

## Psalm 8 – The Greatness of God

### Intro:

#### **1) Word picture – the box more than the gift**

- a. Ever given a gift to a baby child expecting them to tear off the wrappings and be mesmerized by the gift contained inside – only to have the child spend the next hour playing with the box rather than the gift?
- b. As parents you sit there and think – “You missed the point. The Box is just the wrapping...the real treasure is what is inside”

#### **2) Psalm 8 is a great reminder to not miss the real gift**

- a. Its easy for you and I to enjoy the “wrappings” of life – yet fail to move past those blessings to the Blessor
  - i. Focused on this on Wednesday
  - ii. Not just thankful for the “things” but give thanks to the Giver of those things

#### **3) In Psalm 8 – David looks at the stars, the moon, the beauty of creation – and calls our attention to what those things ultimately point to – V1a**

- a. Psalm 8 teaches us not to stop at the box – but to look at the hand that gave it

#### **4) Notice the inscription**

- a. This is a Psalm we all need
  - i. To the chief musician – choir director, overseer of music
  - ii. This Psalm made its way to the hands of the one who was in charge of supervising the Levitical musician in worship – 1 Chr. 15:16-22
  - iii. This inscription indicates that what is contained was intended for PUBLIC worship – not just private devotion
    - 1. Its for all of us – because we all need the truth contained inside
- b. It’s a song that has a majestic, celebratory nature to it that helps lead God’s people with an uplifting, joyful, celebratory tune
  - i. 3 views on what “Gittith” means
  - ii. Most commonly accepted – a musical instrument from Gath
    - 1. Gittith – root word: Gath
    - 2. As a musical term relating to Gath, it appears to indicate a type of Philistine instrument
    - 3. We know David was somewhat familiar with Gath during his exile (1 Sam. 27)
      - a. He very well may have adopted this instrument into Israelite worship

- iii. A type of musical tune or melody
  - 1. Because it's a note for the song leader, it could have been instruction on "how" this was supposed to be played
  - 2. Several psalms have tune indications on them – so this idea would not be out of the normal
  - 3. The Psalms that use this inscription (8,81,84) are all celebratory in nature suggesting a celebratory tune
- iv. A festive Psalm
  - 1. Root is Gath – meaning winepress
  - 2. Indicates that this song may have been reserved for harvest-time festival or a time associated with the joys of harvest
    - a. Us – thanksgiving
  - 3. This fits with the view of Ps. 81 – mentioning the feasts

**5) Notice the context of this Psalm – there are six Psalms that precede this one all of which have a heaviness to them**

- a. They are Psalms which call for God's deliverance or help
- b. This Psalm changes the tone
  - i. Its like the light at the end of the tunnel
  - ii. Its like the celebration once God delivers

**6) The Psalms focus is the Greatness of God**

- a. Notice V1 and 9 have the same wording
- b. Inclusio – gives us brackets to understand what the Psalm is about
  - i. Everything between those statements point us to the greatness of God!

**7) Sermon – The Greatness of God**

- a. Text: Psalm 8:1,2
- b. Goal – to lift our minds and hearts beyond the blessings to the Giver and see this holiday season through the lens of God's greatness

**God's Splendor is over all (V1)**

**1) This Psalm begins with a bold declaration of the GREATNESS of God**

- a. Not only that – but it is a counter-cultural claim about the Greatness of God
  - i. David says God's name is excellent "in all the earth"
    - 1. Yet we know, not all the earth exalts God's name
    - 2. We know there are places that reject the name of God
    - 3. We know there are places that have yet to hear the name of God
  - ii. This statement is an affirmation that God's greatness does not depend on the acknowledgment of man – it is a fact of who He is
- b. This Psalm invites the people of God to align their life with the reality of who God is

