

Psalm 33 – Reasons to Praise the LORD (Part 2 of 3)

III. The Reason of God's Creation (33:6-9) – The psalmist praises the LORD because the LORD created the heavens and the earth by His word! How is this a cause for praise? This universe is man's dwelling place. Not only did He make this home for man to dwell in and enjoy, He gave the dominion of this home to man for him to watch over and dominate. However, man ruined it when he allowed sin into the world. Ever since that fateful day, this world has been groaning for the day of redemption when she will be restored back to her former glory, the period before the Fall of man. Man is the cause of the ruin that this world is in. The earthquakes, the tornados, tsunamis, typhoons, storms, pestilences, famines, drought and diseases are all evidences of this ruin. This world is "hurting" man now. But despite all that man had done, God did not leave him to fend for himself. God still continues to watch over man even in this sin cursed world. Man does not deserve to live on this earth that God had created, after which He said it was very good. Man turned this world into something bad and destructive by his transgressions. Yet this world remains habitable; God could have destroyed man for messing up the earth and the heavens. Man's home is marred by his transgressions but it is still home and still good enough for man to live in. This is a great reason for man to praise God. Believers in Christ are able to, for they alone are able to see the hand of God in God's creation, not the ungrateful and blind world.

God made all that man sees and enjoys, above and beneath him. The power of God is also another reason for man to praise Him. By His spoken Word He made everything out of nothing! This is impossible with man but not with God. The LORD assured man that everything that he sees and touches are from Him. There is nothing on this earth that did not come from God. All that man creates came out of this earth that God gave to him. Man brought nothing into this world and he will take nothing out of this earth. He comes to enjoy what God has created and then he dies! His life might impact the lives of others who are just like him, some for good and others for bad. But for the child of God, his life on this earth is a life of service. He sees this world differently from the world. All the children of God are able to take something out of this earth when they live for Christ. The children of God who see their lives as a life of service on this earth will be able to see through the evil and ugliness. They see the love of their heavenly Father for the men, women and children whom He brings into their lives and they see their need for salvation in Christ. The psalmist can truly praise his LORD for the amazing world that God gave to him. He expressed and affirmed this by the use of synonymous parallelism to emphasize this.

Verse 7 (synthetic parallelism) – When the world was first created, there was no earth or land. It was a watery world and then God, by His power, "gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap." Man depends upon the sea to survive. Without the sea, man's life on earth would be many times worse than what it is today. The sea breezes that cool the earth, the abundance of food that this world provides and not to mention the amount of minerals

that can be drawn from the oceans have kept man alive since the beginning of time. Yet this same sea that gives life to man all these thousands of years can also be just as destructive. Without the LORD gathering the waters of the sea together, there would be no land for man to live on. Man would surely die. This truth was evidently demonstrated by God when He destroyed this world with water in the days of Noah. **Genesis 7:17-24** (KJV), "*And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. 18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. 20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. 21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: 22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. 23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. 24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.*" The fact that man is alive and the sea is all around the earth and not covering the earth is a great reason for man to praise the LORD.

What prevents this same water of the sea from covering this world so that man is not drowned by it? Using synthetic parallelism, the psalmist adds to this truth of the LORD's gathering by revealing that He also keeps them underground, like we would keep something in a storehouse, safe and secure. Calvin captured this truth well when he said, "In the second part of the verse, he seems to repeat the same idea, but with amplification. God not only confines the immense mass of waters in the seas, but also hides them, by a mysterious and incomprehensible power, in the very bowels of the earth. Whoever will compare the elements among themselves, will reckon it contrary to nature that the bottomless depths, or the immeasurable gulfs of waters, whose native tendency is rather to overwhelm the earth, should lie hid under it. That so many hollow channels and gulfs, accordingly, should not swallow up the earth every moment, affords another magnificent display of divine power; for although now and then some cities and fields are engulfed, yet the body of the earth is preserved in its place." [Swordsearcher 6] The deep caverns that God made after the global flood now keeps the water in check. The fact that there is land for man to live on is enough for man to praise the LORD. His very survival and existence depends entirely on God's one simple act of creation - the gathering and storing of the waters of the sea!

Verse 8 (synonymous parallelism) – The psalmist concludes that the earth should fear the LORD. The fear of the LORD would result in praise. Those who do not praise the LORD properly do not fear Him. Those who fear Him will praise Him. This is the inevitable outcome. Man is surrounded by the evidence of a very powerful God. This message is

broadcasted loud and clear day and night throughout the earth for man to know and see. The psalmist cried to the earth to fear the LORD. Sadly, the world has turned her back on the revelations that God has given to man through His creation. Instead man has been trying his utmost to explain away the presence of God through his foolishness such as teaching the theory of evolution. Foolish man thinks that by erasing God from his mind, God would cease to exist. The evidence continues to declare the glory of God day and night! Man has a better chance of erasing the noonday sun from his presence than of removing the evidence of the power of God in creation! Man ought to fear Him and not ignore Him or replace Him by his many idols!

