May the Lord bless you in Christ

*Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.*

Colossians 2:18

As we go along in our Christian walk, it is natural and good for us to find those who are further along than we are to teach us and help us to be disciples of Jesus. That is one of the primary reasons for the world-wide church, the body of Christ. Jesus desires for us to have fellowship with each other to help us grow.

In this verse, Paul warns us that we must be careful. There are plenty of people out there who desire to cause others to follow their own ways and will lead us away from the truth; away from Jesus. The Bible is our one source of absolute truth; we must check everything against what it tells us.

Here Paul is giving a couple warnings. Yes, we are sinners, but we are forgiven in Christ and covered in His righteousness. We need not abase ourselves; Jesus has made us clean. The Bible is clear that we worship no-one but God. Angels are more powerful than we are but are still part of creation. People will often report that they have heard from God, but if what they claim deviates from the Bible, it is falseness from their own minds.

Follow the Bible and listen to those who have proven themselves true disciples of Jesus. Don’t let a false teacher take from you your prize of joy in the Lord.

In Christ’s love

John

7-25-21

Psalm 104 (2)

Our God is worthy of all honor and praise and glory; He is the only one worthy of worship. As His people; men and women who have been saved from eternal destruction by Him; we who have been adopted by Him as His very children; our only rightful response is to worship Him. There are several ways to do this, but our best option is to see how God is worshiped in the Bible and use the Bible’s methods of worship.

We worship by renewing our minds so that we are not conformed to the world. We offer our bodies as living sacrifices to be used by God. To perform a good work in the name of Jesus is an act of worship. Obeying the commands of Christ is a living demonstration of worship. As we see in our current Psalm, recounting to God some of His works, reverently and in wonder, is worshiping Him. It demonstrates that we have paid attention to what He has done and proclaim that only He can do these things.

Here the Psalmist is focusing on God’s creation. In a Psalm like this, we can worship by reading it slowly and considering each line; dwelling on how mighty God is, that only He can create like this. We can also use it as a pattern. We can think of anything God has made and praise Him for the wonder of it. This is easy to do while out in God’s creation; looking for things large and small to impress us with His spender. Be ready always, to be spontaneous in praising Him when something beautiful or wonderful catches your attention.

We began looking at this Psalm last week, and the Psalmist is poetically covering the days of creation; he is currently looking at the first and second. God has created light simply by declaring that it should exist. He has spread out the firmament and established the foundations of heaven in the waters above the earth. In making the clouds His chariot and walking on the wind, it is made known to us that God not only controls the forces of nature, but that He is involved in them. God has not set the universe in motion and then left it on its own. He is not far off without care for what He has made. He is intimately involved in what He has made; including, and especially, human-beings. He controls every atom in the universe; He lovingly holds our lives in His hands and cares for us.

Verse 4 is one of those verses in Hebrew that can be translated in more than one way. That’s why there are various wordings in the different translations. None of them are wrong, in fact, each translation makes sense and shows the power of God. It really even shows the power of God that several translations of the phrase works.

I read, “*He makes the winds His messengers*”. Yours might say, “*He makes the angels spirits*” or “*He makes the angels winds*”. The wind and the angels are both God’s creation and both do His bidding. He has used the wind for destruction, to bring a plague of locusts into Egypt, to bring quail to the Israelites for food, and He appointed a scorching east wind to get the attention of the wayward prophet Jonah. Jesus calmed a strong wind on the sea of Galilee with a word. The wind is used by God to bring messages of caring and of judgement; of provision and of want.

God created the angels and He created them as spirits. They can manifest as humans if God has reason for them to, but their usual mode is spiritual. The angels are ever interested in doing the will of their Creator. They are powerful. They sing the praises of God and He also sends them on errands. The book of Hebrews lets us know that they are “ministering spirits”. They are to help us in accordance with God’s plan.

Because of their strength and abilities, because of their spiritual nature, they can be considered like the wind. We cannot see the wind; don’t know where it is coming from or where it’s going to; but we know it’s there. We can see its effects and feel it. Likewise, angels can make their presence known, but only as God allows them.

The second line of this verse has the same characteristics. My Bible reads, “*Flaming fire His ministers*”. Other possibilities include, “*His ministers a flaming fire*”. As savage as fire can be, God controls it. There are several accounts of Him using it to bring judgement on evil-doers. He led His people, Israel, by night with a pillar of fire.

Again, we see the angels here. With an intense desire to see the Almighty praised and worshiped, they will act vigorously with fiery intensity. Even in His earthly ministers there can be a burning passion for Christ.

The angels are far above us in God’s creation, but again we read in the book of Hebrews, that they are still creation. The angels were created, God the Son was eternally begotten. Jesus was not made; He has always existed with the Father. And He and the Father, along with the Holy Spirit, are one; God is one. Another reason to worship God; His very existence is beyond our comprehension.

