

Psalm 29 A PSALM OF DAVID.

*Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,*

**ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.**

*Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;*

**worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.**

*The voice of the LORD is over the waters;*

**the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters.**

*The voice of the LORD is powerful;*

**the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**

*The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;*

**the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.**

*He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.*

**The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.**

*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 all cry, “Glory!”**

*The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;*

**the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.**

*May the LORD give strength to his people!*

**May the LORD bless his people with peace!**

As mariners in the Indian Ocean know all too well, the age of piracy is not over. Twenty-first century captains no longer fear the likes of Captain Kidd or Blackbeard; they’re worried about Somali pirates bouncing across the waves in speedboats, racing to overtake slow-moving container ships many times their size.

Pirate assaults these days are all about speed, proximity and brutality. If the pirates can get within range, their automatic weapons and bloodthirsty ways are more than a match for most lightly armed or unarmed merchant-marine crews.

For the ship captains, it’s all about keeping the pirates far away.

Fortunately, many merchant-marine and cruise ships that ply the Indian Ocean are now equipped with an effective defensive weapon that does just that.

It’s called a sonic cannon — or, in U.S. Navy jargon, an LRAD.

***“Long Range Acoustic Device.”***

The Navy developed LRADs after the disastrous October 12, 2000, terrorist attack on the USS Cole, off the coast of Yemen. One of the first successful uses of the new technology was in 2005, when the crew of the civilian cruise ship Seabourn Spirit drove off an attack by Somali pirates.

Most of the cruise ship’s 115 passengers were still slumbering in their cabins when two boatloads of pirates raced up and started spraying the ship with

automatic-weapons fire. A few of the crew tried to swamp the pirates with the ship’s fire hoses, but it was the newly installed LRAD that truly saved the day.

The weapon resembles a small satellite dish. A crew member pointed it at the speedboats and hit the pirates with 150 decibels of concentrated noise.

The powerful blast of sound causes excruciating headaches and ear pain, even temporary loss of vision and other physiological problems. In the case of the Seabourn Spirit attack, it caused the pirates to turn tail and flee the scene, no doubt saving many innocent lives.

Just point the sonic cannon and **BOOM!** The pirates are driven off.

LRAD technology may belong to the 21st century, but the concept is a lot older — as old as the Bible. The author of Psalm 29 imagines something like an LRAD burst in describing the impact of the Lord’s voice:

- The voice of the Lord thunders! **BOOM!**
- The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars! **BOOM!**
- The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire! **BOOM!**
- The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness! **BOOM!**

*And all the people say*

**“Glory!”**

Just 2 weeks ago, we celebrated the birth of God’s living Word, Jesus Christ, into the world. The nativity, as we typically picture it, is nothing like an overwhelming wall of sound.

We think more:

***Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.***

***How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given!***

**The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

Bach pictured it a little differently. Consider the opening of his Christmas Oratorio.

**PLAY**

*Shout for joy, exult, rise up, glorify the day,*

**praise what today the highest has done!**

*Abandon hesitation, banish lamentation,*

**begin to sing with rejoicing and exaltation!**

*Serve the highest with glorious choirs,*

**let us honor the name of our ruler!**

John 1:14

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,*

**and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**BOOM!**

In Luke’s account of the nativity we are greeting not with silence but...

Luke 2:13–14

*... suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

**“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”**

God’s own army of angels, shouting their Creator’s praises!

**BOOM!**

This Sunday is often associated with the Baptism of Jesus.

Mark 1:9–11 The Baptism of Jesus

*In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven,*

**“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**

**BOOM!**

Today we are celebrating Epiphany! We remember the 1<sup>st</sup> Gentiles who worshipped the newborn Savior.

*And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.*

**When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.**

*And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother,*

**and they fell down and worshiped him.**

*Then, opening their treasures,*

**they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.**

**BOOM!**

### **Ephesians 3:4-12**

*When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ...*

**that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.**

**BOOM!**

*... to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things,*

**so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.**

*This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,*

**in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.**

**BOOM!**

Hebrews 1:1

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers...

### **Genesis 1:3**

*And God said,*

**“Let there be light,” and there was light.**

**BOOM!**

Genesis 6:5–8

*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said,*

**“I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land,  
man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens,  
for I am sorry that I have made them.”**

*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*

**BOOM!**

**Genesis 11:4–8**

*Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves!*

**And the LORD came down...**

**and there confused their language...**

**and dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth!**

**BOOM!**

**Genesis 12:1–3**

*Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.*

**And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great,**

*so that you will be a blessing...*

**and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

**BOOM!**

**Exodus 5:1**

*Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, thus, says the LORD, the God of Israel,*

**‘Let my people go!**

**BOOM!**

**Joshua 6:20**

*So, the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet,*

**the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat!**

**BOOM!**

**Hebrews 1:2-3**

*but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things,*

**through whom also he created the world.**

*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,*

**and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.**

*After making purification for sins,*

**he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high!**

**BOOM!**

Sure, sometimes God speaks to us in the silence, in the still, small voice, but don't forget that sometimes his word is like a sonic canon.

Sometimes he speaks and there is a sonic **BOOM!**

In that single word spoken from the cross,

**τετέλεσται,**

Jesus declares that everything necessary for our salvation has been accomplished!

- God is for us!
- God is with us!
- All who believe in him are his children for all eternity!

***Talk about a sonic boom! A seismic shift!***

Just as light sprang into being at His word, so the light of Jesus Christ brings light to the world so that all WHO BELIEVE IN HIM shall be saved.

Please join now in singing the great hymn from Bach's Christmas Oratorio!

**GLAD**