

Psalm 8, The Majestic LORD delegated earth dominion to mankind

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Theme

The LORD shows his majesty and power in the heavens, in humanity, and in his plan for mankind to rule his earth creation.

Summary

The majestic LORD has shown his splendor in the heavens and has shown his strength even through the words of children which confound the LORD's enemies (Psalm 8.1-2). When the psalmist thinks about the greatness of the Lord he marvels about the insignificance of man whom the LORD created in his own image and gave ruling dominion over all the earth (Psalm 8.3-8). Truly the LORD is majestic in all the earth (Psalm 8.9).

Outline

Psalm 8.1-2. The LORD displayed his splendor in the heavens and through humanity—even the weakest and most vulnerable child.

Psalm 8.3-8. The LORD created humanity in his own image and gave him dominion over all the earth.

Psalm 8.9. Truly the LORD is majestic in all the earth.

Verse summary

1. **Psalm 8.1.** The LORD (yahweh) our Lord (adonay) is majestic (אָדִיר *addir* Strong's 117, mighty splendid, majestic of people and things. See Isaiah 33.1). The name of God stands for and reveals his character (see Psalm 20.7). He is majestic in all the earth. His majesty is available for all to see. The verb *displayed* in the Hebrew is the imperative of נָתַן *nathan*, Strong's 5414, to give, to put, to set). Most believe the imperative here is a corruption for the perfect. The translations recognize this. The LXX has ἐπαύω, to lift up. The meaning is that the LORD has displayed or put his majesty and greatness above or upon the heavens for all to see. He is the one and only incomparable God and creator. Recall God's attributes, nature, essence. See 2 Chron 6.18; Psalm 19.1-6; 50.1-6.
2. **Psalm 8.2.** The LORD uses even infants and nursing babies, the weak and dependent people, to hinder, by what they say, the enemies of the LORD. This may be by some expression of faith that God is stronger and is in charge, a word of praise for God, a cry for help, or a statement that God controls all his enemies. Even though enemies operate in God's creation, God works through the weak. Paul said something similar in 1 Corinthians 1.27. The point is that our majestic God can work through the weak and helpless to accomplish his plan—including confusing and confounding his enemies. See Matthew 11.25; 21.15-16; Luke 10.21.
3. **Psalm 8.3-4.** When the psalmist looks up at the moon and stars which God has created and then considers himself and all people he is amazed that God has made man his special creation.
 - 3.1. **Psalm 8.3.** The verb consider (רָאָה *raah*, to see, perceive, look at, Strong's 7200) is the word to see something. The psalmist just looks up and is amazed at what God put in place. The word ordained (כִּוֵּן *kun* Strong's 3559), brings up the idea of strongly established, fixed in place. God placed the planets in their respective positions and orbits. Colossians 1.15-17 speak of Jesus Christ (often Yahweh LORD of the Old

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Testament) as the creator and the one who holds together all things (συνίστημι sunistemi, perfect active indicative 3rd singular; to bring into existence in a n organized manner, to cohere, gather together).

- 3.2. **Psalm 8.4.** The psalmist now asks in wonder about the smallness, the insignificance of man when compared to the vast universe. We should compare Psalm 144.3-4 where the same Hebrew words for man are used. Humanity is the subject. God thinks about and pays special attention to people. Man (אָנוּשׁ e'enos generic man, human being, Isaiah 24.6, Strong's 582) and son of man (אָדָם adam for man, people Deuteronomy 8.3, Strong's 120). "Take thought of" is the verb זָכַר zakar to remember, Strong's 2142, and "care for" is the verb פָּקַד paqad, to visit, appoint, pay attention to, Strong's 6485.
4. **Psalm 8.5-6.** This is God's purpose for mankind in relation to earth creation. The LORD of the previous verses is the subject. Mankind is the object of the LORD'S action. The four acts are 1. You made him; 2. You crown him, 3. You make him rule, 4. You put all things under his feet. Here we have clearly said that people have been delegated the privilege and responsibility to rule, govern, and care for God's creation. Creation is for mankind's benefit. We are king's of the earth. Contrary to pagan thought, the earth and all creation are subject to man. The earth is not a goddess. The earth does not need to be left in pristine state. It is to be cared for and used.
 - 4.1. Lower than God. Some interpret elohim as angels (LXX), though the Psalm alludes to Genesis 1.26-28, and therefore God seems the best translation. People are in God's image, though less than divine. This psalm does indicate that humans are higher than all other creation and the only creation in God's image. Hebrews 2.5-10 uses wording from this Psalm, but there the point is that Jesus is superior to angels, and for that the author takes the LXX translation of Psalm 8.6. Hebrews 2.5-10 teach that Jesus was made lower than angels, so that he might die for mankind's sins. Angels do not die (Luke 20.36).
 - 4.2. The LORD crowns mankind with glory and honor means that as the creation in God's image but less than God people have dignity, importance, and purpose. Because we are in God's image we reflect his glory and honor. See Psalm 19.1 and Psalm 96. Compare Genesis 1.26-28.
 - 4.3. You make him rule. This emphasizes the mastery and dominion that God gave mankind over his creation (Genesis 1.28). Rule (מָשַׁל mashal, to rule, have dominion, reign, govern, hiphil imperfect 2ms plus 3ms suffix, Strong's 4010) demonstrates mankind's authority and responsibility. The works of his hands refer to all creation.
 - 4.4. You have put all things under his feet summarizes the idea of dominion. The verb is the common word שָׁיַת shith, to put, place, appoint, Strong's 7896. See Genesis 9.1-3.
5. **Psalm 8.7-8.** Animals, birds, and sea creatures have all been placed under man's dominion.
6. **Psalm 8.9** Conclusion. The LORD is the one and only incomparable God and creator. Creation demonstrates this. We, along with the Psalmist, look at God's creation with its glory, order, and purpose, and man's dominion over creation, and exclaim that God, Yahweh Adonay, is majestic, honorable, and to be praised. See Psalm 104.24; Deut 33.26; Psa 145-150.

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So what for us?

1. The LORD displays his splendor through his fine tuned and wondrous universe. He has intelligence and power beyond us and our comprehension.
2. Even young and weak children have the ability through the LORD to affect God's enemies. God's word spoken by people has God's power. This then should encourage believers to learn and communicate the gospel and Bible doctrine to others.
3. Each individual person, is created in God's image. We are different from animals and all creation. We are God's highest creation. We have God consciousness built into us. We have a conscience, we can reason, we can make good and bad choices, and we can have sympathy, empathy, and enjoyment with people and ideas. Human life is sacred.
4. Mankind has been given authority, power, and dominion over God's creation, but if people do not recognize and praise God above all else, they will pervert this privilege and authority into pagan views of God's creation which is idolatry. The present political platform of environmentalism and climate change is a perversion of the dominion responsibility because it seeks to place God's lower creation (which they call nature) on equal or higher status than people, because it seeks to promote a cultural, political, religious, and economic agenda that leaves God out, because it destroys human freedoms and prosperity, and because it tyrannizes people.
5. Creation is for man's benefit, learning, and enjoyment. It teaches about God and glorifies God. Mankind's responsibility as God's steward is to use, benefit from, enjoy, and care for God's creation, yet never to worship the creation.