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The
Songs

8

PSALMS - The SONGS

Eight

The Name of the LORD is Majestic!

READ AND OBSERVE

Read through **Psalm 8** and mark every reference to the LORD, including pronouns and synonyms, with a red triangle.

Read through **Psalm 8** and mark every reference to the Name of the LORD with a yellow box filled in with light purple.

Read through **Psalm 8** and mark every reference to man with a purple circle.

Read through **Psalm 8** and mark every reference to adversaries, enemy, revengeful, etc., along with all pronouns and synonyms, using an orange capital "W".

Read through **Psalm 8** and mark every reference to the heavens, moon, or stars with a blue circle.

Read through **Psalm 8** and underline every reference to majesty or majestic in purple.

Read through **Psalm 8** and mark every contrast with a pink diagonal line.

Read through **Psalm 8** and divide the passage into the following segments. Mark and title these segments in your text using brackets in the margin.

1. LORD'S Glory above the heavens!
2. Man put over the works of God's hands
3. LORD'S Name is Majestic in all the earth!

READ AND ANSWER

Verses 1-2

Who is the psalmist speaking to?

Who does the psalmist say the LORD is?

Who is “our”?

What does the psalmist say about God’s Name—Yahweh (YHWH)?

What does the psalmist say that Yahweh (Who is the Lord, the God of Israel, and the God of heaven and earth) has done? (Hint: While it is true that God has displayed His splendor *in* His creation, the earth and the heavens, that is not what the psalmist is saying here. What does David say that God *has* done?)

Just in case you missed it in the previous question, does it say “in” the heavens or “above” the heavens?



Psalm 8:1

***O Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is Your Name in all the earth,
Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!***

**When I asked people what this verse was actually saying,
their answers were what I expected—
that God’s majesty is displayed in the heavens themselves.
Their interpretation actually came from Psalm 19—a different Psalm altogether.**

Psalm 19:1

***The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.***

**Although the heavens do declare the Glory of God,
it is not what this verse is saying—
this verse is saying much more than that...**

A familiar passage can sometimes become too commonplace for us to really listen to it—and therefore we risk really hearing what God is saying in it. It can even become cliché—at which point we may lose the meaning altogether.

**So, in the interest of listening to our God...
and with the purpose of hearing Him...
let's unpack Psalm 8:1 a little...**

**The Hebrew word for “LORD” is *Yahweh (YHWH)*.
It is God's memorial name and means self-existent or eternal.**

**The Hebrew word for “Lord” is *Adonay*
and is also a proper name for God.
It comes from an unused root meaning to rule.
It has the idea of a sovereign controller.**

**The Hebrew word for “majestic” is *addir*
and means noble, wide or generally large.
Figuratively it means powerful.**

**The Hebrew word for “name” is *shem*
and means name.
It is from a primitive word that had the idea of a definite or conspicuous position;
as in a mark or memorial of individuality.
It implies honor, authority, or character.**

**The Hebrew word for “earth” is *eretz*
and means firm.
It refers to the land of the earth itself; the earth in general.**

**The Hebrew word for “displayed” is *natan*
and means to give, put, or set.
It has the idea of appointing, ascribing, or assigning.**

**The Hebrew word for “splendor” is *hod*
and means grandeur or glory.
It has the idea of an imposing form or appearance.**

**The Hebrew word for “above” is *al*
and means upon, over, top, or highest.**

**The Hebrew word for “heavens” is *shamayim*
and means heavens.
It comes from an unused root that means lofty.**

Let's think through these definitions for a moment
in order to more clearly understand the awesome message this verse contains.

First of all,
David addresses God by name as LORD because he is referring to all that God is.
The Lord is self-existent and eternal.
He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
He is the God of the nation of Israel.
God gave this name to His people as a memorial name for all generations.
Israel could always call their God—YHWH.
YHWH is the God Who has made a Covenant with Israel—
He is their God and they are His people.

David addresses God as *his* Lord to show his allegiance to Him,
and his pride in Him...
He acknowledges Yahweh as Ruler—his Ruler and the Controller of all that is.
He confesses that Yahweh is the Sovereign Lord of all.

After addressing His God, he begins to exalt the person of Yahweh
and praise His Name.
David declares that the name of Yahweh is a mark of His individuality.
David expounds upon the honor, authority, character, and position
that the Owner of this Name embodies.

David proudly exclaims that his God's "personhood" is majestic—
David's God is noble, great, and powerful.
So great, wide, and large is His identity
that there is nothing on the earth that can compare—
in fact, the nobility of the earth itself
cannot begin to stand in the presence of David's God.

Are you beginning to catch the import of David's praise?
Let's continue...

David doesn't mince his words when he describes His awesome Lord.
He proclaims that his Lord's Glory is not to be taken lightly,
nor is it noticed by accident.
David announces that YHWH, Himself,
has appointed or assigned His Glory to be seen by His creation.

