

PSALM 8

Two questions to ask yourself

Setting

- **Musical Setting:** Gittith (cf. Ps. 81 & 84)/Instrument (or singer?) from Philistine city of Gath?/Instrument designed like a press (thumb harp?) or Song sung while pressing wine or at harvest season/Feast of Booths.
- **Historical Setting:** Initially, David as a shepherd boy camping out at night? (References to creation and to Christ make much bigger setting)

Are you...

- Bored?
- Weak?
- In a rut?
- Lonely?
- Out of sorts?

Then Psalm 8 is for you!

**v.1 Yahweh our Master,
how magnificent is Your name within all the earth?
To that [extent], dispense majesty over the heavens!**

- “Our Master/Lord”
- **First question:** How majestic/wide/great/expansive/excellent/magnificent?
- “Your name” = Yahweh = God’s character and reputation
- Lit. “Give”/set/displayed – Imperative in Hebrew.
- Merismus: earth + heavens = everywhere!

C. H. Spurgeon on Psalm 8

'Tis true the Lord hath fairly writ His name,
And set His seal upon creation's brow.
But as the skilful potter much excels
The vessel which he fashions on the wheel,
E'en so, but in proportion greater far,
Jehovah's self transcends His noblest works.
Earth's ponderous wheels would break, her axles snap,
If freighted with the load of Deity.
Space is too narrow for the Eternal's rest,
And time too short a footstool for His throne.
E'en avalanches and thunder lack a voice,
To utter the full volume of His praise.

2. From lips of children and nursing infants You founded strength because of Your adversaries to put to rest enemy and avenger.

- Children/babies/infants (all ages of them?) = weakness
- You founded/established/ordained (90% = building house/city) strength (praise^{Greek}).
- Who is the adversary/enemy/foe/avenger? Unbelieving Jews! (Psalm 74:4 & 23; Isa 1:24, Mt. 21:16)
- Cf. "Faith as a little child" (Mt. 11:25-26); "Faith is the victory" (1 John 5:4-5)

1 Corinthians 1

26. For y'all see your calling, brothers, that not many were wise according to the flesh, not many were powerful, not many were upper-class. 27. But it was the stupid ones of the world God chose for Himself in order that He might put down the strength of the wise men, and it was the weak ones of the world God chose for Himself in order that He might put down the strength of the strong, 28. and the ones without class of the world and the ones that have been despised God chose for Himself and the ones who do not exist in order that He might put out of commission the ones that do exist, 29. so that all flesh might not boast before the face of God. 30. Now it is from Him that you have existence in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God and also righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

**3. For I will see/consider/look at Your heavens
made by Your fingers – moon and stars which
You established/set in place/ordained,**

- Night-time?

4. What is a man? For you remember him! And a son of a man? For You give him personal responsibility!

- **Second Question:** *What is Enowsh* = man as a frail mortal = son of man (no def. articles in Hebrew; no capitals in English)
- **Zacar** = remember/take thought/mindful
 - Noah (Gen 8:1)
 - Abraham & Lot (Gen 19:29)
 - Rachel in her barrenness (Gen 30:22)
 - Israel as slaves in Egypt (Ex. 2:24)
 - Israel in wilderness (Deut. 9:27)
 - Samson in Philistine temple (Judges 16:28)
 - Hannah in barrenness (1 Sam. 1:11-19)
 - King Hezekiah in sickness (2 Kings 20:3)
 - Nehemiah under Samaritan oppression (5:19)
 - Job (4:7, 7:7, 14:13), etc.

4. What is a man? For you remember him! And a son of a man? For You give him personal responsibility!

- **Paqad** = visit/care/personally hold accountable
 - God gave a child to Abraham & Sarah (Gen 21:1)
 - Potiphar gave Joseph a job (Gen. 39:4-5; 40:4)
 - God gave promised land (Gen. 50:24-25)
 - Accountability re: Idolatry (Ex. 20:5)
 - Census of fighting men (Ex. 30:12-13, Num. 1-4)
 - Financial deposit (Lev. 6:4)
 - Appointment of army commanders (Deut. 20:9)
 - God gave food after famine (Ruth 1:6)
 - God gave child to Hannah (1 Sam. 2:21)
 - God arises to judge and I answer (Job 31:14)

4. What is a man? For you remember him! And a son of a man? For You give him personal responsibility!

- **Second Question:** *What is Enowsh* = man as a frail mortal = son of man (no def. articles in Hebrew; no capitals in English)
- **Zacar** = remember/take thought/mindful – the first step in salvation
- **Paqad** = visit/care/personally hold accountable/show up to give a responsibility
- QUOTED From: Job 7:17 "What is man that You magnify him, And that You are concerned about him,¹⁸ That You examine him every morning And try him every moment?"

