

TEXT SERMONS – SERIES: PSALM SERMONS

THE CREATOR AND HIS CREATION

PSALM 8

This Psalm has been called “The Psalm of The Astronomer.” However, it begins and ends with the words, “how majestic is Your name in all the earth!” God is portrayed as Creator both of the heavens and the earth. Gazing at the clear night sky dotted with stars does much to encourage contemplation of God’s handiwork above and how we, as humans below, fit into God’s scheme of things.

As we concentrate on this Psalm, let us contemplate the God Whom the psalmist sets forth in the Psalm. Let us consider first, his Praise Of The Creator and, secondly, his Pondering Of The Creation.

PRAISING THE CREATOR

“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens.”

The Psalm begins with an *exclamation* and then proceeds to an *explanation*. It is interesting that he begins with the name of God and then elaborates upon the God of the name. The exclamation of the Psalmist is predicated upon the excellencies of the Lord.

A. THE LORD’S MAJESTY (v. 1)

“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens.”

God’s Majestic Name.

“O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth!”

His is the name of names above all names of earth: “How majestic is Your name in all the earth!” In the Hebrew it is quite literally, “*O Jehovah our Lord!*” He addresses God, using two different names: “*O LORD*” that is, “Jehovah” – the eternal, self-existing One; and “*Lord*” that is, “Sovereign, Owner, Controller and Master.”

One’s name is more than just a designation; it represents one’s character, one’s attributes, and, indeed, one’s entire being. When applied to an individual it identifies a specific, unique, identifiable personality. When used in reference to God, it denotes worth, honor, power and authority. There are many names for God in the scriptures.

David knows God by name. He calls Him “*O Jehovah our Lord.*” He has a personal relationship with Him. He says, “*our Lord.*” Both his life and his lips testify that he not only knows about God, but that He knows God personally. The endearing terms that he uses throughout the Psalms unmistakably communicate his knowledge of and love for God.

He extols His name repeatedly in the Psalms:

- “He leads me for His name’s sake” – Ps. 23:3

- “Remember His name” – Ps. 30:4
- “Exalt His name” – Ps.34:3
- “Praise Your name” – Ps. 54:6
- “I will glorify Your name” – Ps. 86:12

When we come to the New Testament we also read of the exalted name of Christ:

- “Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit” - Matt.28:19
- “The demons are subject to us in your name” – Luke 10:17
- “Hallowed be your name” – Luke 11:2
- “Ask in my name” – John 14:13
- “Neither is there salvation in any other name” – Acts 4:1
- “A name that is above every name” – Phil 2:9

God’s name is to be respected and revered. We are not to blaspheme that holy name. “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.” (Ex. 20:7)

God’s Majestic Nature.

“Who have set Your glory above the heavens!”

God’s nature is transcendent, sovereign and glorious. What we see in His creation is but a reflection of His true glory. David was overwhelmed by the grandeur of the universe *and* the greatness of the God Who created it. As he viewed the heavens his mind rightly focused upon God and he said, *“Who have set Your glory above the heavens!”* He had a great appreciation for the glories of the heavens but he had an even greater appreciation for the glory of God!

As a teen-ager David was often out tending his sheep at night and viewed the heavens in all their splendor. He never lost the wonder of the vastness of the universe. I can picture him with his sheep when he was younger, under the stars outside of Bethlehem, gazing up at the star-studded sky.

He knew that as great as the universe is, God is greater. We must not make the mistake that some have made who worship the creation rather than the Creator! Paul wrote about such: “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.” (Romans 1:25)

David was awestricken by the wonder of creation, but he did not worship it. His attention was focused upon the greatness of the Creator. Similar testimonies are recorded of those who did not lose sight of the One Whose handiwork they admired:

- Moses said, *“Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it.”* (Deut. 10:4)
- Solomon said, *“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!”* (I Kings 8:27)
- Again Solomon said, *“But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him?”* (II Chron. 2:6)

- Yet again Solomon said, *"But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!"* (II Chron. 6:18)
- Nehemiah said, *"You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You."* (Neh. 9:6)
- A psalm writer said, *"The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; But the earth He has given to the children of men. His glory exceeds the glory of the starry heavens; above and beyond the stars he sits on His throne ruling over all."* (Psalm 115:16)

I was not city-born. I was born in the country – out in the open spaces where there were farms and fields and forests. Unfortunately, when we move to the city we forfeit the starry sights because of the city lights. The artificial lights obscure the natural light from millions of stars.

