

What is Mankind?:
An Analysis and Exposition of Psalm 8

by
Terry George Paou

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Introduction

Psalms 8 is one of the psalms in the first of five collections of the Psalter. This psalm extols God's glory while the psalmist is amazed by the God-given dignity of human beings. It is a rather short Hebrew poem but has been the interest of many commentators due to its rich theological significance. Moreover, this psalm was quoted by Jesus in the Gospels and was also employed by the author of the book of Hebrews to refer to Christ. For these interesting reasons, I have also attempted to do the analysis and exposition of this wonderful psalm and to look at some of the ways this psalm can address us today.

Analysis of Psalm 8

The Psalter can be generally categorized into different type or genre, depending on the intent and content of the poetry. Psalm 8 is a psalm of praise. It opens with a declaration of how majestic is the name of the LORD (Heb. **יהוה**, trans. *yhwh*) across the earth. It clearly contains words of praise and exaltation. As the poem builds up, it gives reasons why God's name is majestic (thus is praiseworthy) – because he is the omnipotent Creator of the heavens and of human beings. His works of creation are marvellous and glorious. Moreover, the LORD is also praiseworthy because he acts in sovereign, paradoxical ways (8:2). However, this psalm can also be understood as a wisdom psalm since the theme of meditating on God's work of creation is also well-known in the wisdom literature (see for example Proverbs 3:19–20; 8:22–31).¹ With its overwhelming reference to the Creator God, it is perhaps more accurate to see that this psalm is above all a “psalm to the Creator” which invoke images of creation with the goal of praising him.²

¹ Tremper Longman III, *Psalms*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries Vol. 15–16, ed. David G. Firth (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 79.

² W. D. Tucker Jr., “Psalms 1: Book Of,” *IVP Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008), 583.

The historical background to this psalm is not all that clear and not easily determined. The content of the psalm itself does not hint at any historical event or milieu given that it is rather generic and more theological in nature. However, since the psalm has a superscription which contains “A Psalm of David” it could be originated from the united monarchy period during David’s reign in Israel. Some of the psalms that are attributed to David appeared to allude to many experiences of his life which can be found in the book of 2 Samuel (such as Psalm 3, 18, 32, 51 among others). Although we now know that many of the psalms were composed over a long period, nonetheless they were probably collected for worship as early as the reign of David. His own ability as a musician and his interest in national worship (*cf.* 1 Chronicles 16:7) not only make him a possible author of some of the psalms but the phrase “for the director of music” in the superscript of Psalm 8 suggests that it may have been from an early collection of hymns used in the first temple worship.³ Concerning its authorship, as mentioned above the superscription of Psalm 8 contains the Hebrew phrase לְדָוִד (*ledāwid*).⁴ As previously discussed, the author of this psalm was probably David son of Jesse, the infamous king of Israel. However, it also could have been written by an anonymous author for David’s use or about David, or less likely, by an unknown author who wrote in the tradition of David.

In terms of its poetic outline and structure, Psalm 8 has a rather straightforward arrangement which can be understood as a typical chiasm:

- A Exclamation of praise (line 1, v.1a)
- B God’s glory and his dominion over the enemies (line 2 and 3, v.1b–2)
- C God’s heavenly creation (line 4 and 5, v.3)

³ A. A. Anderson, *Psalms* Vol. 1: Psalms 1–72, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans, 1983), 48.

⁴ For discussions on the meaning of this prefixed noun, see Longman III, *Psalm*, 25–26.

D What is mankind? (line 6, v.4)

D' The glory of mankind (line 7, v.5)

C' The authority of mankind (line 8, v.6)

B' Earthly dominion of mankind (line 9 and 10, v.7–8)

A' Exclamation of praise (line 11, v.9)

