

Session 6 Spirit of Revelation: David Perceives God's Beauty

INTRODUCTION

“The Spirit of Revelation: David Perceives God’s Beauty.” We’re going to look at Psalm 19 and Psalm 29. Let’s look at Psalm 19 to begin with. The new anointing upon David gave David a new ability to perceive the beauty of the Lord. The anointing of the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to see the beauty of the Lord throughout His works and throughout His creation. David now looks at the same things he used to look at casually with an enlightened heart. He gazes on them now with an illumined mind. I don’t mean that he’s so in another world that no one can relate to him anymore, but David looks at the sky and he sees the handiwork of God. He always understood that the Lord was the author of the universe, but as the Spirit of the Lord is drawing him close to the heart of God, he looks up there and he sees something new when he looks to the heavens.

BEHOLDING THE BEAUTY OF THE CREATOR IN THE WORKS OF HIS CREATION

That’s what we want the Word and the Spirit of God to do, to renew our minds so that we can see the beauty of the Lord literally all through the works of the Lord. That was one of the hallmarks of some of the great men and women of history, their ability to worship the Lord when they perceived His beauty through His creation, through the works of His hands. Now we all do that a little, but my goal in this session is to give us awareness that there’s more, much more, that God would show the illumined heart. There’s much more that the heart of a lover will see when they look at the works of the One they love. It’s more than just, “Isn’t that flower beautiful?” It’s more than that, because unbelievers can recognize that a flower is beautiful in itself. That’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about seeing the sunset or seeing a flower and being brought into the understanding of the beauty of the One who created it, not just the flower itself. Humanists can see creation and beauty, but they don’t see the heavens as the work of His hands. They see the heavens as merely the process of evolution.

Psalm 19 is one of the great Psalms. I know I’ve said that about eight times already tonight. The truth is, I’m bringing you in this course to the well-known, famous psalms that most of the scholarship throughout Christian history has spent its time on. Certainly Psalm 19 is one of those. David has studied three different books on the beauty of the Lord. There are three different books, figuratively speaking, that David has studied while he has tended the sheep of his father Jesse. Psalm 19:1-6 describes the book of creation, the book of nature. He has looked up to the heavens and studied with devotion the book of creation, if you will. He sees the beauty of the handiwork of God. He sees God’s heart. He sees God’s skill, God’s design.

THE BEAUTY OF A WORSHIPING HEART IN VOLUNTARY LOVE WITH GOD

The second book that David studied in his early life as a young man is the book of Scripture (Ps. 19:7-11): the Torah, the five books of Moses. He studied the book of Scripture. The third book that David studied is the book of the worshipping heart (Ps. 19:12-14). He studied the human processes of the worshipper and what happens on the inside when a worshipper encounters the beauty of God in creation, the beauty of God in the law of God, in the Word of God. There’s a beauty that begins to emerge in the very heart of the worshipping lover of God. It’s the beauty of being a voluntary lover of God. Undoubtedly one of the greatest statements of mature voluntary love ever recorded in the Scriptures is recorded there in Psalm 19:14. David says, “I want to go all the way. I want to go to the very innermost part of my being where my thoughts and my words are acceptable” (Ps. 19:14, paraphrased). Another version says *pleasing*, but it’s the same word. “It’s where the very thoughts and the very utterances of my mouth bring pleasure to You, God.” There’s no greater crowning achievement of

maturity than when words and thoughts are captured into the river of God's love. Obviously, that's the ultimate; that's the pinnacle. That's the book of the worshipping heart. That's mature bridal love at its height. That's what happens to the 144,000 in Revelation 14. Whether that number is literal or figurative or both, the Lord has such ability to operate on a number of levels at one time.

GOD'S ASTONISHING ABILITY TO SPEAK ON TEN OR TWELVE DIFFERENT LEVELS

Concerning the book of Revelation, people tell me there are three or four main theories of the book of Revelation. Some people say the book of Revelation was all fulfilled in the first century. There's quite a theory as to how that symbolism was fulfilled in the first century.

Other people say, "No, it was fulfilled through the last 2,000 years of church history. For 2,000 years it has progressively unfolded."

Another group comes along and says, "No, it's a book mostly about what will happen at the end of the age." They all debate about it and say, "No, it can't be this, it's got to be that."

I say, "Why can't it be all three of them? God's literary skills are so fantastic. It probably has ten other levels we haven't thought of yet." God has the ability to speak at many levels at one time. That's what's happening here in Psalm 19: God is speaking on many levels at one time. I was talking about whether the 144,000 are figurative or whether they're literal or both. Surely it's believers at the end of the age. The question is whether it's been believers throughout the ages. I don't know, but I know at the very least it's believers at the end of the age, where their thoughts and their words come into full obedience. The words they speak and the thoughts they think are captured in divine love. That's the fullness of what he says here in Psalm 19:14. It's the seal of Song 8:6. It's the seal of fiery love. It's a living epistle, Paul said about the church at Corinth. He said, "You are living epistles, written on your hearts by the finger of God" (2 Cor. 3:2, paraphrased).

