

Exposition on Psalm 93

by St. Augustine

The sermon explores the significance of the sixth day of creation, the Lord's reign, and the power of His testimonies, emphasizing the importance of faith and the spread of the Gospel.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:58

Topics: "Creation Theology", "Christology"

Description

St. Augustine preaches on the significance of the creation story in Genesis, highlighting the order and purpose behind God's work from the first to the sixth day, leading to the Sabbath rest symbolizing the ultimate rest in God after good works. He connects the creation of man in God's image on the sixth day to the coming of Jesus Christ in the sixth age for the renewal of humanity. Augustine delves into the Psalms, emphasizing how God's beauty and strength work together to establish the earth and how believers should imitate Christ in showing beauty to those pleased by good works and strength against detractors.

Transcript

1. ...It is entitled, The Song of praise of David himself, on the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was founded. Remembering then what God did through all those days, when He made and ordained all things, from the first up to the sixth day (for the seventh He sanctified, because He rested on that day after all the works, which He made very good), we find that He created on the sixth day (which day is here mentioned, in that he says, before the Sabbath) all animals on the earth; lastly, He on that very day created man in His own likeness and image. For these days were not without reason ordained in such order, but for that ages also were to run in a like course, before we rest in God. But then we rest if we do good works. As a type of this, it is written of God, God rested on the seventh day, when He had made all His works very good. For He was not wearied, so as to need rest, nor has He now left off to work, for our Lord Christ says openly, My Father works hitherto. John 5:17 For He says this unto the Jews, who thought carnally of God, and understood not that God works in quiet, and always works, and is always in quiet. We also, then, whom God willed then to figure in Himself, shall have rest after all good works....And because these good works are doomed to pass away, that sixth day also, when those very good works are perfected, has an evening; but in the Sabbath we find no evening, because our rest shall have no end: for evening is put for end. As therefore God made man in His own image on the sixth day: thus we find that our Lord Jesus Christ came into the sixth age, that man might be formed anew after the image of God. For the first period, as the first day, was from Adam until Noah: the second, as the second day, from Noah unto Abraham: the third, as the third day, from Abraham unto David: the fourth, as the fourth day, from David unto the removal to

Babylon: the fifth period, as the fifth day, from the removal to Babylon unto the preaching of John. The sixth day begins from the preaching of John, and lasts unto the end: and after the end of the sixth day, we reach our rest. The sixth day, therefore, is even now passing. And it is now the sixth day, see what the title has; On the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was founded. Let us now listen to the Psalm itself: let us enquire of it, how the earth was made, whether perhaps the earth was then made: and we do not read so in Genesis. When, therefore, was the earth founded? When, unless when that which has been but now read in the Apostle takes place: If, he says, you are steadfast, immovable. 1 Corinthians 15:58 When all who believe throughout all the earth are steadfast in faith, the earth is founded: then man is made in the image of God. That sixth day in Genesis signifies this....

2. The Lord reigns, He is clothed with beauty; the Lord is clothed with strength, and is girded Psalm 92:1. We see that He has clothed Himself with two things: beauty and strength. But why? That He might found the earth. So it follows, He has made the round world so sure, that it cannot be moved. Whence has He made it so sure? Because He has clothed Himself in beauty. He would not make it so sure, if He put on beauty only, and not strength also. Why therefore beauty, why strength? For He has said both. You know, brethren, that when our Lord had come in the flesh, of those to whom He preached the Gospel, He pleased some, and displeased others. For the tongues of the Jews were divided against one another: Some said, He is a good Man; others said, Nay, but He deceives the people. John 7:12 Some then spoke well, others detracted from Him, tore Him, bit and insulted Him. Towards those therefore whom He pleased, He put on beauty; towards those whom He displeased, He put on strength. Imitate then your Lord, that you may become His garment: be with beauty towards those whom your good works please: show your strength against detractors....

3. Perhaps we should enquire respecting this word also, why he said, He is girded. Girding signifies work: for every man then girds himself, when he is about to work. But wherefore did he use the word *præcinctus*, instead of *cinctus*? For he says in another Psalm, Gird You with Your sword upon Your thigh, O Thou most mighty: the people shall fall under You: using the word *accingere*, not *cingere*, nor *præcingere*: this word being applied to the act of attaching anything to the side by girding it. The sword of the Lord, wherewith He conquered the round world by killing iniquity, is the Spirit of God in the truth of the word of God. Wherefore is He said to bind His sword around His thigh? In another place, on another Psalm we have spoken in another manner of girding: but nevertheless, since it has been mentioned, it ought not to be passed over. What is the girding on of the sword around the thigh? He means the flesh by the thigh. For the Lord would not otherwise conquer the round world, unless the sword of truth came into the flesh. Why therefore is He here said to be girded in front (*præcinctus*)? He who girds himself before, places something before himself, wherewith he is girded; whence it is said, He girded Himself before with a towel, and began to wash the disciples' feet. Because He was humble when He girded Himself with a towel. He washed the feet of His own disciples. But all strength is in humility: because all pride is fragile: therefore when He was speaking of strength, he added, He is girded: that you may remember how your God was girded in humility, when He washed His disciples' feet. John 13:4-15 ...After He had washed their feet, again He sat down; He said unto them, You call me Lord and Master: and you say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; how ought ye also to do to one another's feet? If therefore strength is in humility, fear not the proud. The humble are like a rock: the rock seems to lie downwards: but nevertheless it is firm. What are the proud? Like smoke: although they are lofty, they vanish. We ought therefore to ascribe our Lord's being girded to His humility, according to the mention of the Gospel, that He was girded, that He might wash His disciples' feet.

