

# Who Is a God Like You?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, we begin our worship this evening by singing to God's praise from Psalm 1a, the Sing Psalms version, Psalm 1a, page 1 of the Psalm books.

We're going to sing the whole of this, Psalm verse 1 to verse 6. Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk, who does not stand in sinners paths or sit with those who mock.

We'll sing from verse 1, the whole of the Psalm, to God's praise. Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk, who does not stand in sinners paths or sit with those who mock.

Instead, he finds the story of His joy and great delight.

He makes the precepts of the Lord this sunny day and night.

[ 1 : 27 ] He prospers ever like a tree that's planted by a stream.

And in due season heals this fruit, this peace I always bring.

Not so the wicked day are like the child that's born away.

They will not stand when judgment comes or with the righteous day.

It is the Lord who sees and knows the way the righteous go.

[ 2 : 39 ] But those who live and need the life the Lord will overthrow.

Let's bow our heads now in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, as we continue to worship you this day, as we give thanks for your own day, the Lord's day, as we gather as a people, not just here, but to all ends of the earth, we thank you that your name is praised from the rising to the setting of the sun, that in many different nations and among many different people, in many different languages, your name is praised and your word is heard.

And we thank you that your word is that constant companion to your people, that in whatever language it is heard and read, we thank you for its power.

We thank you for its strength to build up your people in any and every circumstance. And we thank you for the reminder in what we have sung together there from the psalm, that your people are blessed who turn not away from it.

We thank you, Lord, that you are the one who builds your people up, who makes them to flourish. In the midst of everything that this world may throw at us, we thank you that faith is rooted not in ourselves or the things of this world, but in you as our God, the one who is immovable and unchangeable, the one same yesterday, today and forever.

[ 4 : 26 ] And we thank you that as we come together anew this evening, that we have your word before us and that longing and desire to hear it and to grow by it.

And we pray that every one of us here tonight will hear your word speaking to us, that whatever else in the busyness of life we are hearing, the many different voices that clamor for our attention and our thoughts, we thank you that your voice is powerful and that even when we are deaf to it, even when we have no interest in it, that you have power by your Spirit to open our ears to hear and to open our hearts to receive.

And we ask that as we join together and as we pray together, even just now, that you will prepare our hearts, that you will prepare us in heart, mind and soul to meet with you and to hear you and to know the great concern and compassion that you have towards us as your people.

Yes, we may have strayed as so many do. Yes, may we have wandered off and gone our own ways. But we thank you that the word tells us of the great shepherd, the one you sent into this world to shepherd your people, to gather your people, to bring them to yourself.

And we thank you that our great shepherd is the one who calls us, even this evening, who calls us by name to come out and to follow him. And we thank you that we have such a precious Savior.

[ 6 : 03 ]    The one who shepherds us is none other than your Son, Christ Jesus. And we thank you that you saw our great need. You saw our great lostness, how far away we had wandered, that you saw the great need to send your Son as the only way to salvation, the only way to save your people from their sins.

And we thank you that as your truth reminds us that a great price was paid for our sin, the price that we could never pay ourselves. Lord, we thank you that Jesus, in going to the cross, in bearing its shame, in all that it entailed, the mocking, the cursing, the darkness, the pain, the sorrow of it, we thank you that he bore our sins there.

And we thank you that we are reminded today that as he died, yes, he rose again. And he is at your right hand even now. And so we pray, Lord, that you will help us to be assured in that and confident in it, that whatever security this world might offer us, that we would see it's nothing but temporary, that the security we have in Christ is eternal and will last forever, never perishing.

So bless us together this evening. Bless all our homes and our families represented here. We thank you for all that we see before us and pray that you will bless us, Lord.

We thank you for all who tune in online as well. And we pray blessing to them as well, wherever they gather. We pray, Lord, that you will use your word to each and every one of us, that powerful word.

[ 7 : 46 ]    We pray that it will help us to know your great love and compassion that's unchanging, to know the challenge it gives to us as well, to convict and to convert us.

