

## Great People Questions Series

### Psalm 8

Please stand for the reading of God's Word this morning.

And while I read through our text this morning – I'd like to read with me the first and last verses of this psalm this morning.

Everyone read together: *Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory in the heavens.*

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

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

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

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

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

*all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, 8 the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

Everyone read together: *Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Pray

We're going to call this psalm the "**majestic sandwich**" because it begins and ends with the exact same statement about the majesty of God. And in between David gives his personal explanation to what makes God so majestic.

For those of you who are married, let's assume for a moment that one day you turn to your spouse and declare: "*I love you so much. You are an amazing person. I'm so blessed to be able to spend the rest of my life with you.*" After they picked themselves up off the ground after fainting, what if they asked you the all important question: "*why?*" Because they may be thinking you're trying to butter them up so that you can ask them to do something for you. How would you answer why you think they are so amazing? I suppose you could respond by listing all of the things they constantly do for you: wash my clothes, prepare my meals, clean up the kitchen, do laundry, mow the yard, fix things etc. If you really think about it, you've defined their greatness by what they do for you and not by who they are. And often we treat God the same way. We define His greatness or we love Him because of what He's done for us. And if we feel He's no longer doing things for us the way we think He ought to do them, then He's not quite as great.

It's possible to read this psalm and come away with the impression that it's all about how great we are because of the question that David asks: "*What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?*" But if you look at the whole psalm, you'll quickly realize that it's not about man but rather about an amazing, majestic God.

So, this morning my hope is that we might have a renewed wonder at the majesty of God.

David begins and ends this psalm with the exact same statement.

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

You won't notice this in your English translations but David emphasizes God's greatness by using two separate words for "Lord" at the beginning.

1. The first "**Lord**" is the Hebrew word translated "**Yahweh**" and it refers to the sacred personal name of God that is often associated with His covenant with His people.
2. The second "**Lord**" is the Hebrew word translated "**Adonai**" is means sovereign or master and emphasizes God's dominion, rule and power.

So, right off the bat, David is saying that God is amazing because He's both powerful and reigning but He's also personal in connecting with us. He isn't just out there creating and managing His creation, but He's also interacting with His creation and particularly with us.

And this is further emphasized with his use of "**our Lord**". Similarly to when David wrote those famous words, "*The Lord is not just a shepherd*" but "*The Lord is **my** shepherd.*"

And this statement, "Lord, our Lord" can't just be made by David, but is also true for you as well. This majestic amazing God can be the Lord of your life as well. This God deeply desires to be your Lord, not only as the creator of the universe, but also as your God who leads and provides and wants a relationship with YOU!!! And that makes God pretty amazing and majestic.

And then David says, "*your name is majestic in all the earth!!*" I see evidence of your majesty everywhere I look. **Where do you see God's majesty reflected in this world?**

*"You have set your glory in the heaven....(then a little while later he elaborates on this statement) When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,..."*

Notice that David didn't mention the sun – just the moon and the stars. I imagine David is composing this while thinking about the many nights when he was out in the fields as a shepherd at night. And as he laid his head down on the earth and looked up into the heavens it had to look like an explosion of stars. On a clear night David could probably have seen about 5,000 stars. Today, with a 4 inch telescope you can see 2 million stars. But without the use of a telescope, David was blown away by the vastness of God's creation. And I love how David puts this, he describes creation as God placing the moon and all of these stars into place with his fingers. Not his strong arm and might or power but with His fingers. He's picturing God creating all of what He sees in the heavens and very intentionally putting them in their proper place.

Astronomer Allan Sandage, is considered to be one of the founders of modern astronomy and was widely regarded to be the world's greatest cosmologist until his death in 2010 said, "***I find it quite improbable that such order came out of chaos. There has to be some organizing principle. God to me is a mystery but is the explanation for the miracle of existence, why there is something instead of nothing.***"

—**James Tour**, one of the world's leading nanoscientists, and a devout Christian said,

***"I build molecules for a living. I can't begin to tell you how difficult that job is. I stand in awe of God because of what he has done through his creation. My faith has been increased through my research. Only a rookie who knows nothing about science would say science takes away from faith. If you really study science, it will bring you closer to God."***

Next, David switches his focus from the wonder in the heavens to His majesty revealed down here in his created people, and he begins with the youngest among us.

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

The picture is of a battle being waged with fierce, strong and mean enemies coming against God and His battle strategy is to defeat them through the praise of infants. How does He do that?

This past Thursday I was privileged to take care of my 2 ½ year old granddaughter, Audrina and my 4 ½ month old granddaughter, Charlee (so both a child and an infant).

