

Lecture 9

Psalm 29

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Greetings to all of you in the holy, blessed, and kind name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Continuing the series of interpretive lectures on the Psalms, today we will study Psalm 29. Please open your Bibles with me, and from the Old Testament, we will do a commentary and practical study on Psalm 29.

God's Word says this: Psalm 29, Psalm number 29:

“O you heavenly beings, give glory and honor to the Lord! Give the Lord the glory due to His name!”

These are the first two verses of Psalm 29.

In verse 3, it says (Psalm 29:3):

“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

He makes Lebanon leap like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning.

The voice of the Lord shakes the desert; the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord causes the deer to give birth and strips the forests bare.

And in His temple all cry, ‘Glory!’

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever.

The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace. Amen.”

Psalm 29, according to its literary type, is a Psalm of Praise. It is a hymn of praise. This Psalm focuses on praising God and also invites others to do so.

Psalm 29 can be divided into three parts when we look at its outline.

This Psalm has 11 verses:

- The first part is verses 1 and 2, which is an invitation to praise the Lord.
- Then verses 3 to 9 tell us the reason why we should praise God, and that reason is because His voice is in the storm.

If we say the title of this Psalm is “The Voice of the Lord in the Storm,” that would not be wrong.

So:

- Verses 1–2 are the call to praise the Lord.
- Verses 3–9 explain the reason to praise, which is the Lord’s voice in the storm.
- The third part is verses 10–11, where it tells us that the Lord is King, sitting on His throne.

This 11-verse Psalm gives us a call to praise the Lord, explains the reason for it, and ends by showing that the Lord sits as King forever.

Remember, there is a word called “**Theology.**”

Theology means “the knowledge of God.”

In Greek, “**Theos**” means God, and “**Logos**” means word or knowledge.

So, **Theology** means the study or knowledge of God’s Word, which we get from reading and thinking about the Holy Bible.

There is another important word, and that is “**Theophany,**” which means “**God’s appearance**” or “**God showing Himself.**”

Theology means knowledge of God, and Theophany means **God revealing Himself.**

Psalm 29 talks about **a Theophany** – about **God showing Himself.**

This is the same God who walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in Genesis chapter 3.

The same God who appeared to Abraham through an angel.

The same God who appeared to Moses in the burning bush in Exodus chapter 3.

The same God who led the people of Israel in the desert for forty years – appearing as a pillar of fire at night and a cloud during the day.

The writer of this Psalm says that **this same God appeared in the storm**, and the thunder is the voice of the Lord – Yahweh.

And this voice is full of power and strength.

So this Psalm shows that through a thunderstorm, **God revealed Himself** to His people, and it became clear that **Yahweh, the God of Israel, is the eternal and all-powerful King.**

As I said earlier, this Psalm is divided into three parts:

- Verses 1–2: An invitation to praise Yahweh who shows Himself in the thunderstorm.
- Verses 3–9: The reason for praise – the voice of the Lord in the storm.
- Verses 10–11: This powerful voice belongs to **Yahweh**, who is the eternal King of Israel and the whole world.

Hallelujah!

Now we come to the explanation of these verses:

In verse 1, it says: “O you heavenly beings, give to the Lord glory and honor.”

The Hebrew word here for “heavenly beings” is “**Bene Elim.**”

“**Bene**” is the plural of “**Ben,**” which means son.

“**Elim**” is the plural of “**El,**” which means God.

So “**Bene Elim**” means “sons of God” or “sons of the gods.”

There are two main opinions among Bible scholars about this:

1. Some believe “Bene Elim” means **angels**.
 - For example, in Genesis chapter 6, we read that **the sons of God** went to the daughters of men and had children with them.
 - Also, in Job chapters 1 and 2, the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.
 - In Job 38:6, it is written that the sons of God sang together at the creation of the world.

Based on this, in Jewish theology, “**sons of God**” is a term used for **angels**. That’s why here it is written, “O angels, praise the Lord – Yahweh.”

2. The second opinion is that the writer of the Psalm is not talking about angels, but about **the gods of the nations** around Israel.

When he says “Bene Elim” (sons of the gods), he means the gods worshiped by people in idol-worshipping nations.

The Psalmist wants to say that **no matter how many gods people believe in**, the God of Israel – **Yahweh** – is higher and greater than all of them.

Not just people, not just angels, but even these false gods must worship and praise Yahweh, the one true God.

So if you read English Bibles, you will find that some translate this word as “Angels,” some as “Sons of Gods,” some as “Heavenly Beings,” and others as “Heavenly Council.”

The main point is that the God of Israel – Yahweh – is **greater than all the gods and idols of the nations**.

