

# Why Should the Secularists Say, Where Is Their God?

Psalm 115

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • December 18, In the year of our Lord, 2016

Scripture Reader and Reading: Carl Peugh – Psalm 42.1–3

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on God

## **Persuasion:**

### **I. Psalm 115.1 | Glorify the Lord**

**1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,  
But to Your name give glory,  
Because of Your mercy,  
Because of Your truth.**

A. This opening verse drives the Psalm,

1. especially the second line,
2. that the Lord get the glory.

B. This is not about us.

1. We say not the words of this Psalm to get anything for ourselves, but
2. the people around us challenge us,
  - a) asking where our God is,
  - b) the Gentiles challenged according to verse 2.
3. It hurts and angers us
  - a) that people deny God or say
  - b) that He does not even exist.
    - (1) That would be like saying that our parents never existed.
    - (2) We take it personally.
      - (a) We do not like people speaking against the one we love.
      - (b) He means everything to us, and
        - i) we want Him glorified and honored by all people.
        - ii) Therefore, we hate it when people say nasty about God.

C. We know that He blesses us,

1. shown later in the Psalm, but
2. it is not about us.
  - a) We are mindful of Him and
  - b) He is mindful of us, as verse 12 will declare.

## II. Psalm 115.2 | The Challenge

### **2 Why should the Gentiles say, "So where is their God?"**

A. Why did people then, and why do people now, ask this question?

1. People then could see their gods.
2. People today can see the fossils from which we allegedly descended.

B. However, they cannot see our God.

1. Therefore, they issue a challenge.
2. In their minds, it will only be answered when He shows Himself.
  - a) Some people today say they do not believe that He exists,
  - b) for the simple reason that they cannot see Him.
    - (1) To their minds, something does not exist,
    - (2) if they cannot see it with their eyes.
      - (a) Why then do they accept evolution when they cannot see it happening?
      - (b) Why do they believe that George Washington was our first president?
      - (c) Why do they believe nations exist that they have never visited?

C. Immediately the psalmist revealed why

1. the Gentiles then and
2. the secularists today

a) cannot see God.

### III. Psalm 115.3 | The Answer

**3 But our God is in heaven;  
He does whatever He pleases.**

A. God is in heaven and

1. we are on the Earth.

2. And we all want it that way.

a) If He opened up the view into Heaven, or

b) if He came down here in the form that He has now,

(1) no one could survive either experience.

(2) Exodus 20, right after God gives the Ten Commandments,

(a) shows that thinking that seeing God

(b) would be a wonderful experience is misguided,

**18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exo 20.18–19).**

B. Yet, He did take on the veil of flesh, and

1. lived among us, but

2. people still refused to believe that He was God.

### IV. Psalm 115.4–7 | Their Gods

**4 Their idols are silver and gold,  
The work of men's hands.**

**5 They have mouths, but they do not speak;  
Eyes they have, but they do not see;**

**6 They have ears, but they do not hear;**

**Noses they have, but they do not smell;  
7 They have hands, but they do not handle;  
Feet they have, but they do not walk;  
Nor do they mutter through their throat.**

A. Verse 3 said that our God can do and does do whatever He pleases.

1. Can you say that about the gods of the nations?
2. They cannot even perform the simple functions that we perform.
  - a) Man has to use his mouth, his eyes, his ears, his nose, his hands, his feet, and his words
  - b) to make something that they believe make things for them.

B. Look at the characteristics of an idol:

1. Made of silver and gold.
  - a) Our God is spirit.
2. Men made them.
  - a) Our God has always been.
3. Although appearing to have mouths, they cannot speak.
  - a) We have a Book from our God.
4. Although appearing to have eyes, they cannot see.
  - a) Our God sees everything.
5. Although appearing to have ears, they cannot hear.
  - a) Our God hears our prayers.
6. Although appearing to have noses, they cannot smell.
  - a) Our prayers are as incense to our God.
7. Although appearing to have hands, they cannot handle.
  - a) Our God touched people when He lived on the Earth.
8. Although appearing to have feet, they cannot walk.
  - a) Our God goes everywhere.

9. Although appearing to have throats, they cannot even mutter.
  - a) Our God will thunder at the last to destroy the idols.

#### V. Psalm 115.8 | They Are Like Their Gods

##### **8 Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.**

- A. First, they create a god in their image, but
  1. they make him, her, or it better than what they are.
  2. Therefore, they seek to become like that which they have made.
    - a) They call them gods.
    - b) Gods are supposed to be higher than man.
      - (1) So then men seek to become like that which they have created,
      - (2) as crazy as that sounds.
- B. They trust in these idols.
  1. That just does not make sense.
  2. Should not the idol trust in its maker?
    - a) Anyway, they trust in the god
    - b) that it will bring prosperity.
      - (1) However, they have to appease that god, and
      - (2) the best way to do that is to become like that god.
- C. This should be said about humans concerning the God of Heaven.
  1. He made us.
  2. We trust Him.
    - a) Therefore, we seek to be like Him, and
    - b) the more we trust Him the more we become like Him.
      - (1) The Gentiles have taken what should be a good thing and

(2) have misapplied it to a vain thing.

