

Psalm 8
Astronomy for the glory of God!

Introduction:

When we see something amazing, we are often moved to say something...

For instance... you may say to your friends...

“Have you had the raspberry chipotle chicken burrito at Costa Vida??? Wow, it is delicious! It is sweet and savory and spicy.”

“Did you see that new show on Netflix? Wow, what an ending!”

“Have you heard the new John Mayer album??? It is soooo good!”

“Did you just see that 2021 Corvette drive by? Wow, it has incredible styling. It looks kind of like a Ferrari!”

“Did you see that game last night? Russell Wilson threw for 400 yards and five touchdowns!!!”

When we are impressed, we are often moved to say something. We want to share our passion and our enthusiasm with our friends. Isn't this why video's go viral on YouTube???

King David was no different. Thousands of years ago when he looked up at the night sky, he was deeply moved by God's handiwork, and so he said something!!! More specifically he sang something.

This brings us to psalm 8.

This psalm begins and ends with the psalmist expressing his wonder and awe (1a, 9).

Psalm 8:1 (ESV) — 1 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 8:9 (ESV) — 9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

When you see two nearly identical verses at the beginning and ending of a psalm, the psalmist is employing a literary device called an inclusio. An inclusio tells us that everything in between these two verses is expanding on the idea contained within these two verses. That means that this entire psalm is about the majesty of God in creation.

There are no commands in this psalm, in fact, this is the only psalm in the book of Psalms addressed entirely to God. This entire psalm is a hymn of praise to God for the glories of creation.

David praises God for two specific aspects of creation.

First, David praises God for creating the cosmos

Second, David praises God for creating humanity

First, David praises God for creating the cosmos

Psalm 8:1–3 (ESV) — 1 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

If God's enemies don't praise him for his work of creation, the little children will... god is always shaming the wise and the strong with the foolish and weak.

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

Verse one literally says, "O Yahweh (LORD) our King (lord), how majestic, or glorious, or excellent is your name (name is shorthand for character/being) in all the earth."

Why is his character majestic? Because he has set his glory above the heavens. In other words, his glory shines forth from the moon and the stars.

David was probably thinking back to all the cold, dark, and lonely evenings he spent in the fields with his sheep. During those long evenings, he probably spent hours on his back looking up at the night sky, staring at the stars. With zero light pollution, imagine how many stars he saw. Most of us live where light from the city blocks out most of the star's light. But if you live in Stevens County or on Priest Lake, you too have probably been overwhelmed by the grandeur of the night sky!

David sings God praises for creating the stars. How much more should we sing God's praises for creating the stars, when we know so much more about the stars. Like what?

Consider our star, the sun!

Not to brag our anything, but our sun is rather impressive.

The sun is 93 million miles away, yet we must wear sunglasses, hats, and sunscreen to protect ourselves from its incredibly destructive power...

"To produce the observed energy emitted from the sun's solar surface, the equivalent of one hundred billion hydrogen bombs must explode every second in its unfathomably hot, dense core." (Redmond, 123)

It was hot a few weeks ago... 109/113 (Hottest day recorded in Spokane history). But the sun's core burns at 27 million degrees Fahrenheit.

"A pinhead heated to the temperature of the center of the sun would emit enough heat to kill anyone who ventured within a thousand miles of it." (Redmond, 127)

"99.9% of all matter in our solar system is contained within the sun." (Redmond, 129)

1.3 million earths could fit inside the sun... (image)

We have considered the size of the sun! now...

Consider the size of the universe!

Show Star video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBkNhMfrxuk>

The biggest and brightest known star in our own galaxy is **Eta Carinae**. It is more than 100 times larger than the sun.... If the sun and Eta Carinae were the same distance from the earth, Eta Carinae would be 4 million times brighter than the sun." (Redmond, 44)

There is a star named IRS 65... if the sun were 18 inches tall this star would be as tall as Mt. Everest. (Redmond, 44)

If our galaxy (**the Milky Way**) were the size of North America, our solar system would be the size of a quarter.

Astronomers estimate that the Milky way has anywhere from 100 billion to 400 billion stars in it.

Our galaxy is mostly empty space... it would take five years at the speed of light to get from our solar system to the nearest star (Alpha centuri).

How many galaxies are there?

The lowest estimate is 100 billion galaxies, and the high estimate is now two trillion galaxies...

Most galaxies have over 100 billion stars in them...

Psalm 19:1–2(ESV) — 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. **2** Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

Application:

David looked up at the night sky and praised YHWH for his power, wisdom, and might.

God created the universe (200 billion galaxies) out of nothing, by the power of his word!!!