God, Himself, has put a value on His Being, His Glory and Grandeur—
He is weighty in value, far above all else,
and He demands that His creation realize it.
He has set His Glory in front of His creation—
not only the ability to be aware of His magnificence,
but He has put Himself "in their face", so to speak—

they cannot deny His resplendence.

God has ascribed His Glory as that which is the highest of the high;
it is above and over the top of any other supposed glory—
even that which humans consider to be lofty and high—
the heavens themselves.

So while it is true (and wonderful)
that the heavens declare the Glory of God (Psalm 19:1),
Psalm 8:1 is declaring that the Glory of God (which *is* declared in the heavens)
is *above* the glory of the heavens themselves!

Cool, huh!

What has God established?



The Hebrew word for “establish” is *yasad*
and means to set, to lay a foundation.

The Hebrew word for “strength” is *ooz*
and means to be strong, to strengthen, to save.

Why has God established strength, or prepared praise, for Himself?

Who is affected?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What will the enemy and the revengeful do when they hear the powerful praise for God coming from the weak things of this world?



The Hebrew word for “adversaries” is *tzarar*
and means to be hostile.
It comes from a primitive root that means to cramp as packed up bundle.
It carries the idea to besiege, bind up, bring distress, or put in a strait.

The Hebrew word for “enemy” is *ayav*
and means hostile or hate.

The Hebrew word for “revengeful” is *naqam*
and means to take vengeance, revenge, or avenge.

The Hebrew word for “cease” is *shavat*
and means to cease, to rest, to desist.

It seems the foundation of praise that God has powerfully prepared for Himself
(from the mouth of infants and nursing babes)
will be enough to do much more than silence those in opposition to Him.
God’s adversaries, enemies, those who seek revenge against Him—
will discontinue trying to besiege the kingdom of God...
will be forced to lay down their hostilities...
will cease and desist their vengeance against Him.

Matthew 21:15-16
*But when the chief priests and the scribes
saw the wonderful things that He had done,
and the children who were shouting in the temple,
“Hosanna to the Son of David,”
they became indignant and said to Him,
“Do You hear what these children are saying?”
And Jesus said to them,
“Yes; have you never read,
‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies
You have prepared praise for Yourself?’”*

1 Corinthians 1:27
*...but God has chosen the foolish things of the world
to shame the wise,
and God has chosen the weak things of the world
to shame the things which are strong...*

Luke 19:40
*But Jesus answered,
“I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!”*

Verses 3-8

Who is speaking in **verse 3**?

What does David consider?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Point of Depth

The Hebrew word for “consider” is *raah* and means to see, look at, or inspect.

What does it mean when it says that the LORD has ordained the heavens?



Point of Depth

The Hebrew word for “ordained” is *kun* and means to be erect, to set up, to be firm or fixed, to establish.

Besides God’s heavens, the work of His fingers, the moon and the stars, what else (or who else) does David seem to have considered?

Why is David in awestruck wonder at the thought that the LORD would “take thought of man”?



Point of Depth

The Hebrew word for “take thought” is *zakhar*

and means to remember, think about, pay attention to.

Why does David marvel at the thought that the LORD would care for man?



The Hebrew word for “care” is *paqad*
and means to visit.

By analogy this primitive root has the idea of overseeing or taking care of.

Hebrews 2:6

*But one has testified somewhere, saying,
“What is man, that You remember him?
Or the son of man, that you are concerned about him?”*

The equivalent word for “visit” in Greek is *episkeptomai*,
which means to inspect, to look carefully (full of care) and consider,
to go to see with concern, and to take care of.

That’s what a *real* doctor’s visit should be—
a time when the doctor carefully takes care of the patient.

And that is exactly what David is saying that the LORD does for man—
He takes care of us.

It doesn’t compute that out of God’s great and awesome creation He would care especially for man, who seems like nothing in comparison, and yet He does. What special hierarchal position has God bestowed on man?



The Hebrew word for “made lower” is *chaser*
and means to lack, to be found wanting.

The Hebrew word for “little” is *maat*
and means to pare off, little, few.

The Hebrew word for “God” is *elohim*.
It is the plural form of *eloahh* meaning Deity or God.

It seems that David’s aim is to show just how high (although undeservedly)

the LORD has raised the position of man in His creation.
David states the LORD has positioned man just a little (in time or place)
bit lower than God, Himself.

We must not take this to mean that man is actually worthy of such a position—
because he is not.

David is saying much more about the LORD than he is about man.
It is the LORD'S magnanimous goodness toward man which is in view,
(and only serves to raise the LORD to new heights of worship and honor)
not man's weightiness or worth.

The point of the Psalm is the majesty of the LORD, not the royalty of man.

David ends where he began,
but with a new understanding of the majesty of the LORD.
The LORD has undeservedly and graciously
bestowed glory upon one single unit of His creation—man.
David acknowledges that God's lavish and awesome action toward man
makes the LORD even more worthy of the highest of all glory.