GOD GRANTS US THE HEART OF A LOVER WHEN GAZING ON THE WORKS OF HIS HANDS

Each of the books—the book of God's beauty in creation, the book of God's beauty in the Scripture and the beauty of God seen as love matured in the human experience, each dimension of that beauty intensifies in the progression of these three stages of Psalm 19. It's an absolutely fantastic Psalm. It's a summary psalm. Each sentence could be a book title in and of itself. The three books of the beauty of God: We see it in creation; we see it in the Scripture describing God's acts and what He's done; and we see it in His work in fashioning and reforming the human heart in love. All three of these books are written by Jesus, and they are read by the person with the worshipper's heart. They are read by the person who has a worshipper's heart. An unbeliever could look at the skies and see nothing. They see a magnificent scene, but they don't see anything about the beauty of God. The truth is, many believers look at the skies and can glimpse a small thought of the beauty of God, but no further. God wants to develop in us the heart of a lover and a worshipper when we look at the works of His hands; we feel the divine romance tugging us into the first commandment, into wholeheartedness. God wants to romance His church with His beauty throughout all creation. Oh that God would give us eyes to see! St. John of the Cross and St. Francis of Assisi were prominent spokespersons for the beauty of God in creation. It wasn't some Hindu philosophy where god is in everything and everything is god. They were talking about seeing God's work and leading us back to the person of Jesus in extravagant worship. That's what David introduces.

“THESE ARE THE MERE EDGES OF HIS WAYS, AND HOW SMALL A WHISPER WE HEAR!”

We'll look here at just first book here, the book of creation. We're not going to look at all three of them in this session. Psalm 19:1-6, the book of creation. He discusses the heavens, the earth, and the sea. Those are the three things that David typically deals with when he deals with the book of creation. I gave you those five psalms in the last session where he looks at the heavens, the earth, and the sea. Those are the three volumes of that book. David is always dealing with three arenas. Man is overwhelmed by the mysteries of the heavens. We're baffled; we're awestruck. They exhaust the human mind, the human understanding. God tells us that in the vast heavens there are billions of stars many, many times bigger than the sun, billions of them in existence, billions of them far bigger than the sun, billions of them! There's a verse in Job that I've quoted a number of times over the years in which God talks about His acts of creating the heavens and the earth. He says, "When I created the heavens and the earth, they were the mere whispers of My power" (Job 26:14, paraphrased). "They were the mere edges of My ability, My power, My wisdom and kindness." When God made ten billion suns greater than our sun, He said, "This is merely the edges. It's the whisper of exhausting My abilities. Natural creation is the edges of My power. It's the whispers of My ability. It doesn't even get into the deep stuff of what My capacities are." Beloved, that's who we're dealing with. God wants us to look up at the sky and be awestruck. He wants that holy, divine romance to woo us into wholeheartedness and to wean us from the folly of living with other things in the primary place in our life.

It says here in the title, "Psalm 19. To the chief musician, a Psalm of David." David is writing this to the chief musician in the tabernacle of David. Chenaniah was his name. He was the choirmaster. He was over the choirs, or he was over the man who was over the choirs. He was the symphony director. He was over the musicians and the singers. He was over the assembly. He was the worship leader. He was over all the musicians and over all the singers. It was written to the chief musician, who combined those three job descriptions in the tabernacle of David to lead the people into the worship of God. David wrote this under the anointing and he put it to music. He had the instruments, the singers, and the assembly of the people come together. It's fantastic. It was written specifically for worship and for music.

THE SPLENDOR, RADIANCE, BEAUTY, BRILLIANCE, AND MAJESTY OF GOD

It begins, "The heavens declare the glory of God." The word there for *glory* you can write as *beauty* or *splendor*. I don't know how many words for glory there are in the Hebrew, but I've done a casual study of this and there are seven or eight of them or more. There are seven or eight different words for beauty. The words *majesty*, *beauty*, *splendor*, *glory* are often interchanged. There are some rules that guide the use of the words, but from one version to another, from the same Hebrew word in various passages, in one instance it's called *glory* and the next time it's called *beauty* and the next time it's called *splendor*. Sometimes it's called *majesty* or *brilliance* or *radiance*. It takes some work to know exactly precisely what was on David's heart, but you could put the word the *splendor*, the *brilliance* or the *beauty* of the Lord. I like the phrase "the beauty of the Lord," because we think of glory and we just think, "Well, glory to God."

"What does that mean?"

"Well, you know, hallelujah, glory to God."

"Yes, let's do it." I don't know. It's *splendor*. It's *radiance*. It's *beauty*. It's *majesty*. That's what he's talking about. I like to deliberately interchange the word *glory* for other words. He says, "When I look up at the sky, it's preaching loudly but without words the glory of God."

“THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD”

Let's read these six verses. “The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chambers, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end, and there is nothing hidden from its heat” (Ps. 19:1-6).

