

December 20, 2015
Sunday Evening Service
Series: Psalms
Community Baptist Church
643 S. Suber Road
Greer, SC 29650
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HOW MAJESTIC Psalm 8

As I confessed in this morning's message, I have a penchant to walk outside at night, look up into the sky and just marvel. It happens every time. Is this a sign of old age? Or is it a sign of becoming more impressed with God as I walk in fellowship with Him over the years.

As I gaze into the immense creation, I easily become overwhelmed with the size, scope, and intricacy of God's handiwork. There are several of you folks in this assembly who, like me, enjoy creating things. Some of you are musicians, some artists, some quilters, cooks, carpenters, and more. We who appreciate the joy and satisfaction of bringing something new into the world ought to stand amazed as we look at God's majesty displayed in the work of His hands.

Furthermore, we have to be impressed with that part of God's creation that is nearest and dearest to us—our bodies. It seems like each time one of you is admitted to the hospital, or goes through a medical procedure, or undergoes some kind of surgery, we, your friends, learn about new and improved methods for treating these deteriorating bodies. As we study and learn more about these intricate creations, we have to stand in awe of our Creator. What an amazing God He is.

But that is all physical. Maybe the most astonishing work of God is found in the spiritual realm. What is an eternal soul really like? How does God work in our hearts? How does God forgive and remove sin forever? How will we live forever to praise and glorify God? These are questions that boggle our finite human minds. But God has done it all, controls it all, and will be glorified forever by it all. How majestic is His name!

Our Majestic God Is a Tender Avenger (vv.1-2).

Is that an oxymoron? The first part of the statement is certainly true. Our Lord's majesty is revealed everywhere. David wrote that His name is exalted in the world. *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth (v.1a)!* The **name** of the Lord is a reference to His character. His name reveals all of God's characteristics and His characteristics explain His name.

His name is LORD ("Yahweh"). This is the most common name by which God calls Himself in the Bible (5,321 times). It is significant that this is the title that shows up nineteen times in the creation story (Gen. 1-3). What does it mean? Most Old Testament names have a meaning. God gave the meaning of this particular name to Moses when He called him to service. Moses wasn't exactly delighted to have the responsibility of leading a couple million rebels out of Egypt. *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:13-14).* The self-existing God who eternally depends on no one or nothing for existence spoke into existence all that we see (and even what we don't see).

We notice in the text that there is another name for God mentioned immediately. This is not simple repetition. God's name is Yahweh and it is also "Lord" (Aw-done). This is a more common name. It can speak of a master, a god, a king, or someone of importance. Sometimes the word appears in a plural form even when it refers to a single person. That is the case regarding the true God. Scholars have tagged this a the plural of majesty. It is the form the word takes whenever it refers to God (over 300 times). Especially in the creation account, we cannot help but allow this plural form to describe the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who were all engaged in Creation.

These two titles together reveal that the one true God is Lord of us. The title Lord used here appears in a form that forces us to add, "of us." The self-existing God is rightful Master of all of us. His

name declares God's majesty, holiness, power, and justice; Creation affirms it.

His name is exalted in the heavens. David declared, *You have set your glory above the heavens (v.1b)*. To some extent this means that God's glory exceeds the glory of the heavens. The heavens are glorious indeed and the heavens certainly tell of God's majesty. More accurately though, the truth related here is that God put His glory up in the heavens so that everyone will be able to see and stand in awe.

If you want to be awestruck by God's glory, just stop to think about how big the universe really is. About the only way we can measure it is by the ruler of light. Light travels 670,616,629 mph. If you could travel at the speed of light, you could circle the earth 7.5 times in one second. A practical expression of the speed of light means that the action you observe in me takes about 30 nanoseconds to get to you. That is not very much time.

With that information in hand, how big is God's creation? Nobody knows. Scientists claim that the universe is still growing. I believe God has not allowed scientists to discover the outer extremes of His creation yet. Therefore, because they keep finding more and more evidence out there, they mistakenly think that planets, stars, and galaxies are still coming into existence. That would be like ancient explorers concluding that the ocean is growing because they can't arrive at the horizon.

