

Songs of Creation: Psalm 95:1-7 and Psalm 8

Overfamiliarity may rob these two vibrant *psalms of creation* of their energy, their ability to describe and create experiences of the glory of God in God's creation. May the Holy Spirit fill us and the words of these psalms with Life-giving grace as we read, reflect on, and receive these *hymnic psalms* as spiritual nourishment.

Hymns about creation in the Psalter underscore the whole cosmos as God's handiwork (Ps. 8:3) and serve to "de-divinize" totally the natural world and focus on YHWH as Creator, Ruler, and Sustainer of the whole creation. Only God creates and sustains the universe and all of its inhabitants.

Read slowly and reflectively **Psalm 95:1-7** and the nine verses of **Psalm 8** and answer these questions:

1. Write down as many things as you can about *what each psalm teaches about God*.
2. Then write down as many things as you can about *what each psalm teaches about human beings*.
3. Reading **Psalm 8** out loud, notice the flow of ideas: beginning praise in earth and heavens (8:1-2), the wonder of contrasting the Creator of the infinite universe with finite man (8:3-8), and ending praise which echoes the first line (8:9).

How does **8:2** offer a further explanation of God's power? What do you learn about God's creative power?

How might you paraphrase the two questions of **8:4**? How has God "visited us," "cared for us" according to both the Old and New Testaments?

How does **Psalm 8** impact your *perception* of creation? Notice how it offers you and all humans *perspective* and *purpose*.

4. In *Open and Unafraid*, David Taylor treats **Psalm 8** as the "key text... reminding us what it means to be human." What are God's *creation purposes* for human beings? (Taylor, pp. 178-179)

David Taylor describes God's *creation purposes* with these words:

They include a life marked by *joyful praise, wonder-filled thanksgiving, care-filled stewardship of creation, hopeful work of restoration and reconciliation, gracious communion with others, and faithful living*. And we can succeed at this work only because we are confident that Christ himself has faithfully performed this human

vocation in obedience to his Father, the Maker of heaven and earth, and by the power of the life-giving Spirit. (Taylor, pp.179-180)

Let's ask God to search us and point out how we are progressing in each of these 6 areas.

How would you rate yourself on a 1-10 scale?

___joyful praise

___wonder-filled thanksgiving

___care-filled stewardship of creation

___hopeful work of restoration and reconciliation

___gracious communion with others

___faithful living

How is God currently working in you in any of these areas? What might you do to join him in his work? How might the Psalms help you? (Taylor, p. 182)

5. The God who created us wants to know *us* and include *us* in his plan. The writer of Hebrews sees a Christological application in “the son of man” of **Psalm 8:4**, which was Jesus’ primary self-designation in the Gospels.

Read Hebrews 2:6-9, Philippians 2:8, and John 3:16.

(The way to rule the world is seen in Jesus’ sacrificial giving of all for us. Rule is not about brutal control but about giving of self.)

What stands out in these verses for you now in your life in Christ?

What challenges you? What gives you hope?

Here’s a prayer written by Tim Keller in response to **Psalm 8**:

Majestic God, how is it possible that we *fill* your mind? You love and care for us so much you were willing to become a weak infant and vulnerable child, all in order to save us. Now help me, in all my daily interactions, to treat every person I meet as a being infinitely precious in your sight. Amen. (Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*, p. 12)

Write your own prayer in response to Psalm 8.

6. How can we encourage one another to consciously accept our “crowns of glory and honor” and to consciously see “crowns of honor and glory” on the heads of every human being, even those with whom we disagree?

How are you handling being both “made in the image of God” and being a finite creature? How does time out in creation help?