Although Psalm 8 can be seen as an eight-line chiasmic poem, however it appears to be consisted of six units of thought. First, the opening words of exclamation of God's majesty written in a single line with two cola (verse 1a). Then second unit of thought contains two poetic lines: the first line is a bi-colon (verse 1b), the second is a tri-colon (verse 2). It speaks about God's glory in the heavens and his incomprehensible ways. The third unit contains two poetic lines: both a bi-colon (verse 3), speaking about the grandeur of God's heavenly creation. The fourth unit of thought also contains two bi-colon lines (verse 4 and 5). In a chiasmic arrangement, it forms the centrepiece of the psalm. This focal unit marvels at how God has gloriously made human being. From this point, the poem moves back outwardly as the sixth unit of thought speaks about how God has bestowed humanity with authority to rule over the rest of the earthly creation; creatures on the land, in the sky and in the water (verse 6 to 8). Besides a single bi-colon line (verse 6), it contains two more poetic lines: a bi-colon (verse 7), and a tri-colon (verse 8) thus mirroring the above second unit of thought. The last unit of Psalm 8 is a single bi-cola line (verse 9) which functions as the closing words of praise and is similar to the opening words of verse 1a. As such they both function as an *inclusio* bracketing the rest the poem.

As typical in Hebrew poetry, the poetic lines of Psalm 8 is also consisted of parallel phrases. In verse 1b (second line), the phrase "You have set your glory" is supplemented by "above the heavens," forming a synthetic parallelism. Likewise in verse 2 (third line), the three cola form a synthetic parallelism as indicated by an intensification of thought from "Out

of the mouth of babies” to “you have established strength” to “to still the enemy” (ESV). There is, however, another reading option which argues for a complementary between line 2 and 3 (verse 1b and 2a). Since line 3 is a prepositional phrase which cannot stand alone, in this option it is also plausible to consider “Out of the mouth of babies” as completing “You have set your glory above the heavens.”⁵ As such, it results in the understanding of “babies and infants” as those who “give” the glory to Yahweh – those who are the weak, frail, and threatened.⁶

In line 4 and 5 (verse 3), we found two types of parallelism in sequence: in the fourth line, “When I consider your heavens” and “the work of your finger” is synonymous (note that the second colon of this line is an ellipsis) but in the next line, “the moon and the stars” is further described by “which you have set in place.” Then in line 6 (verse 4) and line 7 (verse 5), which form the centrepiece of this chiastic psalm, we found double synonymous parallelism between “what are mankind...mindful of him” and “son of man...care for him”, and between “made him a little lower than אֱלֹהִים (’ēlōhîm)” and “crowned him with glory and honour.” Line 8 of the psalm (verse 6) also consisted of synonymous parallelism while in line 9 (verse 7) and line 10 (verse 8), we have synthetic parallelism in which “flock and herds” is expanded by “animals of the wild” and “birds in the sky” by “fish in the sea.” However, in the third colon of line 10 (verse 8c), “all that swim the path of the seas” appears to be synonymous to “fish in the sea” in the second colon.

As the psalm concludes, the last line together with the first line of this poem, as previously mentioned, function as the *inclusio* which frames the rest of the psalm within the exclamation of praise to Yahweh, the sovereign Lord over all the earth. As such, it sets the

⁵ See for example, Judah Kraut, “The Birds and the Babes: The Structure and Meaning of Psalm 8,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 100, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 12.

⁶ Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 261–2.

mood for the whole psalm, namely promoting an attitude of awe toward the creator⁷ – that God is so much praiseworthy and to be marvelled at because he works through peculiar and unexpected ways.

Apart from parallelism in each line of Psalm 8, there are also noticeable larger correspondences between its units of thought. Line 2 (verse 1b) appears to form an alternate parallelism with line 4 and 5 (verse 3). Together, these three lines seems to suggest that the glory of God is revealed in the sky through the light-emitting bodies (moon and stars) which he has created and set in their places. In the same way, the tri-colon line 3 (verse 2) also forms a kind of parallelism with line 6 (verse 4). Both units of thought speak about the weakness or frailty of the agent (babies and feeble human beings) through which God has chosen to accomplish his purpose – to defeat his enemies and as stewards over his earthly creation. In addition, there is also a clear building up of thoughts from line 7 to line 10 in which the psalmist elaborates on the God-given purpose of mankind because they are made a little lower than *’ēlōhîm*.

