

Above All Gods
Psalm 135

What is going on in Washington these days? Our 14 trillion dollar Federal debt grows daily, as the government borrows 40 cents out of every dollar it spends. At the same time, the price of oil has soared, and the price of everything else is creeping up as well. How much purchasing power will our money still have when all the dust settles?

And what is the Federal government planning to do about all of this? It seems to be in a state of deadlock. Some say that we need to raise taxes while others insist we need to cut spending. Each group cites different economic experts and historical examples. Meanwhile, Standard and Poor threatens to reduce our Federal bond rating if nothing is done. And still the debt grows and the dollar shrinks.

And then there are problems with the weather. You have to go back to 1932 to find a more deadly outbreak of tornados than the ones that ravaged the South this week. Even though we've developed Doppler radar and early warning systems since that time, no amount of warning could help in the face of 200 mph winds a mile wide. Whole towns have been erased from the map – hundreds are dead and thousands are homeless.

And there's that slow-motion disaster that's waiting to happen right over there. The Mississippi is projected to crest at 53.5 feet on May 18 and to remain at that level for at least a week. The Corps of Engineers can calculate how high the water will get. They can talk about blasting levees in Missouri to relieve the pressure. And yet the water keeps coming and the river keeps rising, and there's really nothing anyone can do about it.

Oh, but that's not quite right, is it? There is Someone Who is in charge of all of these things. As the psalmist reminds us in verses 6 and 7, it is God Who makes the clouds to rise, Who sends the lightning and the wind. Where it comes to the weather, our God does whatever He pleases.

And while we may be very impressed with the power of our government, God is not. The psalmist reminds us in verses 9-11 that, in the days of Moses, God brought Egypt, the most powerful nation on earth to its knees. Pharaoh could not stop any of the plagues that God sent. He couldn't keep the Nile River from turning into blood any more than the Corps of Engineers can stop the Mississippi from rising. It was the Lord Who was in charge then, and He's still in charge now.

And what about those fearsome foes of God's ancient people – Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan? God simply swept them away, so completely that we don't know anything more about them than their names. Countless nations have risen and fallen throughout history, but as verse 13 says, it is God's name that endures forever. It is His renown that lasts throughout all the ages.

And what about all that money we Americans spend so much time trying to make or save or borrow? What about all those debts that give us so much concern? The psalmist reminds us in verses 15-18 that people have always been tempted to make idols out of gold and silver. We

know how wrong those ancient people were to place their faith in statues that couldn't talk or see or hear, or say or do anything. But we are just as wrong to place our faith in the Social Security system, or in our bank accounts or retirement savings. In the long run, none of those things can save us.

But God can. As verse 14 says, it is the Lord Who will vindicate His people, no matter how embattled we are by the tides of culture. It is the Lord Who will have compassion on His servants, even in the face of the greatest storms and floods. As verse 4 says, it is the Lord Who has chosen His people for Himself, to be His own possession, no matter how much or how little our money is worth. As verse 12 says, it is God Who gives the land to His people as a heritage, no matter what government may hold sway over it.

And so when we face all these impossible problems in our lives, and so many more, what do we need to do? Instead of fearing the storms of life, instead of placing our trust in our governments or in our gold, let's trust the Lord. This psalm begins and ends with words of praise to God, and that's the very best thing any of us can do – in the face of the storm to remind ourselves of the power and majesty and goodness of the God we worship, and to give to God the glory that He alone deserves.