

## **I. God's Glory Revealed – Who Rules the Universe?**

- A. God's glory is comprehensive and powerful. "He has absolute authority and rule over His creation." (Boice, p. 789). He is totally sovereign. "God exercises absolute control over both the natural and moral world...and that no event, great or small, ever takes place which is not included in His eternal purpose, and which is not made to subserve His ultimate designs." (Asahel Nettleton, 1783-1844)<sup>1</sup>
- B. The clouds and darkness proclaim a "frightening awesome side of God's kingly rule" (Boice, p. 789)
  - 1. The clouds and darkness remind us of the mystery of God's presence that we can never fully understand. He is truly transcendent, beyond our comprehension, unapproachable.
  - 2. He is shrouded in clouds and darkness to protect His people from His full presence
- C. He is fire, lightening, earthquakes
  - 1. He is able to totally destroy those things (like mountains) that we view as permanent and indestructible
  - 2. He is dangerous

## **II. God's Glory Unpacked – How Does He Rule the Universe?**

- A. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne (v.2).
  - 1. He establishes order.
  - 2. He is good. He is not a mercurial tyrant that destroys for the sake of destruction. He can be trusted.
  - 3. He will utterly destroy evil. He rules in perfect justice.
  - 4. He preserves the lives of His saints; delivers them from the hand of the wicked (v. 10). He shows mercy.
  - 5. He is "sowing" seeds of light and joy among all His people (v.11). "God is still here acting as Creator in sowing the seeds of light and joy to those who have suffered under the evil ones." (Tanner, p. 724-725)
- B. His mercy reaches beyond Israel to all the nations
  - 1. Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! (v.1)
  - 2. All the peoples see His glory (v. 6).

## **III. God's Glorious Rule Requires our Response – Not "How Do I Get Through?" but "How Do I Live in His Beautiful?"**

- A. Live in the Now of Redemption and Reconciliation
  - 1. Hate evil
    - a. Do not appease sin. Do not give it any justification.

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<sup>1</sup>From the book, *Asahel Nettleton, Life and Labours*, by Bennet Tyler and Andrew Bonar, Banner of Truth, p. 199. American preacher and evangelist, considered now the Billy Graham of his day, health problems limited his travels and his ministry for a good portion of his life.

- b. Hate all sins equally – no favoritism of one sin over another; or accepting our own sin, but not another's sin.
  - c. Hate your own sin.
  - d. Be willing to accept reproof when caught in your own sin, yet not get angry.
2. Do not make any room in your life for idols. Worship God alone.
  3. Rejoice in His justice and His righteousness!
  4. Don't be defined by your sorrows, sins, and losses. Let joy be the last word.
  5. Give thanks
  6. Focus your hearts and minds on what is truly beautiful – Christ Himself
    - a. What delights the senses and mind, and gives deep satisfaction (Random House Dictionary, p. 131)
    - b. "In that day (the day when the LORD removes what the world considers beautiful because of the people's sin) the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel." (Isa.4:2) - The Messiah will come and what He accomplishes (through the cross and resurrection) will be truly beautiful.
    - c. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'" (Isa. 52:7) – All those who bring the good news of God's salvation, who announce the kingdom of Jesus Christ.
    - d. "One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple." (Ps. 27:4) – To be in the presence of the LORD.
    - e. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth." (Ps. 50:2)
    - f. "Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary." (Ps. 96:6) God is beauty.
  7. His beauty changes us; even in the midst of sorrows
    - a. Matt. 26:10/Jn. 12:3 Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, pours an expensive jar of pure nard over Jesus' feet and his head as a sign of solemn devotion, and unknowingly, prepares Jesus's body for being laid to rest in the tomb. "For she has done a beautiful thing for me."
    - b. "Do not let your adorning be external – the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear – but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious." (1 Pet. 3:3-4)

#### B. Rejoice in the Day of Restoration

1. We will see His glory revealed
2. All will bow down before Christ (Phil. 2:9-11)
3. The old world with its evil and brokenness will melt like wax; and the new world of perfect righteousness and justice will come into being, a forever home for those who are called by God to be His people.

**Questions:**

1. How do idols, sorrows, and/or losses get in the way of our worship of God? Of the way we live?
2. Psalm 97:8-9 hints of anticipation of Christ's Second Coming, when all things will be made right forever, and perfect righteousness and perfect justice will find its ultimate fulfillment. How should we live now in anticipation of His coming?
3. Does Psalm 97 give you hope and comfort?

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