David changes subjects and now talks about the beauty of the logos, the Scriptures. He's looking up here at the heavens and he says, “The heavens are revealing. They give understanding to the illumined heart, to the heart of the lover. They're talking about the splendor and the beauty of the Lord.” The firmament is atmosphere that envelops the entire earth. It's talking about the clouds, the stars, the weather systems, the storms; the atmosphere that engulfs the entire globe is what he's talking about. Often when he speaks of the heavens, he's talking about the stars. Here with the firmament he's also talking about the stars, but he's also talking about the atmosphere all around the world. In Psalm 29, which I hope to look at in this session, David describes the glory and the beauty of the thunderstorm and what it speaks about the beauty of the Lord. He's looking at the firmament and he says, “The firmament is His. It is Your handiwork, the work of Your hands.” Again, the sky isn't just beautiful but it's the work of the beautiful God. It's His handiwork. It's a completely different thing than just being beautiful in and of itself.

“DAY UNTO DAY UTTERS SPEECH, AND NIGHT UNTO NIGHT REVEALS KNOWLEDGE”

It says in Psalm 19:2 that “Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.” There's something about the day that utters speech and reveals knowledge. It makes sense to me that the blue heavens, the day to day, blue skies were but a dim picture of that sapphire pavement of blue that Moses and the elders of Israel stood on in Exodus 24. The throne of God literally rests upon a sapphire expanse, a crystal clear sapphire pavement like sapphire diamonds. It glitters like a crystal expanse, according to Ezekiel 1 and Exodus 24. They believed that the blue heavens were merely a reflection, a dim picture, a hint if you will, of the sapphire expanse which the throne of God sat upon, and that makes sense to me.

Night to night it reveals things. The starry nights are shining with the bright stars and all the different movements in the night. The day reveals something and the night reveals something different, but there's another point here. It's the day to day-ness. It's the routine. It's the incessant, continuous activity that he's talking about here. It's talking about that continuous fountain of flowing understanding. Every single day the word goes out. The beauty of the Lord is staring at us day in and day out, day in and day out. This is in contrast to the unreliability of man. Man is so unreliable. If man does something for a year in a row, it breaks a record of consistency. Man's beauty is always fading, but the centuries, the millenniums passed with regularity, day in, day out. The splendor never wanes. It's always there in its circuit. It's always there to be counted upon. It's not only beauty; it's beauty that doesn't fade. It's beauty that differs in the day and the night, and it's beauty that's consistent. David sees all this. He sees the immutable God, the God of consistent unfading beauty that goes on through every generation. He sees that. The very consistency of every day would stun David when he thought of the beauty of what God is like, who caused every day to come and go, and none of the luster of creation is lost day to day. The sun is as bright. It hasn't lost any of its energy. He said, “That's a remarkable fact about the self-replenishing beauty and energy that God possesses.”

That's what David would see in the day to day-ness. Not only does the day show something different than the night, but they are both continuous. They are declaring God's majesty. It's declaring God's kindness. It's declaring the power, the brilliance, the vastness of who God is. The day to day-ness and the different features of it spoke to so many things of the personality of God to David's heart. The actions, the very existence, the very operation of the heavens, the way the heavens operate, the laws by which they operate spoke of the wisdom, the vastness, the power, the might, the genius of God. Think of ten billion suns like that. Think of the genius of the power required to hold all those in perfect order, with none of its luster waning and none of its course being deviated. It's fantastic! David would get lost in the heart of Jesus, thinking that this man Christ Jesus, eternally God, spoke and by His hands spun into being out of nothing by the words of His mouth this very thing. He is Man and he's our bridegroom forever and forever.

This ravished David's heart. Every day he would come back and say, "It's You again. Do You ever wear out? Does Your luster ever diminish? Do You ever lose course? Does anything ever discourage You? It's the same today as it was yesterday." David would fall in love with God while looking at the skies. He would say, "You're so reliable. You're so trustworthy. You're such a genius! You have so much power to sustain this. You're so brilliant to think of it and then to run it in its order. I love You. Wow." He would just go wild. That's what I want to see you do. That's what I want to do.

THE HEART OF RAVISHED LOVE REQUIRES NO WORDS OF EXPLANATION

"There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard" (Ps. 19:3). There's no place in the earth, whatever tribe of the earth you are in, whatever language or speech, wherever you go, this voice is heard. Even though it's inarticulate and there are no words, the voice is clear. Why is there no speech? One of the reasons why there's no speech is given here in the next verse: "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." But there's no speech and no language, why not? It's not necessary to the illumined heart for there to be words. A picture is worth a thousand words, but to the heart of the lover, to the heart of the worshipper, which is the same thing, to the illumined heart, it's not necessary to speak at that level. God speaks where it needs to be spoken in the written Word of God. Where no words are needed, God draws the heart in another dimension. To the heart of the lover and the heart of the worshipper, there's no need for language. When two people are in love, there are certain things that need to be said and there are certain things that are actually diminished if they are said. The Lord knows exactly the balance of His creation. He's the ultimate lover of all the ages; He's wooing His church into His heart.

