

Listen to Christ's Voice

LHC: Message Nine (980426PM)

Week 9: Listen to Christ's Voice

(Revelation 1:15)

As the end of days approaches, you can find hope as you listen to the awesome voice of Christ!

SUNDAY: Listen to Your Creator

*His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and **His voice as the sound of many waters.***

—Revelation 1:15, emphasis added

Have you heard the almighty and powerful voice of Jesus? He is speaking every day! As the Creator, Jesus' voice resounds throughout planet Earth! Have you heard Jesus' voice speaking in nature?

The apostle John writes that His voice is "*as the sound of many waters*" (Revelation 1:15b). In that verse, John used the metaphor of a thunderous waterfall. Have you ever stood at the crest of the impressive Niagara Falls? My family and I have, and it is an incredible combination of sight and sound as the avalanche of rushing water vibrates the ground as it thunders downward and then bursts upward in mist. It is magnificent to behold!

Since most of us do not live by a mighty waterfall, Psalm 29 uses another metaphor for the voice of the Lord—the deep rumble and loud roar of thunder. I, therefore, happen to like Oklahoma's severe thunderstorms that make our windows shake and rattle! Why? They always focus my thoughts on Psalm 29. Jesus wants us to *listen* for His voice in the storms. So the next time you experience a bad thunderstorm, instead of worrying about it, worship Him through it!

All Creation declares God's glory! As you listen for His voice in the storms, ponder these interesting scientific facts about thunder and lightning:

Thunder is merely a byproduct of lightning which is a river of electricity careening at 100,000 miles per second, down a twisting canyon of air. About 400 people per year are killed by lightning, [normally] more than any other natural disaster. Yet, without lightning, life as we know it could not exist.

Air molecules are heated to about the temperature of the Sun's surface by that electricity. They are white hot at 30,000 degrees Celsius when the bolt of lightning passes through them. Around the planet 100 times each second, lightning strikes the earth with its intense, hot strokes. In a very real sense, it is feeding the plants as the nitrous oxide distills in the rains and goes to the roots of plants. Almost all plants need nitrogen as their basic food. Although 22 million

tons of nitrogen hangs in the air over every square mile of the planet, it is unusable without the effects of lightning.

Lightning that we see is actually traveling upward. It is the meeting of a “leader” coming down from the negatively charged base of a thundercloud, meeting a “streamer” coming up from the positively charged earth beneath that cloud. In the one second long duration of the lightning, as many as 40 pulses of energy have occurred. Heat rising so rapidly out of this super hot path breaks the sound barrier and “thunder” is produced.¹ Each stroke contains hundreds of thousands of amperes, and hundreds of millions of volts. All told a single storm produces more electricity than all of America’s generators combined.² A single stroke lasting one second could power a city.³ And with over 600 storms at any given moment on the earth, God’s power dwarfs all of man’s efforts!

The sound of the Lord as He shakes the earth is a call to reverence

Him. God uses thunder and lightning for many things. For example, He used it in the seventh plague against the Egyptians: *The LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground* (Exodus 9:23). Another wonderful example is when Samuel cried out to God in behalf of Israel, and the Lord answered him in a miraculous way: *“The LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel”* (1 Samuel 7:10).

Those two examples alone are enough to cause us to be awed by the Lord God Almighty’s powerful and thunderous voice! Will you listen to God’s voice today as He speaks to you through His Word?

My Prayer for You This Week: *Oh Father, I pray that we would each hear the voice of Jesus, that we would respond to His voice, and that we might live ever-mindful that You wish to commune with us. Ever since the first time You spoke to Your creatures in the Garden of Eden, to the moment when we enter glory and forever shall be with You, how we long to hear and respond to Your voice! We love You, and ask that You would open our hearts, illumine our minds, quicken our spirits, motivate our wills, and engage us to be Your pleasing servants through exposure to Your Word. We pray that Christ will get all the glory, and that we be purified that we may offer exceedingly precious and fragrant worship to You. In the blessed name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*

MONDAY: Listen to Your Redeemer

I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia.”

—Revelation 1:10–11a, emphasis added

God created us to hear the voice of Jesus. So it is not strange that, when the Creator met with John on Patmos, John heard His voice. As we listen to those words captured by John, every one of these facets of Christ’s beauty calls us to the same response: worship.

Can you imagine how John felt when he first heard the voice like a trumpet? Or what it might have been like for him to see Jesus in the beauty of His deity, and the wonder of who He is? To then be chosen to write down what he saw, and what was yet to come, must have been awe-inspiring to this lonely exile!