When we lie in sin, Lord, we know that we are dead. But we thank you for the life that it is in Christ, the life that he gives. And so we pray that together as a people from youngest to oldest, in our homes and our families and our community, that your spirit will be working to bring life, to bring newness, to bring renewal for us, even at the beginning of a new year, Lord.

We pray that as we go on in the seasons of this year, as we see the darkness turning to light in the days and months ahead, as we see the bare ground bearing its seed once again and giving growth, we pray, Lord, that not just in these natural ways around us, but also in a spiritual way that we would see progression in every way for your church this year, to bring people from darkness to light, to see new growth and new life, to see days of salvation, days of rejoicing in your goodness to us.

We pray that it will be true for ourselves as a people here and that as we endeavor and go on in your strength and prayerfully to reach out with the gospel to all around us, we pray that you will direct our paths and give us a vision for it, give us encouragement in it.

We thank you for all the ongoing work and work that resumes again, and even in this coming week, for our young people with the toddler group and the explorers resuming in this coming week.

[ 9 : 32 ]    We pray for our young people. We pray for them, not just in preschool and in primary school, but up through high school and even into late teens and early adulthood.

We pray for your spirit to move among them, Lord, for people to show an interest in them, for us as a people, as your people, to show an interest in all the lives that we see around us, not just to criticize or to condemn, but to encourage and to show them the love of Christ, to show them a better way, to show them your paths and your ways.

And we pray, Lord, that you will give us prayerful insight into how to reach out to them, how to show them a different life, a different way.

We pray, Lord, that you will give us wisdom and help. We pray that for every endeavor that we have to reach out with the gospel. We thank you for Friday, the free and the many connections that have been made there and relationships being built up.

And we pray that you'll continue to bless every meeting of it in this coming year, that we will see familiar faces coming through our doors again, but also new faces coming in as well, and people we can relate with and show love to and compassion to.

[ 10 : 51 ] We pray for the 55 plus group as well as they continue to meet. We thank you for every encouragement in this past year as it's resumed once again. And we pray, Lord, to continue to bless every meeting of it, to encourage that fellowship with one another, meeting up in an informal way and yet a constructive way as well, and offering praise and worship to you.

So we pray, Lord, and thank you for all who help in all these endeavors. And we pray that you will build us up as a people here, that we will first and foremost be a praying people wherever we are, and that we will be a willing people, that you will make us willing and use us, Lord, for your glory.

Remember us in our particular needs as well as a people, those who are unwell, those who are mourning, those who are going through difficult periods in life, just now, Lord.

We continue to pray for and uphold them in our prayers. And we ask, Lord, that in all our different needs, that you will surround us with your strength and with your grace.

We do pray for James and Donna and continue to commit them to you. We pray, Lord, that the way ahead for Donna will be clearer and smoother in these days ahead, that the infection would clear, and that it would be able to give further treatment and surgery to her as required.

[ 12 : 16 ] Uphold her and be her strength at this time. And to James as well and all the family as we commit them to you. And others too, Lord, in our belonging to us as a congregation, we pray help and comfort and your grace towards those who need you.

And particularly in times of mourning just now and in funerals even to take place in this coming week, we pray for your word to be blessed and your spirit to be present, to comfort, to uphold.

So we ask all these things looking to you. We thank you that you are the one we can call upon, that you are near to your people, that you hear us in our prayers, and that you are the one we look to do abundantly more than we ask or imagine.

We pray that you will continue then to build your church up near and far, to bless all your people, your praying people, to bless those who rule over our nation and the many nations of this world.

We pray, Lord, to see days of peace, days of your goodness and mercy towards us. We ask all these things, confessing our own sin, how far short we fall on a daily basis.

[ 13 : 32 ] And yet we thank you, even as we will read in a moment, of how you are able to cast our sins away. And we thank you for that, for the great salvation and the great God that you are, that no God compares to you.

So hear us in our prayers and continue with us now, pardoning us and cleansing us from all sin. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing together again Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter Version.