God is equally present in every square inch of his universe. He is present 5 trillion light years that way and he is present 5 trillion light years that way.

God controls every single subatomic particle in his vast universe.

God knows everything about his universe.

God knows exactly what will happen on every square inch of every planet in exactly 334 years, 3 days, and 3 seconds from now.

We are talking about incredible, unspeakable, and unfathomable power.

God's creation of, presence in, and control of the cosmos demand that He be praised!

Let me ask you a question. If YHWH has this much power, do you think he has enough power to help you overcome anxiety, bitterness, fear of man, depression, and a crippling addiction?

If YHWH has this much power, do you think he can save your marriage, destroy the power of lust in your life, and help you manage your spending?

God is worthy of all praise because he created the cosmos.... But there is more...

First, David praise God for creating the cosmos.

Second, David praises God for creating humans

More specifically God is praised for what he gives humans in creation... like what?

God is praised because of the care he gives to humans

Psalm 8:3-4 (ESV) — 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, **4** what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

The phrase “Son of man” was a Hebrew phrase often use to refer to mankind in general, especially in contrast to God. (ZSB)

Let me paraphrase verses 3-4. In light of the majesty, size, and scope of the universe why in the world does God care about us? We are so incredibly insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

This is a very reasonable question to ask!!!

Illustration:

Show the pale blue dot...

This picture was taken on February 14, 1990, by the [*Voyager 1* space probe](#) from a distance of about 3.7 billion miles away...

No one had ever seen planet earth from this perspective before... this view rocked the scientific community.

Reflecting on this pale blue dot, Carl Sagan wrote,

“That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every ‘superstar’, every ‘supreme leader,’ every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived here- on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam. The earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena.... Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light.” (Redmond, 56-57)

Sagan is right that we seem incredibly small, insignificant, and fragile in light of the vast cosmos.

Another author writes,

“We are vapors inhabiting a miniscule speck in a measureless sea of cosmic wonder.” (Louie Giglio)

“William Beebe, the naturalist, used to tell a story about Teddy Roosevelt. At Sagamore Hill, after talking for the evening, the two would go out on the lawn and search the skies. Then Roosevelt would recite: “That is the Spiral Galaxy in Andromeda. It is as large as our Milky Way. It is one of a hundred million galaxies. It consists of one hundred billion suns, each larger than our sun.” Then Roosevelt would grin and say, “Now I think we are small enough! Let’s go to bed.”” (PTW)

We humans think we are pretty amazing, don’t we???

We are microscopic dust in a cosmic immeasurable universe.

Illustration:

Working on this talk a fly was buzzing around my head... I kept trying to kill him, finally I did. When it comes to power, abilities, and life span, we have more in common with flies than God...

Application:

Even though we are incredibly small—microscopic specs of dust in a vast universe.
Even though we live incredibly short lives.
Even though our great grandkids will probably not know our names.

The maker of all things cares deeply about us—about every single person on planet earth.

How much does God care about us? He cares about our eternal welfare so much that he sent his only son, the agent of creation, into the world he created to die on the cross for our sins.

Despite how small you are, you matter to the maker of the universe.

God is praised because of the care he gives to humans!

God is praised because of the dignity he gives to humans!

Psalm 8:3–5 (ESV) — **3** When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, **4** what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? **5** Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

Verse 4 is the swing verse in the psalm, and it raises an important ontological question....

Here is the question, “what is man...?” Said another way, “what is a human being?” What are we at the core of our being???

That depends on who you ask-

The hedonist says that, “A person is little more than a player, and we should live for all the physical, sexual and aesthetic pleasure we can get”

The Communist says, “A person is not a player but a worker... Communist express the value of human beings in economic terms”

Capitalist- “The capitalist views the person as not only as a worker but also as a consumer... People work to live, but they live to shop”

The Pantheist- A Pantheist believes that human beings are a part of a universal being. There is no creator just beingness...

The Muslim- Muslims believe that human beings are at the will of God’s arbitrary will.

(Philip Ryken, *The Message of Salvation*, pages 18-19)

Increasingly our culture thinks in secular or naturalist terms-

The Naturalist believes that human beings are meaningless since they evolved from swamp gas by chance like everything else on our planet.

