

**SBC – July 7, 2024**  
**Psalm 33 (NKJV)**  
**“God’s Sovereign Greatness”**

The author of this Psalm is unknown. In general, it is a PRAISE Psalm that praises God for Who He is and What He does.

It brings out the incomparable attributes of God emphasizing His power over nations and His sovereignty over history. History is His Story!

The Psalm can be broken down into two parts: 1) A call to praise in verses 1-3; and 2) A cause for praise in verses 4-22.

**Slide # 1**

***Psalm 33 “God’s Sovereign Greatness”***

- vv. 1-3 A Call to Praise
- vv. 4-5 The Rationale for Praise
- vv. 6-7 The Greatness of God in Creation
- vv. 8-9 A Call to FEAR the LORD
- vv. 10-12 The Greatness of God over the nations
- vv. 13-17 The Greatness of God over individuals
- vv. 18-19 God’s Great Care of those who FEAR Him
- vv. 20-22 The Response of those who HOPE in God

**1 Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful.**

The righteous (those right with God) are called on to rejoice in the LORD. Our calling is to celebrate our God continually.

**Slide # 2**

**Philippians 4:4 (NKJV)**

**4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!**

Before God the praise of the upright is a beautiful thing. It pleases Him!

## **2 Praise the LORD with the harp; Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.**

The call here is to praise the LORD with musical instruments. Stringed instruments in particular are in view here.

I have always thought it strange – the legalism that thinks it is more spiritual to praise God without musical instruments – especially in light of the Psalms where this emphasis is prominent – and especially in view of the concluding “high note” (pun intended) in Psalm 150.

## **3 Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.**

It’s good to sing old songs, but there is definitely a place for A NEW SONG. In a sense we believers sing a new song whenever we sing to the Lord which is contrast to the old worldly self-oriented songs of the world.

But very possibility in view here is a new song written for a fresh occasion. This is the first nine references in the Scripture to a “new song”.

The writer calls for a new song to be played skillfully and with exuberance as is reflected in “a shout of joy”.

It is not that the Lord cannot hear us, but that it is natural for great exultation to express itself in the loudest manner. Men shout at the sight of their kings: shall we offer no loud hosannahs to the Son of David?” (Spurgeon)

It is noted that the worshiper is called to praise God with freshness, skill, and fervor! In other words God honoring worship gets into it whole heartedly.

## **4 For the word of the LORD is right, And all His work is done in truth.**

The WORD of the LORD is done and the WORK of the LORD are inseparable. The Word of the LORD is right and therefore totally trustworthy.

The WORK of the LORD in truth meaning faithfulness. There is no deceit in how the LORD works.

What He says He will do He does! His Word is true and it is proven in Him doing it.

## **5 He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.**

Here the character of God is highlighted. He loves what is right and just. And the earth is full of the goodness (hesed) of the LORD. Hesed means God's faithful love – His loyal love. It is often referred to as God's covenant love or His covenant loyalty. It emphasizes God's absolute FAITHFULNESS!

All His works are done in faithfulness. This is seen in creation – “seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night” (Gen. 8:22). It is seen in providence. ...It is seen in redemption...” – **William MacDonald**

Not only is the greatness of God seen in His moral excellence and goodness but also in His power and authority over the whole of creation.

## **6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.**

Here the greatness of God is seen in creation!

“It is noteworthy that the occasions of the new song are very old acts, stretching back to the first creation and continued down through the ages.” – **Alexander Maclaren**

My mentor (Dr. John Whitcomb) said this was his favorite verse on creation. Note there was no process involved here. God simply spoke and by the word of the LORD the heavens were made. Instantly they were in place. There is no evolution here – only supernatural creation on a scale that is totally unfathomable!

### **Slide # 3**

The Genesis account records seventeen occasions of God speaking (Hebrews 11:3; 2 Peter 3:5). ... There is no process of creation. Each creative act is an instantaneous event not explainable by natural processes. – **Henry M. Morris**

Dr. Whitcomb used to emphasize that the creation activity was unique to creation week and therefore we cannot explain it by looking at the natural processes happening today. How true!

**7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses.**

The context here is the creation account. God created the world covered by water and then brought about the separation of waters both above and below the expanse (Gen. 1).

The psalmist looked at the mighty oceans and understood that they reflected God's power and wisdom in creation. – **David Guzik**

*“In storehouses; either in the clouds, or in the bowels of the earth, whence he can draw them forth when he sees fit.”* - **Matthew Poole**

The greatness of God's character and attributes calls for a response!

**8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.**

The logical response recognizing the awesomeness of God's character and power is to FEAR Him – which means to reverence Him. Actually, you won't find a better definition of what it means to FEAR God than what we have right here in this verse where it says to “stand in awe of Him.” He is a great God to be revered!