Even today, whatever is called a god in this world, Yahweh is higher than them all.

It is written:

“O you heavenly beings, give the Lord glory and honor!”

Here the word “Lord” is the translation of the Hebrew word “**Adonai**.”

The Jewish people respected the personal name of God – “**Yahweh**” – so much that they replaced it with “Adonai” in their speech and writing.

There is even a tradition that the pen used to write “Yahweh” would be broken after writing the name, out of deep respect.

So in our Urdu Bibles, when we read “Khudawand Khuda” (Lord God), it actually means “**Yahweh God**.”

So when it says “Give glory and honor to the Lord,” it means “Give praise and respect to Yahweh.”

And then it is written, “Give to the Lord the glory that is due to His name.”
This means: Praise Jehovah in a way that fits His name.
Give honor to Jehovah that matches His greatness, His status, and His place.

In the first and second verse, the Hebrew word used for "glory" is “**Kavod**”.

Everyone say it with me: “Kavod.”

Learn a little Hebrew.

Now, this word “Kavod” is translated in English Bibles as “**Glory**.”

Everyone say “Glory, Glory.”

Those watching online, please type “Glory” in the comment section.

Even though you usually don’t listen to Mr. Munawar when he tells you to give feedback or write comments, now all of you write “Glory.”

In Hebrew, it is “Kavod.”

So the phrase “Give the Lord glory” uses the Hebrew word “**Kavod**”, which means:

“Give the Lord the glory that matches the greatness of His name.”

“Kavod” in Urdu is “**Jalal**”, in English “**Glory**”, and in Hebrew “**Kavod**.”

The **literal meaning** of this word is “**Weight**” — like heaviness or being heavy.

And the meaning is: Give the Lord honor because His personality is weighty, powerful, important, and higher.

Give Him respect according to His greatness and importance.

Do you understand?

When different types of guests come to your home, do you treat all guests the same?
Do you treat them the same? No.
You treat them based on your relationship with them and their value.

Some guests, you just give water or 7Up and say goodbye.
Some guests, you offer tea, biscuits, patties, and other snacks.
Some guests, you serve food, proper meals.
Some guests, you make two, three, four, or five dishes — beef, mutton, chicken, lentils, vegetable dishes.

So you treat a guest according to your relationship and their personality's value.

In the same way, the writer of the Psalm says:
Praise the God of Israel, Jehovah, in a way that fits His name's greatness.
And what is the greatness of His name?
The greatness of His name is this:
Jehovah's name is higher and greater than all other names —
Whether they are gods, lords, humans, angels, or any other spiritual power.
Jehovah's name is above all names.
That's why He deserves the **highest honor, respect, praise, and worship**.

Not for me — clap for Jehovah God! [Claps]
In the last two classes, you sat quietly and low in spirit.

When someone talks about the praise of God, you clap halfway like you do for people.
You keep clapping — I've seen in many worship places,
When I go to share the Word, I get confused —
Are they worshipping God and listening to His Word or just trying to please people?

One time at a convention, they asked me how I want my welcome.
I said, "Am I coming like a bridegroom with a wedding party?"
The welcome should be for our **Lord**, through songs, psalms, prayers, and the Word.
And I belong to a Pentecostal church —
And many Pentecostals do this the **most wrong** —
Not all, but many have started **personality worship**.
They make people into gods.
They've fallen into **idolizing humans and leaders** —
Putting them on horses, carriages, making them wear garlands, and more.
They lift people like gods onto stages.

But only **Jehovah God** deserves honor.
He is worthy of worship and praise.

Yes, respect people, welcome them, but in a **polite, mature, and limited** way.
Someone said:

"If you worship an idol, no harm is done — because an idol is lifeless and cannot take advantage of you."

But the people who made the idol take the benefit.

But when you worship **humans** and **personalities**,
Then **humans** take advantage of you.

We've made many **heroes**, but the only true **hero** is **Jesus Christ**.

Even if someone gives false teaching, says wrong things, does bad actions, becomes corrupt —
We say: “No, he is a big servant, a famous servant.”

But our **measuring stick** should be **God's Word**, the **Bible**.

If someone's teaching and character are not according to the Bible —

Then he is **wrong**, even if he has a big church, big TV channel, large conventions, or is a famous preacher — **Doesn't matter**.

Alright then.

Now it is written in the last line of verse 2:

“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”

It means that the Lord is wearing the **clothing of holiness**.

This language is used to say that God is wearing the clothing of holiness.

So you should worship Him **according to His holiness**.

The God who wears the clothes of holiness —

You also come with a **pure heart**, **clean hands**, and **holy thoughts**, and worship Him.