The chiastic structure of Psalm 8 deserves further literary attention. Apart from the clearly intentional placement of the exclamations of praise in the opening and closing lines of the poem (A and A' as the *inclusio*), we may also notice that the second and third lines (B) correspond to the ninth and tenth lines (B'). Literarily, this chiastic pairing is given plausibility by the repetition of the phrase “heavens” (בְּהַשְׁמַיִם, – *šāmāyîm*) in lines 2 and 10. In terms of their meaning, element B corresponds to B' by sharing a common theme, in which both express the extent of a dominion – God's dominion and man's dominion respectively.⁸ In element B', the psalmist elaborates the extent of man's dominion over the natural world (the land, the sky and the sea creatures) while in element B earlier, the psalmist speaks about

⁷ Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalm* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 107.

⁸ Kraut, *Birds and the Babes*, 20.

the extent of God's majesty "above the heavens." Of course this pairing does not reflect symmetrical parallel since God's dominion is not "localized" in the heavens like that of human's dominion on earth since God's glory is above and beyond the heavens (and thus beyond all creation).

The parallel of lines 3 and 9 is more difficult to see. Nevertheless in both lines, there are three entities which fall under God's and man's subjugation: enemies, foe, avenger and flock, herds, wild animals respectively. In B and B', the will of one actor (God or man) is imposed upon the three beings.⁹ In line 3, the effort of God's enemies is rendered futile by God's wisdom and dominance accomplished through his much weaker agents while in line 9, the mostly stronger-than-human land animals is similarly harnessed by the wisdom and God-given ability of human being. In this way, lines 2 and 3 gives a picture of God's dominion in the first half of the psalm which finds an analogous picture of human dominion in the second half (line 9 and 10).

As we move further into the third level of the chiasmic structure (C and C'), lines 4 and 5 find their parallel in line 8 of the psalm. Here we find that the phrase "the work of your fingers" in line 4 corresponds literally to the phrase "the works of your hands" in line 8. The language of "setting" is also present in both, where in line 5 God has set "the moon and the stars" in place, while in line 8 God has put "everything" under mankind's feet. In the C element, the emphasis is on God's marvellous power in creating and ordering the heavens while in the C' element, the emphasis is on the delegated authority given to the human being over the earth. In terms of meaning, just as God's heavenly creation, such as the moon and the stars, are under God's dominion and care, he has ordained that his earthly creation, such as the land, the sky and the sea creatures, to be put under the dominion and care of mankind.

⁹ Ibid, 22.

As noted earlier, the two bi-colon lines 6 and 7 form the centre pair of this chiasmic psalm. A broad degree of consensus has emerged as a result of the widespread identification of these two lines (D and D') as the key thematic verses of Psalm 8.¹⁰ As in many chiasmic literatures, the emphatic focus appears in the centre of a poem while the remainder of the psalm is carefully structured as the outer frames.¹¹ These pivotal lines recognize the insignificance of man in comparison the enormity of God's glorious heavenly creation, resulting in a humble amazement "what is man (אֲנוֹשׁ – 'enōsh)?"¹² and "(what is) the son of man (בֶּן אָדָם – ben 'ādām)?"¹³ The psalmist marvels that God not only pay attention to the mortal and fleeting human beings but actively cares for them. And the reason why mankind is specially cared by God is because of their exalted status within the created order, being created to be only "a little lower than אֱלֹהִים ('ēlōhîm)" and crowned with "glory (כְּבוֹד – kābôd) and honour (הָדָר – hādār)"¹⁴ – an allusion to Genesis 1:26–27 in which mankind ('ādām) is created in the image of God ('ēlōhîm).¹⁵

¹⁰ Ibid, 23.

¹¹ See for example, John Welch, "Introduction" in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. J. W. Welch (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), 10.

¹² Commonly translated as generic "man," אֲנוֹשׁ ('enōsh) emphasizes mankind in a frail, weak and mortal existence. See, for example, James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Updated and Expanded Edition* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), s.v. "man."

¹³ אָדָם ('ādām) is both the proper name of the first human and a designation for humankind. The term בֶּן אָדָם ("son of man") signifies human beings in a collective sense. See Paul Ferguson, "Adam" in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 134.