“He who made all things, preserves all things, and can in a moment destroy all things, is the proper object of our ‘fear’; and that we fear him so little, is a most convincing proof of the corruption and blindness of our hearts.” – **George Horne**

**9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.**

Again, there were no drawn-out processes. He spoke and it was done! He commanded and it stood fast in place just as He ordered.

The psalmist again considered the *word* of God and its effective power. God never speaks empty words, they are full of active power to insure their fulfillment. – **David Guzik**

God's power over nature is awesome and is constantly on display. Not only did He create everything out of nothing and instantly it was done, but He also continually holds everything together (cf. Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; 2 Pet. 3:5-7).

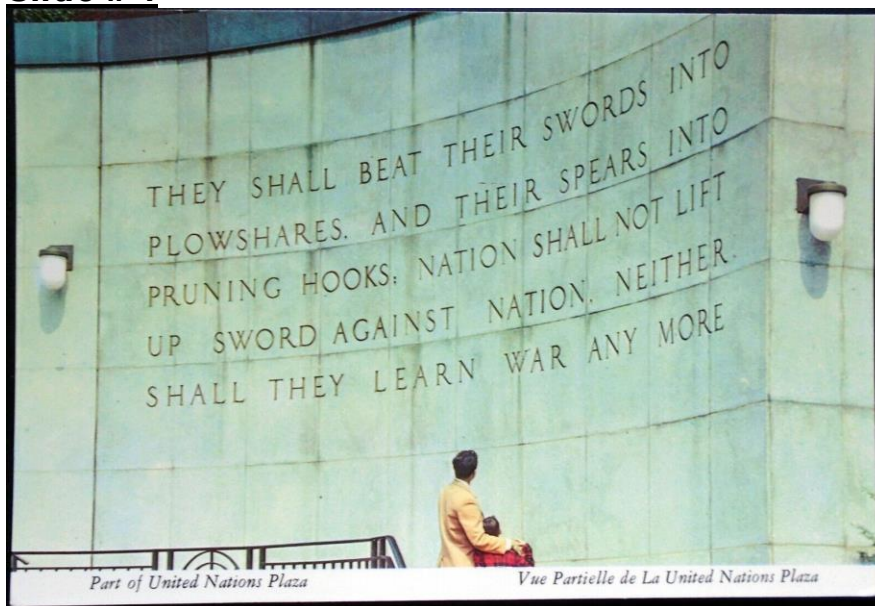
He SPOKE and it was done. It was completed! He COMMANDED and it stood fast – meaning it all held together. Colossians 1:16 says by Christ all things were created and then in verse 17 it says “by Him all things hold together.”

**10 The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.**

I love this verse because it humbles the arrogant pride of man. The nations have their ideas, their plans, their anti-God counsel as noted in Psalm 2. But God brings all their God-less plans to nothing – sort of like what happened back at the tower of Babel in Genesis 11. People talk about their “vision”. But whatever their great plans are it is headed for the ash heap of history unless it is rooted in God and His plan.

The United Nations has on a wall an inscription of Isaiah 2:4 (cf. Micah 4:3).

**Slide # 4**



The United Nations has a huge ego and thinks they can solve the world's problems. However, their thinking is consistently out of touch with biblical truth. They consistently vilify Israel and censure her. It has therefore been suggested that instead of Isaiah 2:4 being inscribed on the wall they should have Psalm 33:10 inscribed there.

**Slide # 5**

**Psalm 33:10 (NKJV)**

**10** The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.

How is that for a chill pill! It is a humble pill for sure and one the nations don't want to hear! But alas hear it and experience they will in due time.

What we have in verses 10 and 11 is contrast between what the nations plan and what God plans. As seen in Psalm 2 the nations intend to thwart God's purposes, but instead it will be God who frustrates their feeble plans. The counsel of the nations comes to nothing – their plans to no effect! In the end the world's future is in the hands of God and not that of the nations. Thank God for that reality!

**11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.**

It is the counsel of the LORD that will stand FOREVER! His sovereign plans will stand for all generations! Over the course of History the sovereign hand of God rules. It is going where He has determined!

In this crazy world – just keep Psalm 33:11 in mind. This is ultimate truth.

God ultimately frustrates the cleverest plots hatched by His opponents. And nothing can hinder the accomplishment of His purposes. He will always have the last word, and whatever He plans will come to pass. – *William MacDonald*

And then note in context where the text immediately goes. After saying the plans of the LORD will stand forever – the text immediately goes to Israel and the ultimate destiny of Israel. This makes sense because the Bible begins in Genesis 12 by promising blessing to those who bless Israel and cursing to those who curse her. And then towards the end of the OT we find it prophetically stated that in the last days the whole world will be rallied against Jerusalem and Israel (cf. Zech. 12, 14). God's centerpiece witness to the world is ISRAEL!

**12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.**

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD. Literally whose Elohim is YHWH. Or we could translate it whose supreme sovereign God is YHWH – the eternal unchanging God.

And we know that ultimately the nation in view is Israel because it says, “The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.” This is undeniably Israel.

