

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Twenty-Nine: Responding Affirmatively To Theologically Errant Views Of Nature (Psalm 29:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. In our era, modern man has largely replaced belief in a transcendent Creator with the doctrine that nature itself is its own god, that life evolved due to forces within itself rather than by means of a personal Creator.
- B. The natural response to this error is to spend our energies opposing evolutionism and building a wall of defense for our belief. Yet, Scripture expects the Christian to live **affirmatively**, to be people who **rejoice** evermore, 1 Th. 5:16. How, then, can we view nature and its surroundings in an **affirmative** manner without either becoming theologically defensive or compromising with evolutionary thought?
- C. Psalm 29:1-11 gives us an illustration on doing this as follows:

II. Responding Affirmatively To Theologically Errant Views Of Nature, Psalm 29:1-11.

- A. To understand the concern of David who wrote this psalm on a thunderstorm, we have to understand the following depraved views of Canaanite Baal worship regarding Palestine's thunderstorms:
 1. The Canaanite god, Baal was the male god of the thunderstorm who rode the clouds with lightning bolts in his hands, releasing rain to impregnate the "female" earth below.
 2. Baal's consort, Asherah, goddess of collected waters, pictured the female goddess who received Baal's rain in collected pools in the earth below and thereby produced the "child" of new vegetation.
 3. Though Baal worship was less-pronounced in the more isolated mountains of Judea, northern Palestine was more open to adopting Baal worship as its geography lended itself to Hebrews mingling more easily with Baal-worshipping Canaanites, Z.P.E.B., v. One, p. 433.
- B. To counter Baalism error **affirmatively**, David composed Psalm 29:1-11 about a thunderstorm moving across **northern** Israel heavily influenced by Baalism, and giving glory for its power to the God of **Israel**:
 1. David opened this psalm with a call for God's mighty angels (who were exalted in Jewish thought) to give glory and strength to Israel's Jahweh, or Lord, Ps. 29:1!
 2. Israel's God was to be given glory due His name, and He was to be worshipped in the splendor of holiness, or in the splendor of **separateness** from **sin**, Ps. 29:2! In this case, the sin involved is adopting Baal worship and ascribing to Baal power and glory for the thunderstorm, and David seeks to counter that sin by ascribing the power and glory of a thunderstorm to Almighty God, the God of Israel!
 3. Having called for glory to be given to God, David describes a sudden violent thunderstorm sweeping across the northern section of Israel and gives glory to its power and fireworks to Israel's God:
 - a. The great voice of God in the form of thunder is heard over the clouds full of water, Ps. 29:3.
 - b. David pauses to say that this sound is powerful and majestic, the voice of God, Ps. 29:4.
 - c. He describes how God thus uses this power to break the giant cedar trees of Lebanon, Ps. 29:5.
 - d. Since both Mount Lebanon and Mount Sirion exist in the Anti-Lebanon range (B.K.C., O.T., p. 816), David describes God's power through the thunderstorm's wind that **energetically** moves the vegetation over these locations like a young, galloping, wild ox moves! (Ps. 29:6)
 - e. God sends out His bolts of lightning in the storm, literally called "flames of fire," Ps. 29:7.
 - f. The storm makes progress from west to east, shaking even the desert region of Kadesh in the area around Damascus, Ibid. Thus, the storm moves over the region most receptive to Baal worship, and David ascribes its glory and power expressions to Israel's God instead of to Baal, Psalm 29:8.
 - g. God's voice of thunder with accompanying lightening and wind makes even the mighty oaks to whirl and strips the forests bare of leaves to the glory of God's power, Ps. 29:9.
 - h. The resulting collections of water, like a "flood" with its great volume of water, is a location where God sits enthroned, not a false goddess, Asherah, Ps. 29:10.
 4. With the storm past, David concludes that this great demonstration of power witnessed in this storm reveals the power of God for helping His people to gain peace over life's challenges, 29:11.

Lesson: To view nature affirmatively while also providing an adequate polemic against evolution, we can simply assert the beauty and power of nature in art and music and ascribe its beauty and power to the Creator and not to evolutionism, Rom. 1:20! We can appreciate the power of a rugged, turbulent thunderstorm as God's power which is available for our good (Ps. 29:11), an affirmative approach!