

Psalm 8¹

"Praise to Yahweh, Who Crowned Mere Man King of the Earth"

For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of David.

Scripture taken from the *NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE*®,
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.
Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

A 1 THE OPENING ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE 8:1

B 1 The Person of Praise: {1} O LORD, our Lord,²

B 2 The Focus of Praise: How majestic is Your name in all the earth!

B 3 The Cause for Praise: Who have displayed Your splendor³ above the heavens!

A 2 THE PROVISION FOR PRAISE 8:2

B 1 Praise from the Innocent: {2} From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength⁴

B 2 Praise to Silence the Enemies

C 1 Because of Your adversaries,

C 2 To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.

¹ Psalm 8. Hymn of praise. Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*.

² Psalm 8:1 - LORD our Lord: Heb. *Yahweh* our '*Adown*. LORD, *Yahweh*, (usually transliterated Jehovah) is the Proper Name of God derived from the Hebrew verb "to be." It means the Self-Existent One, the great I AM. It is especially God's Covenant name with Israel, underscored with Moses in Exodus 3:14 as God was preparing to redeem Israel from the bondage of Egypt and plant the nation in the land of Canaan He had promised to her forefathers. Lord, Adown, simply means Lord or Master. It spells out God's Sovereign Authority over His creatures, and here, especially, Israel. '*Adown* can have a plural suffix, as here, '*Adownenu* (meaning "our Lord") or it can have a singular suffix, '*Adonay* ("my Lord"). Sometimes, however, according to the context, '*Adonay* simply means "Lord" as a proper name of God emphasizing His Sovereignty and Authority. In both uses of "Lord" in Psalm 8:1, 9, the plural suffix is used, "our Lord."

³ Psalm 8:2 - splendor: The sense here is that the stars displayed throughout the heavens are just cause to declare the majesty of Yahweh's name throughout the whole earth, at every point on which they can be seen! The more we know about deep space, the more of Yahweh's majesty we see!

⁴ Psalm 8:2 - strength: When children in the temple praised Jesus as the Messiah, shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David," Jesus said that they fulfilled this passage in Psalms (Matt. 21:15-16). When Jesus thus replied to the chief priests and scribes, they had nothing to say, and the children had made "the enemy and the revengeful cease" (Ps. 8:2b)! God uses even the weak and seemingly insignificant to bring praise to Himself!

A 3 THE CAUSE FOR PRAISE 8:3-8

B 1 The Grandeur of Space at the Hand of Yahweh 8:3

- C 1 The Vastness of Space: When I consider Your heavens,
- C 2 The Enormity of Yahweh: the work of Your fingers,
- C 3 The Nocturnal Features of Space: The moon and the stars,
- C 4 The Sovereign Omnipotence of Yahweh: which You have ordained;

B 2 The Insignificance of Man to Attract Yahweh's Attention 8:4

- C 1 Yahweh's Notice of Man: What is man that You take thought of him,
- C 2 Yahweh's Provision for Man: And the son of man,⁵ that You care for him? ⁶

B 3 The Majesty of Man as Honored by Yahweh 8:5-8

- C 1 In Position: Yet You have made him a little lower than God,⁷ 8:5
- C 2 In Glory: And You crown him with glory and majesty!

⁵ Psalm 8:4 - son of man: David meant the descendant(s) of man. The New Testament, however, invests this term with Messianic implications, applying parts of this psalm to the ultimate Son of Man, the Messiah, Jesus (see Heb. 2:6-9 and 1 Cor. 15:25-26). Jesus called Himself "Son of Man" scores of times (eg., Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 12:8, etc.).

⁶ Psalm 8:4 - take thought of ... care for: David is amazed that, though God is so big and powerful He created the solar system and all the galaxies of outer space, yet He condescends to notice and to provide for the welfare of mere man upon planet Earth!

⁷ Psalm 8:5 - God: The Hebrew word is *Elohim*, the plural designation for the Triune God. David's point is that of all Elohim's creations, whether angels in the heavens or animals upon the earth, He bestowed the greatest honor upon man when He created man in His own image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-28). The two traits there singled out that make man like God are his ability to create life (reproduction) and his authority and power to rule over the material and animate world (subduing the earth and ruling over the animals). The doctrines of evolution and pantheism and their step-children of the animal rights movement and reincarnation are so abhorrent because they deny and emasculate the position of great honor to which God created and appointed Man.

The King James Version incorrectly translates Elohim as angels because it follows the Greek Septuagint (LXX) rather than the Masoretic Hebrew text. Though angels presently have greater glory and power than men, it is never stated that they have been created in God's likeness or image. That is to say they do not reproduce (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25) and they have not been given authority to subdue the earth and rule over animals. Furthermore, men will one day judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3).

Nevertheless, the writer of Hebrews, in the Providence of God, quoted from the LXX translation of Psalm 8:4-6 in Hebrews 2:6-9. In so doing he correctly stated that God, for a little while, made Jesus, the Ultimate Son of Man, lower than the angels.

C 3 In Sovereignty 8:6-8

D 1 Rulership: You make him to rule ⁸ over the works of Your hands;
8:6

D 2 Subordination: You have put all things under his feet,⁹ 8:7-8

E 1 All domesticated animals: All sheep and oxen, 8:7

E 2 Land animals: And also the beasts of the field,

E 3 Air animals: The birds of the heavens 8:8

E 4 Marine animals

G 1 and the fish of the sea,

G 2 Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.¹⁰

A 4 THE CLOSING ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE 8:9

B 1 The Person of Praise: O LORD, our Lord,

B 2 The Focus of Praise: How majestic is Your Name in all the earth!

Expanded Analysis of Psalm 8

Prepared by James T. Bartsch

September, 2006, updated August 16, 2019

WordExplain.com

Email Contact: jbartsch@wordexplain.com

Scripture taken from the *NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE*®,
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.
Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

⁸ Psalm 8:6 - rule: David here singles out man's rulership over the animals as being the most profound illustration of that which makes man most like God -- sovereignty, rulership.

⁹ Psalm 8:7 - put all things under his feet: The Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 15:25-27, applies God's subordination of the animal kingdom to the jurisdiction of mankind to the ultimate authority of the ultimate Son of Man, Jesus. The time will come when Jesus, as the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) will gain complete control and authority over all of creation, conquering even Death, the last enemy (1 Cor. 15:26, cf. Isa 25:6-8 and Rev. 21:4).

¹⁰ Psalm 8:8 - paths of the seas: Oceanography owes a great debt to the books of Matthew Fontaine Maury. His discoveries have been of inestimable help to navigators of the high seas. Maury acknowledged his debt to the Bible for some of his scientific findings. One day when he was ill, his son read Psalm 8 to him. When the boy read the eighth verse, his father asked him to repeat it: "The birds of the air, and fish of the sea, and all that swim the paths of the seas." When the boy had finished, the great scientist declared, "If there are paths in the sea, I am going to find them." Today the great oceangoing vessels follow the paths marked out by Maury, who believed they were there because the Bible said they were. -- Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).