**2) God's Name is Exalted**

- a. Notice the uniqueness in the language David uses in this opening phrase
- b. To the un-studied eye – the opening phrase may read with redundancy
  - i. Why mention Lord again if David calls God Lord to begin with?
  - ii. Truth – the two names David uses here are not the same word
    - 1. LORD – personal, proper name for God, His covenantal name, unmistakable name
      - a. This name places an emphasis on God's position
      - b. The "I Am who I Am"
      - c. "The significance of this name is that God exists in and of Himself" – James Johnston
      - d. It's a name speaking of God being the Real, Un-created Creator of all things
      - e. The name puts a bold separation between God and creation
        - i. All of creation is dependent
        - ii. God is not – He is not in need of anything – He is self-existing
    - 2. Lord – Adonai – places an emphasis on God's authority
      - a. conveys the idea of Master, Ruler, the One who Governs, or King
  - iii. notice that David includes the people in this statement
    - 1. Not "my" but "our"
    - 2. This is the first time in the Psalms that David uses the plural in this manner inviting God's people to join him
  - iv. This opening phrase speaks of:
    - 1. Who God is
    - 2. Who God is to us

- c. Who is this Lord?
  - i. Excellent – lofty, great, splendor, reference to majesty
  - ii. The word excellent refers to “..the radiant, revealed splendor of who God is and what God does.” – S. Lawson
- d. Name – in Bible times it refers to the character, reputation, and revealed identity of a person
- e. In other words – David opens this Psalm saying “God is great!”

### **3) God’s Nature is Expansive**

- a. “in all the earth” – meaning God’s greatness and majesty is not confined to Israel’s borders
- b. This phrase is counter-cultural to the context of how the people viewed their deities
  - i. The common concept of a god was that of a local deity
  - ii. This phrase reminds us - God’s glory is not regional or tribal, it’s universal
- c. David is emphasizing the universal renown of who God is
  - i. This is an emphasis all throughout the Bible
    - 1. Ps. 24:1 - “The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof..”
    - 2. Malachi 1:11 - “..my name shall be great among the gentiles..”
    - 3. Isaiah 6:3 – “..the whole earth is full of His glory.”

### **4) God’s Nobility is Expressed**

- a. “who hast set thy glory above the heavens”
- b. David uses a literary technique here called “merism”
  - i. By mentioning “earth” and “heavens” David is including everything in between also
  - ii. All of creation permeates with the majestic name of Yahweh
    - 1. Ps. 19:1-3
- c. Fascinating – glory
  - i. Word often translated honor, majesty
  - ii. Refers to the splendor of God put on visible display
  - iii. In other words – you cannot ultimately deny how great God truly is

**5) Verse 1 reminds us that the glory and greatness of God is high above the heavens and cannot be contained by them**

- a. The greatness and glory of God far exceed the heights of creation
- b. The Creator of heaven and earth is far greater than heaven and earth and sits as Master over all heaven and earth
- a. Many kingdoms, peoples, and ideologies may seek to exalt themselves above God, but the fact remains God is over all

**6) Personal takeaway – God is great on the mountains as well as in the valleys**

- a. God's display of splendor is not limited to you location!
- b. He takes those who are closes, and brings them closes
- c. He takes those who wander and puts them on the path of righteousness

**God's Strength is over all (V2)**

**1) Verse 1 teaches us that God's is mighty, V2 tells us how God has chosen to display that mighty name**

- a. Verse 2 is really a picture of God's ability
- b. Ordained strength – established might, appointed power, set the stronghold
  - i. Military term referring to setting up a fortress, bulwark, or stronghold
- c. This verse is teaching us some ways the God of heaven has revealed his strength

**2) God's strength is Demonstrated through the Weak**

- a. Interpret - "Even the feeblest of humanity, with their sometimes – inarticulate speech, and in all their inabilities, function as firm testimonies of God's glory..."
- b. In other words – real strength lies in Godliness, not physical might
  - i. Opposite of how the world thinks
- c. The idea of verse 2 is that God's strength is more than sufficient to empower the weakest of humanity to overthrow the mightiest foe
  - i. Babes and sucklings – reference to toddlers, small children, and nursing infants (3 years or younger)
    - 1. Usage of these two terms cover the entire spectrum of early childhood, emphasizing all that accompanies those years
      - a. Helplessness, dependence, and vulnerability
  - ii. Why does he appoint his strength to be displayed in this manner
    - 1. So He receives all the glory
    - 2. Paul - 1 Cor. 1:27-29
- d. This verse reminds us – God uses what is small and helpless to magnify His power
  - i. Good news for you – you might struggle with your INABILITIES thinking they restrict God's usage of you
    - 1. Yet – here David reminds us – God uses the weak mightily
  - ii. In other words - God makes His name majestic by using weak people like you and I to His great work

