



**Israel's Greatest Hits Vol. II-Part 7**  
**Credit Where Credit is Due**  
**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

Well, I had some friends returned recently from visiting the Grand Canyon for the first time. And like most when you go to the Grand Canyon for the first time, they were in awe of all that they saw there. Now, I must have been in a bad mood because my response was, "Well, you know it's just a big hole in the ground." To which they responded very insightfully, "Yeah, Pastor Mike, but it is a really big hole in the ground." Well, yeah, that's true. Now, there's something about sensing your own smallness when you're in the presence of something so grand, something so big, something so vast. And that's a good thing because it's easy for us as human beings to think we're all that, that we're big stuff, that we are the most important thing in the universe. But in reality that kind of perspective building experience, that sense of awe, that sense of wonder is a really good thing for us as human beings because we're not all that, and we're not all that big, and we're really not the most important thing in the universe. I guess a lot of things will do that for us, even here locally. Kind of driving over the hill there at Golden Lantern into Dana Point on a day that's really clear, seeing the vastness of the ocean and just thinking, wow, it's just so immense, that's huge. Maybe driving through the desert out in the middle of nowhere and pulling over and looking up at the stars on a cloudless night and seeing stars you never get to see when you're here in the city, and seeing the Milky Way kind of strung completely over your head and it looks like a cloud. It's just an amazing sense of your own smallness that recalibrates who we are, certainly in light of who we know God is in Scripture. That's very helpful.

There's been an experience that has been recalibrating our sense of smallness and God's bigness that has been the common experience of people for millennia. It's something very simple. Something, maybe we haven't given a lot of thought to, and that's a thunderstorm. A thunderstorm, an experience that everyone has lived through. Something that expresses in very unique ways the power and grandeur in nature. It is nothing other than a reflection of God's greatness. God in his sovereignty put in his songbook a song, believe it or not, all about thunderstorms. Now, it's really about God, but the vehicle to get us to think rightly about ourselves, to recalibrate our sense of who we are, to kind of get us back to what our value is here at Compass Bible Church and that is having a high view of God. It's depicted and expressed through something that most of us have experienced and have vivid memories of and that is a really big, violent, loud thunderstorm.

Take a look at this passage with me if you would. It is interesting that we would look at Psalm 29 understanding that this disruption, this strange weather event that we know is a violent expression of weather is post-fall. It's important to remember that I assume that we're looking at something here in the text that makes us think rightly about God. But even so, though it may be intuitive for godly people to see things like that and be drawn to worship God, it's a strange thing because we didn't have earthquakes, we didn't have typhoons, we didn't have tornadoes, we didn't have storms before the fall. I would say this: when it comes to meteorological situations like we have in a thunderstorm, we didn't have any of that until after Genesis 7 in the post-diluvian world. When the flood came certainly we had a new weather system because we had a different world.



The Bible's very clear, the misting of the world before the flood was something that kept us in a great situation in terms of equalized temperature and certainly the protection that we have from what the cosmic rays are basically killing us and other living things on Earth. All of that protected in a sense. You got people that's why they lived so long prior to the flood. You've got this greenhouse effect around the world. I think it can make a pretty clear case for in Scripture. But all that's radically changed. We have rain for the first time, we have storms for the first time, we have the electrical storms that we stand back today, maybe sometimes from the comfort of our insulated homes and don't recognize the real raw power that is expressed in these storms.

I mean, we have a billion volts of electricity coming through a lightning strike, heating up the molecules around the strike itself to five times the temperature of the sun. I mean, that's an amazing statistic. Right? 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit. I mean this is something that, by the way, thunderstorms, really and the result of thunderstorms, killed more people than any other meteorological phenomenon, more than hurricanes, more than typhoons, more than tornadoes, because of the flooding that comes from them and the lightning strikes. Even in our own country a hundred fellow Americans die every year because of a lightning strike. I mean this is a killer.

I mean, you can look out your window maybe on a, you know, nicely protected insulated place and think, "Oh, well, that's beautiful," and you may think that but in reality it's an expression of the raw power that is in this world. It's messed up because of Genesis 3, certainly the fabric of the universe was messed up in Genesis 3, but then in Genesis 7 and following you had this kind of storm activity going on in our world. But even so, even in something that kills, even in something that destroys, even in something that damages things that we create, even in something that puts us in peril personally.

You see in Revelation Chapter 14, the angels flying around and some of the worst storm phenomenon going on in the book of Revelation during the time of Jacob's Trouble or that 70th week of Daniel, that great tribulational period. Hailstorms and lightning and all the thunder and all the destruction of the floods, all that going on in the book of Revelation and the angels cry out, "Fear God and give him glory." Fear God and give him glory. That's a strange juxtaposition of concepts. Right? I mean, the world and the phenomenon of this world is falling apart. Why? Because he's the creator of heaven and earth. Worship him. I mean that's the picture of something that really unsettles us, the disturbing kind of wonder that we might have, the kind of awe-inspiring sense of smallness we get from something like that.

Now, I'm preaching this, of course, in Southern California. We don't have a ton of these. Although lately, it seems in the last five, six years we've had our share of thunderstorms. But if you're from Florida or the southeast or maybe overseas where you have a lot of these, you might read this passage a little differently than some of us. But nevertheless, we've all experienced them. I went from the frigid cold of Chicago, where I went to college, and God decided to thaw me out and bake me in Tucson, Arizona at the University of Arizona for three years. And what was great about that, at least, is I got a sense of the power of God in thunderstorms and the monsoons every summer. You would have these amazing storms with the heat differential and all that is involved in a lightning storm. It just, it was an amazing thing, I'd never seen anything like that. And some of you have grown up with that. Keep that in view as we read these verses.