WHEN OUR HEART CEASES TO CONNECT WITH LOVE, WE CAN NO LONGER SEE GLORY

David hears God's voice. He sees God's beauty. He says, "His beauty is unmistakable. Who couldn't see this?" The dull heart, the one who isn't a lover, he'll go through life and say things like this, and I'm not trying to be down on anyone, because I've known discouragement; I'm just telling you what we're prone to. In the midst of this unmistakable, undiminishing splendor shining through the sky, we're prone to walking through the maze of life and we can't see its light and its glory anymore. We're so consumed. Someone took some of our position or some of our money. One person said something mean and they told another person. We're walking and our heart is on fire with anger, rage and bitterness. In the midst of this theatre of glory and splendor, we can't see any of it. It all disappears. When our heart ceases to connect with love we can't see the splendor anymore. The Lord is preaching and drawing us. He says, "Listen, it's only five or ten thousand dollars. It's only five or ten people. It's only one position. I'm the God of ten billion suns. I love you. Come, just come. It'll be OK. Come on, Mikey. It'll be OK. Just sit down here. You'll be OK, little man. I'm with you. It's just five or ten thousand

dollars. It's OK. See that sun up there? I have ten billion of them in their place. I really like you. It's OK. Now look up and worship me, because you're only on the earth for a moment."

I say, "Oh, oh yes, good point, good point."

No, I'm serious. Do you know how awesome it is? We don't see it. We drive home after the event or the work or the conversation and we can't see any of it. It's staring at us. It seems as though it's impossible to miss, but it's so possible to miss it because it takes the heart of a lover to engage it. I'm saying this to challenge us.

FOREVER RAVISHED WITH THE TOUCHES OF SWEET HARMONY

Psalm 19:4 is interesting: "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." The word *line* is a very interesting Hebrew word. It says in the margin, "their sound." Some of the versions you have will say *sound* instead of *line* in Psalm 19:4. It's a much-debated and discussed Hebrew word. There are many articles actually written on that one phrase by the scholars. But it's written by David for the chief musician, Chenaniah, to bring to the tabernacle of David; so there's one major argument I like, and many, many scholars believe this. They believe that the line that he's talking about is a sound, a musical sound. The line, it said, was a musical string that was stretched like a guitar string to emit musical sounds. That's why the word *sound* meant "musical sound." "Its sound, its music, has gone to the ends of the earth."

Paul the apostle quotes this verse, Psalm 19:4, in Romans 10:18. He doesn't use the word *line*; he uses the word *sound*. The idea is that the musical sound of God's beauty has gone to the ends of the earth. I prefer that over *line*. I like the idea of musical sound. God's music has gone to the ends of the earth. Of course, this psalm was set to music. It's a love song. This psalm is all about the beauty of the Lord. This creation was God's love song to David. David looked up and said, "Oh, the music of Your creation, I love it. I love the music, the sound of God." It makes no articulate noise, but the sound is impossible to miss. Of course, God's music delighted David and then David's music and worship delighted God. The inaudible voice of God awoke in David adoring worship back to God. "The sound has gone forth." I like that, the sound.

Beloved, when we're in that city called "the bride" (Rev. 21), the city is called the bride not because the building material is the city. It's because the inhabitants and every part of the building materials are rooted in the Spirit of God, the source and the author of everything. Everything makes one harmonious symphonic sound throughout eternity. Our delight in what we see, the delight that we fill the city with our worship and music, I tell you it's a musical love song. Creation is part of God's love song to the bride. The city is part of a love song that God gives us. It's fantastic.

THE SON OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL ARISE TO ILLUMINE THE CREATED ORDER FOREVER

Let's look at Psalm 19:4-5. He's speaking of the heavens. "In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber" (v. 4). He has made the sky a tabernacle for the sun. What an interesting idea. It's a tent for the sun to hide in at night; what language! David sees the skies during the night. He says, "Over there the skies have become a tabernacle to hide the sun." Of course many scholars have said he's working from the imagery of how the Shekinah glory was hidden in the tabernacle of Moses and then in the tabernacle of David. The Shekinah glory was hidden in the tabernacle as the skies hide the glory of the sun. In the morning it breaks out all new again to cause everyone's love to be stirred anew and to be freshly awakened. He says, "In the morning the sun comes forth. It comes forth in two different ways out of this tent. It's been hidden all night." The sun is pictured as like the bridegroom to the created order. It's the source of life

to the rest of the natural order, to the inanimate objects. It's the source of blessing. It's pictured as the bridegroom.

Of course we know from Revelation 21:23 that there's no need of the sun in the age to come. David says the sun is like a bridegroom to the inanimate creation, like Jesus the Son will replace the sun in the age to come. I love Isaiah 24:23. It says the sun will be embarrassed when the Son of God appears. The sun will draw back in shame when the brightness of the appearing of Jesus stands. He looks at that little sun in all its voltage and energy and he says, "It's nothing." It fades in glory. This is the man Christ Jesus who walked on the earth, who died that you could be His bride. The sun will draw back in shame and there will be no need of that intermediate bridegroom to the natural order when the Son of Righteousness appears and illuminates the eternal city.

THE SUN HURRIES OUT IN THE VIGOR OF LOVE, IN THE SPLENDOR OF HIS ATTIRE

David is such a romantic. I mean, he says, "Oh, the sun is like a man in love coming down the aisle for his bride." I love it! "The sun comes out in energy and all the vigor of love in the splendor of his attire." Oh sun, you're incredible. You look at this man and he was in love with God. He was in love with life because he was in love with God. That's what God wants us to do. He saw the skies as a tent and a tabernacle. He saw the sun as an energetic, vigorous lover coming down the aisle to embrace his bride, dressed in splendor, dressed in the greatest attire that he could come up with as a bridegroom.