Psalm 103, page 369. And we'll sing from verse 8 down to verse 13. Psalm 103 at verse 8.

Verse 12 says, So far as east is distant from the west, so far as he from us removed in his love all our iniquity.

So we'll sing from verse 8 down to verse 13 to God's praise. The Lord our God is merciful, and he is gracious.

[ 15 : 13 ] He will not try continually, nor keep his anger still.

With us he dealt, nor does he sin, nor did he quite adieu.

For us the heaven in his sight, we are survived.

So great to know that you in here, His tender mercies are.

As far as east is distant from the west, so far hath he, from us removed in his love all our iniquity.

[ 16 : 59 ] Such pity as the Father hath and to his children dear.

Like pity shows the Lord to such as worship him in fear.

We'll turn together to read in the Old Testament in the book of Micah. We're going to read in chapter 7.

Micah chapter 7. Find this around page 943 of the church Bibles. Micah chapter 7. Last Sunday morning it was, we were looking at Micah chapter 6 and seeing the kind of judgment that Micah was showing to the people and how the Lord was speaking to the people.

In verse 3 of chapter 6 it says, O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me. The Lord calling to his people and then showing the great things that he has done for them and seeking that they would return and walk humbly with the Lord.

[ 18 : 25 ] So we're going to continue on from that into chapter 7. Reading the whole of this chapter. Woe is me, for I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the grapes have been gleaned.

There is no cluster to eat, no first ripe fig that my soul desires. The godly has perished from the earth and there is no one upright among mankind.

They all lie in wait for blood and each hunts the other with a net. Their hands are on what is evil to do it well. The prince and the judge ask for a bribe and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul.

Thus they weave it together. The best of them is like a briar, the most upright of them, a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen, of your punishment has come.

Now their confusion is at hand. Put no trust in a neighbour, have no confidence in a friend. Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms.

[ 19 : 35 ] For the son treats the father with contempt. The daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies are the men of his own house.

But as for me, I will look to the Lord. I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. Rejoice not over me, O my enemy.

When I fall, I shall rise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him.

Until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light. I shall look upon his vindication.

Then my enemy will see and shame will cover her who said to me, Where is the Lord your God? My eyes will look upon her. Now she will be trampled down like the mire of the streets.

- [ 20 : 37 ] A day for the building of your walls. In that day, the boundary shall be far extended. In that day, they will come to you from Assyria and the cities of Egypt and from Egypt to the river, from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain.

But the earth shall be desolate because of its inhabitants for the fruit of their deeds. Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance who dwell alone in a forest, in the midst of a garden land, let them graze in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old, as in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt.

I will show them marvelous things. The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might. They shall lay their hands on their mouths.

Their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth. They shall come trembling out of their strongholds.

They shall turn in dread to the Lord our God, and they shall be in fear of you. Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?

- [ 21 : 58 ] He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us. He will tread our iniquities under feet.

You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. Before we turn back to look at this passage, we'll sing again in Psalm 135 in the Scottish Psalter, page 426 of the Psalm book.

Psalm 135. We sing from verse 15 down to the end of the Psalm. Psalm 135 at verse 15.

Psalm that speaks of the idols of the nations made of silver and of gold. The idols of the nations of silver and iron gold. And by the hands of men is made their fashion and mold.

- [ 23 : 08 ] Mouths they have, but they do not speak. Eyes, but they do not see. Ears have they, but hear not. And in their mouths no breathing be.

We'll sing from verse 15 down to the end of the Psalm to God's praise. Amen. The idols of the nations of silver and gold.

And by the hands of men is made their passion and mold.

Mouths have they, but they do not see. Eyes, but they do not see.

Ears have they, but hear not. O Israel's house, O Israel's house, bless God, and bless God, O Israel's family.

- [ 24 : 47 ] O bless the Lord of the vices, ye who his servants are.

And bless the holy name of God, all ye the Lord that fear.

And blessed be the Lord our God, from Zion's holy hill, who dwelleth at Jerusalem, the Lord, O praise ye still.