Follow along as they read it for you from the English Standard Version, the calibration of our thinking about us and God is very, very, very important. Matter of fact, as Tozer said, I'm going to get to this passage eventually, Tozer said, and I quote it often, because it's such a great concept that our low view of God, really, is the cause of a hundred lesser evils among us. And really, if you don't calibrate rightly your smallness and God's bigness, as our value here says, if you don't have a high view of God, everything else is in peril in your Christian life. Almost every problem we have can be traced back, when it comes to our life and our relationship with God, that we don't think high enough about God, and we don't think small enough about ourselves.

Well, perhaps this will help. Let's read this through, 11 verses, beginning with the superscription, I'm reading from the English Standard Version and it says, "A Psalm of David," simply enough. Verse 1, "Ascribe to the Lord." Now, of course, it's capital O-R-D, that's the divine name. 12 times, by the way, it's used in these 11 verses. So often we're going to have the repeat of the word, Yahweh. "Ascribe to Yahweh, O heavenly beings, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength. Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due his name; worship Yahweh in the splendor of holiness."

Now listen here, this whole section, seven times we have "the voice." And again, I don't want over spiritualize this text. I want to look at it for what it is, an expression of this phenomenon of this rattling thunder and the lighting up the sky with lightning. And here's this sense of here's God's, the echo of God's glory in the earth. Look at it. Verse 3. "The voice of Yahweh is over the waters," the torrential rains that come from these storms. "The God of glory thunders, Yahweh, over many waters. The voice of Yahweh is powerful; the voice of Yahweh is full of majesty. The voice of Yahweh breaks the cedars; Yahweh breaks the cedars of Lebanon," where those huge trees are up north of Israel. "He makes Lebanon," the mountain range. "to skip like a calf," and that's not like "skip, skip, skip." That's not the idea. To skip like a calf is the skittish animal, the young animal, that's spooked by a noise. Like you go behind your cat and clap real loud or something, or your dog, and they startle. That's the idea. Even this powerful, strong, majestic range of mountains in Lebanon, it's like the lightning, it's like they're a calf, a highly poetic language I understand, but they're just skipping away.

"In Sirion," that's the name of Mount Hermon, that tall, snowcapped mountain there in Israel, the tallest mountain. And that's going to skip "like a like a young wild ox," just this skittish, scared. "The voice of Yahweh flashes forth flames of fire," there's your lightning. "The voice of Yahweh shakes the wilderness." Have you ever been so close to the thunder that it just rattles your clothes, like a big subwoofer, you know, from Best Buy? That's a bad analogy but there's the idea. Right? It shakes the wilderness. "Yahweh shakes the wilderness of Kadesh," even.

"The voice of Yahweh," now this is an interesting phrase, "makes the deer give birth." Now you've got a footnote on that in the English Standard Version? Right? You can see there in the margin. We have a consonant-le language here of consonants in Hebrew. If you vocalize this differently with different vowel points, you can come up with this alternate translation, "makes the oaks to shake." Now there are issues with the feminine and masculine nouns here and the mismatch, and so it's a hard little phrase to translate. So it makes it even more of a question as to whether it's about the voice of Yahweh, this thunder making deers go into labor, is some of the manuscript evidence of the old variant readings of some Hebrew texts

that actually have the word trees instead of deer. And so the idea is that the trees are rattling. OK? "It strips the forest bare," and in the Hebrew parallelism that certainly fits. Right? So the Lord makes the oaks to shake or the trees to shake and strips the forest bare. OK? Maybe it is the deers to give birth. That's a hard one there.

"In his temple," now again, we're assuming it's the heavenly beings of verse 1, the throne of God, "they all cry," what? "Glory!" God is great. Right? "Kabowd." Kabowd means the heaviness, the grandeur, the gravitas of God. They say, "God is big, God is great." Verse 10 summarizes what you see, I hope, as a godly intuitive person looking at some expression of power in nature. "Yahweh sits enthroned over the flood; Yahweh sits enthroned as king forever." He's in charge of everything. He's certainly bigger than the things he creates. He's more powerful than the things he creates.

Then an interesting close to the whole psalm. Look at this, it's strange, "May Yahweh give strength to his people! May Yahweh bless his people with peace!" And like you having to calm your kids for the first time that they had to try to sleep through a thunderstorm. I mean, you understand what they need is strength. Right? "Be strong. Go in there, go asleep. Peace." That's the picture here. Which by the way, the rabbis used to talk about how this was a psalm that was read to children and families when there was a thunderstorm in ancient Israel. And that's the picture here of God graciously giving peace and strength to his people. But the picture of the voice of God, the loud clap of thunder, the rolling thunder, verses 3 through 9, that's the picture, all of it is a depiction of God's greatness.

Let's start with verses 1 and 2, make three quick observations here today as we look at this psalm. First of all, let me just at least underscore the word "ascribe." That's kind of an accounting word, if you will, ascribe, to credit. To give someone their due. You owe him this. Right? "Ascribe to Yahweh," and then you might have another footnote on this phrase, "O, heavenly beings." It's the Hebrew phrase Ben Elohim, Ben Elohim, sons of God, sons of Elohim. That phrase used, certainly in Job and used in other ways in other places, but usually referring to angelic beings, something that refers to foreign gods. But I think the context, certainly, is it ends with the temple inhabitants in verse 9, not the earthly temple inhabitants but the heavenly temple inhabitants crying out glory. I think we're talking about angelic beings here.