Audrina has this statement that will just melt your heart. She will look at you and declare simply, "*I'm happy.*" What she's communicating is that she's really enjoying being with you. When was the last time you uttered that powerful phrase, "*I'm happy?*" We so often let the worries and cares of this world drain our happiness. I know so many people who's gift seems to be worrying or pointing out everything that's wrong with our government, or with their job or with the church. Who spend excessive amounts of time looking at the negative of everything – or at least what they think is wrong, rather than simply enjoying God and all that He's given us.

Charlee, at 4 ½ months old doesn't have a very vast vocabulary yet. When she speaks, she's either laughing (which she does a lot) or she's crying. And when she begins to cry it usually means she's either ready for a nap or she's hungry. And for the fulfillment of either of those needs, she needs help. I can't just tell her to go put herself to bed or tell her that there's a bottle in the cupboard and milk in the fridge – go get it yourself. She's totally dependent up and adult to help her satisfy those needs. And that's the same way with God. He wants us to learn to be dependent upon Him rather than independent. And He will often do whatever He needs to do to bring us to that state of dependence. It's what Adam and Eve were until they decided to go their own way and become independent of God, and they did the one thing God told them they couldn't do. How is God trying to teach you a greater sense of dependence upon Him?

Dependence upon God and praise of Him (or finding our happiness in Him) is a powerful weapon against our adversary the Devil. Because it reminds us of what He once had in heaven before his failed overthrow of God. Satan was one of the most beautiful angels God had ever created. And He may have been in charge of leading the heavenly worship of God. But somewhere along the way he wanted the angels' praise to be directed toward himself rather than God and so he attempted to overthrow God. But he failed and so everytime we praise God, he's reminded that he's a loser and will always be a loser.

There's a fascinating encounter during Jesus' ministry when he quotes this passage of scripture from this Psalm 8. It occurs shortly after Jesus' rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and people were praising him yelling, "*Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.*" In doing this they are recognizing his right to be the long awaited Messiah. Shortly after that Jesus goes into the temple and overturns the tables of the moneychangers and he healed the lame and blind that came to him. Meanwhile, the children in the temple are continuing to yell, "*Hosanna to the Son of David.*" The chief priests and the teachers of the law saw and heard all of this and complained to Jesus, "*Do you hear what these children are saying?*" Jesus replied, "Yes have you never read, "*From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?*" And apparently Jesus' response silenced his critics. This is a remarkable exchange because the religious leaders would have been familiar with Psalm 8. And they would have understood that the children and infants were praising God in that context. And so with Jesus' response, he's claiming that they are indeed praising God right now while they praise Jesus.

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Next David writes: "*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?*" While laying on his back and being astounded by the display of God's glory in the heavens, and how vast all of it appears – he's astounded that God knows us and that He actually cares for us. It would be easy for any of us to assume that God is too big and powerful and too busy running the solar system that He even notices us let alone care for us. And so, David, is once again overwhelmed by this aspect of God's majesty. When was the last time you were astounded that not only did God created this vast universe we live in but He actually knows you and all the details of your life and that He cares for you? We need to be overwhelmed more often with this astounding God we know and love. If you were blown away by

the majesty of God more often it would wipe away so many of our worries and complaints. I'd love to hear more people leave church saying, "*Wow, God is amazing and I'm overwhelmed by His kindness and goodness to me.*"

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*You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

David is reflecting back to creation when God put mankind in charge of taking care of His creation. We don't own this creation but Scripture teaches that we are stewards of this planet and God has entrusted the care of it to his children. Remember, when God created the universe and the planet we live on his assessment every day was that "*It was good.*" It was only after He created man that He declared "*It is very good!!*"

And Adam and Eve shared this wonderful relationship with all of creation and with God prior to their sin. But once they sinned, creation was marred. There was no longer harmony but hatred and discord entered in. And we're still living in that state right now. Creation is often disruptive and harmful, what with hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires and earthquakes and fighting among men. But Jesus came to restore all of that to God's original intent.

The writer of Hebrews quotes this verse and refers to the restoration of Jesus.

**Hebrews 2:5-9 (NIV)** *It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. 6 But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor and put everything under their feet."*

*In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

The writer acknowledges that creation, at the present time, is not what God intended it to be. And that's why Jesus came and willingly died on the cross so He might begin restoring creation back to what God intended. And while creation won't be fully restored to it's original design until after Jesus returns, right now we can have our relationship with God restored to what He originally desired and still does. Once again, God is magnificent in the fact that He gave up His life so that we might be brought back into a right relationship with God. This is proof of God's unconditional love for each and every one of us. And that's further proof that God's amazing.

Appropriately David ends the psalm as he began, *Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*