THE SUN IS A CHAMPION RUNNER RUNNING THE RACE IN ASSURANCE AND STRENGTH

But the sun is more than as a bridegroom. It's as the rejoicing of a strong man who is getting ready to run a race. Here is the champion runner; here is the gold medalist, ten times in a row. Of course, that wouldn't work because then he would be old, but you know what the idea is. He wins everything and he's there. He's confident; he's strong; he's assured. Nothing can defeat him. He's the champion runner preparing to run the race in assurance and strength; that's the sun. David knowing the heart of a bridegroom and knowing the heart of a champion sees in the sun the attributes of the lover-bridegroom and the champion-warrior and he sees God in it. He says, "O God, You're like that. You're the Bridegroom-lover. You're the Champion-warrior who will finish His course." The sun is only just a little down payment until then, though the sun so dwarfs everything else that's close to us. It's 93 million miles away, but it's close compared to everything else. It's so big it eclipses everything, and yet it's just a little down payment. It's just a brief little reminder of reality in the age to come when the Bridegroom-lover and the Champion-warrior takes His place here forever.

THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS ARE TRAVELING PREACHERS ON AN ENDLESS CIRCUIT

David says, "It's rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat" (Ps. 19:6). The number one preachers of all history are the sun and the stars. He says this in verse 4 and repeats it in verse 6: No one on earth can escape it. Try as they like, when they lay down at night and look up at the sky, they have to come face to face with grandeur. They have to set their heart against it; they have to get so caught up in other things to miss its obvious message. Some hear the message, some don't. Again, it has to do with the heart of the lover and the heart of one who is so captured by other things. The sun, moon, and stars are the traveling preachers on their circuit, going village to village throughout the earth speaking of the splendor of God. They run their daily course, their circuit. Every day they preach their sermons, right on time. They preach the same consistent message of that power, undiminishing splendor, the genius, the artistic abilities of God, the kindness of God that created for us and for our pleasure.

ALL THINGS CREATED WERE CREATED FOR US AND FOR OUR PLEASURE

Paul the apostle would come along and say in 1 Corinthians 3:22 that all these things were created for the saints. God made all this for us. He did it with us in mind. He didn't need it. They are way too small in power to fit in the eternal scheme. The sun will be embarrassed when the age to come comes. Honestly, the things of grandeur in this age would never qualify. They wouldn't even be on the "B" team in the age to come. They'll not make it. They don't have enough splendor to fit into the scheme of things; they were only made for us. They weren't made for God or for eternity, only for us for a few years on the earth: only for the human race, for our enjoyment and for our prosperity. They are the preachers of the gospel. They're obviously not the Gospel of Jesus, but the introductory, "God loves you. Come find out more."

Then it takes you to the next passage, the written Word of God, where you find out specific revelation. I love this: "Nothing escapes its heat" (Ps. 19:6, paraphrased); nothing is hidden. There are parts of the earth that can escape the light, the deep caves, but nothing escapes the heat. I don't care how far down they go, those caves are impacted over time by the heat of the sun. Nothing escapes the sphere or the grasp of the sun. Yet it's only a little down payment for us. It doesn't qualify for the age to come, but draws back in embarrassment and is no more when the age to come begins. Nothing escapes its power. That's the heavens.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 29, THE GOD OF MIGHTY THUNDERS

David has so much more to say. Turn to Psalm 29. We'll look just a little at this passage, and give a brief overview of it. This is David witnessing a thunderstorm. He's looking at the heavens again. Again, you have to read Psalm 19 and Psalm 29 together. You have to read Psalm 8 with Psalm 104 and Psalm 145. They all go together. I gave those to you in the last session. Psalm 29 has three parts. Psalm 29:1-2 is the call to worship, asserting that the first commandment would be restored to first place. Psalm 29:3-9 is the beauty of God in the description of a thunderstorm. Again David is tending his father's sheep when all this stuff happens. All the other brothers are in the house. David is out there in the thunderstorm but he's worshipping. He says, "Well, hey, I'm going to go ahead and worship." He looks up and says, "O God, look at what's going on up there." I believe that his heart was illumined after the Spirit touched him. We can see a little of the glory of God no matter what. We can get a little of it if we have a heart for the Lord, but when the Spirit of the Lord begins to draw us into deeper communion, we see an intensity of the Lord's beauty everywhere.

Psalm 29:3-9 is the second part. It's the beauty of God in a thunderstorm. Then Psalm 29:10-11 is the assurance of God's blessing upon our lives. Psalm 29 is just a sub-point in considering the heavens. David will spend a whole psalm just looking at the heavens now. Psalm 19 only discussed this in part one. Part two described the Word, and part three the redeemed heart. Now we're in Psalm 29, and the whole psalm is about the heavens. He's locked in on that. David is fascinated with the heavens and the beauty of God. He can't get away from it. I believe these things were given to David in his early life. I don't know that he wrote them in his early life, but I think he did. He writes these Psalms and there's no reference at all to struggle, as in all the Psalms of his later life. No one is chasing him; he's not grieving over anything; he's just loving God. In Psalm 8, Psalm 19 and Psalm 29 there's this tremendous absence of the struggle which is so common in even his worship songs in his later life. He didn't have a lot going on in the natural. He was tending sheep and very lonely, but he was really locked in. He used it and he locked into the Lord in those days.