The greatest, most powerful created beings that there are, are not human beings, they're angelic beings. We have them all classified, cherubim and seraphim and archangels and all that. That class, we don't learn a lot about in Scripture, but we read enough to know they are a lot more powerful than you and me. These angelic beings are called to, strangely enough in this psalm, the most powerful beings God ever created, you ought to be giving God glory for his greatness. Now think about that. That's an argument from greater to lesser. In other words, here is the argument: if the greatest and strongest, most majestic beings God ever created should be bowing down, and should be recognizing and crediting God with strength and greatness, well then, certainly, what does it mean for us? Of course we should. And in this text it says you ought to. You ought to "ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength," the gravitas and greatness of God and strength, "ascribe to Yahweh the glory that is due his name."

And that's the problem, we don't know how much he's owed that kind of descriptive. I mean, we don't think highly enough about him to really stand back and see it. But every Christian should learn, in every phenomenon of nature, in every expression of the greatness of God, the

vastness of space, the impressiveness of the huge ocean we look at every day, the bigness of what God has created and certainly his power expressed from the storm, we ought to say God deserves our worship. We ought to "worship Yahweh," now look at this phrase, "in the splendor of holiness." In the splendor of holiness. This is a phrase, by the way, that was used when I was a kid to make sure you wore good church clothes to church. If you look there, there should be another footnote on that just to give you the literal reading of this "the attire of holiness," what you're dressed in.

So people have said, "Well, here's the thing, you should have a little piece of fabric that hangs from your neck, that ties in a knot, that covers the buttons on your shirt because you should worship God in the "attire of holiness," which of course is a recent invention in the time. It has nothing to do with how you dress at church, although that's a different topic. I mean, culturally at least, reflect whatever is expected in your culture and, you know, so whatever. That's another sermon. I don't want to talk about music or clothes right now at church. But I do want to say this, this is not really talking about how we dress in church or dress in worship. It has nothing to do with that. Right? We worship God in spirit and truth. It has nothing to do with the kind of clothes you wear.

Even in the Old Testament that's not the picture here that's being given to us. Matter of fact, I'll try to prove this in a text I'll have you look at just a minute, but this has to do with God's attire. He's dressed in holy attire. He rides, if you will, on the storm. His expression of his glory and his greatness and his splendor is something that's being seen in the next few verses, verses 3 through 9. That's the picture. And matter of fact, that Hebrew word there "in" could be translated "for," we worship the Lord for the attire of his holiness, and now we're going to explain what that is. One of the things that he puts on, that he shows his greatness and majesty and glory in are things like storms, an electrical thunderstorm. That's the picture. I'll try to prove that to you in a minute if you're skeptical about that.

But let's at least summarize those first two verses. We certainly should be crediting, that's what ascribe means, God for being great. Now again, you come to church, true or false. Is God great? I hope you say that God is great. But we ought to be crediting and ascribing to God greatness ALL the time. Storms, I don't want to get too far afield here, but electrical storms are a picture of God's greatness all the way back, I mean I would say, to Genesis 7. But clearly, we have plenty of storms depicted between Genesis 7 and Exodus 19, but I would say at least by Exodus 19 what we clearly have is something God chose to express his greatness to the people of Israel.

They came out of slavery from Egypt. They came down now through the desert to Mt. Sinai, and then God says "I'm now going to give you the rules," and he sends Moses up to Mt. Sinai and as he's going up to Mt. Sinai there's a huge storm on the mountain. You could look this up on your own in Exodus Chapter 19 and into Exodus Chapter 20. And as they're sitting there watching the peals of thunder, the dark thick clouds at the top of the mountain and hearing the rolling thunder coming off, this loud and close, they're all frayed. It says they're terrified at this. And by Chapter 20, they're sitting there with this huge storm on this mountain, they're so afraid they say, "Listen, we don't want to hear the voice of God. We don't want to have any more of this storm. As a matter of fact, Moses, why don't you talk to us about what God told you? But we don't want God to talk to us lest we die."



So they're afraid. Which, by the way, as I said, even in our country 100 people die from electrical storms. They're not stupid back then, they understand this is dangerous, and so they're saying we don't want to experience this God and this depiction of God on this mountain through this big thunderstorm. And so Moses comes and says this to them. After recognizing what God wants to communicate to the people as the prophet of God, here's what he says in Exodus Chapter 20, he comes back and he says, verse 20, this is 20:20, no connection there, Exodus 20:20. "Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear.'"

Now again, if God doesn't want us to fear what's with the storm? Right? That's the picture here. What's with the storm? God is certainly depicting his greatness, but what did he just do? He took them out of Egypt as his people, his covenant people, which he says in Deuteronomy is because he set his love on these people, just graciously, without merit, nothing they did, not because of they're the greatest nation. He just chose to love them, build a covenant with them starting all the way back to Abraham, and he brings them out of Egypt. "So listen, I'm not bringing you out here to destroy you on this mountain. That's not the point. Do not fear."

Here's what Moses now says to the people, "God has come to test you, that the fear of God," might be among you, "might be before you, so that you may not sin." Now this is weird if you think it through logically. Right? I'm scared of this storm that's supposed to be expressing God's greatness. You just told me, "Don't be afraid because it's not here to make you afraid. It's just here to make you afraid." That's really what's going in the passage. Well, you got to understand that logically because the Bible's very consistent. We see this throughout the rest of the Bible. We must be talking about two kinds of fear. And there are two kinds of fear. There's the fear of condemnation, as John says in First John 5, the condemnation of being cast into outer darkness, into hell. And you should not fear God because he wants to consume you in your sin. That's not how you should fear God.

