

Ascribe to the Lord
Psalm 29
January 12, 2025

We have Psalm 29 today. It is a Psalm of David. He begins with the sentence, "Ascribe to the LORD". It then goes on in the next couple of verses to glory and strength and the Lord's name. Yes, we want to ascribe these things to the LORD. Glory, strength, His very name which points to His eternalness.

Today we also want to celebrate the baptism of Jesus and His ministry that we see starting with His baptism and His 40 day life in the wilderness. We look to this day of His baptism as the start of most of His life. Sure, we have the account of His birth and the wise men and His stay in Egypt with only the few days He spent in Jerusalem when He was 12 years old, otherwise most of what we know about Jesus' life is after this day at the Jordan River when John baptized Him.

At the river that day, the Lord spoke from heaven about His Son, of His pride in coming to do what was planned for Him to do and that was to save the people from their sins. That is what the name Jesus means. He is the one promised way back in the day Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. God promised a Son, born of a Virgin who would make things new.

God was pleased that Jesus was now doing what was planned. In what He was doing, more glory and strength would be attached to that name, which would cause all to bend the knee in honor of Him and what He would do.

Yes, the Gospel lesson would be the beginning of the ministry life of Jesus but the text for today is not from Luke but from Psalm @9, a psalm of David. Glory and strength are associated with God and as we see throughout His ministry to Jesus, the second person of the Trinity as well.

David speaks of glory and strength and of the name of the Lord and this gives us reason to ascribe this to the Lord. We know that the LORD fulfills all this perfectly. But what about the rest of it?

We look to the glory and strength of the Lord throughout time. If we look to the beginning of time we see His glory and strength in creating all things. If we can imagine what it was like, which I don't think we can fully do, everything was perfect. Everything that we have now and then some as the Lord has, throughout time, allowed men to discover the intricacies of what God created in the beginning.

I know there are those who think it is their own smarts, their own figuring that has created great things but everything created by man is only possible if God had put things into creation for man to use to create, not out of nothing as God did in the beginning but creating, using what God has already created.

Yes, we think of things like electricity and atomic energy, of things like fiber optic cable and even something in its infant stages, Artificial Intelligence. It was all there, just waiting for the Lord to have man wonder, investigate, experiment and risk time and money as they sought to bring something new that would benefit mankind, even though much of it could be used for evil as well as good.

We think of all this and what will come our way and give glory to God for creating in such a way that these things could benefit His creation and especially those who have found out what is out there to be used for mankind, good and bad.

We think of the LORD as being the ultimate example of good. We know of God and His working in the Old Testament with His chosen people, the Israelites. We know they were looking to the coming of Jesus, the Messiah and even though they broke faith with God so many times, the promise was still there.

We have this Psalm of David which begins with ascribing the Lord glory and strength. It has that, but then it goes into the voice of the Lord. We know that the voice of the Lord is what created everything as it was the spoken Word that created it all. Genesis 1:3 *And God said:* is the phrase God uses to begin each day of creation up until the last day of creation when He said: *Then God said*, as He finished up creating on the sixth day. We read who the Word was and it was Jesus who John writes about in his gospel, John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* And in verse 14 of the same book and chapter: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

The glory of God is now found in His Son our Savior. We see that in all that Jesus did for us as we read of all the accounts where Jesus worked in this world to prepare it for His going to the cross. This is His ultimate glory even though it was such an evil way to have the life of an innocent man taken.

This wasn't the only time that God showed His glory and strength in something that many would consider evil or definitely not too kind. We know of how it didn't take long before Adam and Eve had to deal with death. Yes, they had the first death, the

spiritual death but physical death came through their two sons where the oldest son, Cain, took the life of his brother because he was jealous of his relationship with God because of his offering.

Death, we see it as the ultimate evil and as we think of it being so bad. What did it take though, for the Lord to get the attention of His people at times? David eludes to this in the next verses of the Psalm for today. David tells us to ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name when he points out how the Lord uses His voice. We see it over the waters as the Glory of the Lord thunders. We associate thunder and water especially when it comes to what went on with Noah, but the Bible also talks of thunder when Moses was on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments where the thunder was accompanied by fire. It was fire and the thundering voice of God that struck fear into the people so much so that they only wanted Moses to deal with the Lord God.

If you were to look into the notes on these verses of this Psalm in the Lutheran Study Bible you would see that the voice breaking the cedars could mean that the Lord was breaking one of the objects of worship, of the Canaanites, the large cedars.

With the calf and the young wild ox, their skipping might just be the Lord causing the land of Lebanon and Sirion, or their mountains to be moved, by the Lord as with an earthquake or landslide. We know of the of the Lord and His flashing forth flames of fire on the mountain and the shaking of the wilderness like He did when He spoke through Moses and the ground opened up and swallowed Korah and all his family and possessions.

The Lord's voice is powerful, powerful enough to cause the deer to miscarry and the forests that people worship to be stripped bare and yet, in His temple the angels cry out "Glory".

We see all these times when the Lord causes all sorts of bad things to happen and yet we know that the Lord is good. So how can it be that He would cause even the babies to suffer and die?

We must never forget that Adam and Eve were given one command and not eat from that one tree or they would die. Each of us, all people deserve to die as each person who has ever been conceived is sinful and God has every right to require their lives from them.

I know many would consider babies and innocent. The Lord doesn't see them that way. The sin they have inherited from their parents is sin that puts them in the

category of those who deserve hell and if there was no way to save them, that is where they and we would find ourselves.

Maybe this would be enough for some to turn their backs on the Lord if it weren't for one thing, the Lord's voice that spoke from heaven that said: *You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased*". God the Father was pleased that the time had come for Jesus to live the perfect life and set His sights on His death on the cross for the sins of the whole world.

We think of that as a terrible day for Jesus and yet He went to that cross willingly, looking forward to the sins of the world to be covered by His sacrifice. We see that cross as a cross of glory where God did His most glorious work, His work of salvation for us and the whole world.

Yes, we see it as a bloody tool of evil and yet Christ made it something great for all. Why else would a person wear a gold image of that cross. Why would there be so many crosses made to hang on walls. Why would a person tattoo a cross on their skin or why would we have a cross made that we hang from wires over the altar? It is a reminder of the way Jesus died for us and our sins and the three days in the tomb before He rose and ascended, so that we could die, and rise to new life in Him?

Today we remember His baptism and His life lived for us. We know that we ascribe to Him the glory due His name as we do to the triune God. The Lord blesses with good things as well as bad. Yes, the bad comes and yet the Lord uses the bad to bless, to bring those who sin to a knowledge of sin and the resultant asking for forgiveness and there is then the desire to change sinful ways in exchange for the way of the Lord.

We can ascribe what we consider good as well as bad to the Lord. We know He is God and if He chooses to use evil for the good of His people, who are we to argue as we know we are sinners who if it weren't for Him, we would be lost, swallowed up in our graves that would lead to hell.

We have been baptized, made a part of the family of God, baptized, delivered from our sin and given eternal life. The Holy Spirit has created faith, saving faith in us so that we too can ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name, to His glory and strength.