In Revelation 1–3, Jesus’ voice is calling the church throughout the ages to worship Him! In Revelation 1, there are nine reasons why we must listen to and worship our divine Redeemer:

1. **Jesus is the Conqueror of Adam’s fallen race**—One like the Son of Man, robed to His feet. (1:13)
2. **Jesus is the Perfect Priest**—with hair as white as snow. (1:14a)
3. **Jesus is the Ancient of Days**—with eyes like a flame of fire. (1:14b)
4. **Jesus is the Seer of All Secrets**—with feet like fine brass. (1:15a)
5. **Jesus is the Ultimate Judge**—crushing all foes with a voice as thunderous as the twelve million cubic feet of water crashing at Niagara’s base! (1:15b)
6. **Jesus is the Voice of God**—commanding all to pay attention. (1:15b) Even the deaf and the dead can hear it, and so should we!
7. **Jesus is the Possessor of All Secrets of the Universe**—holding the stars in His hand, which He spoke into existence by His Word. (1:16a)
8. **Jesus is the Creator of All Things**—with the face of incomprehensible countenance, blazing with the power of the sun. (1:16b)
9. **Jesus is the All-Powerful Lord of Glory**—who says to us, “Will you worship Me?” (1:17–18)

As you reflect upon the nine signs of Christ’s divinity listed above, listen for Jesus’ voice—and worship Him! One way to worship the Lord is to dwell on the truth that Jesus came and rescued you. Another is to meditate upon how thankful you are that He is your perfect priest. Or you can praise Him for being the eternal One you can trust! Another example of fragrant worship is to express adoration that His all-seeing eyes always know where you are and what you need! On and on the list can go. Now take a moment and offer thanksgiving for all the other things He brings to mind!

TUESDAY: The Voice of Jesus in Eden

The LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”
—Genesis 3:9, emphasis added

The final book of God’s Word is The Revelation of Jesus Christ. Within the chapters of that book are reflections from every part of the Scriptures. It is amazing that each element of God’s revelation starts in Genesis and finds completion in Revelation. In other words, answers to the age-old questions that began in the book of Genesis are found in Revelation.

Let’s go back and meet the first two humans on earth. Listen to the inspired, accurate, and divine recounting of their experience of hearing the voice of Jesus in the Garden of Eden.

Think with me of life as a perfect human. Picture yourself at the dawn of creation as Adam or Eve, perfect and sinless. Your first memory is that of waking up in God's garden, Eden. You live in a comfortable world with no extremes of hot and cold, no storms, no disasters to fear. Your home is secure; there are no pestering bugs, poisonous snakes, or deadly spiders. There is just the continual beauty of fragrant and color-filled flowering orchids hanging from the verdant green trees and blooms that never fall off, never yellow, or wilt. Full, juicy fruit hang ripe on the branches, but never fall off and rot.

Even more, you have a body that never aches, a digestive system that never rebels, eyesight that needs no correction, and ears that hear the sweet sounds of life all around. No pains; never a sorrow; no weariness; not even a fear—just peace-filled living.

God's perfect garden is a paradise. Every day is an adventure of new colors, new fragrances, and new symmetry in flowers, butterflies, and all the wonders of a perfect animal world. There are no predators, no scavengers, and no carnivores. Only placid and magnificent creatures reflecting the majesty of God live in the garden. And around every corner of towering and graceful trees, each perfectly planted by God, are flocks, herds, and gatherings of exquisite living animals that God has created and brought to life.

But the best of everything is the sweet sound of the voice of your Creator, God the Son, Jesus Christ. About suppertime each day a gentle breeze whispers by, and then you hear His voice. The Gardener and Planner of the universe soon walks with you in the cool of the day. He seeks fellowship with you, His best friend, whom He has made to look just like Him. And your ears hear the sweetest sound of all—the voice of Jesus who created you!

But soon your paradise will be lost. The “bad guy” has entered into God's perfect garden, and nothing will ever be the same again!

WEDNESDAY: Satan Hates the Voice of God

*Then **Jesus said** to him, “**Away with you, Satan!** For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.*

—Matthew 4:10–11, emphasis added

The “bad guy” in paradise—that old serpent, Satan—planned a masterful scheme for mankind! More than anything, he has wanted to make us doubt, reject, and become deafened to the voice of God! And had you and I been in the Garden of Eden instead of Adam and Eve, we would have made the same fatal choice. Instead of listening to God, they listened to Satan, who took God's Word and twisted it. Satan must have thought that he'd scored a final coup with his plan to cut off the voice of Jesus from His children:

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For

God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

—Genesis 3:1–5

Satan’s Four Spiritual Flaws: Satan’s plan, even to this day, involves four elements from Genesis 3 that are the main threads that weave together through all the false religions of the world. All false religions are derived from these lies of Satan that seek to keep mankind from listening to the voice of their Creator. We will cover three of them now, and then go over the fourth in tomorrow’s devotional.

