

Revelation 5: 13 and 14: "Every Creature in Heaven and Earth", Sermon # 42
in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul
Rendall on December 3rd, 2006 in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In Chapter 4, verse 11, we learned that God the Father is worthy to be praised and to be given honor and glory because He created all things. Now here in verse 13 we find that every creature which is heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, all that are in them are heard to be saying, "Blessing, honor, glory and power be unto Him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." I would like us to consider this truth this afternoon; that all of God's creatures are created to praise the Triune God and to live and fulfill the purpose for which they were created. Indeed we find that this truth is proclaimed in many parts of the Scripture as we shall see when we go forward with this sermon. The question that we want to ask this afternoon is in what sense do all the creatures that God has made praise Him in the way that is described for us in these verses? Let us ask how it is that those creatures which are in heaven praise God? Let us ask how it is that creatures on the earth are to praise God? Let us ask how creatures under the earth are to praise God. And let us ask how creatures in the sea are to praise God? May God help us to answer these 4 questions correctly.

1st- How is it that every creature which is in heaven brings praise to God?

It appears to me from what is said in praise of our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 12 that every kind of praise is summed up in these words that are used to set forth His worth. The words, "Power, and riches and wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing" seem to encompass it all. There are seven aspects of praise to be given to the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ and all seven are rendered to Him by the angels and by the living creatures and the elders. Every creature which is in heaven would encompass all of the angels and the spirits of righteous men made perfect, from the beginning of the world until the present hour. There are spirits of men which have been in the presence of Almighty God since the death of righteous Abel. And I do not think that they are dormant spirits. I think that the spirits of those righteous departed spirits are capable of praising God and they do praise God. You are capable of praising God in the spirit. You are capable of praying to God in your spirit. You are capable of singing to God in your spirit. In 1 Corinthians 14: 15 the Apostle Paul says, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding." I will sing with the spirit, and will also sing with the understanding." He is referring to what is going on in his heart and mind as being the basis of all his praise. But just because a person's physical brain is dead and physical body is dead, it does not mean that the spirit no longer has thoughts which cannot be read by God or praises that cannot be expressed. There is no such thing as soul sleep. I believe that the spirits of righteous men and women who have died, since they do not any longer have sin in their spirit, and since there is no fleshly nature to clog their praises, they are actually much more alive in their spirit unto God and to praise than any of us here upon the earth. Now I grant that it will be much more glorious in the day of the resurrection, when the resurrection body is rejoined to the spirit which has been made perfect, but I believe as Paul has said in 2 Corinthians 5: 8, "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him." If that is our aim when absent, that means that we must be able to do things for our Lord even in the interim time period when we will have no body to do it with, until the time of the resurrection. I think that one of the major

occupations of the departed righteous is praise. They praise God along with the myriads of angels and they get to know them and love them, and perhaps even to converse with the other saints. In Luke 16, although it be but a parable, it seems to be giving us a real look into what it is like for those who have died. Lazarus is being pictured in "Abraham's bosom." He is carried to this place of comfort and bliss by the angels. The rich man, who has died, has been taken to a place of torments. Across the great gulf which has been fixed, the rich man cries out to Father Abraham and carries on a conversation with him about having Lazarus come over to him, having dipped his finger in water to cool the rich man's tongue. Does this parable have nothing to do with the reality of what it is like for those who have died? I can hardly conceive that it could be so. Jesus would have never told it. I am sure that it is far more real and profound and true than even the words of the parable can convey. I think of the words of D.L. Moody when referring to his own death. He said, "Some day you are going to read in a newspaper that D.L. Moody of East Northfield is dead." "Don't you believe a word of it!" At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall gone up higher, that is all, out of this old clay tenement, to a house that is immortal." Well D.L. Moody did die, and he did go up, and he was more alive than he was at the time that he spoke those words. But his body awaits the resurrection. It is his soul and spirit that are more alive. He is one of the creatures in heaven singing and praising God with the angels.

2ndly- How is it that the creatures on the earth praise God?

They do this according to how God has created them, or how he has re-created them, or they do not do it rightly at all. Turn with me to Job chapter 40. Listen to God speak of how a great creature that He has made glorifies and praises Him. Verse 15 says, "Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you; He eats grass like an ox." "See now, his strength is in his hips, and his power is in his stomach muscles." "He moves his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are tightly knit." "His bones are like beams of bronze, His ribs like bars of iron." "He is one of the first of the ways of God." I would suggest to you that this creature is praising God with what he does with his strength. He gives God pleasure and praise by the use of his power and strength. You and I who are here upon the earth, should, when we praise God, be seeing Him as worthy of our strength as well. The behemoth does this naturally and instinctually, but you and I do it according to the power that He has given us by His grace. But when we praise Him, and when we serve Him, and when we worship Him, are we giving Him what He is worthy of? He is worthy of whatever power and strength that He has given us, both physically and spiritually, being directed back to Him with all of our heart and all of our strength in worship and praise in all that we do.