But he turns around and says this expression of the greatness of God in this storm is so that you will fear, so that you will not sin. So that you can have a perspective on me that is so high, that you recognize that that great God who could destroy you in a moment with a zap of one lightning strike, is a God who wants to remind you how powerful he is. Now he's good because he just took you out of slavery in Egypt and he wants to lead you to the Promised Land. That's the whole promise of all this. I'm going to take you into the Promised Land. But I want you to fear me along the way. You may understand that there's a fear in the Bible that's appropriate and there's a fear in the Bible that's not appropriate when it relates to God. And most people today say, "Well, fear is bad. I don't want to feel fear because fear is an uneasy feeling. So we don't have any fear toward God, because I can look at First John 5 and it says, oh, you know, "perfect love casts out all fear," so I'm not going to fear. But if you think that way you're thinking simplistically and you don't understand the distinctions in Scripture. Scripture is very clear, you are to fear God, it's the beginning wisdom. Fear God, fear God, fear God. It's all over the Bible. What kind of fear is that? It's the kind of fear that you might have recognizing the awesome, transcendent power of God that is expressed in things like thunderstorms. It's just a picture, but it pictures the greatness of God having all authority.

C.S. Lewis did that well in the Chronicles of Narnia. You might remember as Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords is depicted as Aslan, this great lion, and Lucy and her sister and brothers go through the wardrobe into Narnia, of course, in this whole analogy and parable, if you will, of Christ and the kingdom. As they get there, you know, Mr. Beaver comes up and

takes them on the tour through the land and they ask a lot of questions, they find out that there's a king of Narnia and they want to meet the king and they find out through their tour guy that the king is a lion and not a person. Lucy goes, "Well, I would think that the king would be a man, that was my thought. And is he safe?" Mr. Beaver says, "Well, he is a lion." And she said, "Well, I would be quite scared to meet a lion," she said, little Lucy, and Mr. Beaver says, "Well, you should." He said, and I'll quote this, it's well well-written, "And you will be afraid. For if anyone can appear before the Great Aslan without their knees knocking, well they're either braver than most or they're just silly." And she says, "Well, then he isn't safe." Mr. Beaver says, "Safe? Who said anything about safe? Of course he's not safe. But he's good."

There is the juxtaposition of Exodus 20. God's goodness has been demonstrated before you. He's just taken you out of Egypt. He wants to take you to the Promised Land. But who said anything about a domesticated deity? Who said anything about him being safe? You've got to fear God. You ought to worship him with trembling. I mean, that's the whole point of Psalm 2, you tremble, you serve the Lord with that trembling fear, recognize his greatness. If you've bought into the 21st century evangelical lie that God can be brought down to your level and he's just your buddy upstairs, and Christ is your homeboy, and all that stuff we talk about from time to time in pulling him down to our life coach, our genie, our butler, we've misunderstood the Christ the Bible, we've misunderstood the Triune God. God is a great, holy, awesome God. We better fear God because of his greatness and his power. Sometimes storms like this that kill people should remind us of his greatness. Just like that electrical storm in Exodus Chapter 20.

In verse 1 of our passage, it speaks to heavenly beings. And I couldn't help but think about a passage that I hope you think of, if you know your Bible well, in Isaiah Chapter 6 when heavenly beings are worshipping God and here is a man, Isaiah, able to see that. I'd like you to look at this for just a second, if you would. Turn with me to Isaiah Chapter 6. Get your eyeballs on this text. Let me walk you through this afresh if you haven't read it recently. In Isaiah Chapter 6 we're going to have the heavenly beings that are spoken of in Psalm 29 worshipping God. Isaiah doesn't have to tell them to worship God, they're going to do it. But it's an interesting situation of someone recognizing in this vision the greatness of God and responding to it the way that we ought to. It may not look like a passage to ascribe to the Lord this and ascribe to the Lord that, but I guarantee you here we'll see Isaiah ascribing to the Lord a lot of things.

Let's start in verse 1. "In the year King Uzziah died." Just like any leader in any organization, you get long term leaders who stay there a long time, there's a lot of stability, a lot of security that comes with that. Uzziah had been the king for 52 years in Judah and he was very, very prosperous in that regard and the nation did well. But one of the downsides of consistent leadership is a lot of people can get complacent, which certainly the first five chapters of Isaiah speak to in that they were morally complacent. There's a lot of problems and Isaiah was pointing all that out, saying God's going to judge these people if you don't repent.

But now, after 52 years as Kings Uzziah dies, he has this vision and he sees the "Lord sitting upon a throne," not a park bench, not a folding chair, not a stool, he's sitting on a throne, this picture of his majesty. In this vision he is, here are some words, "high and lifted up," just like our spatial analogy of saying our value at Compass Bible Church is to have a high view of God. It's a spatial analogy. I guess you could use a different spatial analogy, to have a big view of

God. Something about his power and greatness and he sees that in this vision, this picture depiction of his power and greatness on a throne, it's exalted, it's on a platform, "it's high, it's lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple."

You watch these princesses get married in Westminster Abbey and you think why do you need your dress to drag on the ground for so long? Right? What's with that big thing, that train of your wedding dress? Well, of course, that's supposed to express her majesty and her greatness and all of that. Now, it's one thing for you to drag your dress down half the aisles at Westminster Abbey, but this is a picture of God's train of his robes, not a bathrobe, this is the robe of a king, the regalia of a great near-eastern king, and his robe in this image is filling not just the aisles, it's not just draped over the steps of the platform on which he's seated, it is filling the whole room. "Come on. Can't you have a more modest outfit?" No! The king is going to have a robe that fills the whole temple. More than that, if I can skip ahead for just a second, in verse 3, look halfway through it, "the whole earth." It's not just the heavenly temple that is filled by his train, it fills the whole earth, "the whole earth is full of his glory."