5. And You make him a little lower than God And encircle him with glory and majesty.

- **Satan's lie:** "You will be like God" (Gen. 3:5)
God's truth: "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23)
- **Lower than *Elohim*:** lit. "high ones" – also Hebrew for "God." Greek translations = "angels" (LXX, Heb. 2:8)
- **"glory & honor"** – Originally God's possession (v.1), but shared with man created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27, Isa. 35:2, Ps. 145:5&12, Ps. 21:5)
- **We have dominion over** animals (man is wiser - Job.35:11 and can tame any animal Jas. 3:7) and over angels (judging them - 1 Cor 6:3; and served by them - Heb. 1:14)

6. You cause him to rule in relation to what was made by Your hands; You put everything under his feet:

- Cf. “works of Your fingers” (v.3) – heaven, moon, stars also under our dominion! (Rev. 12:1)
- **Initially of Adam:** Gen. 1:26-30 (Dominion mandate), but He failed.
- **Then of David** (all his enemies under his feet – 1 Ki. 5:3; Ps. 18:38)
- **Then Jesus succeeded** (Mal. 4:3; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 2:8; Eph 1:22 – cf. Phil 2 “emptied Himself... every knee will bow”)
- **Then comes our turn!** (“Satan will soon be crushed under your feet” Rom. 16:20)

7. Sheep and oxen – all of them, And also beasts of the fields, 8. Game-birds of the heavens, and fishes of the sea passing over sea-paths.

- Three “heavens” in Hebrew:
 1. Sky (v.8)
 2. Space (v.3)
 3. Spiritual abode of God (v.1, 2 Cor. 12:2)
- Dominion = fishing, hunting, wildlife management, and space exploration! This is God’s calling on your life as ruler over the work of His hand.

9. Yahweh our Master, how magnificent is Your name within all the earth?

- "...the ground for praising Yahweh has shifted from the first verse to the last... our praise began by affirming the magnificence of the Creator. At the end, we stand in awe at the unexpected grace that has elevated His human word to unimaginable heights of glory..." GHW
- "We will never understand human beings unless we see them as God's creatures and recognize that they have special responsibilities to their Creator... it is... humanity's special privilege and duty to look upward... to God... rather than downward to the beasts. The result is that they become increasingly like God rather than increasingly beast-like..." JMB

Cure for the "summer blues"

- Lonely?
 - Out of sorts?
 - In a rut?
 - Bored?
 - Weak?
1. Psalm 8 SOLUTION: Praise "our Lord"! ASK "How magnificent IS His name in the earth?"
 2. Psalm 8 SOLUTION: Rule with Jesus! ASK "What is man?"

Credits

- Bible translation of Psalm 8 by Nate Wilson
- Commentary Bibliography
 - Augustine: Expositions on the Book of Psalms By Saint Augustin, Bishop of Hippo, Edited, with brief annotations, and condensed from the six volumes of the oxford translation By A. Cleveland Coxe, D.D., 1888
 - Boice: Psalms, Vol. 1 by James Montgomery Boice, 1994, Baker Book House
 - Cohen: The Soncino Books of the Bible, vol. 9, The Psalms, by The Rev. Dr. A. Cohan, M.A, Ph.D, D.H.L, Revised by Rabbi E. Oratz, 1992
 - Delitzsch: Commentary on the Psalms by Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890)
 - GHW: The NIV Application Commentary: Psalms- Vol. 1, ©2002 by Gerald H Wilson.
 - Henry: Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible (1662 - 1714)
 - JFB: A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, 1871.
 - Spurgeon: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 1885.
 - Stott: The Canticles and Selected Psalms, John R.W. Stott, 1966 Hodder & Stoughton