¹⁴ כְּבוֹד (kābôd) and הָדָר (hādār) is within the semantic range of אֲדִיר ('addîr – translated as "majestic" in line 1) and הוֹד (hōd – "glory" in line 2). See Longman III, *Psalms*, 81.

¹⁵ There are no consensus among scholars regarding the precise meaning of אֱלֹהִים ('ēlōhîm) in Psalm 8:5. In the OT, the word 'ēlōhîm (a plural form of אֱלֹהִים ; 'ēlōhîm), which literally means "gods" is also sometimes used for angelic beings (Job 1:6), pagan deities (Exodus 12:12) and even used to refer to unjust rulers (Psalm 82). However, here in Psalm 8, it is more likely used to refer to the Creator God himself as in Genesis 1:1 since this psalm is obviously about Yahweh, the God of Israel. After all, human beings are created in the image of God which is clearly alluded to in 8:6–8 (cf. Genesis 1:26–28). See Ibid.

Exposition of Psalm 8

Taking our cue from the intentional arrangement of the psalm, we can observe that Psalm 8 is intended to communicate the transcendent sovereignty of God over all of his creation (as emphasized by the *inclusio*, lines 2 and 3) and to express deep appreciation that God has made humankind the pinnacle of his creation (the emphatic focus of the psalm). At the outset, we can recognize the covenantal context of this psalm. It is addressed to specifically to Yahweh “our Lord” (Heb. אֲדֹנָי – *’ādōnê-nū*), which identifies him – the One who has graciously entered into a covenant relationship with Israel (*cf.* Exodus 24:8) – as his people’s master or sovereign ruler. But Yahweh is not only the Lord over his covenant people, he is also sovereign over all the earth as illustrated by the phrase “how majestic is your name in all the earth!” The fact that Yahweh’s reputation is magnificent throughout the world is a claim that he is more than just a local or national deity. It meant to signify the other nations’ conscious acknowledgment of the majesty of Israel God and that the dominion of Yahweh extends well beyond Israel. He is after all, the sovereign Creator of the heavens, humankind and all the animals of the earth as elaborated in the rest of this psalm.

As indicated by its chiastic structure, the central theme of the psalm is man’s uncomprehending but grateful recognition that God – whose dominion covers the entire universe – has created humanity in the highest dignity and installed them with divine-like powers of dominion over the natural world.¹⁶ Human beings are crowned with “glory and honour” and given God-like authority because they are created just “a little lower than *’ēlōhîm*.” Following the interpretation that *’ēlōhîm* refers to the Creator God, this psalm suggested that humanity is the pinnacle of God’s creation. Human beings are certainly less than God but they are closer to God than anything else in the created order.¹⁷ Nowhere in

¹⁶ Kraut, *Birds and the Babes*, 16.

¹⁷ Longman III, *Psalm*, 81.

Scripture are we told that any other creatures, angelic or animal, were created like this. Humanity are created for a special relationship with God and for a crucial role in God's creation.

The focus on mankind's elevated position and dominion in this psalm appears to intentionally evoke Genesis 1:26–28, which narrated how God created human being in his image so that “they shall 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” and “fill the earth and subdue it” (1:26, 28). Apparently, Psalm 8:5–8 is the psalmist's rendition of the creation of man in the image of God where mankind are crowned with glory and honour and given God-like dominance over the earth. God is glorious, and humanity as God's image-bearer reflects that glory, like the moon reflects the light of the sun. Moreover, as in Genesis 1:28, God made mankind rulers over the rest of world by given them dominion over “the works of your [God's] hands” and putting “everything under their feet.”

Mankind's honoured position in God's creation in the psalm is framed by a resounding declaration that the ultimate majesty and glory belong to Yahweh, the sovereign Lord. With literary artistry, this psalm presented us with the doctrine of man. Humanity is created with dignity and intrinsic value which originate from God himself as the majestic Creator. We are created for a pivotal role as God's vice-regents, as rulers of his earthly creation who are subjected to him as the sovereign Lord over the heaven and the earth. Human beings are given the responsibility as benevolent rulers who would care for God's creation and be good stewards of it, not tyrants who would exploit God's world.