Now go back, at least on the worksheet, I'm not done with Isaiah 6. I want to point out a couple more things. But look at that phrase in Psalm 29 verse 2. The bottom verse of verse 2. "Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness," in his holy attire. I said I'd try to prove this to you. I think the picture here of the robe filling the temple and his glory all over the planet, even though the planet is corrupt and fallen, and the ground is cursed and people are dying, all of the glory and greatness of God is still reflected in earthquakes and typhoons and thunderstorms, among other things. The birth of a baby, the lily of the field, the birds that are singing in the morning, all of those things are reflections of his glory, even through the sinful dimness that we have in perceiving that, as the old hymn says: "Though the eye of sinful man his glory may not see." But the reality is we do see it if we look for it, the greatness of God's glory, but it's depicted in his attire, his robe, his clothing. And the clothing in our passage is the thunderstorm, it is the picture of the expression of the thunderstorm. I think we see this consistent picture of the robe, the greatness of God, and it expresses his glory.

"Above him," back to verse 2 in Isaiah 6, "stood the seraphim." The cherubim or the cherub - singular, cherubim - plural, seraph - singular, seraphim - plural. That's some high-ranking angel. Right? You can talk about archangels and other angels, principalities and powers, but all we know is that these are closely associated with the throne of God. The word in Hebrew "seraph" means burning. Right? They're the burning ones. Right? And they are now in this passage flying around with six wings. And look at the first two wings, they're covering their faces. I mean, the picture of the depiction of the glory and greatness and grandeur of these seraphs that are so highly exalted, the seraphim, I mean, they're seen as covering their face.

Our guys are up at the men's camping. Hopefully, they're coming back soon. But guys are weird, right? Manly men at least, into pocket knives and things like flashlights, which I'm into both, but don't buy me any. But the idea is I know one thing I would be doing if I were there last night around the campfire when the campfire starts to dim. I'd be pulling out my cool flashlight, because they're so cool lately because they get so small, we used to have big flashlights, and now you can get small flashlights and super powerful flashlights and it's a so competitive-man thing, I understand, but, you know, "my flashlight's brighter than your flashlight." And, you know, shining it up at the top of the trees. I mean, I'm living like I was at this retreat, but I wasn't. But I imagine if I were there I'd be pulling out my flashlight and look



at it. And as you see that with the dimming fire of the campfire and you're shining at the top of the branches and "can your flashlight do this?" And "look at my flashlight," When all that's going on and you can compare the brightness of your flashlights.

But right now, if they were to pull up their flashlights in the middle of the day and say, "point your flashlight at the top of the tree." "Well, I can't see anything." It's not that that flashlight doesn't work. It's not that those photons don't shoot out and go toward those branches. It's just that you can't see them. Why? Because the overpowering illuminance of the sun, that big ball of fusion, it dims everything else. That's why I think in verse 1 you're saying to the heavenly beings, the brightest beings, if you will, the most majestic powerful beings in the universe, "You think you're great? You have to cover your eyes before the greatness of God." Every powerful, great being dims by comparison. They cover their face. They fly, they cover their feet.

"They call out to one another," special, different, unique, "holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of the armies." He's so different, he's so exalted, he's so transient and he's so much bigger and better and higher than all of us. "The whole earth is full of his glory! And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called." There's that same word again, "the voice of him who called," depicted in our passage with thunder, and like thunder, shaking the forest. Here you have it shaking the temple, which by the way, there's a column in the old temple that was struck by lightning in Jerusalem and you can see the pictures of that online. The idea of the shaking of this presence of God, this depicted presence of God. "And the voice of God calling out, and the whole house was filled with smoke."

Now all of that is understanding the greatness of God. Look how Isaiah ascribes to God greatness. And I just want by inference show you three simple things. Verse 5. The first thing he does is admit his lack of greatness, because next to the great greatness of God, you're not great at all. As a matter of fact, here is the great prophet who seemed so much better than all the other people in Israel according to his preaching in the first five chapters. Now all the sudden he gets down to things like my words are not right. "Woe is me! I am lost; I'm a man of unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts!" You start to recognize now you are not great at all. It's kind of like standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, I suppose, and saying, "look how small I am."

You want to ascribe to God the glory that's due his name, one inverted, inferred way to do that is for you to confess your sins. One way for you to do that is to say, "look how not great I am." The greatness of God reveals the smallness of us in a moral, ethical sense as well. God is so perfect, so holy, so pure. And God is saying, man, just like Isaiah did, it would be good for you to recognize who you are in the pecking order of the universe. Isaiah's response, he admits his lack of greatness and then he gets forgiven, verse 6. "One of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched his mouth, he said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, your sin is atoned for."

Now, Isaiah often throughout the book and certainly through the Psalter shows us that when you get a sense of your forgiveness the natural response is gratitude for the grace of God. I mean, it's breaking out with great praise that God is a God who would forgive our sins at all, that he makes intercession for sinners, that he atones for our sin. I mean, that's a theme in

Isaiah and certainly a theme throughout the Psalter. To ascribe to the Lord is not only to say I ascribed to you greatness by recognizing that I'm not great and I ascribe to the Lord greatness by recognizing that you have anything to do with me. That you would forgive my sins, that you would say to a sinful people at the base of Mt. Sinai, "I want to have you be my people. I want you to be my covenant people. I want you to enter into a relationship with me."

