

# Who is a God Like unto Thee

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] I'm going to sing now from Psalm 89, Psalm 89 from the beginning of the psalm.
- God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all. For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure. Thy faithfulness even in the heavens thou wilt establish sure.
- I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously, and to my servant whom I love to David sworn have I, that I thy seat established shall forever to remain, and will to generations all thy throne build and maintain.
- We'll sing to verse 6 of Psalm 89. God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall. God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall.
- God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall be built, said I, forever to endure.
- [ 1 : 4 8 ] Thy faithfulness in many hands, the wilt is not assured.
- I will■■■ I shall say, and with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously. I will be fakies I willify my chosen one have made a covenant graciously, And graciously unto my servant, To my love to give this work of I, That I, I see, this other shall Forever to remain And will to generate us all
- Thy throne will not maintain The praises of thy wonders, Lord, The heavens shall express And in the congregation All saves thy faithfulness For who in heaven with the Lord May once and shall forgive
- Who is thy God among the signs Of those that mighty are Shall we turn now for a short while To the passage read, The Old Testament scriptures And the book of the prophet Micah We can read again at verse 18 Who is a God like unto thee That pardoneth iniquity And passeth by the transgression Of the remnant of his heritage He retaineth not his anger forever Because he delighteth in mercy He will turn again He will have compassion upon us
- He will subdue our iniquities And thou wilt cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob And the mercy to Abraham Which thou hast sworn unto her father From the days of old Who is a God like unto thee?
- [ 5 : 4 6 ] We've been looking over the last number Of prayer meeting evenings At a broad examination of God's glory We've, for the most part We've been looking at physical manifestations of God If we can even call it that Physical manifestations of his work And how he represents himself To his people at various times In their experience We saw God appearing to Abraham In the smoking furnace We saw how he made himself known to Jacob When the angels came down on the ladder
- From heaven and ascended and descended On the ladder of Bethel We saw also how he appeared to Moses One of the occasions He had more than one occasion Where Moses was made aware of The presence of God In a supernatural way Where the glory of God Filled the tabernacle We saw him making himself known to Joshua When he halted The progress of the moon and the sun And last Thursday We saw in Ezekiel The prophecy there Where the prophet was given a mission Of the four-faced creature A theophany Perhaps a Christophany

So there's a slight departure This evening But I would argue that While it is a departure From physical representations of God It is where the glory of God Is pre-eminently seen In the gospel Because I think that's what we are Confronted with here Again to encourage God's people To bring them face to face As it were with the prospects That they have under God's hand And I want us just to look at these words In that light So see what we can learn From what the prophet is bringing To our attention here The question that is asked

Is a question That any one of us Could answer Who is a God Like unto thee Who is a God like you And we may have our own answer We may have our own Perception of How we should answer that question Perhaps there are many Possibilities A divine Theologian That I often quote E.W. Tozer In a book Written In the early 60s And it has to do With the holiness of God And in that book He made the following Observation And he was talking About his own society He said The God of Contemporary Christianity

Is only slightly Superior To the God Of Greece And Rome If indeed He is not Actually Inferior To them In that He is weak And helpless While they At least Had power Now you could say That Tozer is Somebody Who is Very often Extreme in his views And Deliberately He Incites People By The language That he uses Now if he had Just said That Contemporary Society Has this Kind of View Of God Then he Would be Probably Something Doing something That we would Be willing To accept But he is

[10:51] Not just Saying Contemporary Society He is Saying Contemporary Christianity And You would Think That Is not Possible That The view Of Christians Of God Should Be Anything Other Than A view Where God Was Celebrated In their Side And yet In his Opinion God Is little Better Than the Gods And the Deities Of Greece And Rome Well whether You would Agree With what He is Saying Or not And I Would Imagine I would Probably Be More Inclined To Agree With it In this Sense And bear In mind That that Book was Written All about The holiness Of God That Modern Christian

Thinking Is not At all Preoccupied With a God Who Is Holy A God Who Is High And Lifted Up I've Said It Often That We're More Comfortable With Bringing God Closer To Ourselves Rather Than Endeavouring To bring Ourselves Closer To God God And While We Might Say There's Not Much Difference Between The Two Ways Of Thinking I Would Argue That There Is The Biggest Difference Is Possible The Person Who Understands That God Is A God Who Is Holy And Who Sits Upon The Throne Of The Universe And Who Is In Every Respect So Different To Ourselves And That

We Are Required To Stretch Ourselves Out To Him Rather Than Make Him More Like Ourselves And Bring Him Into Closer Proximity To Ourselves Which Is What Many People Would Much Rather What Has That Got To Do With What We Have Here Well As I Said The Subject That To Was Dealing With Was The Holiness Of God And When You Think About A God Who Is Holy His Holiness Influences Affects All Characteristics That Are Divine All The Attributes Of God They Are Holy Holiness Itself Is An Attribute Of God I Was Recently Reading Of On This Topic And One Of