Every believer must fear the LORD all the days of his life. The psalmist emphasized this truth by using synonymous parallelism to announce to all mankind that he must stand in awe of God. He is surrounded by the evidence of an all powerful God. Man had better humble himself before God and come to know Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Man thinks that he is great by his puny inventions and weapons of war. By entering into the atomic age man has propelled himself into the stratosphere of pride and arrogance. He thinks the existence of this world is in his weak puny hands. This delusion has set man on a collision course of self annihilation, which will happen if God does not intervene, the way He did prior to the days of the watery global judgement some five thousand years ago. Now man finds himself on the precipice of global anarchy and terror because of his rejection of God and failure to stand in awe of God. The psalmist cried to the world to hear and bow before the LORD. In this world today, only believers in Christ will do so in spirit and in truth. They are able to see all that the psalmist saw.

Verse 9 (synonymous parallelism) – By repeating himself, the psalmist reiterated the power of God. God did not have to act by using His "hand" as it were, for all He needed to do was to speak and all that He wanted done was done to its exact detail and timing! This is how great and powerful God is. There was nothing before He created. By the power of God's spoken word, everything that we see and feel and handle came into existence. This same power keeps this world in its proper order for man to live. Just as God can keep, He can also destroy! Right now, God is still in ultimate and sovereign control over all things, in heaven and on earth. This same word of God that created the world and has been keeping the world in its proper order is the Bible. The Bible has the same potency as we see in this psalm. It has the power to create and destroy. Man must take notice so as to live! If he does not, then it is tragic. Man will fall deeper and deeper into his sin and then he will die in sin and find himself in the depths of hell for eternity.

Using synonymous parallelism, the psalmist repeated this truth to all humanity! God commanded and the whole creation stood fast. Every beam of the sun's rays, every droplet of water and every grain of sand remains exactly where the LORD wants it to be! Why will

man not listen and begin to see the hand of God in creation all around him? Man is dead in sin and is blind to all things spiritual. If man cannot see this truth in God's creation and the message that this creation reveals, then he cannot be born again in Christ. All who are born again in Christ must see. If the inanimate listen to the commands of God, so must all who are born again in Christ!

IV. The Reason of God's Counsel (33:10-11) – Man's foolish wisdom is utterly destroyed by the LORD. The phrase that the psalmist used is "the LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought." Whatever excuses man might concoct to erase God out of his life or to explain Him away will be brought to nought. Man's foolish replacement of God by way of idolatrous worship is futile. It is illogical and makes no sense at all. How could man who made these idols, which makes him the creator, bow down to the thing that he made?! Man is more powerful than the idols, for these idols would not have existed if man had not made them! Yet man bows down to them instead of the living God who is the creator of man. This kind of delusion will not escape the judgement of God. God will judge man for his foolishness, for they are grievous transgressions in His omniscient sight. The theory of evolution is laughable, for man was not there and yet he dares to confidently say it is true and puts his eternal destiny into a myth of his own making! These will all be brought to nought when man dies. Man will know then that these are all lies designed by the father of lies which is the Devil himself. Another way God will bring it to nought is when He pours down His wrath unto this world at the last days, culminating in the return of Christ who will come to judge this sin-filled world with a rod of iron! The philosophies of man are nothing but utter nonsense. Man heaps upon himself self proclaimed and man-centred diplomas, making himself an expert in the events of this world that are past, present and future when in reality he knows absolutely nothing. Man's hardened heart will condemn him if only he is honest enough to admit it. He is surrounded by the evidence of an all-powerful God and yet he toys with the idea with myopic arrogance that God does not exist and makes himself into a god. Such counsel will be brought to nothing!

To emphasize this point, the psalmist again used synonymous parallelism. This second stich describes God's power destroying the devices of man. The word "devices" has the idea of something woven or contrived. Man will make something out of nothing with his wild and ridiculous imagination, portraying that he knows better than God. These devices are euphemistically called the sciences of man! Man thinks that by mastering the arts and sciences of this world, he can become the master of the universe! With modern technology and advancement knowledge in the computer age, man's ego has really grown too big for his own good. He thinks there is a multi universe. He thinks that there are other life forms outside of this earth. He spends his precious life pursuing worthless fantasies. He thinks that he can control nature including the heavenly realms. Man has tried to penetrate into the spiritual realm with all the different forms of idolatry but has failed miserably to his own

condemnation. However, man still refuses to admit this in his stubborn blindness. He would rather believe that there is no God even though the evidence is all around him. He will die in his sin thinking that he will find his way to heaven because he has the audacity to make God into his own image. This foolishness will be made of none effect by God almighty, in His time. He will be proven as a liar and deceiver. All his theories and attacks on the Word of God and the Person of Jesus Christ will be exposed. The truth of God in Christ will prevail and shine with the brightness of the noon day sun for the whole world to see when Christ appears through the clouds in glory as the Judge of all judges, King of kings and Lord of lords!