1. **Doubt God’s Word:** When young people are first exposed to secular scientific theories (with the God of Scripture left out), Satan always plants this seed of doubt in their minds: *“Has God indeed said . . . ?”* (3:1b). Since listening to the voice of Jesus always involves the Bible, Satan tries to persuade us that God’s Word is just like any other book. “Oh,” he says, “The Bible is nice, perhaps helpful, but it is not absolute.” His ultimate plan is to keep us from regular contact with the Lord by questioning, avoiding, or neglecting the Word. The Lesson: **You doubt God when you doubt His Word.**
2. **Doubt God’s goodness:** Satan planted seeds of doubt in Eve when he said, *“Did God really say, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”* (3:1b). He wanted her to doubt God and His goodness. He likewise bombards each of us by whispering lies such as: *God is trying to hold out on you . . . He is robbing you of some good times . . . He is out of touch with your needs . . . He missed that disaster you just went through . . . He messed up on how He made you . . . God means well, but since He doesn’t quite have everything under control, that makes Him not good.*

Satan’s fiery darts of lies are reserved for our most vulnerable moments. For instance, when a baby is born who is not fully functioning, or a young person’s life is cut off in what seems to be a tragic and untimely death, a normal reaction is to cry out, “Why, Lord?” Things like this simply make no sense to our finite minds, so we may be tempted to doubt God’s goodness.

Another example is when teens idolize those who grace magazine covers or are otherwise in the social spotlight. At some point, however, they have to come to grips with the fact that they will never look like those people. So they may begin to despise their own features and question God’s goodness by thinking: *Why did God make me this way?*

When the storms of life are at their fiercest, don’t give in to thoughts like this that challenge your faith: *Is God really in control? Why is He letting this happen to me? Where is He? Is He really good?* At such times, watch out because Satan acts like a prowling lion (1 Peter 5:8), and you must not give the devil a place to land in your life (Ephesians 4:27). In Ephesians 4:25–31, Paul lists sins that can open you up to Satan’s influence in ways that will hinder your walk in Christ. Satan lurks at the door of your mind, so do not let him in! The Lesson: **You doubt God when you doubt God’s goodness.**

3. **Doubt God’s authority:** In Satan’s next all-out attack to deceive Eve, he says point blank: *“You will not surely die”* (3:4). Satan loves it when we doubt God!

He wants us to believe that God is not in charge, that God is not interested in our choices, and that God will not hold us accountable for our deeds. When that happens, every man or woman does whatever seems right in his or her own eyes. That is the hallmark of our world—take charge of your own life, and be all you can or want to be! The Lesson: **You doubt God when you doubt God’s authority.**

Never forget that Satan’s masterful scheme is to make you doubt, reject, and become deafened to the voice of Jesus. Because you are not listening to the voice of Jesus when you think wrongly about God, daily ask yourself: *Whose voice am I listening to?*

THURSDAY: Satan Wants to Silence God’s Voice

*“The thief [Satan] does not come except **to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.**”*

—John 10:10, emphasis added

Yesterday we learned that Satan has four spiritual flaws that he uses to try to silence God’s voice in our lives. We have discussed the first three in which Satan tempts us to doubt God’s Word, doubt God’s goodness, and doubt God’s authority. Here is his fourth spiritual flaw:

4. **Doubt God’s plan:** In Genesis 3:5 Satan blocked the Creator’s voice when he said *“Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”* From the very beginning, Satan has sought to convince mankind that his way is better than God’s. Thus he tries to entice us with his own plan for how we can achieve immortality, glory, and happiness. How does Satan do that? He tries to solidly plant this thought in our minds: *Abandon all those restraints—just let go and work out your own plan for pleasure!* The Lesson: **You doubt God when you doubt His plan for you.**

Satan loves it when he gets us to doubt God and His plan! The devil’s scheme is to plant thoughts that God’s way is too restrictive, but his way allows freedom to pursue whatever lusts will bring the greatest pleasure. In fact, if Satan were to summarize his plan for us as a billboard ad, it would probably read:

Go for the gusto!
You only go around once!
Get your gratification *now*.

Satan delights in whispering to us: *Lust won’t wait, so lust for what you want—and take it every chance you get!* That is exactly what Adam and Eve did when they gave in to their desire for pleasure (Genesis 3:6). Thus the horrible precipitous slide down into sin began, as these verses reveal: *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. . . . And **they heard the sound of the LORD God** walking in the garden . . . , and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God* (Genesis 3:7–8, emphasis added).