Jews and Muslims are better than us in bowing down before God.

We don't even take off our shoes when we step on the stage.

When we think of bowing down, we say our knees hurt.

Jews and today's Muslims regularly bow before God.

Actually, in the Hebrew language, many words are used for worship.

One of them is “to bow down.”

Here, that same word is used.

So, in our personal and group prayers and worship,

We should **bow before God**.

Bowing is a **symbol** that we are not just bowing with our body —

We are also submitting our **wishes**, **plans**, **decisions**, and **actions** before God.

So worship the Lord with a **pure heart** in line with His holiness.

After this, from verse 3 to verse 9,

It talks about a **Theophany** — a **manifestation of God**.

And how is God revealed here?

Through a **mighty storm**.

There is **thunder** in this storm, and this thunder is the **voice of the Lord God Jehovah**.

And this voice has **power**.

From verse 3 onwards, it is written:

The phrase “**The voice of the Lord**” appears **seven times** in verses 3 to 9.
How many times? **Seven**.

This shows that the **main topic** of this Psalm is the **voice of the Lord**.

And this voice of the Lord is heard in a **theophany**, in a **thunderstorm**.

Here, the voice of the Lord is **not** through His Word.

In many places, the “voice of the Lord” means the **Word of God**.
But in Psalm 29, the voice of the Lord means His **thunder**, in the **storm**.

Now let’s look one by one what it means.

In verse 3, it is written:

“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is over the waters.”

Remember, in the Holy Bible, **clouds** are a sign of **God’s presence**.

When the people of Israel were traveling in the wilderness —
After being set free from Egypt and going toward the Promised Land —
During the 40 years of journey,
God led them in the form of a **pillar of cloud** during the day.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was transformed on the mountain,
It is written: A **bright cloud** surrounded Him,
And from the cloud came a voice:
“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.”

God spoke about Jesus from the **cloud**.
God led the people of Israel **in a cloud**.

So here, when it says, “The Lord is over the waters, the God of Glory thunders” —
“God of Glory” means **God full of glory**.

So when it says the Lord is over the waters,
It means God is revealing Himself through the **clouds**, **storm**, and **thunder** to the people of Israel.

So the thunderstorm is being used as a **picture** or **image** of **Jehovah God's appearance**.

The One who appeared in the fire, the One who appeared in the cloud, the One who appeared in the storm, the One who appeared in the waters and seas—in Psalm 29, He is appearing in a thunderstorm. According to verse 3, He is not speaking, He is thundering. It is written: “What does the God of glory do? He thunders.”

Then the verse... and what does this thunder mean?

The answer is in verse 4:

“In the voice of the Lord, number one: there is power, and number two: there is glory.”
Power and Glory, Power and Glory.

Power means strength, authority, rule, majesty—that the voice of the Lord has strength, authority, rule, greatness, fear, and glory.

And what kind of power and strength is it?
The power to create.

In Genesis chapter 1, it is written: “The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving there, and God said, He spoke, He sent His voice, ‘Let there be light’”—and in the dark, empty, and lifeless environment, light appeared.

Creative power.

Power to defeat false gods and idols.

The voice of God has the power to bring water from rocks.

The voice of God has the power to divide the seas.

In the following verses, we will see that some **manifestations** of the power and glory of God’s voice are described in Psalm 29.

And then it is written: “There is glory in His voice.”

I have already explained that the Hebrew word is **kabod**, which means weight or honor.

Many times, when you need something important done by someone, you take a respected or honored person with you so that your request will be taken more seriously.

So this is saying that God’s voice is “honor,” it has weight, value, and importance.

If a regular person says something, and a leader or ruler says the same thing, there’s a big difference.

So, the voice of God has power and glory.

What kind of power and glory?

Look in verse 5:

“The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, yes, the Lord breaks the cedars.”

These cedars, and it is written:

“He breaks the cedars of Lebanon into pieces.”

The cedar tree, in English, is called **cedar** (C-E-D-A-R).

The region of Lebanon was outside the land of Israel, and the psalmist is saying that the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon—meaning big trees outside of Israel.

It breaks them into pieces—what does that mean?

That the power and authority of the voice of Yahweh God is not limited to the borders of Israel, but His voice's power and glory reach outside of Israel, even to the ends of the earth.

He is the God of the whole earth, not just one region.

Did you get that? If not, I can explain more.

Then it says: “The great cedar trees are broken into pieces by the voice of God.”

Here, the voice of God is being related to a strong wind.

When clouds thunder, the psalmist says: that is the thunder of Yahweh God.

He appears.

When a strong wind blows and a storm comes, the storm knocks down big trees.