William Provine, esteemed Darwinian professor of biology from Cornell University, wrote,

“Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear... There are no gods, no purposes, no goal-directing forces of any kind. There is no life after death... There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no meaning to life, and no free will for humans, either.” (Blanchard, 30)

Dr. Rodney Brooks, a professor at MIT, wrote, “A human being is nothing but a machine or a big bag of skin full of biomolecules interacting by the laws of physics and chemistry.” (Simmons, 37)

If evolution is true humans are nothing more than chunks of meat. We have no more value than rocks or bugs. There is no basis for morality. All that matters is survival of the fittest! If evolution is true, why should we care if the frail, elderly, or mentally handicapped survive? We shouldn't!

Thankfully most evolutionists don't live out the implications of their worldview. If they did society would disintegrate.

So, what is a human being? According to psalm 8, human beings are incredibly significant. Human beings are made in God's image.

No other book or religious system makes this claim....

Psalm 8:3–5 (ESV) — **3** When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, **4** what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? **5** Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

Speaking of humanity, David writes, “You ... crowned *him* with glory and honor” (italics added). This is an effective way of identifying man with God and saying that he has been made in God's image. Humans reflect God more than any other part of creation.

According to the Bible, when we want to know what God is like we don't look at the sun, the ocean, or Mt. Everest, or the Milky Way galaxy. Rather, we look at humans since they are the only part of creation said to be made in God's image.

Application:

The Bible's worldview provides the only basis for human dignity.

Because we are all made in God's image murder is wrong, racism is wrong, abortion is wrong, and bulimia is wrong.

Christians must have a positive self-image, not because they are sooo amazing, talented, and good looking, but because God is so amazing, and every human is made in his image.

This means that we are like God in the way we relate to others, think, work, and create.

This doctrine is the best foundation for any notion of human rights, tolerance (i.e., real tolerance), liberty, and freedom.

If there is no God, it is survival of the fittest. On the other hand, if there is a Christian God, we must care for the poor, weak, elderly, and disabled, because they are all made in his image.

*God is praised because of the care he gives to humans.
God is praised because of the dignity he gives to humans.*

But that is not all...

God is praised because of the task he gives to humans!

Psalm 8:5–8 (ESV) — **5** Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. **6** You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, **7** all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, **8** the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

According to verse 6, God has given humans dominion over creation. This is an allusion to Genesis 1:28ff.

Genesis 1:28 (ESV) — **28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Theologians call this the cultural mandate.

God commands humans to rule over the creation and harness all of it for God’s glory. This is part of being made in God’s image.

What does this look like?

Taking care of the environment...

Taking care of animals...

Turning crystals into computer chips...

Turning sand into glass...

Turning trees into homes, violins, pianos, and picture frames.

Harnessing chemicals and minerals into lifesaving drugs.

Manipulating atoms to create safe and efficient forms of nuclear power.

Application:

God wants the human race to harness every square inch of his magnificent creation for his glory. This means that human beings have purpose. You have purpose!!!

This is reason enough to praise God!!!

Conclusion:

As David contemplates the night sky...

David praises God for creating the cosmos

David praises God for creating humanity

Although God created humanity to rule the world, humanity has failed miserably.

We pollute and exploit God's creation.

We sin against other human beings created in God's image.

Instead of harnessing nuclear power for life saving energy, we harness nuclear power to create bombs that destroy entire cities.

The human race has failed miserably to fulfill God's initial plan for humanity.

Let's face it, the human race is not very good at being human.

We need a savior, a perfect human.

This brings us to Hebrews chapter 2. The author of Hebrews 2 indicates that Jesus Christ fulfills psalm 8.

Hebrews 2:5-9 (ESV) — 5 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. **6** It has been testified somewhere,

(now he quotes from Psalm 8)

“What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? **7** You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, **8** putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.

In other words, clearly the human race has failed to bring creation under its control...

But God sent his only son to be the last Adam, the perfect man, the head of a new race, to subjugate and redeem all of creation.

How does he redeem creation? By tasting death for his creatures.

9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Jesus suffered and died on the cross to destroy the curse of sin. Sin effects everything, not just our lives, but all of creation.

Jesus is able to rule over creation as the perfect man, because he destroyed the power of sin over creation through his life, death, and resurrection. Now he rules and reigns over all things.

1 Corinthians 15:27 (ESV) — 27 For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.

Yes, in one sense creation has always been under the authority of the divine Christ. But Jesus was fully God and fully man. When he died on the cross as a man, he destroyed the power of sin. As a result, he is able to rule over all of creation perfectly, as the last Adam.

Here is the good news, everyone Christian will reign over all of creation with Christ in the new heavens and the new earth (2 Timothy 2:12). No more sin, no more sadness, no more snake bites, sun burns, or malaria.

In the meantime, we worship God for the glory of creation while we wait patiently for Christ to return and inaugurate the new creation. Let's pray...