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“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place.” Psalm 8:3

Main Idea: Imagine the moonless night, bright and clear, when David looks up to the night sky and sees God's wonder and glory and immediately bows to worship Him in awe. Oh, how Great and magnificent our God is, His wonder and splendor is beyond any, thought, word, or philosophy! His Magnificence is beyond any land or planet or star system or galaxy or universe. His Glory encompasses beyond it all! He radiates from His heaven through all what is known and unknown. Even children and babies can see his Glory reflected in the universe and can praise Him in indefinable utterings. He establishes His boundless strength against your enemies and care for His children.

We may wonder who we are when we look to the sky or at the images of space telescopes that peer to the end of the known universe, we see the countless galaxies of color, beauty and grandeur; and, God's fingerprints and presence are throughout, as He is the Creator and Sustainer Who reaches beyond our comprehension. We may wonder can He possibly care for me, do I have a place? And, I am dumbfounded by the answer, the very Truth of God. He does care and love me ever so! He makes us in His image with the love and care we will never understand, even crowning us with His glory. God has even set us above His creation, allowing us to be stewards of it and work it, even the responsibility of plants and animals belongs to us to care for and use wisely. How Exalted and Great God is! How majestic and glorious and excellent He is throughout all!

Contexts and Background:

A Psalm of David, a praise song and a wisdom and nature poem, has a powerful theme, the Excellence of God, His works, creation and deeds. This Psalm also asks two of life's deepest and oldest questions, “Who am I, am I important?” Who is man, humanity, in the backdrop of the vast, mighty universe and a reverence of God. Am I loved? Do I have a place? Do I have meaning? Philosophers have asked this since the dawn of man. People like Freud, Marx, Pascal, Darwin and at Plato's' forefront, have asked and wondered at our meaning. Humanity is created with a purpose, not to be slaves, but to work as stewards who have dominion over creation under God's greatness and loving power. This all points us to who we are in Christ (Matt. 22:42; John 8:24).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Gittith*. This is a Hebrew word for a harp-like striking instrument like a zither, and refers to the ‘song of the winepress,’ to celebrate God's bounty and goodness. It may also refer to the Philistine city of Gath, where perhaps musical instruments are made like the “Gittite lyre” and/or descendants of Obed-Edom the Gittite, who was a Levite (2 Sam. 15:18; Psalm 81; 84).

Verses 1-4: This Psalm is the example of a proper hymn; an introduction of praise to God that is honoring and celebrating His glory, then being grateful for His grace and then revering Him for our lives for all that He has done. God is to be worshiped with our joy and appreciation (Matt. 21:15-16).

- *LORD, our Lord*. *LORD* HERE IS YAHWEH, meaning God is excellent and supreme in all of His attributes. This is a personal name for God that God revealed to Moses, worthy of our worship and reverence (Ex.3:14). *Lord* means sovereign ruler, that God governs and has the right to and does establish covenants with His people.

- *Majestic...Name.* The Exaltation and Victory of God, His character and reverence and reputation is sure in the universe. God is sovereign Who created the universe and humanity and Who created persons that are subordinate to God. This realization should cause an overwhelming sense of awe and wonder as well as reverence and gratitude (Gen. 1:28; Ex. 15:6; Psalm 93:4; Isa. 6:3; 42:21; Rom. 1:20).
- *Heavens... fingers.* This ‘anthropomorphism’ refers to God’s power as Creator, Who set the courses of the stars, the universe, in place. *Fingers* or *hand* means created by handiwork, not that God is some kind of hominoid, a body like a person (Ex. 31:18; Deut. 9:10; Job 7:17-21; Psalm 33:6-9; 102:25; 136:5; 144:3-4; Isa. 2:8).
- *Praise of children and infants.* Meaning, The God Who is The Great I AM, personally knows us from the nursery to kings. This refers to the fact that children are wiser and worthier than those who refuse to worship, as our praise is to be directed to God--something the children knew, but the wicked priests did not! *Infants* also means humanity’s helpless state and need for God and a Savior and the contrast of enemies and fools who think they are self-sufficient and have no need for God (Matt. 21:16; Heb. 2:5-11).
- *Foe.* A contrast between the weak and strong. When we are in the Lord, we are strong and under His sovereignty. No matter who wicked humanity is, they can’t out evidence God’s glory; God is still good and in control (Matt. 21:16; 1 Cor. 1:27).
- *Avenger.* This is someone who strikes back in unjust blame, abuse, and hateful revenge; here the adversaries and haters of God (Psalm 44:16).
- *Consider.* The entirety of creation, from stars to sea, acknowledges a Creator (Isa. 40:26; 45:18; 51:16).
- *Set in place.* God is in control, sovereign, everything has a meaning and purpose, so much more is humanity.

Verses 4-9: God as Sovereign Ruler over all is interested in and cares for us. This part of the Psalm 8 is quoted many times in the NT (Matt. 21:1-17; 1 Cor. 15:27-28; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:5-10). For the Christian, this Psalm applies to Jesus as the perfect Man as well as fully God, who comes to redeem His people and restore our dominion over nature to steward, not abuse (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 15:27; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:22; Col. 3:10; Heb. 2:6-8).

