

Trends

A new survey shows that the majority of Americans no longer believe that Jesus is the path to salvation and instead believe that "being a good person" is sufficient. This includes 68% of those who identify as Christians. (77% of Catholics embraced this idea.)

- via *The Christian Post*, 8/9/20

1 Timothy 1:15: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Acts 4:12: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Sentence Sermons

"If we all lived according to the teachings of Jesus Christ, life would be much simpler." —Chuck Palahniuk

Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

News & Notes

Please pray for the Wallace family. They continue to miss our services (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She's an encouragement to all!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for the African appeal for funds to buy Bibles, songbooks and support faithful preachers' travel expense. Donate if you're able! 1 Jn. 3:17

Please pray for Marcia Wilson, Wilma's daughter. She recently had gall bladder surgery. Also, please pray for Lana May. She is struggling with kidney stones.

Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?!

Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



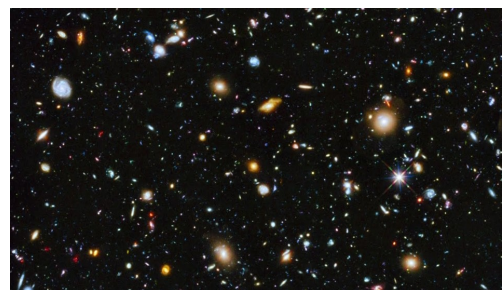
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Why Is the Lord's 'Name' Excellent?

Craig Thomas

The first thing that catches my attention in this messianic psalm are its bookends. It starts and ends with "O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth" (vv. 1 & 9). A careful reader should immediately ask themselves the question, "Why is that the case?" We will get to that shortly. One of my favorite scientific subjects is astronomy. Everyone has heard of the Hubble Space Telescope. One of the Hubble's greatest achievements is the "Hubble Deep Field." For "kicks and giggles" the Hubble team decided to aim the telescope at an unusual patch of sky and take some pictures. This patch of sky was the size of a tennis ball at a distance of 100 meters. Ridiculously small. They did so because this unusual little patch of sky was essentially devoid of stars to earthbound telescopes. Upon examination of the results, and to their great surprise, they found thousands upon thousands of points of light (see picture). Upon further examination they found these points of light were not individual stars but massive galaxies, each one containing billions and billions of stars! As men we are so small. In comparison to the physical Universe we are as insignificant as grains of sand on a vast beach. Spiritually we are in even sadder shape. We are totally and completely spiritually bankrupt! The Roman letter says we "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23) and deserve eternal



death, eternal separation from God (6:23). But notice what the Psalmist says:

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit [care for, cvt] him?" (vv. 3, 4)

At one end of the spectrum, both physically and spiritually, man is an insignificant

nothing; a mere fly speck. But on the other end of the spectrum, man is the focal point and pinnacle of God's creation. God provides for all our physical needs (Matt. 6:25-33; Acts 14:15-17). And, even more importantly, He provides for all our spiritual needs (Eph. 1:3). Again, in the Roman letter Paul writes:

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (vv. 31, 32)

Now do you appreciate why this Psalm's bookends are "O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth" (vv. 1 & 9)? We need to ponder that and respond accordingly.

Mr. Milquetoast?

Craig Thomas

Psalm 2 is a "Messianic Psalm" that describes, among other things, the reign of the Messiah (Jesus Christ). The so-called "Christian world," for the most part, describes Jesus as a Mr. Milquetoast sort of character. Such a character is timid, unassertive, undemanding, overly accommodative, unduly tolerant, compromising, etc. The Messiah is nothing of that sort! He rules "with a rod of iron" and will "dash" His enemies "to pieces like a potter's vessel." (v. 9) This does not mean the Messiah is a capricious and vicious despot. That is totally untrue! However, He does require our absolute obedience (Heb. 5:8-9; Lk. 6:46; Matt. 28:20) and absolute allegiance (Lk. 9:23). In order to please Him we must "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt. 5:6) and "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). Most of the human race is unwilling to do so. In the words of the Psalmist, these folks chafe at the Messiah's demands for faithful obedience. Their attitude says, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." (Psa. 2:3; cf. Jn. 3:19-21) What is the LORD's response to their unwillingness to submit to His rule? "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision." (Psa. 2:4) Why? He knows they will pay the ultimate price for their foolish obstinance: eternity in hell! (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:15).

The Messiah paid the ultimate price to redeem us; yet the vast majority reject His amazing grace. What a tragedy! Surely righteousness and justice demand a high penalty for our rejection of His amazing love! (cf. Rom. 5:8) We need to come to an appreciation that what the Messiah asks of us is in return is in our best interests A-L-W-A-Y-S! (1 Jn. 5:3) Submitting to His rule brings forgiveness, hope, peace and tranquility to our lives (Eph. 1:7; Heb. 6:19-20; Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 4:7). Unfortunately, most of humanity will reject their Messiah and end up with eternal regret in eternal fire (Matt. 7:13-14). Let us not be fools and reject Him. Let us take the advice of the Psalmist when he said,

*"¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.*

¹² Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,

*And you perish in the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him."
(Psalm 2:11-12)*

Give the Lord Your "Whole Heart"

Craig Thomas

Each time I approach a Psalm to write a **Thought for the Day** I feel like a man in a treasure house filled with all sorts of gold, silver, and precious stones. My pockets will only hold a relative handful of the treasures. Which do I choose? So these short articles can only explore a small handful of the spiritual treasures in the Psalms. Let's look today at Psalm 9; esp. verses 1 and 2:

*"I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart;
I will tell of all Your marvelous works.
I will be glad and rejoice in You;
I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High."*

Sadly, so many claiming to be Christians are frauds. They may "talk the talk" but do not "walk the walk." David gave the LORD his "whole heart." The LORD is satisfied with no less from you and me. Recall when the "scribe" asked Jesus "Which is the first commandment of all?" (Mk. 12:28) Jesus replied, "you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." "This is the first commandment." (Mk. 12:30). Does that describe you? Does that describe me? When it comes to serving the LORD, it is an **all or nothing** proposition! Jesus put it this way in Luke's gospel: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it." (Lk. 9:23-24) With all honesty, candor, and humble reflection; let each of us examine ourselves "as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves." (2 Cor. 13:5) Next David calls the LORD his "refuge in times of trouble" (v. 9). When troubles come (and they always do!) to whom shall we turn? The only logical choice for those "who know Your name" (v. 10) is the LORD! God has fully proven His love and care in the sacrifice of Christ. As Paul says, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32) God will not forget our pleas for help if we remain faithful to Him (v. 12; cf. Heb. 13:5-6). A final thought for today is found in verse 17:

*"The wicked shall be turned into hell,
And all the nations that forget God."*

Judgment is coming! It is coming for us as individuals (Acts 17:30-31; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 3). And, it is coming for nations. The Old Testament is replete with God's judgment of nations. Every nation in history has ultimately grown so wicked that God's longsuffering ran out and He overthrew them or greatly diminished their power. Sooner or later, our nation will one day join that sad list. You and I may not be able to do much to stop that. However, we all have the choice and opportunity to be on the right side at the final judgment of all men (Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 20:11-15). Are you ready? Am I ready?