This would especially apply to the formal worship of the church where we gather together to give Him the glory due to Holy Name; when we give Him our tithes and offerings to His service which are our riches, when we attempt to do all that we do to His glory and honor, being wise stewards of the grace that He has given us. We are giving Him the very best of ourselves, not the leftovers of power and strength from what is left after the work week. Stir yourself up to praise and bless His holy Name. Call upon Him and ask Him to receive the gift of the thoughts and meditation of your heart, and pray that these thoughts would be acceptable in His sight. This requires a regenerate heart. You cannot do this simply by imitating the words and prayers of people around you, or by reading aloud from the book of Common Prayer. Your praise should be the living and breathing devotion that has come from having your heart fired with love to God for having given you the gift of His Son Jesus. This will keep you awake in the services of the church when all of my best efforts fall short. You should stoke the fires of your heart by secret prayer and the

reading of the Scriptures and developing a heart relationship with Christ. Then you will arise to praise Him. Then God will truly receive something of worth from your life. It is because you have asked the Spirit for greater measures of blessing and power, strength and wisdom and that is translated into blessing and glory and honor for what He does tangibly give, and what you continue to look for from Him. This is spiritual excitement and revival. It is not wild fire or enthusiasm. This is what God has called us to in our salvation. Listen to Psalm 146. "Praise the Lord!" "Praise the Lord, O my soul!" "While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being." Listen to Psalm 115, verse 15 and following. "May you be blessed by the Lord, Who made heaven and earth." "The heaven, even the heaven, are the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men." "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence." "But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore." "Praise the Lord!" This is how important it is for us to praise the Lord. It is so true, that we will be judged according to our works for the things done in the body. And one of the best ways that we can glorify God in our bodies is by praising him with our mouths, obeying Him with our eyes and hands and feet and other members of our bodies. Let us do this while we have our being, knowing that when we are called up higher, that with our body we will no longer be able to do what we will long to do until the day of the resurrection; to praise him. Our body will be silent in the grave. The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who down into silence. Oh, the awful silence of hell, that those who are there will hear no praise of God in it forevermore. But O, the wonderful praise of heaven, that even after losing the body, we shall bless the Lord forevermore. God is the God of the living and not of the dead as Jesus says in Mark 12: 27. That is why we should and why we shall praise our God and our Christ forevermore.

And 3rdly- Let us ask how it is that creatures under the earth praise God?

There are some creatures which have been created to live under the earth. In Proverbs chapter 30 we are told of the ants. They are "little on the earth", and we might add, "under the earth", but the Scripture says that "they are exceedingly wise." The ants, it says further "are not a strong people, yet they prepare their food in the summer." This is how God is honored by those of us who are not a strong people in themselves as well. The Christian will prepare for the winter times of their soul by storing up the food of the word of God to live on when other outward supplies of strength and power fail them. They will "remember their Creator in the days of their youth," they will praise Him and pray to Him and live for Him in the summer of their lives, so that when their strength diminishes when they grow older, they know that they have done what they could while they can. Grace grows best in winter, it is true, but the true Christian will store up and lay up for himself treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy them. He will do this in the good times so that he has a provision of spiritual food to feed on, food that others, and food that the world knows nothing about. They will learn to look for and to prize the treasures of spiritual things when they are young and strong, and not simply begin when they are old and feeble. They will roll these treasures into the underground of their hearts, just like you might see an ant roll a large crumb of food into a hole in the ground. Proverbs 30: 26 says, "The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags." I love what John Gill says on this. "The conies make their homes in the rocks, to cure themselves from their more potent enemies; and thus what they lack in strength is made up in sagacity, and by their wise conduct they provide for their safety and protection." "These are an emblem of the people of God, who are a weak and feeble people, unable of themselves to perform spiritual duties, to exercise grace, to withstand the corruptions of their nature, resist the temptations of Satan, bear up under afflictive providences, and grapple with spiritual enemies, or defend themselves from them: but such heavenly wisdom is given them, as to

betake themselves for refuge and shelter to Christ, the Rock of Israel; the Rock of salvation, the Rock that is higher than they; a strong one, on which the church is built, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: and here they are safe from the storms of divine wrath, and the avenging justice of God; from the rage and fury of men, and the fiery darts of Satan; here they dwell safely and delightfully, and have all manner of provision at hand for them; they are inhabitants of that Rock, who have reason to sing indeed!" Think of the Christians of the 1st and 2nd centuries who often lived in the catacombs and yet flourished so well underground. Isaiah 33: 15 and 16 says that the person who walks uprightly and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with their hands refusing bribes, who stops their ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts their eyes from seeing evil; that person shall dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of the rocks; bread will be given to him, and his water will be sure. It does pay for the Christian to learn to praise the Lord in this "underground sense."

And finally- Let us ask ourselves how all the creatures in the sea praise God?

Such creatures as are in sea praise the Lord too. Psalm 104: 24 says, "O Lord, how manifold are Your works!" "In wisdom You have made them all." "The earth is full of your possessions--This great and wide sea, I which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great." "There the ships sail about; there is that Leviathan which You have made to play there." These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season." "What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good." In verse 31 the praise continues, "May the glory of the Lord endure forever." "May the Lord rejoice in His works." Is the Lord rejoicing in you, one of His works, this afternoon. Do you praise Him in this way? Isaiah 42: 10 says, "Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!" Verse 12 says further, "Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare His praise in the coastlands." "The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war." "He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies." This is what our Lord Jesus Christ did for all of creation in the redemption of God's Elect. This is what He will yet do in the resurrection of the dead and the redemption of the creation when the New Heavens and the New Earth are created for His praise. Romans 8: 19 says, "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God." "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now." But it shall be released. That is why in Psalm 148 it says, "Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights!" "Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him all His hosts!" "Praise Him sun and moon; praise Him, all you stars of light!" "Praise Him you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens!" "Praise the Lord from the earth, You great sea creatures and all the depths; fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind fulfilling His word; mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl; kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens; old men and children." "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven." "And He has exalted the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints." Can this be anything else but the praises given to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ? "Praise the Lord."