

Are We Constantly Searching for the Next Big Thing?

We began Psalm 147 last time by acknowledging that Christians will often become bored with worship because they're continually searching for "the next big thing." This Psalm gives us a look at the importance of worshiping God, not merely out of our own personal preferences, but rather, for the amazing God that he is! This Psalm calls attention to the fact that we should *praise God for his wisdom*. As we look now at verse 2, we see God's wisdom, by means of two parallel statements: "he builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel." On the one hand, this is initially referring to God's timing in bringing his Covenant people out of captivity in Babylon and back to Jerusalem in order that they would be able to praise him once again in a completed Temple surrounding by walls of protection from their enemies. And yet, there's clearly a point being made here in that God *chooses his elect and gathers them* in accordance with his perfect wisdom and timing. The Church is being *built up* in every age. In verse 3, we read that: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Not only the Old Testament church, but the church throughout redemptive history relies on the wisdom of God, who is the only One who knows perfectly how he plans to heal our brokenness and bind up our wounds and our hurts.

Notice now in verses 4-5 we see God's wisdom in creation. In these verses the Psalmist is calling our attention to something unique. We see this in a play on words that can't be seen as clearly in the English translation. Literally this section reads: "He *numbers* the stars; he gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding cannot be *numbered*." In other words, the number of the stars in the heavens are determined and named by God, but the extent of his *infinite wisdom* cannot be *numbered*! This section concludes with a contrast that continues to show God's wisdom in action: "The LORD lifts up the humble; he casts the wicked to the ground." Let's move on now from Praising God for His *Wisdom* to:

—Praising God for His *Works*

Verse 7 begins with a phrase that commands our singing in worship. "Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre." Notice that—not only are we commanded to sing God's praises in worship—we're also told that what our *attitude* is to be. We worship—not begrudgingly or with discontentedness but—with an attitude of *thanksgiving*. And our attitude of *thanksgiving* should be there no matter what's going on in our lives! God is in complete control and for that we should be thankful!

The Psalmist takes us now from seeing the heavens at *night* with the millions of stars (vs. 4), to the heavens in the *daytime* that God covers with clouds. There he prepares rain for the earth that makes the grass grow for food, to care for the beasts as well as the young ravens (vss. 8-9). Again, we see God's amazing *work* in his creation. Neither the cattle, nor the wild animals that roam the earth, nor the ravens that take flight in the skies, can supply the grass or any of the sustenance that they need to live. God brings the rains that are needed for the grass to grow.

In verses 10-14 we read: “His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, (possibly a war horse and an infantry soldier), but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love. Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you. He makes peace in your borders; he fills you with the finest of the wheat.”

Our battles should never be fought in our own strength. We should never trust in our own abilities, nor even in military might, for our *ultimate* security. We should trust God! And though we’ll fail to trust God at times, the Psalmist tells us of God’s *delight* in, and his blessings given to, his covenant children. Of all his creation, only mankind is made in the image of God, and God’s covenant children hold a priority place in his love and affections. What a blessing, as well as another important reason to praise God! Are we constantly searching for *the next big thing*, or are we intentionally growing in our understanding of and love for God? The Psalmist reminds us that—if we’re thinking biblically—Christians have no reason to be bored with Lord’s Day worship but rather, we have every reason to *excitedly* run to our local church weekly to gather with God’s people for the public worship of our Triune God.

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