Well, we can turn back together for a time to Micah chapter 7. I'll read again at verse 18. We're going to look really from verse 13 down to the end, but we can read again at verse 18.

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? Really that question that we're thinking about this evening, who is a God like you?

[ 26 : 20 ] What God compares to you? I'm sure we're all familiar with making comparisons with different things.

We live in a world where we often compare and contrast things, things that we enjoy, maybe others don't, and we speak about them. We compare cars, we compare athletes, we compare holiday destinations, we compare food.

We speak about all these things together, and we all have our opinions as to maybe what is better, what is worse. But one thing that we maybe are familiar with comparing, and it's always being thrown in front of us through adverts, especially on television, is comparing insurance.

There's a constant barrage of adverts telling us to compare the market or to go and compare, to find the best deal when it comes to insurance.

I'm sure many of you have used these things, but what do you look for when you use these kind of places? Do you look at just the price, and are you looking just for the cheapest deal, or do you look at the details behind the policy?

[ 27 : 34 ] Do you look at actually what's contained in your policy that you might be buying, and see, really, is it? Are you getting value for money? It may be cheap, but us, we often hear, buy cheap, pay dear, is what we're often told.

But what about when it comes comparing God in this world, comparing salvation in this world? Where are we looking for that insurance?

Where are we looking for that guarantee? Are we looking for just the cheapest option available to us, the easiest option available to us, or are we looking at the fine detail of what's involved?

Are we looking at the details behind everything that life entails and what eternity entails? When we look at life as it's offered to us in this world, it's so often just, go on and do your own thing.

Live your life to the full. Don't concern yourself with God or eternity or anything that the Bible says. And yet, when you look at the Bible and what the Bible says, it gives a very different picture.

[ 28 : 53 ] It gives every instruction that we need for life and also the seriousness of eternity and what insurance we need for that.

And that's what's behind this question in verse 18. Who is a God like you? What in this world compares to having you as God?

Because the people here in Micah's day, as you see as you read through the book of Micah and also the book of Isaiah written about the same time as well, is that the people in these days were turning away from their God, the God of Israel, the God of these people, the God who had, as we see in chapter 6, led them through Egypt out of slavery and bondage there who had brought them to the promised land.

They were turning away from this God. They weren't seeing him as the one who was able to give them a full life. And there were other idols, other gods that were tempting them away.

A way that in many ways maybe seemed easier. A way that didn't entail much suffering. A way that entailed maybe short-term gain.

[ 30 : 18 ] And yet a way that entailed eternal loss. And that's the seriousness of why God sent prophets such as Isaiah, such as Micah, and others as we read of in the Old Testament to see that the people of God who were turning away from this insurance and this guarantee and looking at the cheap alternatives, they were perishing and being lost.

And God sent them to call them back to himself. So the book of Micah is one that's full of warning to the people and it's full of warning to ourselves as well.

It's a book that speaks of judgment that will come. Judgment as we saw the last time as we were looking at chapter 6. Judgment for not listening to God.

For turning away from him. For not trusting him as a guarantee for salvation. in that question that God was asking of the people in verse 3 of chapter 6.

God is challenging the people there. He's challenging them. Where is your security? Where is your insurance? Oh my people, what have I done to you? Have I wearied?

[ 31 : 35 ] Answer me. What have I done that you have turned away from me? Is it too much for you to follow me? And he went on to explain what he had done for them in verse 4.

For I brought you up from the land of Egypt. I redeemed you from the house of slavery. I sent before you Moses and Aaron and Miriam. What God compares to this?

Is there any God that they could look to around them that compares to this God and the miracles that he had done to lead them out of Egypt through the Red Sea, through the wilderness?

Show me, he's saying, a God that compares to this. And Micah, as he comes to the end of this book, is saying, who is a God like you?

Saying to the people then and saying to ourselves today, who is a God like you? There are consequences, as we see in Micah, for not listening to what God is saying to us.

[ 32 : 38 ] But then we ask ourselves, what are the benefits then to listening to what God is saying to us? And as you come into chapter 7, as you read through the book of Micah, what you see is, yes, there's much judgment in this book.