THE GLORY DUE HIS NAME IS OUR WHOLEHEARTED DEVOTION

Psalm 29:1-2 the first part, a call to worship. We'll look at this briefly. "Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due His name. Worship the Lord in the

beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:1-2). Every line is filled. It says three times, “Give unto the Lord.” It’s a call for wholehearted response. David is calling other people to give to God something that is due Him. “Respond to God in a way that’s worthy of who God is.” That’s what he’s saying. “Give yourself to God according to who He is and how He’s given Himself to you. He’s calling people to wholehearted love. He’s calling people to the first commandment. Basically he’s saying, “Do what the angels do when you see what the angels see. See the beauty of God and you’ll worship. Do what the angels do. Worship with vigor, but I sing what the angels see: the beauty of the Lord.” Obviously we can’t see with the clarity with which they see, but the same principle operates: We worship more when we see more.

He says, “Give to the Lord the glory due His name.” The glory due His name is wholeheartedness. That’s what it’s talking about. How do you do this? The answer is by worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Again, put “the first commandment,” by worshipping; wholehearted love; the first commandment restored to first place in the beauty of holiness.

THE MEANING AND THREEFOLD DIMENSION OF HOLINESS

The beauty of holiness is threefold. There are three dimensions to the beauty of holiness. Number one, it’s the holiness of God. When you think of holiness, I’ve said this over and over, over the years, but some of you are new here. There are two main lines of thought about the holiness of God in Scripture. The root word from which the Hebrew word *holy* is derived means “other than” or “separated unto.” The word *holy* means “separated unto.” The word *holy* means “other than.” It means you separate it from something to something else. It’s a basic word but it’s very, very powerful.

When the word *holy* is used about God, it doesn’t mean He’s just separated from bad stuff, and therefore He’s pure. The word *holy* means that, but that’s the secondary meaning. God isn’t just separated from wrong things therefore he’s pure. Again, that’s an attribute of holiness. That’s not the main idea of holiness. Holiness means separated from everything that’s common, for example everything that’s created. God is totally other than everything that exists. He’s transcendent, is the idea. When God is called *holy*, it means He’s separated. He is in an entirely different category from everything common, like the cherubim, seraphim, the archangels and everything less than them. Everything else is created and is therefore common to God. God is *holy*. He’s separated. That doesn’t mean He’s aloof. It means He is in a unique, infinite superiority to everything that’s common. That’s what the word *holy* means, “separated from everything common.” That’s the primary meaning of the word *holy* when it’s related to God. When the angels are gathered around the throne, when they say, “Holy, holy, holy,” they aren’t saying, “Purity, purity, purity, You don’t sin. You don’t sin. You don’t sin.” That’s not what they are saying. Purity is only one aspect of God’s holiness. They are saying, “Totally superior to everything, totally superior to everything, completely other than, completely other than.” Or another phrase: “Transcendent beauty, transcendent beauty, transcendent beauty.” That includes, “Your wisdom, Your purity, Your love, Your power, everything is totally other than and superior than anything else that’s common or created.” That’s what the word *holy* means.

CALLING THE PEOPLE INTO THE TRANSCENDENT HOLINESS OF GOD'S BEAUTY

What David is calling the people to do is to interact a little with the transcendence of the holiness of God. “Look at the skies and say, ‘totally other than, totally other than. O my God, You’re so superior. I love You and You love me.’” It’s to call us into the vastness of God’s superior beauty. That’s what *holiness* means first, the holiness of God. In His holiness He’s free from everything that’s bad, but He’s higher than everything that’s good too, everything that’s created. So the first way we worship God in the beauty of holiness is by growing in

the knowledge of His splendor and His majesty. We worship by seeing His transcendence. David says, "I meditate on the glorious splendor of His majesty. I study His transcendence. I meditate on how other than He is, because it makes my heart alive with adoration." That's how you worship in the beauty of holiness, by seeing God's holiness a little.

IN REDEMPTION YOU HAVE BEEN MADE SUPERIOR TO THE REST OF CREATION

The second way you worship in the beauty of holiness is by understanding that in redemption you've been made totally other than the rest of creation. The way that you worship in the beauty of holiness is by knowing your spiritual identity. The day you're born again, beloved, the day I'm born again, I'm already connected to the Son of God as His bride. It's only a matter of time until I'm enthroned and embraced forever as His bride over all the angelic host. The beauty of holiness is when I understand the beauty of who I am the day I'm born again. There's a beauty of holiness that's true of you before you've raised one finger to change a thing. You're completely other than the rest of creation by virtue of the fact that you're the bride of Christ.