This is the power and glory of the voice of Yahweh God.

Think about it: if the wind sent by God can knock down trees as big as cedars, how powerful and mighty is God Himself?

Then it says:

“He makes them skip like a calf—Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.”

In verse 3, the voice of God is like a thunderstorm in the clouds.

In verse 5, the voice of God is like a strong wind that can knock down even great cedar trees.

Recently, we got some work done at our house...

“Brother, what’s your name?”

“Yes, my name is Tariq.”

He stole something—just kidding!

So he did some wood polishing work at our house.

That’s when I learned that cedar wood is one of the most expensive types of wood, and the furniture made from it is very heavy, and even glue doesn’t stick to it easily.

There are other, cheaper kinds of wood.

So the strongest tree is mentioned here—that when God’s voice comes in the wind, it brings it down.

Meaning the strongest power in the world cannot stand before the voice of our God Yahweh.

Alright, in verse 5, God’s voice is in the wind.

In verse 6, God’s voice is in the **earthquake**.

It is written: “He makes them skip like a calf.”

“Calf” means a young cow — the little baby of a cow, right?

If you try to touch it,

Or if it’s a young calf of a buffalo,

Especially if it is newly born — it jumps and skips around up and down like crazy.

So he skips, he jumps, he bounces.

It is written: this name Sirion is another name for Mount Hermon.

The psalmist is saying that when Yahweh God appears—Theophany, when God shows Himself, when His presence comes, His voice appears—

Then the mountains of Lebanon and Hermon jump and shake like a young calf.

Then verse number... Why?

Because the voice of Yahweh God has power and glory, strength and weight.

“The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire.”

“The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness.”

He passes through fire, and He shakes the deserts.

Again, as I said—this is talking about earthquakes.

One more interesting thing I want to share about the cedar:

Remember, the historical context of this Psalm is that the Israelites lived among idol-worshipping nations, and they had their own gods. They worshipped them.

And the psalmist wants to show that our God Yahweh—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the New Testament—is greater than all those gods. He is above all.

What did we learn about **glory**? The meaning of **kabod** is “weight” or “heaviness.” In Pakistan people even say, “One Zardari is heavier than all,” but in truth, over all the powers of the world—whether political, religious, spiritual, economic, or military—the glory and being of our God Yahweh is above all.

So the cedar tree in Lebanon, in the ancient Near East, was considered the biggest and most glorious tree in that area.

In that time, when people built temples or palaces, they used cedar wood.

And in ancient Mesopotamia (today’s Iraq), there were two gods: one was **Gilgamesh**, and the other was **Enkidu**.

They used to say that for their gods’ homes on earth, temples should be made of cedar wood—wood brought from the cedars of Lebanon—for Gilgamesh and Enkidu’s dwellings.

And in many traditions, people even worshiped the cedar tree as a god, because it was so big, thick, and grand.

But what does the psalmist say? That the voice of Yahweh God breaks the cedars into pieces.

He shakes Lebanon and Sirion—that is, Mount Hermon—with earthquakes and tremors like a wild calf jumping.

His voice splits the flames of fire, it shakes the deserts.

Then it says, “The Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.”

Now this area of Kadesh—by the way, these three areas mentioned in Psalm 29

Number One: Lebanon,

Number Two: Sirion,

Number Three: Kadesh,

These three places were outside the borders of Israel. They were lands of other nations.

And it is clearly written that these areas shake because of the voice of our Lord—because of His Word, because of His thunder—because His voice has power and glory.

He also makes the desert of Kadesh shake.

Then it is written that:

Because of the voice of the Lord, deer give birth.

This does **not** mean that the deer have a miscarriage because of the Lord’s voice.

When we read it, it may sound like that.

But actually, when we read this verse in Hebrew and then translate it into Urdu, it gives **two meanings**.

In English Bibles, you will find:

One meaning is that: **Because of the voice of the Lord, pregnant deer start to give birth.**
This shows life—that there is power and life in God's voice.
If a deer is pregnant, it starts giving birth.
So this is one meaning of this verse.

Our Urdu translation is a little unclear.
That's why we should check the Hebrew, interlinear, and English translations too,
if we want to study the Bible deeply.
One translation is: **Because of the Lord's voice, the deer start giving birth.**

The second translation is this:
Because of the Lord's voice—
Now the two Hebrew words here, "*Yachol*" or "*Ayelot*",
some scholars say they can also be translated as:
"The voice of the Lord twists the oak trees."
In English, it says: "*The Voice of the Lord twists the oaks.*"

So the Hebrew words, where it says "*the deer give birth because of God's voice,*"
can also mean: **"The oak trees bend because of the Lord's voice."**

Like cedar trees, oak trees are also big, thick, and strong.
But it says that when God's voice comes,
no matter how big and thick the oak tree is,
God's voice can bend it.