But as it comes to a conclusion, it's reminding us of the wonderful love of God. Verse 18 to verse 20 there really highlights for us who is a God like you?

Who is a God that can pardon our iniquities? Who is a God that does not retain anger forever? Who delights in steadfast love? Who will have compassion on us?

Who threads our iniquities underfoot? Who will cast our sins into the depths of the sea? All of these things that you see in these verses, have you found another God in this world, in this life, who compares to the God of the Bible?

The God of steadfast love, the God who forgives sin, the God who offers life and life eternal. Have you found another God that compares to this?

[ 33 : 57 ] You haven't and you won't because there is no God like this God. God. And when you look at Micah himself, his name actually means who is like you as Lord.

That is the root of Micah's name. Who is like the Lord? And this is the prophet that God sent. And when we listen to God, when we begin to see that no God compares to this God, then we realize, truly realize, the steadfast love and the security that this God offers to his people.

Psalms 34, it says to us, O taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

We sang in Psalm 1 that man that man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray. The blessing of knowing God. The joy of knowing that security of his steadfast love and the salvation that he offers to us.

But are we looking to him? Or are we looking and comparing and looking for a cheaper alternative? We're surrounded by idols and false gods ourselves.

[ 35 : 28 ] What the world tells us we need success and money and status power. We're surrounded by all of these idols. An idol is a false God that comes between us and the living God.

And when we listen to the idols of this world, we will perish. That is the warning of Scripture. But when we listen to God, we find life and hope.

So is there a God that compares to this God? Well, there are three things that Micah shows to us in these verses in the closing part of chapter 7 that show us that no God compares to this God.

And I want us to see it in three ways. Three ways that Micah shows us no God compares to him. And the first is no God compares to him as a shepherd, a shepherd king.

No God, secondly, we'll see, compares to him as sovereign over this world. And then thirdly and finally, we see no God compares to him as saviour.

[ 36 : 43 ] These three things Micah shows to us. The shepherd, the way God is sovereign and the salvation that God offers that no God compares to him.

So first of all, we see the shepherd. When you look at verse 13, it's the end of a section that's speaking about desolation coming to people, destruction coming to people.

In verse 13, it says, but the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants for the fruit of their deeds. The land is made desolate.

Destruction is all around. But yet, there's hope. There is hope. There is a seed of recovery.

There is a sunrise after the night of darkness. And you see that Micah himself has made known that in verse 7 where it says, but as for me, I will look to the Lord.

[ 37 : 50 ] I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. Rejoice not over me, O my enemy. When I fall, I shall rise.

When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. That there is hope, that there is darkness in his day, but there is hope of the light to come.

And Psalm 30 is another wonderful psalm that speaks to us in verse 5 of tears enduring for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

And what makes the difference in these circumstances? When there is darkness, when there is suffering, but there is hope. even there is a hope that we cannot yet see, but there is a hope.

What makes the difference? Well, it's that God has not forgotten his people. Because you see that in the prayer that Micah offers up in verse 14.

[ 38 : 55 ] Shepherd your people with your staff. The flock of your inheritance who dwell alone in a forest in the midst of a garden land, let them graze in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old.

As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt. I will show them marvelous things. There is hope. What makes the difference?

Who is a God like you? As Micah says, when it comes to this situation, there is no God who will shepherd in this world apart from our God.

Shepherd your people with your staff. The people, your inheritance, who you know and who you love so well. When you look at the shepherd imagery in the Old Testament, it's always a picture of knowledge.

It's always a picture of concern and compassion when you think of a true shepherd. It's the image that we see so often throughout the Old Testament, most particularly as we see it in Psalm 23.

[ 40 : 07 ] The shepherd was one who ruled well over his flock, who provided for them in every way, who remembered them and knew them intimately, knew every sheep, every face before him.

He knew if there was one missing. He knew if there was one suffering or hurting. That is the knowledge that we see in the shepherds of the Old Testament. And that is the knowledge of God for his people.



