

Look Up [Psalm 8]

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INTRODUCTION

1. One of the benefits of technology is our ability to understand more of the universe
 - a. One of my recent enjoyments was a site showing how far it is to Mars.
 - b. The website Distancetomars.com shows the rate of travel to the moon, then Mars.
 - c. Anywhere from 8 hours to 3 days to get to the moon. 150 days to get to Mars.
2. The more we dwell on the scope of our solar system, galaxy, and universe, the more we start to wonder about our place in the universe.
3. One of the blessings of the Scriptures is that it answers questions like this:
 - a. Where do I, one person in millennia of history, fit in the scheme of the world.
 - b. And I love that we can find this deep, theological discussion in light of poetry.
 - c. This morning, we dive into Psalm 8.

VERSES 1,2

¹ LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory in the heavens.

²Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

1. The psalm, like many others, begins with words of praise for the Lord.
 - a. The glory of God is seen as one looks up into the skies.
 - 1) Perhaps you did last night during our SUPERMOON.
 - 2) Not a tie-in to movie promotion but a close pass by the moon.
 - b. This is a purposeful description because of how ancients viewed the sun/moon/stars
 - 1) Mesopotamian religions viewed heavenly objects as gods themselves
 - 2) The message to God's people: **while they look up and see deities, you see creation**
 - c. God's glory transcends the heavens, which are merely his workmanship.
2. On the back-end of these verses, we see **God protecting people against enemies**
 - a. Again, this is a repetitive theme within these psalms, but it's intended to instill hope.
 - 1) We will continually doubt whether we can persevere through trials but you can.
 - b. God will ultimately triumph and all enemies will be silenced. But how?
3. The beginning of verse two answers: through children and infants.
 - a. This shows the brilliance of God
 - 1) **Though he harnesses the power of the heavens**, he defeats through babies
 - 2) This speaks to us of God giving powerful voicing to the weakest amongst us.
 - 3) When we fret for the powerless, know that eventually, their voice overcomes.
 - b. It's easy to see how older kids can praise. That's why we need you for VBS.
 - 1) We're going to have children singing words of praise to the LORD.
 - c. But what about infants? How do babies praise the Lord?
 - 1) Through their life, their breathing, their cries, their growth.
4. In these verses, we see the paralleled power of the Lord, through great and small

VERSES 3,4

³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

1. In light of all creation, the place of humanity is peculiar.
 - a. Again this evening, you'll be able to look to the skies and be amazed.
 - b. You can find one of our city vistas and soak in the valleys and rivers
2. But when I look at all of this, I begin to wonder about me.
 - a. In the scope of all of this, how do I hold any significance?

- b. I had this feeling on the Staten Island Ferry in 1996. From the waters, I looked back at NYC.
 - 1) After a day experiencing the massiveness of the city, I felt small and insignificant
 - c. This is actually something that the psalmist wants us to realize. You and I are limited.
 - d. Friends, humanity is fragile. And it's brilliant. And it's all things in between.
3. It is this concept that brings us to a quote by 17th century French Mathematician **Blaise Pascal** "What a **[KIE-MERE-UH]** chimera then is man?"
- *A chimera is a mythological creature composed of multiple parts)like lion/dragon
- What a novelty, what a monster, what a chaos, what a subject of contradiction, what a prodigy! Judge of all things, stupid worm of the earth; depository of truth, [CLO-AI-KA] cloaca of uncertainty and error, glory and refuse of the universe."**
- *A cloaca is an orifice in animals that serves multiple purposes (procreation and refuse)
- 4. OK, this is rather disgusting, but makes a point.
 - a. Out of humanity comes some of the greatest and most wretched things.
 - b. No matter how great the good, it's impossible to ignore the bad. This drives the question.
 - c. WHY SHOULD GOD, THEN, REALLY CARE FOR US? THE NEXT VERSES ANSWER THIS.

VERSES 5-8

⁵You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet:

⁷all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,

⁸the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

- 1. While the psalmist laments how we should be insignificant in the Creator's eyes, we aren't.
 - a. Our place in the universe is secure as His preferred created beings.
 - 1) So we see God's care for humanity by extending His Greatness to us.
 - 2) Crowned with GLORY and HONOR, less than angels but more significant?
 - b. We are giving dominion over creation—from the world to the animals.
 - c. Again, this is significant as the ancients had a different view of creation.
 - 1) From Egypt to Mesopotamia, people in the ancient world deified animals.
 - 2) Here, God permits us to care for creation.
 - 3) So care is USE not ABUSE.
- 2. All of this pays homage to a seminal text in the Bible that discusses this: **Genesis 1:26,27**

"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

 - a. This is the basis for the theology of the **Imago Dei**.
 - 1) You and I were made in the image of God. Difficult to totally identify but specifics.
 - 2) You were created to be ETERNAL like God & granted DOMINION like God.

VERSE 9

⁹LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

- 1. The same verse that begins Psalm 8 concludes it.
 - a. This is where our significance in the universe is found.
 - b. Our lives dwell in the parenthesis of the holy name of the Lord
 - 1) The holy name of God is **YHWH**, carries the entire ethos of who God is.
 - 2) And what the Psalm then tells us it so know our place.
- 2. WHERE DO WE FIT IN THE UNIVERSE: both as **LOW and HIGH**.
 - a. It seems contradicting, but it helps us to strike the balance of self-view
 - 1) These are the extremes between which you and I dwell,
 - 2) Balance demands that I understand where I fit in the world.
 - b. And this psalm tells me that I'm somewhere between **Animals & Angels**.

CONCLUSION

1. When those of us here worry about our place in the world, it's more about prominence.
 - a. The city attracts people who are interested in achieving something.
 - *Perhaps in your field, among your family and friends, you want a unique life.
 - b. And in this era of social media and everyone as special, everyone wants this.
 - 1) This week I met with a young minister asking me about church planting.
 - 2) And the more we talked about ministry, I could tell he was looking for more
 - 3) He wanted to ensure that his life meant something.
 - a) Well intentioned, but can easily become a futile endeavor.
2. FIND YOUR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD
 - a. It's your calling. It's the greatest calling you could know.
 - b. **Ephesians 2:10**
For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.