm of God’s judgement is to be in Christ. Ultimately, He Himself is the sanctuary spoken of in verse 9 where “*in his temple all cry* ‘*glory!*’”.

Having heard the voice of the Lord in Psalm 29 today, what is your response to the perfectly glorious voice of the King? Fear, shame and guilt, **or** faith, trust and confidence in Him?

This world needs a ruler who has the power to sort out all the problems which face us. That ruler is the Christ. Ultimately, He is the calmer of all storms. He is the One who gives strength and who blesses His people with peace. In Him, brothers and sisters, we are completely safe and secure.

AMEN.