I mean, that certainly can't be done without you thinking of the sin that has to somehow be atoned for. And so it is in verses 6 and 7 and then lastly in verse 8. "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'" And Isaiah said, "Well, what's on the docket? Let me see. I'll check it out. Tell me what the mission is." Right? Do you see that there in verse 8? "No, Pastor Mike, because it's not there." Well, he didn't even wait to find out what the details were. He's going to get the details in verses 9 and following. But he says, "Hey, you got something that needs to be done? Here I am! Send me." To ascribe to the Lord glory and strength, to ascribe the glory that's due his name, is to respond to the greatness of God by seeing your own lack of greatness, to recognize that God is a gracious God even to reach out to you and want to have a relationship with you. You certainly should be grateful for his grace.

And then lastly, you ought to acknowledge his kingship, that he's completely in charge, by confessing and ascribing to him that you're his servant. "I'll do anything you want." We talk about around here the acronym ATAPAT. AnyThing, AnyPlace, AnyTime is the right response of someone who sees the greatness of God. And we don't have to see the details before we say, "Well, God, I'll think about it. I'll consider the request. Let me see what the mission is." We say, "God, anything you want from me, any place you want me to do it, and anytime you want me to do it, I will do it. Here I am! Send me."

I mean, look at that, invert it. God is unfathomably holy. God is unthinkableably gracious. God is totally and completely in charge. To ascribe to God the greatness that is due his name certainly infers all those things. My confession of sin, my praise for grace and mercy, my willingness to do whatever he asks. Ascribe to the Lord, heavenly beings. Ascribe to the Lord, people of Compass Bible Church. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength, whether you're the greatest or the smallest. Ascribe to the Lord the glory that's due his name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. Look at the reflections of his holiness.

And then it's spelled out in verses 3 through 9 of Psalm 29. Just read it again real quick. "The voice of Yahweh is over the waters," torrential rain comes in these thunderstorms. "The God of glory thunders," you hear it. "Yahweh, over many waters," torrential rains. Verse 4, "The voice of Yahweh is powerful; the voice of Yahweh is full of majesty. The voice of Yahweh breaks the cedars." I had someone show me a picture and I remember this from social media a couple of years ago that picture of a birthday party they were having in the backyard and just took their big tree in their backyard, right here in South County, and just put it into splinters. You get people in our church who have been in the southeast and a lot of different places in our country where you have this kind of weather. Everyone's got a story of something being struck by lightning. If you grew up here you didn't get a lot of that. Go on YouTube this afternoon and look at lightning strikes. Pictures of people there, you know, taking pictures and all sudden this lightning strikes can just blister these trees, huge trees, sometimes like the cedars of Lebanon, breaking them to pieces with one lightning strike. "He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf." That mountain range is just cowering with these lightning strikes. "Sirion," Mount Hermon, "like a young wild ox. The voice of Yahweh flashes forth flames of fire." Have



you been in those dark night storms where it just lights up and you see your shirt and your shoes and your shoelaces just BAM! The flash of that lightning strike.

"The voice of the Lord," verse 8, "the voice of Yahweh shakes the wilderness; the voice of Yahweh shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. Yahweh makes the deer to give birth," or makes the oak shake, "and strips the forest bare, and in his temple all cry, 'Glory!'"

There are 16 million thunderstorms on this planet every year. 1,800 thunderstorms they estimate are going on at any given time. So right now around the world 1,800 thunderstorms are taking place with 50, note this, 50 lightning strikes every second on our planet. Think about that. So "one Mississippi, two Mississippi." You had 100 lightning strikes happen in those two seconds all around the world. There are 1.4 billion lightning strikes a year. As I said, it heats up the air molecules to 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit, five times the temperature of the sun's surface.

They have a new way to report the voltage of these lightning strikes. They've reached as high as 1.3 billion volts at 200 amperes. I mean, this is an amazing expression of power and electricity. If you say, "Wow, that's interesting. I should study more about this." Well, you should. You should see the power that God is unleashing in these storms. As a matter of fact, let's jot that down and before I lose the second point, "Consider God's Great Power." It's a subset of what I've just said: God is great and in a storm you see his great power, whether it's the torrential rains, the whipping wind, or whether it's the strike of lightning that is absolutely unthinkably powerful.

How does it work? Well, whatever Wikipedia says, that's how it all works. I don't know how it works. If you go to your kid's 6th grade science book to look this up, and be careful with 6th grade science books because they have pat answers for everything, you're going to have the explanation of how this works, the electrical, you know, electrons floating to the bottom of these big clouds and positive charges at the top, and the positive charge on the ground, and some negative charges on the ground. You get the leader coming up and the strike coming down and this is how it works, you get the explanation.

Go a couple layers deeper though, if you would. Do a little research on lightning. And you'll find out this a very difficult and complex thing. People do not understand it. Today there are competing theories about how this takes place. I mean, we know negative and positive charges, we understand at least the attraction of that. It's like you rubbing your feet on the carpet and touching the doorknob at the right time of year with the right kind of, you know, ambient thing going on in your room and you get that little shock. Well, that's a little tiny shock. It's certainly not a billion volts of electricity. They're trying to figure out exactly how this works.

Now, I'm not a God-of-the-Gaps guy, you understand that. I don't believe that God is just necessary for the things we can't explain in science. I don't believe that at all. I believe just what verse 10 says, "the Lord sits enthroned over the flood; he sits enthroned as king forever." He is the one who created the whole thing. He upholds everything by the word of his power. That's what I believe because that's what the Bible teaches and that, I think, makes sense and is the only thing we can do with all the available evidence. I get that.