One of my favorite things when I was a boy, was to gaze at the night sky on a clear night watching for "shooting stars." I was fascinated by astronomy. I often wondered, "How great must be the God Who could create all that and keep all those orbiting spheres from bumping into each other!" I was enthralled by the vastness of the cosmos – something we lose as we grow older if we do not keep gazing upward!

David was awed by God. We too love, revere, and fear Him, but are we awed by Him? Have you lost the wonder? Are you still fascinated by Him? David was fascinated with his Lord. He hadn't outgrown his holy, healthy and exuberant excitement of the God Who only does wondrous things! He said, "For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God." (Psalm 86:10) David's admiration of God was never dimmed by earthly lights.

An English merchant and the renowned poet Robert Blake were standing watching the sun come up out of the sea. The bright yellow disc of the sun emerged above the horizon painting the sky with a thousand colors. Said the merchant, "Ah! That reminds me of gold!" Blake answered, "I see the glory of God! And I hear a multitude of the heavenly hosts saying, "The whole earth is full of His glory!" What do you see?

B. THE LORD'S MIGHT. (v. 2)

"Out of the mouth of babies and infants, You have established strength because of Your foes to still the enemy and the avenger."

Even children and infants represent the strength of God. He is so mighty that He can use the weakness of children to defeat His enemies. He has ordained that the weak shall confound the strong: "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." (1 Cor. 1:27)

From the greatness of creation to the smallness of a child; from the heavens above to the earth below we see the marvels of God's creative genius. From infinity to an infant we see the majesty of God; we see His greatness and our smallness; the might of God and the minuteness of humans.

Children know very little about theology, but their simple faith pleases the Lord. I have, for many years, observed the faith of children. Some of them talked about God with such complete trust that they were a challenge to me. I have heard some of them pray with such confidence that hardened sinners were moved.

I remember speaking in a church on the eternal lostness of unrepentant sinners, where a Mother and her two adolescent daughters were present. The father was hardened against God and was not present in the service. When the mother and daughters went home that evening, the daughters were so burdened for their father that they tearfully repeated the message to him. He was already in bed for the night but God spoke to him in such powerful way that he got out of bed, knelt at the bedside and received Christ as his Savior. I later heard from him how he became convicted by his young children's appeals for him to receive their Savior as his Savior.

Jesus quoted from this Psalm when He said, "Have you never read, '*Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise*'?" (Matt. 21:16)

The Lord's majesty is seen in both His name and His nature which should result in us humbling ourselves before him in worship.

PONDERING THE CREATION

"When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas." (vs.3-8)

A. MEDITATE UPON GOD'S WORKMANSHIP AND HIS REIGN. (v.3)

"When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have set in place...."

The wording suggests that David was in the habit of considering and meditating upon God's creation. Astrology is far-reaching, taking us to the heights of the heavens. Theology, however, is further reaching, taking us beyond the heavens to the dwelling place of God. Do you ever pause to reflect upon the beauties of God's handiwork? Have you ever thanked the Lord for all that we see in nature on the earth, in the sky and the sea? We go to museums to see the works of humans prominently displayed and "Ooh" and "Aw" over what we see displayed and walk past God's creations without a thought of appreciation. The Architect of the universe must feel slighted!

Surveying the solar system's vastness has a humbling effect upon us earth dwellers. All of humankind's inventions put together pale into insignificance when compared to the immensity of the universe, which is God's invention!

The Universe comprises everything that physically exists. Some have speculated that this "Universe" is just one of many disconnected "universes", which are collectively called "multiverses." It is thought, by some astronomers, that there may be more than 100 billion galaxies in the observable universe. Do not get so fixated upon man-made Star Wars that you miss the real thing! Go out at night and see the real thing for yourself!

The universe is so vast that the term "light years" is used to measure it rather than the earth term "miles." Light travels at 186,282 miles per second. A light year is the distance that light can travel in a year traveling at the speed of 186,262 miles per second. Light travels 5,865,696,000,000 miles in a year - that's 670,000,000 miles-per-hour!

Can you imagine how long it would take to cross such a vast distance by airplane? A jet airplane travels at 500 mph at cruising altitude. The moon orbits the earth 239,000 miles away. Traveling by jet it would take almost 20 days to reach the moon; at the speed of light, 1.3 seconds!