That is the knowledge that Psalm 23 speaks about so wonderfully. The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know. I will not lack anything because my shepherd knows what I need.

And this is the care that God has for his people at all times, and especially in their suffering. In Exodus 2, we've quoted this before, but when God was looking upon his people in Egypt as they were suffering there, it says in verse 24, God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

God saw the people of Israel and God knew. He knew what had to be done. He knew that action was required.

[ 41 : 26 ] Why? Because his sheep were suffering. His people were suffering. And God has this knowledge for his people at all times.

Psalm 100, another psalm that speaks so wonderfully about the shepherd and the sheep. Know that the Lord, he is God. It is he who made us and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

He remembers our frame. He remembers our need. He remembers our weakness. He remembers everything about us. And this is the plea that Micah is making here in verse 14.

There is desolation, there is suffering, but Micah is saying, who is a God that compares to you as our shepherd? Shepherd your people with your staff.

the flock of your inheritance. May they come again and graze in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old.

[ 42 : 33 ] And it's interesting now how in verse 15 it ties back to verse 3 and 4 of chapter 6. As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them marvelous things.

The Lord is here speaking. And this is in contrast to what he was saying to them in verse 3 and 4. Oh my people, what have I done to you?

How have I wearied you? Answered me, for I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery. I have done all these things for you.

And what is he saying? I will do it again. I will do it again. as in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them marvelous things.

And he will remind us again and again that no God compares to him. And for the people of the Old Testament, even into the New Testament, as you think of the feast of the Passover, the Exodus was a great remembrance deliverance for them, the deliverance of God, the marvelous things that he did in shepherding his people, in leading them, is so well.

[ 43 : 58 ] Well, what has he done to show his great love for us today? Can we say, does any God compare to this God who sent his own son, the shepherd of his people?

Shepherding us through Jesus Christ, remembering us in all our great needs, even though we are standing before him just as they were in the days of Micah, saying, well, God has left us, God has abandoned us, God has turned his back on us, God has weeded us with all his laws and all of these things.

How? How compared to this God who shows us love, his steadfast love, through shepherding us through his own son, the son Jesus Christ who, in John 10, verse 14 and 15 says, I am the good shepherd, I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, I know the Father.

And what does he go on to say and I lay down my life for the sheep? That is the love of the shepherd, the shepherd that Micah is pleading for, to shepherd your people, to lead your people.

As we were hearing this morning how Jesus led his disciples out, here's another great example of that as well. Shepherd, lead your people.

[ 45 : 37 ] The shepherd in the Old Testament, not like us today who go behind the sheep, trying to force them the way we want them to go. The shepherd always led from the front.

And so our good shepherd, he has led from the front. He has gone before us to the cross to bear our sin, to give us life through him, that he would show us marvelous things.

Even as in the days of old and even better, that we have a great shepherd to watch over us. Is there any God that compares to this?

Is there anything in this world that compares to the love of this Savior? There is nothing. There may be cheap alternatives, but they're no use at the end of the day.

We need this shepherd. And the second thing we see here is in verse 16 and 17, where we see the promise, the sovereign promise that God gives.

[ 46 : 51 ] And this is more a sign that God will rule over all people and all nations, the good and the bad. The nation shall see and be ashamed of all their might.

They shall lay their hands on their mouths, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth. They shall come trembling out of their strongholds.

They shall turn in dread to the Lord our God, and they shall be in fear of you. The nations shall see and be ashamed.

They will turn in dread to the Lord our God. All the nations of this world will see.

But what do the nations say today? What were the nations saying in the days of Micah? They were saying to Micah, where is your God?

[ 47 : 56 ] Where is your God? God. And so they say to this day as well, where is your God? We often say that time goes by so quickly.

The years go by so quickly. Later on this year, it's more than 20 years in September since the terrorist attack.

September the 11th in the United States. It's amazing to think just how quickly the time has gone past. Boxing Day last year now, 2023, was 19 years since the tsunami in the Far East struck.