### **Slide # 6**

#### **Psalm 135:4 (NKJV)**

**4** For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His special treasure.

#### **Amos 3:2 (NKJV)**

**2** “You only have I known of all the families of the earth....

What God has determined for Israel will yet have a fulfillment. All the prophecies of judgment – yes they will be fulfilled, but also will all the covenant promises of blessing. Israel in the end will be the most blessed nation in all the world – it is just a matter of time.

Everyone likes to quote Jer. 29:11 and there is a place for personal application for believers, but really God spoke this in relation to Israel.

### **Slide # 7**

#### **Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV)**

**11** For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, **to give you a future and a hope.**

### **13 The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men.**

The Psalmist now moves from the Big Picture of God’s sovereignty over the nations to that of individuals.

Verse 13 is a statement of God’s omniscience. He sees all that is happening with every single individual on the earth. Nothing is hidden from Him.

**14 From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth;**

**15 He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.**

The word translated “looks on” means “to gaze intently”. God knows what is going on with every individual.

### **Slide # 8**

**Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV)**

**13** And there is **no creature hidden** from His sight, but **all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him** to whom we must give account.

Every person is unique and special. Not only are all people made in the image of God, but each one is also unique and can never be replaced in that sense. God fashions each person's heart individually, and then He considers all their works.

God is interested in what we are doing, especially in relation to Him – which is the point of this Psalm.

God made us one by one, each with our own particular physical, mental, emotional makeup, including the allowance of our weaknesses and sinful inclinations. As our Maker He has the right of inspection, so **He considers all our works.** – *David Guzik*

### **Slide # 9**

**Jeremiah 17:9–10 (NKJV)**

**9** “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?

**10** **I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.**

### **Slide # 10**

- v. 14 God sees all – Omnipresent
- v. 15 God fashions all – Omnipotent
- v. 15 God understands all - Omniscient

**16 No king is saved by the multitude of an army; A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.**

**17 A horse is a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.**



People just think they are in control of their own destiny. They tend to trust in their own resources, but those who know the LORD know that He sovereignly and providentially controls the whole of history collectively and right down to the details of each person's life personally. Safety ultimately comes from the Lord.

**Slide # 11**

**Psalm 127:1 (NKJV)**

**1 Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.**

**Proverbs 21:31 (NKJV)**

**31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But deliverance is of the LORD.**

In truth we are totally dependent upon the LORD! Human effort and resources ultimately do not determine the outcome of events. God is sovereign over our destiny.

God is sovereign over all but His special care rests on those who fear Him.

**18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy,  
19 To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine.**

The eye of the LORD represents His special care. It is applied to those who fear Him (reverence Him) and those who hope in His mercy. Mercy here again is the Hebrew word "hesed" referring to God faithful care. God will be faithful to His promises. And those who fear Him depend upon Him in the crisis of life.

Those who truly fear the LORD are not self-sufficient. Rather their HOPE is in the LORD. They realize their dependence upon the LORD!

The Psalm ends with a three fold affirmation that reflects the disposition of those who fear the LORD.

**20 Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.  
21 For our heart shall rejoice in Him, Because we have trusted in His holy name.**

## **22 Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, Just as we hope in You.**

Note it is spoken in the plural. This is a congregational confession. The godly as a group do three things.

- 1) They wait for the LORD because they depend upon Him as their help and shield. Shield is the idea of protection. God is their helper and protector!
- 2) They rejoice in the LORD as evidence of their trust in God's name – Who He is as the Holy God of Israel.
- 3) And third, they pray to God for His blessing to be upon them in accordance with their hope in Him.

The word “mercy” in verse 22 is once again the word “hesed” – meaning God's loyal covenant love or His faithfulness. This word is found 3 times in the Psalm – as seen in verse 5, 18 and 22.

The Legacy Standard Bible translates verse 22 this way...

### **Slide # 12**

#### **Psalm 33:22 (LSB)**

**22** Let Your lovingkindness, O Yahweh, be upon us, As we wait for You.

The godly who truly fear God rely upon Him and they are blessed in doing so. God honors this. The Psalm begins and ends with a “rejoicing” theme because of WHO God is and for WHAT He does for His people.

He is the living God who controls the destiny of the nations and has a special plan for His own. In this God we can rejoice and hope in Him.

God is sovereignly in control of all things both great and small!

When we trust in the name of God, our hearts will rejoice. May I make a suggestion? Why don't you saturate yourself with the Psalms? Instead of running around attending all of the conferences which tell you [about]... doing this or that, why don't you stay home and read the Psalms? When you are saturated with this portion of God's Word, it not only will bring comfort to your heart, it will solve 99.4 percent of the problems of the church. – **J. Vernon McGee**

Indeed, focusing on God's sovereign greatness is the cure for many problems. May we be among those who wait on the LORD and rejoice in Him.

May we take to heart what the Psalmist calls us to do when says:

**Psalm 33:1 (NKJV)**

**1** Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful.

**Indeed it is!**