When that thief died on the cross and stepped over that line and crossed the line of eternity, Jesus said, "This day you will be with Me in paradise." He died and crossed that line. He had only been saved about an hour, and he stepped over the line into paradise and he found out he was a king. He found out he was royalty. He said, "Why did no one tell me this? I would have lived differently. I didn't have any idea. I wouldn't have stolen all that money if I knew I was a king. I thought I was a beggar the whole time." That's the beauty of holiness. Beloved, you're kings as regards the rest of creation, but you're a queen regarding the Lord Jesus Himself and His embrace. You're the bride. You're a queen, but you're kings over all the works of God's hands the day you're born again. There's a beauty of holiness that's automatic the moment you're born again. It's your new spiritual identity. You're loved of God. You're crowned with the glory of God.

WORSHIPING IN THE BEAUTY AND SPLENDOR OF A TRANSFORMED LIFE

The third way is literally the beauty of a transformed life; growing out of bitterness and being enslaved to stupid lustful passions. They aren't stupid in the sense that we've all done them and been enslaved to them, but they are worthless passions. Let's put it that way. They make sense when we do them. It's later when we wake up and say, "Why did I do that?" There's something so fantastic about walking in mature love that is beautiful, where our heart, our whole experience on planet earth, is adorned in beauty when we walk in the first commandment.

There's the beauty of God, who He is: the beauty of who we are in our spiritual identity the day we're born again, and the beauty of being transformed and literally walking as a lover of God in our living experience on the earth. David is calling them to all three dimensions of the beauty of holiness.

Now David is going right to an issue of God's transcendence, the storm. He's going to go right to the beauty of God's holiness. He's going to talk about the storm now. This is on a stormy night, or it could have gone on all day. It's hard to know exactly. He says, "The voice of the Lord is over the waters" (Ps. 29:3). By the way, the voice of the Lord is the thunderstorm. The voice of the Lord is over the waters, and by the waters he means the watery clouds, the waters above right now. He says, "The God of glory thunders; the Lord is over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; yes, the Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Syrian like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire" (Ps. 29:4-7). By the way, that's lightning right there. Instead of *divides*, you can write the phrase, "distributes the lightning." "The voice of the Lord

shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everyone says, 'Glory!' (v. 8-9). That's the thunderstorm.

THE FIVE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE THUNDERSTORM IN SCRIPTURE

Before we go on, I want to tell you this. There are five levels of the thunderstorm in the Scriptures. I believe David is in touch with all of them. He goes to the lowest level and describes it. Every one of them has a counterpart; that's why this is a massive psalm. There are five levels to the thunderstorm. Number one: thunder is depicted as coming out of the Godhead four times at least in the book of Revelation. Revelation 4:5 is one of them. Lightning and thunder emanates out of the being of God, thunder and lightning in eternity at the throne of God. The light show that goes on incessantly through the ages, all diversities and administrations of thunder and lightning, is always breaking out of the throne of God in various intensities and variations. It has nothing to do with natural creation. That's why there's natural thunder, because it exists in eternity around the throne of God. It's part of the atmosphere of the throne of God. It comes and goes through the ages according to God's perfect desire.

GOD'S JUDGMENTS THROUGH THE AGES, THE THUNDER OF HIS WRATH

The second dimension of thunderstorms in the Bible is God's judgments, His wrath throughout history. They're called the thunders of God. They're culminating in the book of Revelation. The thunders of God's judgment break in upon natural history at the end of the age in a manner unprecedented. His thunderous judgments crash in upon the human race at the end of history. Every one of these dimensions has a counterpart in verse. David is the master poet, a revelatory teacher. He knows what he's doing. I'm sure David is saying, "Oh, this will get them. Holy Spirit, when You let them peek into this, it will stun their hearts before You. This will really get them!" Throughout history when the Spirit of God opens it, your heart says, "Oh!" I believe David was in touch with what he was writing. I don't believe David was just a man out of touch. He had profound understanding, not full understanding, but he was a poet anointed with a prophetic revelatory anointing. He was feeling when he was writing and he liked it.

THE SONS OF THUNDER, THE STORMS OF LIFE

The third type of thunder is God's anointed preachers in the Church, the sons of thunder, like John the apostle. God raises up men and women who are thunderous in the power of God. He calls His servants sons of thunder, anointed preachers in the Church. The fourth manner in which thunder is described is trials in our own individual lives. It's the storms and tempests of life. David uses that all the time throughout the book of Psalms. He uses all of these all the time, actually. He uses all of these a number of times throughout the book of Psalms.

Fifth is the natural storm itself. The one that's the least personal is the one for which he paints the picture, and then there are those four other ways, God's heart, His majesty in eternity at the throne of God, His judgments over history, His anointed servants in the church and difficult times in our lives. Here he paints the most impersonal picture, the thunderstorm in the sky. He gives seven different manifestations of the thunder crashing in, and every one of them has an application to all five levels. David, I believe, is operating as a prophetic poet. Again, John the apostle is the counterpart to David in the book of Revelation. John sees the thunder around the throne four or five times in the book of Revelation. John the apostle saw the thunders of God's judgments at the end of the age. John the apostle knew from the Son of God Himself that he was a son of thunder. He was a preacher of righteousness. He was an anointed son of thunder. John knew those three, for sure. Undoubtedly he knew about the storms of life. He watched Peter in the midst of the storm get out of the boat and walk on the water. He knew about the storms of life in all five levels we need to think on.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE VOICE, THE VOICE OF THUNDER FROM ON HIGH

Psalm 29:3-4 describes the uniqueness of the voice, the uniqueness of the voice of thunder, the voice of God at all five levels. It's unique. It's over the waters. If you read all the other psalms, it's talking about His voice over the clouds, the waters in the firmament. The voice of God comes from on high. At all five of those levels the voice comes from on high. Even the natural thunderstorm comes from up there. It comes from on high. It's over the waters.

THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS EFFECTIVE AND MAJESTIC, MARVELOUS AND TERRIBLE

God's thunder, whether it's His wrath, whether it's the passion within the Godhead, whether it's anointed preachers, is powerful and effective to subdue everything in its path. That's what it says in Psalm 29:4: It's powerful and effective. It breaks and subdues everything in its path. The thunder of God's passion in the Godhead subdues everything that's before it. The angels, the seraphim, the saints are always falling down before the thunder of God's heart. The passion of the Godhead is breaking out in majesty. They are always depicted as falling down before Him. When the preachers of righteousness, men and women, are loosed, the voice of the Lord is powerful. It comes from on high. It's above the waters. It's effective and it's majestic. There are the elements of marvel and terror that are brought into that divine paradox. You look at the thunderstorm and you want to go out, but you had better stay in. You want to go out, though; there's marvel and there's terror at the same time. When the Word of God goes forth in revival, it will cause marvel and terror to hit the church. It says about the early Church that others were afraid to relate to them. There's marvel and terror with the passion of God's heart. There's marvel because you want to go and embrace, Papa but you fall down before Him in awestruck worship. It's majestic. It's marvel and terror in that holy paradox put together. That's Psalm 29:3-4. It's unique. It comes from on high. It's powerful and majestic.

THE SEVEN DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS OF THUNDER IN THE THEATRE OF NATURE

Look at Psalm 29:5-9. There are seven different ways that this thunder is manifest in the theatre of nature. The reason I'm showing you this is because I want you to see the paradigm of this worshipper of God. Looking around, he could see God in all of this stuff. Not that he never had low times, because he had some really low times, and the Psalms are full of them, but he had those times with the Lord where his heart was romanced by the beauty and the majesty of God. He wanted everyone to be brought into it. We've said this over and over again, but in Psalm 145:5 he says, "I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty." That's what he was doing in this thunderstorm; he was looking up and saying, "Oh man, I love it. I love it. I want to come near, but I'm afraid to come too close." The angels draw near and fall down. They collapse because of the glory of the brilliance of the God they love so much. The God that they worship is the God that we love.

THE VOICE OF THE LORD BREAKS THE PROUD, THE STATELY, AND THE STABLE

Look at Psalm 29:5-9. There are seven features, seven manifestations of the voice of God in the theatre of nature. Number one: it breaks the cedars. The cedars are always depicted in Hebrew Scripture as the proud, the stately, the strong, the cedars of Lebanon. They're these giant, expensive, fragrant cedars; nothing breaks the cedars of Lebanon! They were the picture of stability, of fragrance, of beauty. They were very expensive. Solomon built his house out of the cedars of Lebanon. It was like, "Whoa!" He had a little tag there, "Cedar of Lebanon," right there. Everyone knew where he got it. That's my one joke of the night, come on you guys! When the thunder of God comes, it breaks the proud, the stately and the stable. Of course in the preaching of the gospel kings fall down before it. The wrath of God comes on nations and nations will fall. Cedars of Lebanon will crash before God's end-time judgments. The cedars, the stately ones around the throne of God, collapse before His glory. Literally, the real cedars broke when the thunderstorm came. It's true of all, and sometimes in

the midst of the trials we finally break and our pride is broken. God's voice is powerful enough to break the stately, the powerful, and the immovable. God says, "I will win. You wrestle with Me; I will win." He will defeat all of creation. Every cedar will be brought down low. There are a number of places in Judges and other places in the Psalms where the cedars are pictured as proud men standing and resisting God. He says, "My voice will break every stately, proud thing that stands before Me." Again, the hosts of heaven aren't proud, but they are stately and majestic. Everything breaks in the presence of the thunder of God. That's number one.

THE VOICE OF THE LORD SPLITS THE CEDARS ASUNDER

Number two: It splinters them. Sometimes they are left standing, but they're completely disturbed and completely rearranged. This is poetic language. Sometimes He will break some and they are lying flat before God. Other times He splinters them and leaves them completely disordered and completely disturbed from their original condition before the thunder broke in. Not every city of the earth will fall when the judgments of God's thunder come. Some will be splintered; some will be utterly broken. Some people humble themselves entirely. Some are significantly disturbed, but they never go all the way down. God has different manifestations.

Number six: He makes these cedars skip like a calf and He makes the mountains skip like the wild ox. These are two different mountain ranges. Some of the commentaries think David is saying that the thunder of the storm triggered the earthquake. Some say, "No, the thunder was so intense that literally the mountains shook and they reverberated under the thunderous noise in nature." The point is that the stable mountains and the stable trees will be shaken. They will be moved from their place. God will move mountains. He will move the stately things by His thunder.