Verse 11 (synthetic parallelism) – In great contrast to the counsel of the foolish man which God will bring to nought, the counsel (same word as used in verse 10) of the LORD will stand forever! The psalmist attested to this truth unequivocally. Generation after generation will come and go and man's counsel will die with him. Many great super powers of old have had their day in the sun whereby their knowledge of the earth was taught to their people because of their military might, just as the Babylonians did to Daniel, and the British to her subjects when Britain tried to conquer the world. The counsel of these kingdoms disappear when these kingdoms lose their might and are replaced by another new super power that will promote her new ideas of right and wrong, truth and errors. These kinds of foolishness go on from generation to generation. It has not changed, for we see the same today in our world. The difference is that the foolishness of today spreads and corrupts must faster than ever before because of the advancement of technology! But the counsel of the LORD will never fall or be marginalised. It might be rejected by puny men today but it will still be true for eternity. God's truth will vindicate itself when all that God reveals in the perfect Word of Life becomes reality. Then the world will know that God is true and all men are liars! But until that day comes the challenge against the Truth of God will continue. It will not only continue but will gain in momentum in its denial and attack. But the children of God must not be moved like the psalmist! He must continue to praise the LORD for divine counsel that he receives. He must cherish the LORD of God by his obedience and defence of it, even if it costs him his freedom and life!

The way it stands forever is described in the second stich. The thoughts of God's heart will be made known to all generations. The word "thoughts" is the same as the word "devices" in verse 10. What a great reason to praise the LORD for the knowledge of the heart, i.e. the contrivance of the LORD are made known to man so that man might know God intimately. All the designs and works of the LORD within His heart have been made known to all generations only through His holy and perfect Word. In the Word of God is the revelation of God's plan of salvation for mankind. All that man needs to know about the spiritual realm and what God did from the beginning of time and what he will do in at the end of time are all revealed in God's holy and perfect Word! For example, the beginning of sin and death

and the end of sin and death are all found in His Word. The psalmist said that this is a wonderful reason to praise the LORD. The child of God now has the mind of God inside him. He knows what God knows concerning the beginning. He knows what God knows and what He will do in the future! He can now live his present life in a way that is guaranteed to be pleasing in the sight of God.

V. The Reason of God's Salvation (33:12) – All the above is not possible if the person is not born again in Christ. This is the first step to spiritual sight. The psalmist described his people, Israel, as blessed, for they are the only nation that was designed by God from the beginning. All other nations of the earth were born in and out of idolatry and heathenism. There is no nation that is called blessed other than Israel. God raised up Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to form the nation of Israel. God protected them and called them out and set them apart for the purpose of forming a nation through which the Lord Jesus Christ would be born. It is a nation of God's people entrusted with priests and prophets and the Word of God to lead and teach the people so that they will tell the world about Christ. The right place and manner of worship were given only to the priests of Israel. To be considered "blessed" means to have a personal relationship with God. God knows them and they know God. Their worship and prayers to God will be accepted by God. This is what it means to be blessed. The God of this nation is the LORD. The name "LORD" is the term Jehovah or Yahweh which means the same thing. Whenever this name is used in the Bible, it refers to a covenantal relationship between God and that people. God's covenants are always sealed by blood. It is forever. God always keep His covenant. Only Israel had the LORD as her God. Therefore only Israel is blessed. America is not a Christian nation. There was only one Christian nation and that was the nation of Israel in OT times. In NT times Israel rejected God and God replaced her with a local church witness and not another national witness.

Using synthetic parallelism, the psalmist added that the LORD alone chooses whom He pleases to be His people. It is not up to man to make himself the people of God. This privilege and prerogative belongs only to the LORD. God will make that people His own inheritance which means they belong to Him. This second stich uses the word "people" rather than "nation" which means that Israel is not the only one referred to here. It means that there are others who can become part of this inheritance as long as God has chosen them. In NT times, many of the Gentiles were called the people of God who were once not God's people.. **Romans 9:25-30** (KJV), *"As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. 27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: 28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrhah. 30 What shall we say*

then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." God saved many Gentiles and has entrusted them with this highest honour to bear the image and Name of Christ everywhere they go. John Gill captured this well when he said, "not Israel only, but the Gentiles also; not all mankind, but a peculiar people, whom the Lord has chosen out of the world to be his possession, and who are his jewels and peculiar treasure; these are happy, being the Lord's portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and he chooses an inheritance for them, adopts and begets them unto it, and makes them meet to be partakers of it." [Swordsearcher 6] All believers in Christ have the best reasons to praise the LORD . . . especially the fact that they are saved in and by Christ from sin, death and hell!

To be continued