

Storms on the sea can be very fearsome and awe-inspiring and were likely one the most intense displays of power that David had known, so he apparently believed it to be a fitting way to describe the immense power of the voice of the LORD. He describes the power of LORD's voice in terms of thunder, lightning and wind and their devastating effect on the landscape.

A Psalm of David

1 Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

"A Psalm of David" – This is another psalm where we are given the author but not the occasion for its writing. In this case, David is the author and he writes from his heart with the obvious intent of focusing solely on the glory of the LORD.

"Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty [lit. sons of God]" – The word translated "mighty" comes from two Hebrew words, the first, *ben*, means "son of" and the second, *el* means "god." *El* usually refers to God, but can also refer to angels or to mighty men of rank or strength. David is possibly referring to "sons of God" which is an OT expression for angels (Gen. 6:1-2; Job 1:6, 2:1). He appears to be calling on the angelic host to give their praise to the LORD.

"give unto the LORD glory and strength" – Angels have a certain amount of glory and strength that has been given to them by the LORD. The LORD is not lacking in glory or strength and does not need the angels to supply what He is lacking. Rather, David is calling on the angelic host to praise the LORD for all of the glory and strength that He has, which makes Him worthy of their praise.

2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

"Give unto the LORD the glory [honor; reverence] due unto his name" – The LORD is not "the man upstairs." The LORD deserves all the reverence and honor that we can possibly give to Him. This is why the 3rd commandment states "*Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*" (Ex. 20:7). To use the name of the LORD in any other way than a manner that glorifies Him is to use the LORD's name in "vain" (emptiness, pointless).

"worship the LORD in the beauty [holy adornment; glory] of holiness [separatedness; sacredness]" – The Hebrew word for "beauty" can refer to the adornment someone might wear when coming to worship the LORD. It can also refer to an adornment of glory which the worshiper expresses toward the LORD. The Hebrew word for "holiness" here conveys the idea that the LORD is unlike anyone else we might encounter. When you put it all together and consider this line's parallelism with the first part of the verse, David is saying that when we come to the LORD in worship, we should do so conscious of the fact that the LORD is different from anything else we have experienced. We should not come to church with the same attitude that we might have when attending a social function or some place of entertainment. We should come with an attitude of reverence to the LORD and His house. So many people come to church these days dressed as casually as if they were going to a friend's house or to the store. They do not act like they are coming to meet the LORD God Almighty. In fact, they act like attending church primarily about them and not about the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.

The voice of the LORD is frequently associated with the sound of thunder. For instance, **Isa. 30:30-31** says "*And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.*" The Hebrew word for "many" can be translated as "large in number" or as "large in size." David seems to be declaring that the storms that occur over large bodies of water (such as the Sea of Galilee or the Mediterranean Sea) are an expression of the LORD's glory and strength. David wants us to be in awe of the LORD's power, so he uses what was likely the most powerful force of nature that he knew, a storm on the sea, in order to illustrate the power of the LORD.

4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

"The voice of the LORD is powerful" – David describes the LORD's thunderous voice, emphasizing its power, which comes from a powerful God.

"the voice of the LORD is full of majesty [splendor; glory]" – The impressive power of the LORD's voice demonstrates His glory and splendor. Anyone who has experienced the fury of a storm at sea, a tornado, or a hurricane can attest to the impressive power being displayed. These things pale in comparison to the power of the LORD Himself.

5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

The Hebrew word for "breaketh" refers to breaking or crushing in a violent manner. David is comparing the power of the voice of the LORD to the power of a storm that can destroy trees and leave them splintered in its wake. The cedars growing in Lebanon (a mountain range north of Israel) were known for their immense size, so David is declaring that these huge trees cannot stand up to the power of the voice of the LORD.

6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

"He maketh them also to skip like a calf" – The voice of the LORD is so powerful that it doesn't merely blow the trees over. The power of His voice causes them to fly away, bouncing and flipping end over end, calling to mind the way a calf jumps and skips.

"Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn [wild ox]" – The skipping seems to be implied in this line, either referring to the forests of Lebanon and Sirion (another name for Mt. Hermon), or perhaps even to the mountains themselves. David is describing the power of the LORD in the strongest terms he can conceive in his day. The power of the LORD's voice can cause entire forests of huge trees and even the mountains to skip around like calves or young oxen.

7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

The Hebrew word translated “divideth” means “to cut or hew out; to dig.” The word is often used of cutting and shaping wood or stone in order to make something. It is also sometimes used to describe digging in order to do things such as making a garden or digging the foundation of a house. The idea seems to be is that the voice of the LORD makes flames of fire (probably lightning). David has already used thunder to describe the voice of the LORD and now he describes the lightning that is so often associated with thunder, adding to the picture of the power of the LORD being demonstrated in severe storms.

8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

“**The voice of the LORD shaketh** [*to twist; to writhe; to whirl about*] **the wilderness**” – David seems to be referring to the chaos and destruction caused by a severe storm (perhaps even a tornado) in the wilderness. He is saying that such storms are an expression of the power of the LORD’s voice.

“**the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh**” – The wilderness of Kadesh was at the southern boundary of Israel. David is saying that the power of the voice of the LORD can traverse the entire nation of Israel from beyond its northern boundary (Lebanon and Sirion – vs. 5-6) to below its southern boundary into the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.

“**The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds** [*deer*] **to calve** [*to twist; to writhe; to whirl about*]” – The same Hebrew word translated “shaketh” in v. 8 is translated as “calve” in the sense of giving birth. While it’s possible that the word is used to describe deer writhing in the pain of child birth, the context seems to better fit the idea that the deer are writhing and twisting in fear at the sound of the voice of the LORD.

“**and discovereth** [*to strip off; to lay bare*] **the forests**” – David paints a picture of a forest stripped of its trees by the voice of the LORD. The fierceness of His voice has destroyed most, if not all, of the trees.

“**and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory**” – Anyone who has gone to the temple to be in the presence of the LORD will be so overcome with awe of the power of the LORD that they will be compelled to speak of His glory. We also ought to be so in awe of God when we come to church that we will focus all our attention on glorifying Him above all else.

10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

“**The LORD sitteth upon the flood** [*Noah’s flood?*]” – The Hebrew word used for “flood” is only used elsewhere in the OT when referring to Noah’s flood in Gen. 6-11. Thus many commentators take this fact to mean that David is talking of the LORD sitting on His throne during the flood in Noah’s day. The LORD is in control and can send judgment whenever and in whatever form He desires.

“**yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever**” – Not only did was the LORD on the throne during Noah’s flood, but He is eternally on the throne and in sovereign control of all His creation. There will never be a time when He is not on the throne.

11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

“**The LORD will give strength unto his people**” – After establishing the power and strength of the LORD, David tells us that the LORD is able to give strength to His people to protect them from their oppressors. The LORD is on the throne and can sovereignly cause His people to benefit from His strength.

“**the LORD will bless his people with peace** [*tranquility; safety; welfare; friendship*]” – Despite the awesome power of the LORD as displayed during a storm, His people do not have to worry. The LORD will bless them and peace, showing them His tender care of them, as well as ensuring their welfare and safety.