

**International Sunday School Lesson  
Study Notes  
January 1, 2017**

**Lesson Text: Psalm 33:1-9  
Lesson Title: Praising God the Creator**

**Introduction**

The Book of Psalms is Israel's hymnbook of praise and worship. Not only the individual feelings and sentiments of the Israelites are expressed therein, but also the national hope. The Holy Spirit inspired the sacred writers to record every expression of worship and praise.

Psalm thirty-three is a corporate hymn of praise, a celebration of a national deliverance for the nation of Israel (verse 12). The specific occasion of God's deliverance is unknown, although it might have been deliverance from a national famine (verse 19). It is possible this psalm was used in public assemblies to thank God for food and a bountiful harvest.

The author of Psalm 33 is unknown. It is one of only four psalms that does not list a title or author. Most scholars ascribe authorship to David because it is placed between Psalm 32 and Psalm 34, both penned by David, the sweet psalmist of Israel. David certainly revered the truth of God's creative power. He was also a man of praise and worship.

**A Call to Praise (Psalm 33:1-3)**

Verse 1

“Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.”

Psalm 33 was addressed to the “righteous” and “the upright.” The “righteous ones” and “the upright” are those who know God personally and who are seeking to please Him by living obedient lives. In New Testament terms, these are people who have joyfully received God's forgiveness and cleansing for sin (Romans 3:21-26).

The author calls upon the “righteous” to “Rejoice in the LORD.” “Rejoice” means “to give a ringing cry.” It speaks of a loud shout heard publicly. God's people are called upon to “rejoice in the LORD” and nothing else. “LORD” is Jehovah, the self-existent One, the Jewish national name for God. To “rejoice” in temporal benefits or earthly pleasures is dangerous. To “rejoice” in “the LORD” is “comely for the upright.”

“Comely and upright” means God regards praise and worship from His people as beautiful. “Comely” means “suitable, or beautiful.” Commenting on the word “comely,” Doctor Alan Carr writes, “There are many emotions that can grip our hearts. We can be overcome with pride, hate, malice, anger, envy, unforgiveness, and a host of other harmful emotions. No emotion is as elegant, as beneficial, or as beautiful as a heart that is filled with praise for the Lord.” (*The Sermon Notebook*, “*Why the Saints Should Rejoice In Our God*,” Psalm 33:1).

## Verse 2

“Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.”

“Praise” is the Hebrew word *yada* {yaw-daw}. It means “to hold out the hand; to revere or worship by the extending of the hands.” “Praise” is giving, holding out our hands and hearts to give the Lord the glory due to Him alone. “Praise” is the natural response of God’s people for receiving His benefits.

The psalmist’s thought here the believer is not only offering his voice in praise, but also brings everything he can carry in his hand to the Lord in praise. The psalmist mentions the “harp, psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings.” The “harp” and the “psaltery” were both stringed instruments, differing in sound due to their sounding board. The psalmist is clearly exhorting God’s people to praise Him with the accompaniment of musical instruments.

Musical instruments dedicated and used in worship satisfies and pleases the God who created music. Strangely, some teach the use of musical instruments in worship was limited to the Old Covenant and had no place in the New Covenant. There is no scriptural support for that theory.

## Verse 3

“Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.”

“Sing” means “make musical sounds with the voice.” Most songs recount or celebrate a work of some sort. The believer “sings” in worship and adoration of God’s creative and redemptive love. Our songs are to be sung “unto him.” He alone is worthy of a song.

“New” is the Hebrew word *hadash* {haw-dash} which means “fresh.” The psalmist is calling upon the righteous to see every occasion as an opportunity for expressing fresh praise to the Lord. Our songs of praise should never become stale or repetitious. To sing a “new song” requires thought and exercise of the mind, will, and emotions. Our thoughts about God should always be challenged and growing through reading His Word and communing with Him in prayer.

To “play skilfully with a loud noise” means our worship must be controlled. While there are no words of caution on restraint for worship in this psalm, worship is never uncontrolled chaos. Our vocal and instrumental praise are to blend harmoniously to God’s glory. The professionalism of the worshipper should never draw more attention than the One being worshipped. All of us should remember what is meaningful to us may mean absolutely nothing to God (Isaiah 1:13; Amos 5:21).