But it is interesting that when it comes to something so simple, from Ben Franklin to Steve Jobs, we still can't figure this thing out with electricity. How this works. I mean there are theories about cosmic rays and all the things that seed this and make this happen. There is a phenomenon even with positively charged lightning strikes that they can't figure out. Now, how does that work? Does it just come from the top of the cloud? How does this stuff get explained? Is it really just ice particles or dust particles and electrons being stripped as it comes down? I mean there are theories and some of these things don't work with all the test cases in here. Here's a cloud without any ice particles. Here's a cloud that seems too small to make this work on our equations. Here's something that doesn't make sense at all regarding the positive and negative charges of a cloud. We still don't understand it. I'm just saying it's an interesting field of study.

It is important for us to stand back and say, yeah, it is an amazing expression of God's power that we still can't, in our modern age as you carry computers around in your pocket, we don't know how this all works. God is complex. We don't fully comprehend it. And yet we do know this: God's glory is reflected in even the damaging disruptions of nature like thunderstorms, because without it we got problems on this planet. Oh, we wouldn't have problems with the canopy and we wouldn't have problems with this kind of this greenhouse effect, we wouldn't have problems pre-flood but post-flood we need thunderstorms. Not just in the destruction of the Earth that God uses to destroy it in Genesis 6 through 9, but what we see afterwards. We need a cleaning of the air through thunderstorms. We lose 20 degrees in temperature because of the existence of thunderstorms post-flood. I mean, this is an important part, not to mention the shade and everything else in these warm climates.

This is something, by the way, that brings the number one source of moisture to the middle of continents around the world. Thunderstorms, without those we've got problems in the Middle East continents which we wouldn't have problems before the flood. But the post-diluvian world needs this. Not to mention, did you know that nitrogen gas in a strike of electricity turns nitrogen gas into nitrogen particles, and those nitrogen particles then float to the earth like dust. If you know anything about gardening, you certainly need nitrogen in the soil. I don't think you would need that, but we need it now in a post-flood world, but you gotta have that. As a matter of fact, even in modern farming where they're mass producing food in their farms, these modern farmers say 10% of the nitrogen that they need in their soils comes from lightning strikes. It's an amazing reality all this coming from God.

In the interesting work of the world, whether it's bacteria, whether it's the food chain, whether it's even sicknesses that we have to deal with for certain reasons, whether it's weather patterns, all of these things now have a role to play in a post-fall, post-diluvian world. The Triune God is powerful and also gracious, even in the things he does and at the end of these thunderstorms sometimes if the sun is out just right we see that splitting of the spectral wave of light, we see the rainbow. Though we deserve a catastrophic, world-destroying flood every 50 years or so, God said I'm going to hold all the judgment to the end when it comes to catastrophic worldwide events. I'm going to save it for judgment at the end. God has promised to never destroy the earth the way he did in Genesis Chapter 6 through 9. God is gracious, even in the expressions of his judgment, which is certainly reflected in thunderstorms.

With all that and I hope we will stand, and can't do it in 50 minutes, but I hope we stand in awe of what God expresses, even in something so simple as a thunderstorm, that reminds us

of the summary statement here in verse 10 that "The Lord, Yahweh, sits enthroned," above the flood, he's "over the flood," he's over it all. He sits above the storm and "Yahweh sits enthroned as king forever." He's sovereign, he's in charge, he's bigger than his creation, he's more powerful than his creation.

Then this interesting, tender prayer of David, "May Yahweh give strength to his people! May Yahweh bless his people with peace!" You need, just like with your kids, putting them to bed in a thunderstorm, strength and peace in a chaotic world of abrupt and violent weather. We need that. And in this passage we see being humbled by a storm, God, we graciously ask you for these things.

Number three on your outline. We ought to humbly, "Humbly Seek God's Gracious Gifts." We ought to think about the fact that though he should destroy us, he invites us to come and take refuge in him, it says in Psalm 2. Warning the people and the kings of the earth who are rebellious and don't want anything to do with the strictures of God's moral law, you should "Kiss the Son, lest he become angry. His anger is quickly kindled." And you think, "Wow, that's a scary verse. I want to run away from that God." Well, no one said anything about him being safe, but he is good, the next line says. Blessed are those, blessed, "Asher" in Hebrew, the happy, content. "Blessed are those who take refuge in him." I don't want to run toward the storm. No, no, no. This God who is so scary, this God who is so powerful, this God who can condemn, this God who can kill you with one strike of a lightning bolt, which he does, killing 100 Americans on average every year in our country alone. That God says, "Come and take refuge in me, in the middle of the storm, in the eye of the storm. I am the king. I am sovereign enthroned over all things. I give strength, I give peace."

Speaking of Isaiah, at the end of Isaiah, after all was said and done in the long career of Isaiah as a prophet, he ends this way. Isaiah 66:1. You know what the Lord says? "Heaven is my throne, and the earth," where all this stuff that seems so big to us, from the Grand Canyon to the biggest storm you've ever experienced, "the earth is my footstool," nothing to me. "Where then is there a house that you can build for me?" This great, Solemonic temple that stands before you. I'm not going to live there. Even Solomon said that. "Heaven and the highest heaven," when he dedicated the temple he said, "Heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house I built for you!" You're not going to live in this house. You not going to live in this box. But would you please look to your people and answer their prayer when they pray?

Here it says in this passage, "Heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool." Where's the house you can build for me? "My hands made all these things." Clearly that's not the case. Yet, the condescension of God, here it is, "to this one I will look." You know the passage? "To this one I will look: to him who is contrite in spirit, to the one who trembles at my word, the humble and contrite, who tremble at my word." And you think about a printed book laying on your lap. I mean, I understand this is about God's data, his information, the things that he said, but the way it's depicted in Scripture, even in our passages, the "voice of the Lord," man, it's expressed in this scary thing like thunder.