Before this awful day, Adam and Eve had been drawn to the voice of the Lord, and responded to Him. They both had longed to talk with their Creator and tell Him of

their discoveries. They loved to ask Him questions about His universe and the garden they lived in. But now they discovered that His voice repelled them, so they hid among the trees of the garden. Then God—this Jesus who came “*to seek and to save that which was lost*”—had to become the seeking One (Luke 19:10).

The Creator himself is the One who seeks out His fallen creatures: *Then the LORD God called to Adam . . . , “Where are you?”* (Genesis 3:9, emphasis added). When the Lord confronted Adam concerning his sin, he abdicated his leadership role and blamed it on his wife, saying: *“The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate”* (Genesis 3:12). Eve then blamed her sin on the serpent: *“The serpent deceived me, and I ate”* (Genesis 3:13).

Satan inhabited the serpent, which was upright, and the most beautiful of all the created animals as it glistened with all the lovely colors. But Satan’s use of the serpent brought God’s curse to crawl in the dust and become a sign of evil: *“Because you have done this,” God said to the serpent, “You are cursed . . . ; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel”* (Genesis 3:14–15, emphasis added).

Every time a new child is conceived in this world, he or she, as a descendant of Adam, is already a sinner because of divine decree. But as soon as the child is old enough to make conscious choices, proof of being a sinner is soon evident through wrong actions.

As for the term “her Seed,” women don’t have seed. This is a very strange idea until you understand the virgin birth of Christ—that the virgin Mary would bear a child without the seed of a man (Isaiah 7:14). The Seed of the woman is Jesus Christ. Jesus’ body was buffeted and broken because of sin. But on the cross, He crushed the head of Satan *that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil* (Hebrews 2:14b).

Because Satan is not omniscient (all-knowing), he thought that he was scoring a major coup in the Garden of Eden! But God was actually in control—as always—working out His masterful plan for the ages so that you and I can have enduring hope for the future!

FRIDAY: Listen to Jesus’ Voice in His Word

*How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was **confirmed** to us **by those who heard Him?***

—Hebrews 2:3, emphasis added

For every one of Satan’s spiritual flaws, God counters with a positive and powerful law. Therefore, He has *four spiritual laws* that destroy Satan’s *four spiritual flaws*.

God’s Four Spiritual Laws:

1. **Trust God's Word:** *Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven* (Psalm 119:89). God's Word has never been proven to be in error scientifically, morally, or historically. God's Word is the only thing that you can stake your life on!
2. **Rest in God's goodness:** *Truly God is good . . . to such as are pure in heart* (Psalm 73:1). God is indeed good, and He has revealed himself to be so. He always makes good decisions! He made you well; you are a beautiful work of art, created in Christ Jesus for good works (Ephesians 2:10). He made you for His glory, so never wonder why He has allowed something to happen in your life; trust His goodness and rest in that truth.
3. **Submit to God's authority:** *Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you* (James 4:7). Resist Satan's lies; resist his desire to make you rebel, and he will flee from you.
4. **Follow God's plan:** *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths* (Proverbs 3:5–6). As soon as we head away from the Lord to follow after our own understanding, we are heading toward Satan's path. Satan always moves us away from God's Word, so we need to listen to the voice of Jesus in His Word!

Christ's voice in Revelation calls for action. The voice of Jesus calls out to His church for utter devotion. For example, the observance of the Lord's Table is an act of utter devotion to Christ. There we say, "We are partaking of Your body and Your blood. We are communing with You, and we are unable to live apart from You. We love You and we worship You!"

Look at Christ's indictment of the church at Ephesus: "*I have this against you, that you have left your first love*" (Revelation 2:4). Jesus is telling us to examine ourselves to determine whether He is the most important person in our lives, like He once was. Are you still drawing near to Him as you first did? If not, He says, "*Remember . . . from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works*" (Revelation 2:5).

Jesus wants us to continually seek Him like we did at the beginning. I always tell married couples: "Work as hard to keep your beloved as you did to win him or her." The key to a strong marriage is to never stop dating. That is an even bigger key to worship: love Christ like you did the first day you knew that your sins were washed away, and that your destiny was secure in Him.

The voice of Jesus also calls out to the lost for salvation. Any time there is a gathering with the preaching of God's Word, there should always be an acknowledgement of anyone who has not yet heard the voice of Jesus. An invitation ought to be extended to him or her to come to Christ: *Let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely* (Revelation 22:17).