Apart from the two main themes discussed above, we can also notice a sub-theme inherent in Psalm 8. As previously noted above, line 3 and 6 on the psalm appear to form a thematic parallelism where both lines speak about the weakness or insignificance of the

agents through which God has chosen to accomplish his purpose. In line 3, the transcendent God chooses to use the mouth of puny and powerless children and infants to overpower – as suggested by the phrase “establishing a stronghold” – the presumably strong avenging enemies in battle. Likewise, God chose mankind, who are dwarfed by the immensity of the universe, to be vested with authority and made masters over the immense creation. This paradoxical principle expresses the wonder of divine choice, wisdom and God’s sovereign actions in accomplishing his purpose.¹⁸ God seems to take delight in using a frail and weak agent to defeat or put to shame the strong and powerful of this world (*cf.* 1 Cor. 1:27–28).

Psalm 8 was used a number of times in the New Testament. In Matthew 21:15–16, Jesus uses the third line of this psalm to answer the Jewish religious leaders when they were angry hearing the children in the Temple courts shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David” in his praise. Jesus was quoting from the Septuagint version which contains the phrase “you have ordained praise” rather than “have established a stronghold” as in the Hebrew text. Nevertheless, the quote is appropriate since the children’s praise challenges Jesus’ enemies and it probably enraged them further because the quote effectively puts Jesus in the place of God.¹⁹

Words from this psalm were also cited or at least echoed in 1 Corinthians 15:27 and Ephesians 1:22. In both instances, Psalm 8 was read in the light of Christ. While Psalm 8:4–5 seems to speak of the insignificance yet elevation of humanity over creation, in 1 Corinthians 15:27 Paul cited the second cola of line 8 (“has put everything under his feet”) with particular reference to the defeat of the power of death which Christ defeated by his resurrection. Meanwhile in Ephesians 1:22, Paul also alluded to this phrase when he wrote, “*God placed*

¹⁸ J.A. Motyer, “Psalms” in *The New Bible Commentary 21st Century Edition*, eds. D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer and G.J. Wenham (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 492.

¹⁹ Longman III, *Psalm*, 83.

all things under his feet and appointing him to be the head over everything for the church” (italics mine) – similarly referring to Christ victorious resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God.²⁰

The most extensive use of Psalm 8 in the New Testament can be found in the book of Hebrews. In 2:6–8 the author of Hebrews employed Psalm 8:4–6 by using the Septuagint version which has “lower than the angels” – where the Greek ἄγγελος (trans. *angelos*) is used as the translation for the Hebrew *’ēlōhîm*) – to expand his exposition on the superiority of the Son of God (cf. Hebrews 1:4–13). Here we find perhaps the most Christological interpretation of the psalm over-against its original anthropological (or even royal) understanding. Apparently, the author understands that Psalm 8:4–6 together with Psalm 110:1 contain reference to things placed under Christ’s feet. The author employs Psalm 8 in such a way to indicate a time during which the Son came down to earth, taking on a position (as a human being) that was lower than the angels.²¹ He interprets the phrase “You made him a little lower than the angels” as referring to the incarnation of Christ where he apparently reads “a little lower” as “a little while” (Gr. βραχύ – *brachu*), which is a plausible reading in Greek (cf. 2:9a). The latter fits the author’s line of thought that Christ lives as human being for a brief time before being exalted back to heaven.

In this usage, Psalm 8:4–6 moves from the statement of Christ’s humiliation to a statement of Christ’s glorification as a result of his exaltation. The thoroughly Christological interpretation of Psalm 8 by the author of Hebrews affirms Christ’s identification with humanity, namely his role as representative of humanity.²² He understands Jesus as the “son

²⁰ Noticeably, in both usage, there seems to be an allusion to Psalm 110:1 as well, used in conjunction with Psalm 8:6.

²¹ George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews,” *The NIV Application Commentary Series*, eds. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 98.

²² Ibid, 100.

of man,” the one made “lower than the angels” for a time and the one God “crowned with glory and honour” and “put everything under his feet.” Furthermore, he also specifies the means by which Jesus was crowned with glory and honour: “because he suffered death” (2:9b) on behalf of God’s people.