Where were you when these things happened? I'm sure for many people here these events they still stand out in your mind. You maybe remember exactly where you were when you heard these events were happening and saw them on your television screens.

They were huge events, monumentous events for our world and all the world saw this happening. All ends of the earth saw these things taking place.

[ 49 : 11 ] And it's so often in these times when people will question, where was God? Where was God when these things happened?

John Blanchard, an author, he wrote a book and the title of the book was Where Was God on September the 11th? And in the book he highlights the challenge that these kinds of tragedies bring to us and especially bring to faith.

How do we respond when people say these questions? Where was God when all of this was happening? And he tells of a story when he was challenged himself about the question, where was God?

And there was a time when he met with a lawyer called Edward Tabash. Edward Tabash comes from a five unbroken generation of Orthodox Jews.

But the Holocaust impacted his family and it claimed the lives of two of his own family members. And it turned him into a passionate atheist, turned his back on faith and religion.

[ 50 : 29 ] And behind it all was this question, how could God allow this to happen? And in one debate that he was having, it was in California, he said this, Edward Tabash, if the God of the Bible actually exists, I want to sue him for negligence, for being asleep at the wheel of the universe when my grandfather and uncle were gassed to death in Auschwitz.

And you can just imagine the pain that he's suffering thinking on these events, but to say I want to sue the God for negligence, for being asleep at the wheel of the universe.

Was God asleep when these things happened? When Auschwitz happened and so many lost their lives there? John Blanchard went on to speak about this about September the 11th and he said, when I was asked where was God when religious fanatics killed those 3,000 people in America, I replied exactly where he was when religious fanatics killed his son, Jesus Christ, in complete control of everything that happened.

This is a clear teaching of Scripture, he goes on to say. Those who combined to have Jesus crucified were wicked men, yet his death was according to God's set purpose and foreknowledge.

as the book of Acts, chapter 2, verse 23, makes clear. It is hard to answer some of these questions. Where was God when?

[ 52 : 26 ] But that is the greatest answer we can give. Exactly where he was when religious fanatics killed his son, Jesus Christ, in complete control of everything.

And that's hard sometimes for us to accept. But isn't it such a great assurance to us to know that God is sovereign, that God is in control?

Because what does this world have to offer us in terms of security and control? Who is in control? Who is in charge of events and everything that's happening in this world?

Is it just chance? Do we just leave it to go on as it is with no thought of anything or anyone being in control? Well, God is in control.

What God compares to him? And the knowledge that he is in control. We are all sinners, as verse 18 makes clear for us.

[ 53 : 41 ] But he does not retain his anger forever. He has mercy. And that is something wonderful for us to think on.

Not to turn to atheism. Not to turn away from God completely and accuse him of being asleep at the wheel of the universe when all these things happen.

But it's a time to come to God, to look to him, to trust in him, because there is no other way to salvation. There is no other way to security.

There's no other policy that this world can offer us that will give us comfort and confidence in all of these situations apart from God. Jesus said on the cross, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

And to know that forgiveness, to know that peace that he is offering, to know that steadfast love that we have in him. When we listen to God, we see his sovereign over all the good and the wicked and all events of this world.

[ 54 : 59 ] And we can leave them in his hands, for we'll never understand some things. But God does and God knows.

And is that not enough for us to know that he is sovereign? Well, thirdly and finally, we see here that he is the Savior.

And no God compares to him when it comes to salvation. In verse 18 to verse 20, make that so wonderfully clear for us.

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity, passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in steadfast love.

He will again have compassion on us. He will tread our iniquities under foot. He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. What a wonderful God we have.

[ 56 : 07 ] Is there any God in this world who can do this for us? Show us steadfast love, pass over our transgression, cast our sins into the depths of the sea?

No. There is no other. Our greatest need is a saviour. And we have one here in Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus himself said, no one comes to the Father but by me. And he also said, it is finished. I have opened the way.

The way is prepared. I will lead you as my people. But what kind of people are we? Where is our confidence?