Up to the very end of God's Revelation, He is still offering salvation to all who will respond to Him. In the privacy of your will, you may say yes to Jesus Christ: *Yes, He died in my place! Yes, He is the One who came to seek and save me, a lost sheep! Yes, He is my only hope and my sin is taken care of by His sacrifice.* That is how simple salvation is.

Have you responded to Christ in faith yet?

SATURDAY: Jesus Waits for Us to Hear His Voice

*The **voice of the LORD** is powerful; the **voice of the LORD** is full of majesty.*
—Psalm 29:4, emphasis added

In Psalm 29 we hear His voice in the earth, and it is calling us to worship Him! In that psalm, the Lord reveals five elements of His eternal greatness that we are to reverence as we hear Him.

Hear the powerful and majestic voice of the Lord:

1. **Through thunder God is declaring His ownership:** *O you mighty ones, Give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness (Psalm 29:1–2).* We cannot make the sky thunder; neither can we make it stop thundering. God owns and controls the physical universe.
2. **Through thunder God is declaring His majesty:** *The voice of the LORD is over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The LORD is over many waters (Psalm 29:3).* I can easily envision David high on a hillside overlooking one of those massive storms that blows in from the Mediterranean Sea. As the anvil-shaped thundercloud begins to rise, he knows he has to comfort his sheep, and get them safely into the fold before they become frightened and scatter. As he is out there with nowhere else to go, he soon hears the rumble in the distance come ever closer, and watches the frequent bolts of lightning. And then David listens in awe as the voice of the Lord thunders again and again—and he worships! If thunder is just the power of God’s voice, imagine what kind of total power He has! One might even say that thunder is only the Lord “clearing His throat”!
3. **Through thunder, God is declaring His power:** *The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars, Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire (Psalm 29:5–7).* What manner of God is He that at the very sound of His voice the earth rumbles and shakes and quakes and burns before Him?

Have you ever seen a tree that was hit by lightning? It is literally splintered. Lightning contains hundreds of millions of volts! I had a friend who used to be a park ranger. He told me about times when he sat in the tower watching for forest fires during thunderstorms. Because the towers were grounded, he was safe. So when he saw lightning hit the rock wall around the tower, and the balls of fire tumbling along the ground, he always opened his Bible to Psalm 29:7: *The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire.* Amazing!

4. **Through thunder God is declaring His worship:** *The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everyone says, “Glory!” (Psalm 29:8–9).*

This is not people who are saying “Glory!” It is all of Creation that is in the temple of God. Remember: *Jesus came to His own, and His own did not receive Him* (John 1:11). The first “His own” is neuter tense in the Greek, which means that He came into His own world. Creation always received Him. For example, trees would bow in front of Him when He spoke to them, and the sea would calm when He spoke to it. Jesus controlled the natural world, and it worshiped Him.

Although God does not get much glory from His creatures who are created in His image, at the sound of His voice all the earth shouts “Glory!” Should not we? The next time you are in a thunderstorm, shout “Glory!” to declare your worship of the Lord from your heart!

5. **Through thunder God is declaring His judgment:** *The LORD sat enthroned at the Flood, and the LORD sits as King forever. The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace* (Psalm 29:10–11). God is the judge, and He is in control. When you hear the thunder and see the lightning, declare His judgment. God is going to right all wrongs. Do not try to get revenge on people. At the Flood, He destroyed those who pushed Him out of their lives, and He is going to do the same when He comes back again. That is why Psalm 29 is so very important!

Make a choice to live in hope: As we approach the end of days, I encourage you to find hope as you listen to the awesome voice of Christ, your Creator and Redeemer! Remember that the sound of the Lord as He shakes the earth is a call to reverence Him! So wholeheartedly join David in praise and worship as he says:

I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. . . . Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable. . . . All Your works shall praise You, O LORD. . . . They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power. . . . Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

—Psalm 145:1, 3, 10–11, 13

To complete your precious time of worship, I encourage you to joyfully sing this song to the “God of glory, Lord of love”!

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

*Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow’rs before Thee, Op’ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day!*

*All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heav’n reflect
Thy rays;
Stars and angels sing around Thee, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flow’ry meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in Thee.*

*Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother—all who live in love are*

*Thine;
Teach us how to love each other; lift us to the joy divine.
Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began;
Father love is reigning o'er us, brother love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.*
—Henry van Dyke (1852–1933)

¹ *Our Amazing World of Nature* (Pleasantville, NY: Reader's Digest Books, 1969), pp. 229–31.

² *National Geographic* (July, 1993), pp. 83–103.

³ *National Geographic* (June, 1950), pp. 809–28.