How big is the part of God's creation that we know about? By way of illustration, at the speed of light it takes eight minutes for us to see what is happening on the sun which is 150 million kilometers (93 million miles) away. It takes seven hours for us to see what takes place (if anything) on the planet Pluto which is 7.5 billion kilometers away. It takes four years for us to see the light from the next nearest star, Proxima Centura, which is 40 trillion kilometers away. The edge of our galaxy, the Milky Way is requires 100,000 years for the light to reach us from 1 quintillion kilometers. At present, the farthest we can see into the universe is 440 sextillion kilometers, which takes light 13.8 billion years to reach us.

Oh! So the universe is billions of years old? It has to be if we are now seeing light from 13.8 billion light years away, right? Wrong. God created the universe with age so that the light was already visible on earth from the farthest stars. Just like God created Adam as a full-

grown, mature man—not an embryo. The majesty of God's creation is incomprehensible.

Our Lord reveals His majesty and might in creation. But God reveals His strength in many other ways. Innocent children testify about God's majesty. David realized that *Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength (v.2a)*. Children who are barely beginning to speak testify to God's mighty power. Even the conception and delivery of a child is testimony to God's majesty.

David praised God for creating us in our mother's womb. *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb (Psalm 139:13)*. Possibly David or another psalm writer praised God for His sovereign care in delivery. *Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you (Psalm 71:6)*. Every child born testifies to God's majesty.

Beyond birth, as children begin to articulate their simple thoughts and opinions, they glorify God. God's law written on their conscience causes them to believe in God the Creator. Wicked teachers inspired by God's archenemy Satan must teach them about evolution—and insist they believe it. Every time a child comes home from Sunday School and repeats a Bible verse he or she memorized, it testifies of God's majesty. Jesus applied this principle to that very thing when the scribes and chief priests rebuked Him for allowing the children to praise Him and call Him "Son of David." *They said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" (Matthew 21:16)*.

God is so tender and kind that He ordained for babies and children to praise Him. But, at the same time, God's enemies experience His strength. David said of God, *you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger (v.2b)*. Put together with the previous phrase, this means that God uses the testimony of innocent children and people to build a fortress against the enemy. For over fifty years public school teachers and college professors have been forced to teach Darwin's theory of evolution. This is the enemy's plan in an effort to rob God of His glory. Satan desires for all people to suppress the truth that God has revealed about Himself in creation (Rom. 1:19-20). But in spite of

this thorough and concentrated effort, there are still millions of people in America who believe in the Creator God to whom we all will give an account.

The confession of children or apparently ignorant and naive people build the walls of God's fortress against the enemy. Paul put it like this: *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.* (1 Corinthians 1:18-21). If we need proof of this truth, *consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth* (1 Corinthians 1:26).

The enemy and avenger has tried for thousands of years to silence God, but His majesty continues and testimony to that majesty never ceases. That testimony cannot be silenced because . . .

Our Majestic God Manifests His Majesty in Creation (vv.3-9).

David rightly wondered "What are we compared to God's majestic creation?" (vv.3-4) We should be awestruck when we observe God's work. Praise for God's handiwork is fitting. David was and wrote, *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place* (v.3). What do you think about when you look at the heavens? Are you content to whistle, "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"? Do you ever take time to consider the work of God's fingers?

To *look at* is to perceive, learn, come to understand, and enjoy. God desires for us to seriously consider what He set in place with his fingers. The word *fingers* emphatically reminds us that God creating all things of this massive, intricate universe was not difficult for Him. Do you want to be impressed with what God created with His fingers? Added to the immensity of the universe, we need to consider that the earth is 25,000 miles in circumference. It spins at 1,000 miles

per hour with such precision that we set our clocks according to its spinning in order not to miss very important appointments. It circles the sun every 365 1/4 days (a distance of 580 million miles) with astonishing precision at 1,000 m.p.h!