Thunderstorms are scary. They make us tremble and they should. Not just like the modern arrogant person who sits around thinking, "Oh, no big deal." Not until one strikes you or your house. It is a big deal. You stand in awe of this great God with reverence and fear. But you





recognize this: God is a God who wants to give strength and peace and he looks to, he condescended to. As Hosanna 11:4 says, "He bends down to feed his people." He's so powerful but yet he tenderly, like a shepherd, carries his lambs on his shoulder. He is calling us. While you might feel like it's like this: God saying, "I'm scary, but come, come, come. I'll give you rest. My yoke is easy. My burden is light, come to me. I'll give you strength. I'll give you peace."

Speaking of storms there was an electrical storm, you can be quite sure it was, in northern Israel on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus in Matthew 8 is asleep on the cushion, you might remember. It was a bad storm, even seasoned fishermen were scared, and they finally went in and woke up Jesus asleep on the cushion and they said, "Wake up. Don't you care that we perish? Aren't you afraid we're about to die? Aren't you concerned about us? Don't you care about us?" And I've preached this many times and I've referred to it many times, but you remember it is a rebuke from Christ. "You of little faith." "This isn't just I'm upset because you woke me up from my nap. This is you should have trusted me in the midst of this storm." And then you remember what happens. He stands up and he says, "Be still. Peace! Be still." And all the waves and all the storm instantly goes away.

He shows that he is king "enthroned over the flood. He is king forever." The incarnate God, the one "who upholds the universe by the word of his power." This is the expression in Hebrews 1 about Jesus himself, the Son of God. And in that statement, he again is rebuking them and yet they marveled, they marveled by saying, "Who is this that even the winds and the waves obey him?" And now they recognize the one in your boat, the one in your life, the king of all things, you should trust me even in the midst of a chaotic world and chaotic storms. Peace and strength in the midst of the storm. That's what he wanted from his disciples and that's what he wants from us. We recognize the greatness of God in a scary world that's filled with violence and death and a lot of things that should scare us and God sits enthroned over it all.

I'm going to ask you to do something unique here. I don't normally do this but if you're a note taker jot this down before you do this for me. Job Chapter 36 verse 24, Job 36:24 through 37:5. Did you catch that? Job 36:24 through 37:5. Don't turn to it, but if you would, I want you to think, as we humbly seek the gracious gifts of God in light of something like this, I want to read this to you and if this seems weird to you, I'm sorry. But I'd love for you just to close your eyes and before I make you close your eyes and you imagine the scene I'm about to read to you, I want you to know this is Elihu. Elihu in Job is the fourth friend, not his three friends who were miserable counselors, but one that comes in at the end, he's younger, it's the only one that the Lord does not rebuke. The only one that does not have some kind of corrective. So these words are true, these words are right, these words are right on with the God of the universe, the God of the storm. But I want you to listen to these words. Close your eyes, if you would, if it's not too weird. Imagine this text as I read it for you. OK?

Here it comes. "Remember to extol the Lord's work, of which men have sung. All mankind has looked on it; men behold it from afar. Behold, God is great, and we don't understand him; the number of his years are unsearchable. For he draws up the drops of water; they distill his mist in the rain, which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly. Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thundering of his pavilion? Behold, he scatters his lightning about him and covers the depths of the sea. For by these," strikes of lightning, "he judges peoples; and gives food in abundance. He covers his hands with the lightning and he



commands it to strike the mark. It's crashing declares his presence; the cattle also that he rises. At this also my heart trembles and leaps out of its place. Keep listening to the thunder of his voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth. Under the whole heaven he lets it go, and his lightning to the corners of the earth. After it his voice roars; he thunders with majestic voice, and he does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard. God thunders wondrously with his voice; he does great things that we do not comprehend."

God, give us a higher view of you this morning, even as we consider a weather phenomenon that we don't experience very often here. Maybe for us it will be the destruction of a really bad earthquake. And of course, we lament the loss of life whether it's someone getting struck by lightning or devastation of an earthquake, but we got to stand back and intuitively as your people say, "Great is the Lord. He sits enthroned above the flood." He sits enthroned above the typhoon, he sits enthroned above the tornado, he sits enthroned before the earthquake, he sits enthroned above all things. "Everyone in the temple in heaven cries, 'Glory!'"

Even in Revelation 14 has the world as coming unhinged, the angels sing "Fear God and give him glory." The God who made the heavens and the earth, worship him. God, we worship you not because you're a capricious, angry deity, trying to offer you gifts and offerings and foods so you won't strike us dead. We recognize that your expression of love for us couldn't have been more poignantly, carefully, demonstrably given than it was on the cross of Jesus Christ. That all the wrath, all the lightning, all the pain, all the eternal torment poured out on Christ, the King, who stood in our place, that now allows us to come to the foot of this mountain.

Oh, if they were scared at the base of Mount Sinai, as the writer of Hebrews says, how reverential, how filled with awe should we be as we come to the heavenly Zion, the place where you live and we recognize in festal gathering with thousands and myriads of angels, all of them, even the seraphs, the seraphim, bowing down before you calling out, "Holy, holy, holy." God, we recognize your glory reflected in this world, even the things that scare us. We stand in awe of you. Elevate our view of you today and let it get us all in the proper perspective. How small we are, how dependent we are, how reliant we are. God, elevate our view of you today. Let us ascribe to you the glory and strength that's due your name.

In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.