The usage of Psalm 8 in the book of Hebrews suggested Jesus Christ to be the “fulfilment” of the psalm’s ideal. Since the Fall, the biblical narrative indicates that mankind has no longer able to subdue the earth freely (*cf.* Genesis 3:17–19). Moreover, the New Testament also recognized that “all [people] have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). This means that sinful humanity now lack the glory that was once theirs as bearers of the divine image ²³ – rendering us “less-than-truly human.”²⁴ Therefore the “man” of Psalm 8, the “second Adam” and the true human one, now exalted to God’s right hand, ruling over the works of God’s hands, is the one who has restored the image of God in humanity. As a result, it ultimately envisions that human beings found their humanness and dignity only in Christ. Only when humanity are united to Christ and indwelt by his Spirit that we fulfilled our vocation as divine image-bearers with glory and honour.

Contemporary Application of Psalm 8

Psalm 8 celebrates God’s glorious splendour, marvels at his immense creation and recognized our puny insignificance in comparison. Yet at the same time, the psalmist acknowledges that God has created mankind so special and assigned us to be stewards over his creation. This reality should lead us, as the psalm both begins and ends, to declare “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” This psalm invites us to marvel

²³ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 226.

²⁴ As Paul would also argued, through his incarnation Jesus fulfilled the human vocation for “just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man [Jesus] the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

at the greatness of the Creator God and his unimaginable power that outweigh the vastness of his creation. With the invention of telescope and its ever-advancing technology, today we have come to know that the universe is an immeasurably huge space, exponentially bigger than what the ancient psalmist was able to observe. And all of these are created by the God who simply said “let there be...” Thus how incomprehensibly greater is the One who created it all! Indeed how exponentially small and insignificant we are among the galaxies. But even more marvellous is the fact that God is so mindful of us, such a puny being among the created order. Reading this psalm should causes us to humbly marvel at God’s love in caring for a small creature like us. Furthermore, the wonder, mystery and even destructive power of nature that we often seen or heard about in the media ought to first and foremost remind us of the benevolent Creator and compel us to worship him rather than merely causing us to be fascinated by or afraid of the elements of the natural world.

From this psalm we also learn that even though mankind are far too small and weak, yet God has chosen to put us in the most significant place. Therefore God cares so much about each human person and each one is important to God. Because mankind are created just “a little lower than God” himself, each person is created equal and valuable in God’s eyes. This is what gives every human being intrinsic value and purpose in this world. As such, one should treat each person with dignity and respect as beings created in God’s image. No one, from whatever place, race, family background, upbringing, social status, or walk of life should be despised or worse, treated as less than human – including criminals or perverts. No matter how much a person has sunk below standard morality, he or she is still a human and should be treated as one whom God cares about. This also means that, as Christians we cannot glorify the majesty of God while treating our fellow human beings with contempt.

According to Psalm 8, God has assigned humanity such a pivotal role as rulers over the works of his hands, to be responsible stewards of God’s earth. It also reminds us that this

world is not ours but belongs to its Creator. Human beings are mandated to care for the world and to make it flourish. As such, Christians should speak against the greed of industrialists and corporations that often exploited the nature with no regard for its beauty and preservation. Like the environmentalists, we should also care about the environment and work towards creation care for the glory of God. Meanwhile, as individual believers, perhaps we can start doing this by being care enough to conserve energy, water, paper and other household materials that we usually use without much consideration. This suggestion might not sound significance, and we may feel that there is nothing much we can contribute for this cause but just as God in his wisdom can use “children and infants” to defeat his enemies, we should trust that he can also use our seemingly insignificance effort for his purpose. Because Jesus has come to redeem humanity we have another chance, through his sovereign grace, to walk as God originally intended – as responsible stewards of his world.

Conclusion

Being one of the most well-known psalms, Psalm 8 compels God’s people to acclaim his majestic name and to meditate on his glory which is displayed in his heavenly creation and in humanity. Through an intentionally arranged chiastic poem, the psalmist expresses wonder at the exalted place of humanity in God’s created order. This rather short psalm is nevertheless rich with theological-anthropological significance and was read through an extensively Christological lenses in the New Testament. This ancient poetry is very much relevant today, especially over the background of modern sociological issues and ecological concern.

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