The other night I watched a comet streak across the sky. It must have been nearly a foot long and was visible for two seconds! Actually, the head of a common comet can be from 1,000 to 1,000,000 miles long and can have a tail up to 100,000,000 miles long. It travels at speeds up to 350 miles per second. That is like from Greenville to Daytona Beach, FL in one second. And the best response I could muster was, "Wow, that was cool."

Compared to God's handiwork, we are of little account. No wonder David asked, *What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him* (v.4)? George Bailey really could not lasso the moon and give it to Mary. Jump as high as you can and you are still astronomically short of touching the sun. Fly in the fastest, most enduring spaceship or space station and you are still just on the edge of earth's gravity field and gazillions of miles from most of the rest of the universe.

While we create some amazing things, and the computer age astonishes us, we have not created one planet or a star or anything close. Not only does humanity seem insignificant compared to the rest of creation, but within that race we are pathetically common. There are billions of us alive right now, and there really is not that much difference between any of us.

So what makes you think you are so special? That is David's question. Since we are so insignificant, why does God put so much attention on us? This attention from God is especially obvious when we dismiss fantasies like Martians or live on other planets and focus on God's plan of redemption. What is there about us that draws out God's attention (both beneficial and judgmental)?

God made us lower than angels but greater than the rest of creation (vv.5-9). Though not equivalent to angels, God crowned us with glory. *Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor* (v.5). Probably this statement is a reference to the fact that God has made us in His image. We do not have the same powers or characteristics as the heavenly beings. In that respect, we are a little lower than them. But

the Hebrew word translated *heavenly beings* is *eloheim*. This is a name for God. It also is a general work for gods or godlike beings sometimes being used to speak of the sons of God.

Because God made us in His image, He has crowned us with glory and honor. But that image is marred and distorted. Therefore, God the Son became one of us for a little while in order to redeem the fallen creation and in particular win back our glory and honor. The writer to the Hebrew Christians applied this truth to Jesus. *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 (Hebrews 2:9).*

God made us in His image and a little lower than angelic beings. And at the same time, God gave us dominion over the work of His hands (vv.6-8). What are we that God is mindful of us? God gave humans dominion. *You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (v.6).* Mother nature is not our master. God the Creator delegated oversight, governance, management to us humans who He made in His image. We must not subject ourselves to the elements of creation. That is the characteristic of people who have suppressed the knowledge God has given them about Himself in the things He created.

Paul described this natural decline in the first chapter of his letter to the Christians in Rome. *For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles (Romans 1:19-23).*

This kind of perversion leads to a freedom to kill babies who are unwanted, but at the same time go to great lengths to save trees, plants, or creatures that might become extinct. We are not to worship nature; we are to manage, oversee God's created things responsibly. Is it not obvious that this climate change issue is a lie from Satan. If

there is clear proof that we humans are polluting and destroying the resources God gave us (i.e. water, air, etc.), we should be the first people to demand change in management. But when data about God's creation is manipulated in order to allow rulers to have authority to fence people in so they can control them, that is to put the creation over humans. God intends for us to manage His possessions not become subject to them.

Animals are not our equals. In that God gave us dominion, *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 (vv.7-8).* We are to manage and oversee all animals. In fact, one form of management is that God gave many of them to us for food. After the flood, God told Noah, *The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything (Genesis 9:2-3).*

When we fail to manage animals, they become so numerous that we fear them. Sometimes that is part of God's judgment. He promised the Israelites, *"Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins. And I will let loose the wild beasts against you, which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock and make you few in number, so that your roads shall be deserted" (Leviticus 26:21-22).* God expects us to treat animals like animals and humans like the image of God. That is what "dominion" means.

In light of these marvelous truths, the psalm rightly ends with praise to the Lord repeated. *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth (v.9).* The self-sustaining, eternal Creator God is our Master. His character, which is revealed in His Word and work, is glorious, excellent, worthy of all praise. All the earth should testify to God's majesty. The sunrise does. The sunset does. The moon and starry host do. The mighty storms do. The beauty of the seasons does. Do we declare God's majesty by our works and our words?