The Puritans Was Saying You Can Speak About The Christian Being A Holy Christian And You Have Every Right To Do So Because That Is What Christians Are They Are God's People They Are Made Holy By Reason Of Being Made Holy By Him But Their Holiness Is Always Derived Holiness Whereas As So Many Puritans Put it He Is The Fountain Head Of Holiness He Is The Source Of Holiness And In That Respect If We Are To Think Of God's Glory We Cannot But Think Of The Glory Of God In The Sense That Holiness Flows Out Of It Or Holiness Marks It Out As Something That Is So Different To Any Idea

We May Have Offered Just To Give You An Illustration Of That God's Power For Example Makes A God Who Is Powerful God Is Mighty God Has Strength God Has The Potential In Himself That Cannot Be Curtailed Or Restricted If He Wishes To Exercise It Whereas In His It Is His Holiness That Makes Him Glorious His Holiness Is Something That Makes Him Glorious It Makes His Actions His Activity Glorious Because He Is Always Perfectly Holy He Is Always Unchangeably Holy He Is Always A God Who Is As

[ 15 : 54 ] We Said Essentially Holy Because He Is The Source Of Our Holiness And The Source Of The Angels Holiness The Source Of All Holiness As We Experience It There Is There Is No God As Holy As Him But Looking At This Verse What Has This Verse Got To Do With God Being Holy What Do What Do You Think The Passage Here Majors On What Is The Message Of The Prophet As He Speaks Of God Here Well The Message That He Conveys To Us Is That He Is A God Of Mercy That He Is A God Who Is A God Willing To Show Mercy He Pardons Iniquity And Passes By The Transgression Of The Remnant Of His Heritage When

You Read That Instantly You May Have A Problem With It Because Your Idea May Involve You Thinking That In Order For This God To Pardon In Order For This God To Pass By The Transgression Of The Remnant That Will In Some Way Involve Him In A Departure From His Original Holiness Which Of Course Is Not Possible In Order To Show Mercy That That Facet Of His Character That Is Display In This Verse Is Something That May In Some Way Diminish The Idea Of Holiness And It Shouldn't Because If Anything When

We Focus On What God Is Doing And Remind Ourselves Of The Retention Of His Holiness It Should Fill Us With All It Should Fill Us With Wonder It Should Make Us Realize That There Is A Glory In What God Is Doing That Is Seen In The Way That He Does It Because He Doesn't Change And Yet He Sees To It That We Change Who Are The Recipients Of His Mercy So What Is The Nature Of The Mercy Of Which He Speaks He Says It Is A Pardon For Iniquity And For For Transgressions He Passes By The Transgression Of The Remnant Of His Heritage And One Thing We

Have To Keep In Mind When We Speak Of This Is How Offensive Sin Is In The Eyes Of God We Want Sin To Be Something That God Is Tolerant Of If For No Other Reason Than That We Ourselves Are Sinners And That God Tolerates Us As Sinners Requires Us To Think That His Tolerance Is In Some Way Connected With His Willingness To Overlook Our Sin Which Of Course Is Not The Case In The Last Few Weeks We Have Been Confronted On Our Television News Bulletin Of His Most Heeness Series Of Crimes Carried Out By Aner In The Murder

Of Infant Children The Crime Was Heeness And There Is No Excuse For It And There Was No Excuse Offered For It Publicly Anyway But The Method Of Dealing With Crimes Of This Sort Or Of Any Sort In Modern Judiciary Is For The Criminal To Be Treated In A Way Where They Are Able To To Be Restored So That Regardless Of The Offence The Justice System Is Heavily Weighted Towards Restorative Justice And As We Saw In Our News Bulletins The

[ 20 : 56 ] Understanding Of That Restorative Justice Is That The Person Accused Of The Crime Should Be Confronted By Those Against Whom The Crime Was Committed Or Those Who Suffered Loss Because Of It In This Case Those That Were Those That Were Killed Obviously Could Not Face The Person Who Was Guilty Of The Crime But The Parents On The Basis Of Restorative Justice Felt Deprived Because The Person Who Was Guilty Of The Crime Refused To Meet Them Cy

The The The The The The Biggest biggest crime but part of the situation that confronted you was this denial of what is called restorative justice that those who were victimised were not allowed to meet the person guilty of the crime now what has that got to do with what we've got here well at the heart of the crime that the prophet is highlighting is a crime against God because that is what sin is it is against God and there are no small sins directed against God the words that he uses here are iniquity and transgression I'm not going into the detail of what the finely nuanced meaning of these words are you've heard it often enough but it depicts to us a God against whom sin has been committed and he is not in any way going down the road of seeking restorative justice in bringing those who have sinned against him into his presence in order that he would find redress no what he does is deal with the sinner so that the sinner is dealt with in a way where God is not deprived of his justice and the sinner need not fear that the sentence is in any way inadequate

God we need to remind ourselves cannot overlook sin and yet he is prepared to pardon his mercy and grace are what confronts us throughout the words of scripture repeatedly we find a God of mercy and a God of grace a God who is able to abundantly pardon we sang the words of the psalmist that lay hold of that truth and this is what the prophet is highlighting here when he is saying who is a God like you he is dealing with the fact that God in his infinite grace and the wisdom that is at the heart of what he is doing is dealing with the sinner in a way where his own holiness is not held ransom nor his justice done away with the

Puritan Brooke says God's measures are above all his works and above ours as well were it not for God's extravagant and indescribable measure nobody in all of history would ever have as much as a single sin forgiven that's the only ground upon which the sinner receives a measure or pardon or forgiveness it is in God himself not because of me or because of you or because you're improving or because you're getting better or because you're growing in knowledge as to who God is the source of forgiveness is in God and God alone but the gospel of his grace declares that to be so and it's the gospel of his grace that is highlighted to us in these words

God's wrath is against the sinner against the sin that is in the heart of the sinner and this is what has brought our attention here in his comments on this passage John L.