## **VI. Psalm 115.9–11 | Trust the Lord**

- 9 O Israel, trust in the LORD;  
He is their help and their shield.**
- 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD;  
He is their help and their shield.**
- 11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD;  
He is their help and their shield.**

A. The psalmist addressed three groups:

1. Israel,
2. The house of Aaron, and
3. Those who fear the Lord.

B. All three should trust in the Lord, because

1. He is their help and shield,
2. something that the gods of the Gentiles cannot do.

C. The Gentiles trusted in things that cannot help or shield them.

1. For example, think not only of the church, but think of America.
2. Why has America accomplished what it has?
  - a) We do not have anything greater than any other nation,
  - b) except that we have made the God of the Bible our God.

D. Therefore, trust in the Lord God of Psalm 115, then see what happens next.

## **VII. Psalm 115.12–16 | The Lord Has Been Mindful of Us**

- 12 The LORD has been mindful of us;  
He will bless us;  
He will bless the house of Israel;  
He will bless the house of Aaron.**
- 13 He will bless those who fear the LORD,  
Both small and great.**
- 14 May the LORD give you increase more and more,  
You and your children.**

**15 May you be blessed by the LORD,  
Who made heaven and earth.**

**16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S;  
But the earth He has given to the children of men.**

A. Trust Him and

1. He will bless you and
2. the psalmist will now show how He blesses.

B. He will be mindful of us,

1. something again that the gods of the Gentiles cannot do.
2. The Lord thinks of us.
  - a) How does it affect you when someone thinks about you?
  - b) That always humbles me and thrills me.

C. The psalmist, knowing that the Lord would be mindful of us,

1. declared that means He would bless
2. those whom he mentioned previously,
  - a) the house of Israel,
  - b) the house of Aaron, and
  - c) those who fear the Lord,
    - (1) whether they are small or great, and
    - (2) we are among those who fear the Lord.

D. He blesses us with continual increase.

1. He can do it, because
2. He made Heaven and Earth.
  - a) The gods of the nations cannot bless because
  - b) they have not made anything.

E. Our God is not a statue on the Earth, but

1. the heaven, even the heavens, He owns.
2. He has given the Earth to us.
  - a) Back on October 2 in our bulletin,
  - b) I had this in *Ruhl's Rules*,

**Time Magazine has a series of podcasts, located at Time.com/Podcasts, titled, It's Your Universe, exploring the universe. This reminded me of the ending of 2010: Odyssey Two (The sequel to 2001: A Space Odyssey), when the supernatural forces at work in the movie, consume Jupiter and send out this message: "ALL THESE WORLDS ARE YOURS EXCEPT EUROPA ATTEMPT NO LANDING THERE." The title of Time's series and the ending of that movie, struck me, because Psalm 115.16 says, "The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S; but the earth He has given to the children of men." It is as though the movie tells us the opposite of the message of Scripture.**

### **VIII. Psalm 115.17-18 | Therefore, Let Us Bless the Lord**

**17 The dead do not praise the LORD,  
Nor any who go down into silence.  
18 But we will bless the LORD  
From this time forth and forevermore.  
Praise the LORD!**

- A. Do you go to the cemetery and hear the dead praising God?
- B. No, and David used this to persuade God to let him live (Psa 88.10).
  1. David wanted to praise God on the Earth.
  2. Yet, if he died, people on Earth could not hear David praising the Lord.
- C. Remember how this Psalm began.
  1. The psalmist wanted God glorified.
  2. So the psalmist decided that was precisely what he would do, and
    - a) he speaks for us, saying,
      - (1) "we" will bless the Lord,



(2) starting from this moment and for the rest of our existence,

(a) our lives shall be about praising the Lord.

(b) Why sink to anything lower?

b) Then the psalmist does it, proclaiming, "Praise the Lord!"

### **Exhortation:**

#### **I. This Psalm does not speak much on what we are to do,**

A. except to praise the Lord.

B. Today, make the decision that the psalmist at the end, and

1. decided that from this time and

2. on into the future,

a) you will bless the Lord.

b) Perhaps you do not know how you shall praise Him daily, but

(1) if you make the decision to do it, and then

(2) to stick with it,

(a) you will find reasons for blessing Him, and

(b) you will find ways to bless Him.

#### **II. The Psalm compared our God to the dead and false gods of this world.**

A. He showed us what our God can do and

B. what the gods cannot do.

1. Remember those things as you seek to bless the Lord.

2. How can you bless Him today?