### 3) God's strength is Displayed against the Wicked

- a. Notice what God's display of strength combats
  - i. Enemies – avenger
    - 1. words speak of rival, adversary, one who seeks vengeance
  - ii. Notice – the words spoken for the opposition are stated both in the plural and singular
    - 1. Plural - indicating the many that are hostile to God's rule
      - a. David was used to facing many people who lived and spoke in opposition to God – surrounding nations
    - 2. Singular – the chief adversary/avenger – possibly a reference to Satan and the ultimate opposition
- b. Notice what God does to the enemies
  - i. Still – put to silence, to cease, put to rest, root word of Sabbath
- c. Interpret – God has a plan to combat the enemy and opposition
  - i. Sometimes – it may not feel like it, but we have His Word that He does

### 4) God's strength is Declared in His Worthiness

- a. What's fascinating about this verse is how Jesus used it in Matt. 21:14-16
  - i. Notice – Jesus quotes this verses through the Septuagint translation where “strength” is translated “praise”
  - ii. Hebrew word strength can be translated “loud” (2 Chron. 30:21)
    - 1. Since “strength’ in the text is related to what comes out of the “mouth” and it seems that the rabbis of that time often interpreted the word “strength” as “praise” since it can refer to the loud noise coming from the mouth
    - 2. 2 Chron. 30:21 applies this word in the context of praise
  - iii. Matt 21 gives us a good interpretation of what is meant here in Verse 2
    - 1. The foes came to voice their criticism, while the voice of the children sang praises to Jesus
    - 2. It is in this context that Jesus uses this verse
  - iv. What we see here in how this verse is understood and applied by Jesus, that praise a key element to overcoming the enemies and declaring God's strength
- b. Application – there is overcoming power in praising God
  - i. God has ordained praise as a means to still the enemy
  - ii. Sentences:
    - 1. Praise that exalts God silences the enemy
    - 2. Praise may be viewed as “weak” but it sets up a fortress against the enemy in our lives
    - 3. Praise becomes a defense weapon against God's enemies

### 5) Don't miss the Gospel perspective of this verse

- a. By quoting and applying this verse to Himself, Jesus was revealing that this text was a divinely-inspired prophecy about Himself
  - i. Indicates that the Psalm is a Messianic Psalm – speaking truths about the Messiah
- b. If we look at the text through the lens of how it applies to Jesus we see:
  - i. Right praise of God brings Him glory
  - ii. Also see how God purchased the ability to praise Him rightly
    - 1. What we see in this verse is: God revealing to us that through a baby He will overthrow the enemy and the avenger who sought to diminish God's majesty as Ruler over heaven and earth
- c. Through a baby, God has ordained strength and set up a fortress guarding His people and on their lips will be praise
- d. This verse tells us that the enemy does not ultimately win but rather will be defeated
- e. Shows the uniqueness of the Gospel
  - i. Worldly – God would have come down and set up His rule and reign through a display of might and warfare
  - ii. Gospel – Gal. 4:4,5 – “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”
- f. We understand through this passage that there is no other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved!
  - i. What's that name? Jesus



**Closing Thoughts to Ponder****1) God is greater than the chaos of this world**

- a. When culture and society seem dark or unstable, when your situation seems out of control – Psalm 8:1 reminds us – His glory is STILL above the heavens
  - i. Nothing dethrones the God of all the earth

**2) God doesn't need human strength to validate Him**

- a. He desires our heart-felt praise
- b. He displays His glory through the weak – meaning God is not impressed with our:
  - i. Credentials, status, or worldly power
- c. God can do big things through small people who seek to give Him the glory

**3) Children matter deeply in the Kingdom of God**

- a. The first voices God mentions in Psalm 8 are children – not kings, warriors, philosophers, or heroes
- b. The value of children is solidified all throughout the Scripture – cumulating in the sending forth of the Messiah as a baby

**4) God is personal, not distant**

- a. O LORD, OUR Lord
- b. “The God of infinite majesty is also intimately yours
- c. God is both transcendent and relational
- d. This verse points us to the key on how one has a personal relationship with God
  - i. Through Jesus – the One who came as a babe, established right praise, overthrew the enemy, and offers salvation