Where is our assurance today? Is it in anything else but God? Who is a God like you?

[ 57 : 11 ] A question was once asked in a newspaper article. and it was seeking responses. And the question was this, what's wrong with the world?

A simple short question. But a question that could lead to many different answers. How would you answer that question today?

Where do your thoughts immediately go when you hear that question? What's wrong with the world today? Well, there was a number of correspondents that were sent in to the paper with answers.

But one winning answer was chosen. And it was the shortest answer that was given. And the response was this.

In response to your question, what's wrong with the world? I am. Yours faithfully, G.K.

[ 58 : 14 ] Chesterton. G.K. Chesterton is a writer, an author, a Christian author. And that was his response. Is that the first response that comes to your mind when you hear that question?

Or is it our natural inclination just to go away and think of something and somebody else? Or do we look to ourselves and say, what's wrong with the world?

Begin with I am. My heart not being right with God. My not trusting in him with all my heart.

Me not depending on him for security and salvation as is offered in the scripture. that's what was wrong in Micah's day.

It's what's wrong in our day too. It's the sin of our heart that is wrong with this world. We are alive today because, as we sang in Psalm 103, God does not treat our sin as it deserves or repay us according to our iniquities.

[ 59 : 36 ] Or to put it in a more positive way as Lamentations 3 says, because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed. That is how we are alive today.

Who is a God like you? Peter, when he was asked and the disciples were asked, will you also go away?

Will you turn away from this God who is offering salvation through Jesus Christ? What a wonderful response he gave. To whom else can we go?

For you alone have the words of eternal life. There is nowhere else to go. There is no place we can go and find assurance and insurance for eternity apart from this God.

God. So where do we go? Who is a God like you? There is no other.

[ 60 : 39 ] And when we listen to him, we see the benefits that he offers to his people. He will shepherd. He will lead his people. He is sovereign over all people of this world.

And he is preparing a salvation for his people like nothing else that this world can offer. Paul, when he wrote to the Corinthians, in chapter 2 of 1 Corinthians, it says, But as it is written, what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.

No God compares to this God. who is a God like you. There is no other. We can compare every other idol and false God of this world, and at the end of the day, none will help.

Apart from this God, we have nothing. Psalm 77 says, in verse 13, O God, most holy are your ways.

What God compares with you, you are the God of miracles, whose power the nations view. There is no God who compares with him.

[ 62 : 03 ] And whatever the world puts in front of us and shows us, whatever tempts us away from this God, may we see there is no benefit now or for eternity in any other God apart from this God who will shepherd, this God who is sovereign, and this God who can save.

Let us pray. our Father in heaven, we rejoice in your word to us and we thank you that it speaks to us of your judgment in so many ways and your sovereignty over all people, but your great assurance to your people that you will shepherd, that you will save.

And we pray, Lord, that you will help us to hear your voice in the midst of all others, to hear and to listen and to follow you. For we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 135. We sang the end of this psalm from the Scottish Psalter, which reminded us of the idols of this world.

But the beginning of the psalm reminds us of the greatness of our God. Praise the Lord, all you as servants. Praise his name with glad accord.

[ 63 : 32 ] You who serve God in his temple, in the dwelling of the Lord. Then verse 5 says, For I know the Lord is mighty, greater than all gods he is.

He is sovereign in the heavens, on the earth, and in the sea. Psalm 135, the Sing Psalms version, page 176. We'll sing from verse 1 to 6.

Praise the Lord, all you servants, praise his name with glad accord.

You who serve God in his temple, in the dwelling of the Lord.

Praise the Lord, for this is victory. He is good, his praise proclaim.

[ 64 : 36 ] Praise the Lord, for it is pleasant to sing praises to his name.

For the Lord has chosen Jacob to be known to him alone, Israel to be his treasure, set apart to be his own.

For I know the Lord is mighty, greater than all gods he be.

He is sovereign in the heavens, on the earth and in the sea.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all, now and forevermore.

[ 65 : 53 ] Amen. will pray.

Pray for you them