So this line of the verse has **two meanings:**

- One: **Pregnant deer give birth.**
- Two: **Oak trees bend.**

Then it is written:
"The voice of the Lord strips the forests bare."
That means when God's voice comes like a storm,
even big trees drop all their leaves.
"Strips bare" means the trees become leafless—leaves fall to the ground.

Those scholars who say the earlier line should be:
"The voice of the Lord twists the oak trees,"
they say this because the next line says:
"The voice of the Lord strips the forests bare,"
which means trees lose their leaves.

So the correct translation for the earlier line should be:
"God's voice twists the oak trees."

Next point:
In God's voice—
whether it comes through thunder in the clouds,

whether through the sound of wind that comes from God,
whether through the shaking sound of an earthquake,
or whether through His Word—
His voice has power and glory. It has strength and heaviness.

Now the last part of the Psalm says:
“In His Temple, everyone shouts: Glory, Glory!”

The word “Glory” (Hebrew: *Kavod*) means **weight or heaviness**,
but its **theological meaning** is:

- **Divine Presence** (God being there)
- **Divine Honor** (Respect or Honor to God)

So when we say “Give glory to God’s name,” it means:

Give honor, respect, and praise to God’s name.

And when we say “God’s glory appeared there,”
it means **God’s presence was seen or felt there.**

It is also written:

“In His Temple, everyone is shouting: Glory, Glory!”

This means **God’s presence was in the Temple.**

When Jesus Christ became human, it is written:

“We saw His glory, like the glory of the only Son of the Father,”

which means:

We saw God’s presence in Jesus, just like a Son shows his Father.

So the theological meaning of glory is:

God’s presence or God’s honor.

So when people were shouting “Glory, Glory” in the Temple,
they meant:

“Give honor to the name of Yahweh! Give honor to Yahweh!”

Now the question is:

Are you ready to give honor to Yahweh’s name in response to His voice today?

Is His voice touching your heart through this Psalm today?

Are you ready to give Him glory and praise in return for His powerful voice?

If this message doesn’t lead to that,
then I am just shouting loudly for nothing.

There’s no benefit.

Because the study of the Bible and theology is not just for information—
its purpose is transformation.

These things about Hebrew, other nations, and geography—
I didn’t tell you just for information.

Along with information, we want **transformation**.
Your **mind and heart should be changed**,
and you should **bow down on your knees and praise Yahweh** in a way that matches His name.

It is written in verses 10–11:

“The Lord sat enthroned during the flood.”

This points to Genesis chapters 6 to 11—

When the flood of Noah came, **God was sitting on the throne**,
meaning **God sent that flood**.

The Hebrew word for flood here is: *Mabbul, Mabbul*.

Say it with me: *Mabbul, Mabbul*.

It means “flood.”

So the Lord was enthroned even in that flood—

That flood came **under God’s control**.

And not just at that time—

It is written: **“The Lord is enthroned forever.”**

“The Lord is King forever.”

Yahweh is the Eternal King—

From everlasting to everlasting, **He sits on the throne**.

And Yahweh God sent **His living Word, Jesus**, into this world in human form.

In the book of Revelation, it says: **He is King of kings**.

And when Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven, where did He sit?

At the right hand of God’s throne.

So Yahweh is on the throne,

and His Son Jesus Christ, the eternal Word made flesh, is also on the throne.

We must bow before His throne and worship.

Remember, His throne is not one of **force or cruelty**.

The book of Hebrews tells us:

It is the throne of grace—

From there we receive kindness, mercy, grace, and blessings.

Because this God, who is King, is also our **Savior**.

He arranged our **salvation through Jesus Christ’s death on the cross**.

It is written:

“The Lord gives strength to His people. The Lord blesses His people with peace.”

Here “His people” means the Israelites.

But in the **New Covenant**, God’s people are not only Israelites.

The Church is also included.

And in the New Covenant, God has given His people, His Church, **power through the Holy Spirit**.

Today we hear God’s voice through:

1. **The Holy Bible – God’s Word**
2. **The Holy Spirit – God’s Spirit**
3. **Our life situations – through circumstances**
4. **God’s people and His servants – through them**

So God speaks to us in four ways.

And if we hear His voice, accept it, and praise Him,
then the **power and strength that is in God** will also come into us
through His Word and His Spirit.

And our response should be:

Praise the Lord! Worship Him! Give glory to His name as He deserves.

God bless you richly!