In verse 5 it says, “*He established the earth upon its foundations, So that it will not totter forever and ever*.” The idea of the earth being on foundations is an interesting one. That is a manner of speaking to help us picture how stable the earth is. Yes, there are earthquakes and such, but the earth as a whole continues to do what God made it to do. And we simply hang here in space. God Himself ends up being the foundation.

Now, we know that the earth is moving; it is not stationary. I thought it would be interesting to look at some numbers, just so we can have some idea of how unimaginable God is. The earth makes one rotation every day. In order to do that, the earth is spinning, at the equator, at over 1000 mph. The earth is orbiting the sun and it take one year to do that. That means it is traveling around the sun at 67,000 mph. One more: our earth and solar system are located in the Milky Way galaxy and we are toward the outer edge. The galaxy rotates around its center; so the earth and solar system are rotating around the center of the galaxy. It is doing so at the speed of 490,000 mph. We don’t even feel it. Even in all this hugeness, we can still be in awe of God when we look upon the beauty of a simple flower.

Once again, God is the one who set all this up and maintains it. He is the one we give glory to. When Job desired to have an audience with God so he could question Him, God gave him his prayer. In 38:4-7 God asked him,

*“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
Tell Me, if you have understanding,*

*Who set its measurements? Since you know.  
Or who stretched the line on it?*

*On what were its bases sunk?  
Or who laid its cornerstone,*

*When the morning stars sang together  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”*

The term “*forever and ever*” is again poetic. It refers to the earth’s stability for as long as God maintains it. The Bible lets us know that sometime in the future, something very drastic is going to happen to this world. In Psalm 102:25-26, the Psalmist writes:

*“Of old You founded the earth,  
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.  
“Even they will perish, but You endure;  
And all of them will wear out like a garment;  
Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed.”*

Then, in Revelation 21:1, the apostle John tells us what he sees in his vision:

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.*

This world, this beautiful earth that the Lord has created, has nonetheless been cursed because of the sin of mankind. God will not let it simply continue in deterioration and frustration. Praise Him because He will intervene, at the perfect time, and recreate everything new and better and free from the curse. This is where we will live; also free from the curse and forever free from sin. Our God knew all this from before creation; it is all according to His plan and according to His infinite wisdom. Trust Him.

In verse 6 we consider the earth itself as God first made it; covered entirely with water. There had to be lots of water, because water is so very crucial to the life God was about to create. He knew what He was doing, everything was planned out. Nothing will come as a surprise to Him and the day He will make the new creation was known to Him before He made this earth, submerged in water.

It is interesting to consider that when we undergo Christian baptism, we are baptized into Christ. The people of Israel were under the cloud and passed through the Red Sea; in so doing, they were baptized into Moses. Baptism shows the beginning of new life. Here we see the earth completely submerged in water; a type of baptism; a baptism of the earth before God created new life upon it. Of all the vast universe, this is the place God chose to make people in His image; the place He created to send His Son to redeem mankind from the penalty of sin.

This is the one planet God baptized and then used the dust of it to make living animals and people. This is not to say that we have a “mother earth”. We don’t. The earth is simply made of dirt and so are we. Our creation is all God’s doing.

At this time “*The waters were standing above the mountains*”. That’s a lot of water. Water is powerful and unruly; but God not only created it, He commands it. Our Psalm will look more into this as we go on.

As God’s people in Jesus, it is for us to praise Him and worship Him. But because we are fallen in sin, we have to work at it. The Holy Spirit will guide us into worship, but we must be willing and we must put forth the effort. As we are sanctified, worship will become easier and more natural for us. But it is a fight to be transformed in this way; satan, the world, and our flesh are against us we try to worship and they are strong enemies.

Perhaps, consider water this coming week. Whether it be a brook or an ocean. Maybe it will be rain or even water in our sink. Let it be a reminder to us of our holy God; to take a moment in gratitude and humility to worship Him. It will not be time wasted. God inhabits the praises of His people and it will draw us closer to Him.

Prayer

Mighty God, creator of all things; how right it is that the hosts of heaven are always praising You and singing of Your glory. These are mighty beings, yet they reverently submit to You. They bow before You as they behold Your justice and recognize Your grace. They know they were created, while You have existed for all eternity.

How much more do we, weak and steeped in sin, need to recognize You as God; as the all-powerful and only Deity. We pride ourselves in what we think and do; all the while we owe You every breath we take and every beat of our heart. You are perfect in goodness; our thoughts and intentions are evil.

We worship You Lord because although we deserve judgement You have mercy upon us through Jesus Christ; Your only begotten Son, our one and only Saviour. It is by grace we are saved and that comes by faith that You provide. It is by means of Jesus’ work on the cross that we are able to worship You and our worship is acceptable. Thank You for accepting us. May Your Holy Spirit constantly remind us to think on You with praise and admiration.

We pray these things in Jesus’ name

Amen