[ 26 : 35 ] Mackay the late principal John L. Mackay refers to verse 15 and he reminds us that in verse 15 what the prophet is doing is referring back to the way that God took his people out of Egypt according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things now he's attributing the redemption of Israel to God and he reckons it a marvelous thing liberation of the prisoners from the bondage that was theirs but here he moves on and he speaks about the liberty and the liberation that the child of God enjoys because

God is showing pardon if God has ever convicted you of your sin I'm saying that because it has to be a question that we ask ourselves if God has ever convicted you of your sin you will know what I'm talking about being under the conviction of sin and if God was to leave you convicted of your sin without addressing your need in the way God alone can where would you be how would you feel would you sit there with your heart heart free from stress or distress with your head held high not if your experience of being a sinner in the eyes of a holy God is anything to go by but those who have experienced the conviction that the

Holy Spirit brings into the experience of a child of God when God begins a work in them he follows that with the marvel that is salvation the wonder that is the sins of the believer being removed through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus and only by way of God's hand if you can't or if you haven't reconciled the burden of sin with the methodology that God uses by which he deals with it then there is something lacking your life if it is anything other than God in his grace showing mercy and forgiveness to you for your sin then your sin has not been dealt with just coincidentally when I was preparing this

I came across a book by Professor Collins the late Professor Collins and it's a very short book some of you may have it it was published long ago by the Free Church Publishing House and it's a book about the life and ministry of Big Macrae Macra Moore and it just gives us some detail about the life of John Macrae but it also contains some short account of the kind of preaching that he had and just coincidentally it had a pre-save of his sermon on this text and he describes the pardon the Christian receives in this way he says it is full and it is free and it is forever it is full it is free and it is forever it's not something that you can go back to and say it's no longer the way it was that's not what God does what he does he does with permanent effect it is you haven't left us sin if you've come to

Christ by way of the cross and your sins have been dealt with by way of Christ on the cross then there is no sin that is dealt with there is no sin that is overlooked because God is the one who is dealing with it and the way he deals with it he deals with the guilt of the sinner he deals with the need that there is for the sinner to be changed by virtue of God's grace in his life and what he does is remove the curse of sin and deliver the sinner from the condemnation that the sin had introduced into his experience these are the words of Macrae and they're well worth remembering and if you have the book read it because in very short compass he gets to the heart of what this verse is all about this is

[ 32 : 20 ] I would argue a picture of the glory of God in the salvation of sinners salvation that he declares to us in the gospel a gospel that is directed to sinners Paul the apostle called himself the chief of sinners and yet he was doing so not as a sinner still embroiled in sin but as a sinner who had received salvation through Christ Jesus in Ephesians 2 he speaks of those who were once dead in trespasses and sins that was their past that was how God found them but now he says you are washed now you are cleaned now you are someone and he says this throughout his epistles he has quickened us together with Christ and he says the most important thing that we need to remember by grace he says you are saved now we have if we have received mercy we are all in awe of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus we are in awe of the way it was achieved we are in awe of the manner in which God saw fit to introduce us to it to open our blind eyes to make us receptive to the truth that declares us to the more you reflect on it surely the more you realise that there is a gospel glory that is a glory all of its own I know this is different to the way that we have been looking at the glory of God but I don't believe that we can overlook a passage such as this without bringing into focus the fact that God in his grace saves sinners by way of the cross in verse 19 he says he will turn again he will have compassion upon us he will subdue our iniquities and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea there is more not one passage of scripture that is as precious to the believer as knowing where God has taken their sins where they will not be remembered where they will never again be raised up to bring the sinner into condemnation if indeed

Christ has done what he has promised to do in the gospel and that's what God holds out to us here in these verses who is a God like unto you that pardones iniquity and passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage and may God encourage us by these words let us pray Lord we bless you and thank you for the message of the gospel that puts the sins of your people in the light that needs to make us aware of what sin is and the damage that is wrought in our lives because of it and that we are each one beyond redemption were it not for the fact that there is a redeemer who is able to redeem from our sins all who are brought to God by way of

Christ bless us in his name we pray make us marvel all the more at what he is to us as our saviour forgive us in his name Amen I'm concluding psalm 85 going to sing in gaelic psalm 85 at verse 9 psalm 85 at verse 9 these two verses said then shall talk there and ask a so can that come and line how

Thank you.

[ 37 : 54 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. and reveal and reveal Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, rest and hide with you all now and always.

[ 40 : 13 ] Amen.