4. ... For He has made the round world sure, which cannot be moved....What then is the round world, which cannot be moved? This He would not mention specially, if there were not also a round world that can be moved. There is a round world that shall not be moved. There is a round world that shall be moved. For the good who are steadfast in the faith are the round world: that no man may say, they are only in part of it; while the wicked who abide not in faith, when they have felt any tribulation, are throughout the whole world. There is therefore a round world movable: there is a world immovable: of which the Apostle speaks. Behold, the round world movable. I ask you, of whom speaks the Apostle in these words, Of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already: and overthrow the faith of some? 2 Timothy 2:17-19 Did these belong to the round world, that shall not be moved? But they were chaff: and as he says, they overthrow the faith of some....Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure; having his seal,-- what seal has it as its sure foundation?-- The Lord knows them that are His. This is the round world that shall not be moved; The Lord knows them that are His. And what seal has it? And let every one that names the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness. Let him depart from unrighteousness: for he cannot depart from the unrighteous, for the chaff is mixed with the wheat until it is fanned....

5. Your throne is established from thence, O Lord Psalm 92:2. What is, from thence? From that time. As if he said, What is the throne of God? Where does God sit? In His Saints. Do you wish to be the throne of God? Prepare a place in your heart where He may sit. What is the throne of God, except where God dwells? Where does God dwell, except in His temple? What is His temple? Is it surrounded with walls? Far from it. Perhaps this world is His temple, because it is very great, and a thing worthy to contain God. It contains not Him by whom it was made. And wherein is He contained? In the quiet soul, in the righteous soul: that is it that contains Him....He who said, Before Abraham was, I am: John 8:58 not before Abraham only, but before Adam: not only before Adam, but before all the angels, before heaven and earth; since all things were made through Him: he added, lest you, attending to the day of our Lord's nativity, might think He commenced from that time, Your throne is established, O God. But what God? You are from everlasting: for which he uses Greek version; that word being sometimes used for an age, sometimes for everlasting. Therefore, O Thou who seemest to be born from thence, You are from everlasting! But let not human birth be thought of, but Divine eternity. He began then from the time of His birth; He grew: Luke 2:40, 52 you have heard the Gospel. He chose disciples, He replenished them, His disciples began to preach. Perhaps this is what he speaks of in the following verse.

6. The floods lift up their voices Psalm 92:3. What are these floods, which have lift up their voices? We heard them not: neither when our Lord was born, did we hear rivers speak, nor when He was baptized, nor when He suffered; we heard not that rivers did speak. Read the Gospel, you find not that rivers spoke. It is not enough that they spoke: They have lift up their voice: they have not only spoken, but bravely, mightily, in a lofty voice. What are those rivers which have spoken?...The Spirit itself was a mighty river, whence many rivers were filled.

Of that river the Psalmist says in another passage, The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of God. Rivers then were made to flow from the belly of the disciples, when they received the Holy Spirit: themselves were rivers, when they had received that Holy Spirit. Whence did those rivers lift their voices? Wherefore did they lift them up? Because at first they feared. Peter was not yet a river, when at the question of the maid-servant he thrice denied Christ: I do not know the man.

Matthew 26:69-74 Here he lies through fear: he lifts not his voice as yet: he is not yet the river. But when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, the Jews sent for them, and enjoined them not to preach at all, nor to

teach in the name of Jesus....For when the Apostles had been dismissed from the council of the Jews, they came to their own friends, and told them what the priests and elders said unto them: but they on hearing lifted up their voices with one accord unto the Lord, and said, Lord, it is You who has made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; Acts 4:24 and the rest which floods lifting up their voices might say, Wonderful are the hangings of the sea Psalm 92:4.

For when the disciples had lifted up their voices unto Him, many believed, and many received the Holy Spirit, and many rivers instead of few began to lift up their voice. Hence there follows, from the voices of many waters, wonderful are the hangings of the sea; that is, the waves of the world. When Christ had begun to be preached by so powerful voices, the sea became enraged, persecutions began to thicken. When therefore the rivers had lift up their voice, from the voices of many waters, wonderful were the hangings of the sea.

To be hung aloft is to be lifted up; when the sea rages, the waves are hung as from above. Let the waves hang over as they choose; let the sea roar as it chooses; the hangings of the sea indeed are mighty, mighty are the threatenings, mighty the persecutions; but see what follows: but yet the Lord, who dwells on high, is mightier. Let therefore the sea restrain itself, and sometime become calmed; let peace be granted by Christians. The sea was disturbed, the vessel was tossed; the vessel is the Church: the sea, the world.

The Lord came, He walked over the sea, and calmed the waves. How did the Lord walk over the sea? Above the heads of those mighty foaming waves. Principalities and kings believed; they were subdued unto Christ. Let us not therefore be frightened; because the Lord, who dwells on high, is mightier.

7. Your testimonies, O Lord, are very surely believed Psalm 92:5. The Lord, who dwells on high, is mightier than the mighty overhangings of the sea. Your testimonies are very surely believed. Your testimonies, because He had said beforehand, These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation....He added, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. John 16:33 If then He says, I have overcome the world, cling unto Him who overcame the world, who overcame the sea. Rejoice in Him, because the Lord, who dwells on high, is mightier, and, Your testimonies are very surely believed. And what is the end of all these? Holiness becomes Your house, O Lord! Your house, the whole of Your house, not here and there: but the whole of Your house, throughout the whole world. Why throughout the whole of the round world? Because He has set aright the round world, which cannot be moved. The Lord's house will be strong: it will prevail throughout the whole world: many shall fall: but that house stands; many shall be disturbed, but that house shall not be moved. Holiness becomes Your house, O Lord! For a short time only? No. Unto length of days.

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