For this...
And to Him...
One can only give praise...



I want to lightly address something that could cause a little confusion
if you are not careful in your observation of this text.
It has to do with the translation of the word *elohim*, the plural form of *eloahh*,
which means God or Deity.
In a general sense (rare) this word can be translated as angels,
or supernatural beings.
The King James Version uses the Septuagint translation in this area.

In context, Psalm 8 seems to refer to the LORD.
However, we can rest assured that the Psalmist's point
(God, from His glorious position, has raised man to a special level of dignity)
is well taken either way.

What has God crowned man with?

1.

2.

What authority has God given to man?

What does man rule over?

What has God put under man's feet?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Is this still true today?



Genesis 1:26-28

***Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;
and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky***

*and over the cattle and over all the earth,
and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.
God blessed them; and God said to them,
“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it;
and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky
and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*



Point of Depth

Has the world gone green?
Or has it just gone crazy?

People try to limit their “footprint” on the earth,
save every (you fill in the blank) animal they can think of,
and lobby against consuming meat for all the wrong reasons.

I am always saddened when any supposed Christian
gets involved in one of these campaigns
and considers it a godly thing to do.

Why?
Because the key component of these “save the world” programs
is simple, yet hideous, idolatry.
The creation is worshiped rather than the Creator.

People in India worship cows.
So do Americans, just in different ways.
Turtles, snakes, eagles, fish, and frogs all usurp the position of man in our courts.
America refuses to take advantage of oil reserves
that God has placed in the earth for us to use
because we believe we need to keep “the natural wildlife” happy
in its “natural habitat”.

But God has set *us* over *them* and not *them* over *us*.
Animals are our servants, we are not theirs.

News flash—there is no “Mother Earth”.
“She” doesn’t exist.

News flash—God doesn’t need our help to sustain His planet.
He created it.
He sustains it.

He will destroy it in His timing.

In the meantime, God has set man as ruler over the earth and everything in it.
We are not to concern ourselves with their good *so as to surpass our good*.
When we do that, we are actually surpassing the good of the Kingdom of God!

Why?

Because we are to use God's creation to further His Kingdom.

Man's responsibility over the earth and everything in it
is not for the purpose of sustaining all things—that is God's job.
Our responsibility is to use the things of the earth—all things—
to further His Kingdom.

And when we do that, we will bring Him Glory!

Verse 9

How does David, once again, address God?

What blessing and praise does David give to God?

READ AND REASON

Just in case you missed it,
let me back up and reason through **Psalm 8** a little bit.

Verse 1 crystalizes that God's glory is far above (greater than) the heavens.
Verse 2 and **verse 3** both recognize how lofty the heavens, themselves, are.

So... the glory of the heavens is great, but God's glory is greater.
Got it.

Now, in **verse 4**, David is considering man's place in God's creation.
He logically concludes that man's place is at the bottom of the hierarchy—especially
after considering the heavens, (the moon and the stars).

David finds his thoughts falling on mankind and he is incredulous.

Surely man does not have the same dignity as the heavens?
And most certainly, man is not as important as the God Who made them.

So, how is it that this great God,

(Who is above the heavens—which are above man)
should actually give His *attention* to man?

And beyond that, David wonders... how is it that this great God,
(Who is above the heavens—which are above man)
should actually *care* for man?

Do you see the logical hierarchy of glory David has set up in his mind?

God is on top.
Heavens are below God.
Man is below heavens.

Pay special attention to this order because that is what **Psalm 8** is all about.

Verse 5 tells us this marvelous, amazing God has done something
that is beyond the eye of David's understanding
(and ours too, if we would look at things the way David did).
God has actually taken man from the bottom of the pile and lifted him up above the
heavens and put him just a little lower than God, Himself.

It goes from “God—heavens—man—all things” to “God—man—heavens—all things”.

God's “illogical” order of glory (where He crowns man with undeserved glory and honor)
looks like this:

God is on top.
Man is just a little below God.
Man is over the works of God's hands—
including the heavens.
All things are under man's feet...
Sheep,
oxen,
beasts of the field,
birds of the heavens,
fish of the sea,
whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

So... the glory of the heavens is great, but God's glory is greater.
Got it.

And... God has graciously bestowed undeserved glory and honor to man.
Got it.

Therefore... because of the LORD'S benevolence to care for man in his lowly state,
God is revealed as even more majestic that we could have imagined.

Oh... now I get it!

Segment by Segment

**Try titling these segments yourself.
Ask God to help you.**

Verses 1-2

Verses 3-8

Verse 9

Purpose of Psalm 8

**Try to identify the purpose of Psalm 8.
The purpose simply states “why the Psalmist wrote the Psalm”.**

Theme of Psalm 8

**Try giving Psalm 8 a title by identifying its theme.
The theme simply states “what the Psalm is about”.**
