

Week 1

# THE SON OF MAN

PSALM 8

## OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

- Book of Common Prayer, p. 827

## INTRODUCTION

Psalm 8 traces the great movement we have been exploring in the Creation Psalms, examining God in relation to his cosmic universe, as if we are looking through a telescope. In the devotions, we have considered the heavens—the planets, stars, and skies. We have tracked the formation of the earth—from the mountain peaks to caverns in the ocean depths. In Psalm 8, the field focuses, as if looking through a microscope, on the finite and fragile existence of humans, amplifying our importance. We have come to the pinnacle of God's creation—mankind.

In Psalm 8, we feel as if we have interloped upon a private setting, even a time of prayer, perhaps on a scenic hilltop in the Judean countryside. There we find David, the psalmist, contemplating the greatness of God. Inspired by his setting, and perhaps his own personal concerns for his future, David—the shepherd and king—speculates on mankind's role in God's great universe. Through this prayerful inquiry, God casts a vision for the unique and exalted calling for mankind. Like other elements of God's created order, we are meant to reflect God's glory. But embedded into this Scripture is also God's provision that enables us to fulfill our calling—namely Jesus Christ. Psalm 8 is a beautiful reflection on the correlation of God and mankind, his vision for our lives, and his plan to teach us how to be fully alive.

## KEY VERSE

*“What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”*

PSALM 8:4

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## GETTING STARTED

What are some of the great achievements of humanity?

What are some of the greatest failures of humanity?

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## ENCOUNTER THE WORD

PAYING ATTENTION TO THE TEXT AND MAKING OBSERVATIONS

### Read Psalm 8.

1. While David is evidently stargazing and meditating on the vastness and brilliance of God’s creation in verses 1–3, what is his big, cosmic question in verse 4?
2. What are indications that humankind holds a special place in creation (v. 5–8)? In what way is this designation a noble or royal calling?

**Note:** The Hebrew the word for “glory” can mean “weight, importance, or worthiness.”

3. What attributes of man in this passage reflect the character of God? (You might want to consider some of the traits we encountered in the Creation Psalms.)
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## WATCH VIDEO

The video teaching can be found at [biblestudymedia.com/pilgrimspath](http://biblestudymedia.com/pilgrimspath).

### Video Notes

#### BIG CONCEPTS:

- Mankind's calling is royal and comes with sovereignty.
- The fall of mankind—the loss of dominion and the crown
- Jesus fulfills the calling of mankind.
- God accomplishes his plan for humanity through his Son, Jesus.

## ENGAGE OUR HEARTS

#### APPLYING SCRIPTURE TO DEVELOP INTIMACY WITH GOD

4. In what ways are we unable to fulfill God's calling to humanity on our own?
  - a) What is not under our power or dominion?
  
  - b) What things tarnish our crown or diminish the glory God had in mind for us?
  
5. How was God "mindful" of us when he sent Jesus (the Son of Man—Jesus's favorite title for himself) to walk in our humanity?

6. What character trait(s) would you assign to God, based on his plan of salvation enacted through Jesus, his Son? (See also 1 John 4:9–10.)
7. Irenaeus, the early church father and theologian said, “The glory of God is man fully alive.” The disciple John said we have seen God’s glory in his Son Jesus (John 1:14). What does that mean for us? (See also John 17:22–23.)

*Jesus said, “I came that they might have life and have it abundantly.”*

JOHN 10:10

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## ENCOURAGE OTHERS

### BEARING WITNESS TO JESUS IN THE WORLD

8. Is there someone you know who needs to be “crowned” with glory (using the definition in **Note** after question 2)? What are ways that you can esteem others that will help them remember their divine, royal calling?
9. Jesus acted completely under the authority of God while he walked on earth, and yet he had authority over everything. In what capacity do you have dominion or authority (family, work, community)? Are there any issues that need to be more fully submitted to God’s authority? How can you do that? What do you think will be the outcome?
10. When Jesus wore his crown on earth, he lay down his life for others. Is there someone you need to forgive or bear their burden? Is there something (a behavior, an attitude) you may need to set aside or sacrifice in order that another may live more fully?

# P R A Y E R S

If you are doing this study as part of a group, you may want to share your prayer requests with each other. There is a Prayer & Praise Journal on p. 202 where you can keep track of your group's requests or write your own. Have someone close in prayer or pray the following prayer together.

## C L O S I N G   P R A Y E R

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
*Amen.*

- Book of Common Prayer, p. 214