### **A Cause for Praise (Psalm 33:4-9)**

#### Verse 4

“For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.”

The righteous are exhorted to praise God “For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.” The term, “the word of the LORD,” refers to the written word of God. The Scriptures are verbally inspired and every thought is exactly as God would have it. The Bible, figuratively speaking, is a written copy of God’s will and nature. It is therefore “right,” or straight and perfect. Thus, God’s “works” or everything He does is done in “truth.” “Truth” means “faithfulness.” God is faithful and true and cannot act otherwise. Therefore, He is worthy of worship and praise.

#### Verse 5

“He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”

“The earth is full” means throughout the earth there is overwhelming evidence of “the goodness of the LORD.” To listen to sinful man, one might think God was an unfair and unjust dictator. However, if you closely examine the gracious hand of God, everything He does is marked by “righteousness and judgment.” God loves “righteousness and judgment.” “Righteousness” refers to “the essential principle of justice.” “Judgment” refers to “the carrying out of righteous principles.”

The “earth is full” of God’s “goodness” or His lovingkindness (Isaiah 6:3). Every work God does is dependable and perfect. The “earth is full” of His unfailing love and grace. “Full” means there is no place on earth where man may look or examine that is empty of evidence of God’s “goodness.” This is cause for worship and praise.

#### Verse 6-7

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.”

The righteous have cause to worship and praise the Lord because “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” The term “word of the LORD” used here most likely refers to God’s spoken word before it was His written word. God did not struggle or strain to bring everything into existence. He simply spoke, “*And God said...*” and it was done (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26).

The “heavens” were “made” by the Word of God and all the “hosts” thereof were formed by the “breath” of God’s “mouth.” “Breath” refers to the words which were spoken forth from the mouth of God (2 Timothy 3:16). The “heavens” is a reference to the visible sky. The “hosts” refers to the stars and planetary bodies (Isaiah 40:26). All things were created by the “breath of his mouth.”

“He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses” is a reference to the creative power of God in the oceans. God is able to “gather the waters of the sea together” wherever He so desires. That is proven in history at the Red Sea and the Jordan River (Exodus 14-15; Joshua 3:13-16; Psalm 78:13). The psalmist imagery of the forces of nature being “laid up in storehouses” is a reference to the waters of the great deeps such as the seas and oceans as “stored up” by the Almighty for His own use as He desires (Genesis 7:11; Job 38:22; Psalm 135:7).

*Note: The psalmist, while speaking of the original creation in this verse, is also emphasizing everything God created as being formed according to design. As scientific discoveries are made year after year, some question or doubt the creative power of God. As believers, we must be reminded true scientific discoveries never contradict God’s Word. They always align with God’s Word and should lead us to worship and praise. Science will never catch up to God’s Word but even the smallest discovery should result in our praise and worship of the Creator.*

### Verse 8

“Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.”

In the opening verses, the psalmist calls upon the righteous alone to rejoice, sing, and praise the Lord. (verses 1-3). But now he calls on “all the earth,” literally, all mankind to “fear the LORD.” Jehovah is to be revered with “awe” and true “godly fear.” To the ungodly Jehovah is an object of terror and fear. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. It is a serious matter to question God’s creative power and sovereignty.

## Verse 9

“For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

“For he spake, and it was done” means whatever God spoke immediately existed. “He commanded, and it stood fast” means once God spoke, a standing law was created to which everything obeyed (Psalm 119:90-91).

## **Conclusion**

There is no way to believe Psalm 33:1-9 and even consider the theory that the universe and life on earth came about by the process of evolution over billions of years. If you believe God’s Word, there is no room for the theory that God guided the process of evolution over billions of years. Rather, God’s Word clearly teaches He spoke and it was done instantly! The obvious application is that we should fall on our faces before such a powerful and awesome God and worship Him!

The apostle Paul applies the doctrine of creation to our salvation. He says, *“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* (2 Corinthians 4:4-6). In other words, if Jesus Christ is your Savior, it is because of His saving work in your heart. Prior to salvation, you were in spiritual darkness; furthermore, you loved it (John 3:19). Just as God spoke the sun into existence, even so God spoke light into your dark heart.

For God’s creation, He is to be worshipped and praised. For God’s salvation, He is to be worshipped and praised!

Amen.