

Fact Sheet for **“O LORD our Lord,  
How Majestic Is Your Name in All the Earth!”**  
**Psalm 8**

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What kinds of things make you think well about yourself? What kinds of things make you think poorly about yourself? Do you think too highly about yourself, or too lowly? We live in a world that has given us all the wrong signals for this. We have been taught to always find ways to praise everyone, and never to chastise anyone. I have never been a fan of the term “good self-esteem”. I prefer rather an “accurate self-esteem”. What better place to start than what God says about us in his Word! Psalm 8, a psalm of David, is a wonderful place to start to encounter how God created us. It is the psalm from where we get our song “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

**ESV Psalm 8:1 To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.**

The first sentence in this Psalm is all of verse 1.

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

Notice LORD (Yahweh) and Lord (Adonai). Yahweh is God’s name that he revealed to Moses in the burning bush. Adonai means “sovereign” or “master”, and stresses God’s dominion over all that he created. David is saying, “O LORD, our master”. You can almost hear him praying. “Majestic” speaks of God’s magnificence. God’s “name” is his revealed character that is exalted above all creation. David ends the first half of this verse with a reference to all the earth. His name should be praised everywhere. Compare this with the words of the Seraphim in Isaiah 6:3. David then ends verse one with a reference to the heavens. The earth and the heavens are everywhere we can look!

**You have set your glory above the heavens.**

Then David wrote a verse that at first glance seems almost out of place.

**<sup>2</sup> Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength  
because of your foes,  
to still the enemy  
and the avenger.**

An avenger is someone who is revengeful and vindictive. David marveled that God even uses the words of children to establish his strength before his enemies. You could say that God uses the words of children to praise him before his enemies. Paul echoes something similar in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

Was this verse out of place, or was it almost prophetic? On the day after Palm Sunday Jesus cast the moneychangers out of the temple, and the Jewish leaders sought to kill him. That same day the blind and lame came to Jesus in the temple and he healed them. The children were shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David”, as the people did on Palm Sunday, the previous day. The chief priests and teachers of the Law were indignant. Jesus then quoted the first part

of Psalm 8:2 in Matthew 21:16. Although Jesus didn't quote Psalm 8:2 about enemies to these Jewish leaders they would definitely have made the connection about enemies to themselves. In terms of an accurate self-esteem a question that needs to be asked is, "Which side am I on?" Am I a friend or a foe of God?

**<sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,  
<sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him,  
and the son of man that you care for him?**

There are two Hebrew words for "man" here. The first ("what is man") emphasizes his weakness and his mortality. The second ("son of man") is the word for "Adam". When you look up to the heavens at night... when you see image from the Hubble telescope... when you think of God's great creative acts... then you think of yourself... how small do you feel? David felt the same way. Yet God, the creator of the heavens is mindful of us and cares for us! Wow! How does this feel to an accurate self-esteem? This reminds me too of John 3:16. The creator of the earth and heavens is mindful of us weak mortals! He cares for us!

**<sup>5</sup> Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
and crowned him with glory and honor.**

Some versions of the Bible read "heavenly beings". Others read "angels", as does the Septuagint. But others read "God". Why? The Hebrew word being translated is "Elohim", a plural word. *When referring to God this is called a "plural of majesty", much like a monarch using the plural "we" to refer to himself.* But the usual translation of this word is "God". Psalm 8:4-5 however is quoted in Hebrews 2:5-9 clearly using the Greek word for angels. Besides, I am bothered to think that man has been created by God as only "a little lower" than himself.

The author of Hebrews is also employing a Jewish method of application to refer Psalm 8 to the foremost representative of man... Jesus. But Psalm 8 is rightly referring to all people. Think about it for a moment. God has graciously created us to have a very high role in all his works.

**<sup>6</sup> You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under his feet,  
<sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen,  
and also the beasts of the field,  
<sup>8</sup> the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.**

David does have an obvious allusion to Genesis 1:26 here.

**<sup>9</sup> O LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

An accurate perception of ourselves must begin with God's thoughts about us. He created us, cares for us, and has given us a great position in all that he has made. We can either build on that foundation by being a friend of God, or tear it down in our lives by being an enemy of God. Sometimes an accurate self-esteem call for encouragement. At other times it calls for chastisement.

Build an accurate self-esteem in God!