Our sun is 93,000,000 miles from the earth! By jet 21 years to get there, at the speed of light: 8 minutes 20 seconds. The nearest star other than our sun is 4.3 light years from the earth! How long would it take to get there by jet? 51 billion years! The diameter of the observable universe is at least 93 billion light years. (Data from Discovery Channel web site).

Our finite minds cannot even begin to comprehend distances this immense and yet God can measure all this with the span of His hand! The psalmist tells us in Psalm 147:4-5 that God "counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite." Not only can He count the billions of stars, He has named them! We have named some of them: Pluto, Mars, Sirius, Vega, Altar, Pollux, etc. but God has already named them all!

The vastness and variety of creation leads to one of two conclusions: the belief in a Supreme Being Who is great enough to create the universe, or, secondly, unbelief because of the refusal to believe that such a Being so great could exist.

I have done a layman's study of our solar system, considered its expansiveness, order and beauty; meditated on the variety of creatures on the earth, in air and sea, and have thought: "How could there be a Being great enough to ordain, order and oversee it all?" Then I come back to Genesis 1:1 and Hebrews 1:2 and take my stand there!

Genesis 1:1 – "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Hebrews 1:2 – "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."

The universe, or if you prefer the multiverse, is the work of God's hands, according to Psalm 8:6 and Psalm 19:1 both of which say: "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands."

He reigns over all – "The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved."

(Psalm 93:1)

B. MEDITATE UPON GOD'S WORKERS AND THEIR RULE. (vs.4-8)

"What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him?"

This rhetorical question emphasizes the insignificance of man when compared with the scope of God's creation. And yet God cares for us! David is amazed that God would elevate finite man to such a high position as God's representative on earth. That which may appear to be insignificant in man's eyes is significant in God's eyes.

The Worth Of Mankind To God. (v.5)

"Yet You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings, and crowned him with glory and honor."

The psalmist marvels that the glorious Lord of heaven, Who is transcendent, should stoop, Should condescend to be concerned about mankind on and of the earth.

The terrible feeling by so many that they are "nobodies" is common today. That is understandable if you believe that you are the accidental result of blind evolution. However, when you believe the Bible you have the assurance that God loves you, as unimportant as you may feel.

The stars are great and grand, but Jesus Christ did not die for planets and galaxies but for those who were created in His image but became sinners! You are not a nobody! You are the object of Christ's love and redemptive price which He paid on the cross of Calvary! We are insignificant in comparison to the universe and yet He gives us significance. While tending His universe He does not forget us!

"What is man....?" The world gives all sorts of answers.

The Dictator says, "a pawn to be used."

The Militarist says, "a number in my army."

The Industrialist says, "a producer in my factory."

The Politician says, "a vote to be wooed."

The Merchant says, "a customer to buy my goods."

The Atheist says, "A product of evolution who is annihilated at death."

The only place we can find an accurate answer is in the Word of God. And the first answer that it gives to the question, "What am I?" is this, "You are a special person created in the image of God." David said, "You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings, and crowned him with glory and honor."

Man is a unique creation by the hand of God and of great worth in God's sight. That worth was acknowledged by God when Jesus said that He is "a friend of sinners" (Matt. 11:19) and "gave himself for us." (John 3:16)

The Bible says, "I have carried you since you were born; I have taken care of you from your birth. Even when you are old, I will be the same. Even when your hair has turned gray, I will

take care of you. I made you and will take care of you. I will carry you and save you.” (Isaiah 46:3-4)

The Work Of Man For God. (vs.6-8)

“You have given him dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.”

God has given man a special place in His creation. He has made man "a little lower than the heavenly beings", as compared to rest of the creatures. Among the creatures, man has dominion; man rules over "all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas."

David also says that God "crowned [man] with glory and honor" and "put everything under his feet". These statements were true before man's fall, but man, at the Fall, lost much of his "glory and honor" and much of his dominion over the animals. As the writer of Hebrews says, as he comments on this passage: "In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him." (Heb. 2:8)

But what man lost through his fall, God restored through Christ. The writer of Hebrews continues: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone" (Heb. 2:9).

It is because Christ has "everything under His feet" that mankind can be said to have complete dominion. It is in Christ Jesus that we become the people that God intended us to be. This psalm not only looks backward toward creation, but forward toward the coming of Christ when all that Adam lost will be restored.

DOXOLOGY

David concludes with the same expression of praise with which he began:

“O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Thy name in all the earth!”

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