- *What is mankind/humankind.* Refers to the dignity that God gives His creation and especially to us, His children. In God’s incomprehensible vastness, how little humanity is, yet He gives us worth! The Israelites had a high value of humanity. We have value, worth, a purpose and a plan. Our lives have meaning and are valued. This was revolutionary to other ancient people groups, especially those of no wealth who considered themselves unworthy because of no status in society. In their religions, Mesopotamian, Canaanite and Greek, humans were accidents from gods’ fighting and were used as toys and servants. In God’s Lordship, He gives us purposeful work as stewards of His creation, we have worth and meaning, no matter who we are in societies status or wealth (Job. 7:17; 26:6; Psalm 9:20; 90:3; 103:15; 144:3).
- *Mindful... care for.* God is sovereign; yet, God is compassionate, Who condescended to us as a loving parent to a helpless newborn baby (Job 7:17; Psalm 144:3; Jer. 23:2).

- *A little lower than the angels/heavenly beings.* ‘Elohim,’ usually a name for God; here it denotes divine beings. This tells of how angelic beings like the Cherubim and Seraphim surround God and sing His praises. This Psalm tells us that there is One God, we are not Him! Here is a contrast between God, humanity, and angels. God has total dominion! Only God does; humanity does not. Our pride is pointless and meaningless to His Lordship and refers to the marvel and the holiness and high dignity God who bestows to insignificant humanity with trust with power and authority over the other creatures (Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 82:1-6; 100:3; Isa. 6:2; Heb. 1:13; 2:7-9).
- *Crowned.* Humanity was created to worship God and then rule over creation as God’s vassals as benefactors to maintain order and shine God’s Light. David as king realized Who he really was, that everything is subdued under God; yet, God has him as his steward. For those who are strong and who are weak are to work for Him, what is remarkable and obscure (Gen. 1:28; Isa. 43:7).
- *Rulers/dominion over the works.* As God is the Sustainer of the universe, we sustain the earth. This means we are responsible and it is a privilege and mandate to take care of His creation, to use wisely. Yet, we can only control ourselves when we are properly in Christ (Gen. 1:28; Psalm 110: 1; 1 Cor. 15:27; James 3:7)
- *Under their feet.* All of the universe, all of life, our purpose and meaning is found in God’s Lordship and grace. Our dominion over nature is to be as God is to us--good; thus, we act in God’s will as wise caretakers, use what we need, put back, regrow, resupply as God’s agent.

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

Have you ever looked up at the night sky on a clear night? Have you seen a breathtaking view of a landscape? Have you seen the wonders of a birth or the complexity of a cell on the sub-micro level? Then, have you wondered about God’s glory in it? Or your purpose in His creation?

Have you ever wondered if God truly knows and loves me, and if He cares for me? Do you feel He plays favorites and I am just a background character of no consequence? Well, from this Psalm and many parts of Scripture, the truth is, He does love, He does care and yes He has an intimate plan for you. You matter and have purpose. This should help galvanize your life in a more positive direction if it is not so now.

This psalmist is overwhelmed in His wonder of God, unable to express the Glory of God in words, because no language contains any true definition. No philosophy has any explanation and our mind has no comprehension. As we look to God’s greatness, it is easy to reflect on our meaning; countless philosophers have done so through the centuries. We can even wonder if we have any significance as many scientists ponder; we can wonder if our place has any meaning as theologians have expressed. But, this Psalm tells us we are not lost in the vastness of God’s creation as mere grains of sand in a vast beach. We do have a place. We do have meaning. We are deeply loved and cared for. This can help us see our vital call to place our focus on the main thing in daily life and in our spiritual walk, Christ as Lord! We must see Christ in our life as The Holy God as He is in our faith formation and fulfills us.

Christian Life Principle: Worship is the essence of the Christian life and our response to God’s Holiness, Wonder and Work. Christ indeed loves you, you are important, you matter, He has a plan and a purpose for you! Therefore, we worship Him (Psalm 8; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 2:6-8; 13:15-16)!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Have you ever looked up at the night sky, away from the city lights on a moonless bright and clear night? What did you see? Do you see God's wonder? Why do some people not?
2. What causes you to immediately bow to worship Christ? Why are we important in God's sight?
3. Have you ever wondered who you are philosophically, like do I have a place in the world? Do I have meaning or purpose? So, what does it mean to you that God deeply cares for you, that you matter? What does this Psalm tell us?
4. What do you think are in the proper format for a hymn or our worship and praise to God? How can this Psalm be a great outline to make better praise songs and hymns?
5. How do you honor and celebrate God's glory in your life outside of church?
6. Why do many people think they are self-sufficient and have no need for God?
7. God has placed us as caretakers over nature. How can we be better at this? How can you be a wise caretaker, use what you need, put back, regrow, resupply as God's agent?
8. No matter how wicked humanity is, they can't out evidence God's glory; He is still good and in control. How can this theme from this Psalm give you comfort when life seems dire?
9. What can your church do to help its community see a sense of awe and wonder as well as reverence and gratitude for Christ? That Christ personally knows us, and wants to save us?
10. How can you communicate to someone who is down that God indeed has a love and care for them we will never fully understand?
11. What can you do to be better at being grateful for His grace and then reverencing Christ as Lord for our lives for all that He has done?
12. How can you worship God with your joy and appreciation?