

=STORIES BEHIND THE PSALMS=

Lesson 6

Psalm 8

AIM: to teach my pupils the story behind the 8th Psalm and the meaning of this marvelous Psalm

POINT OF CONTACT: Since the 8th Psalm finds David looking at the moon and stars and realizing the insignificance of man, it would be wise to consider the heavens. Ask the class how many names of stars they can remember. Discuss with them the formation of heavenly bodies. It might be wise to discuss for a while our space program. Then ask the class what they think about the flights to the moon. Should man explore space? Is he entering into God's domain? Have a discussion for a few minutes about space, the stars, etc.

INTRODUCTION: The Bible has a great deal to say about the stars. It was a star that hovered over Bethlehem. Daniel 12:3b says, "they that turn many to righteousness" shall shine "as the stars for ever and ever." When Deborah and Barak fought against the forces of Sisera, the Bible says the stars in their courses fought for them. Job said that at the dawn of creation the morning stars sang together. In Genesis 1:16, the Lord says He made "the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." In Revelation 1:16-20 and Revelation 2:1, preachers are called "stars," and God reminds us that He holds His preachers in His right hand.

One night David looked at the stars and the moon and realized his own insignificance. Upon this realization, he wrote the great and beautiful 8th Psalm. Let us look at its teaching.

- I. DAVID CONSIDERS THE BIGNESS OF GOD. In Psalm 8:1, notice especially the words, "who hast set thy glory above the heavens." In other words, we could say, "who hast established thy platform above the heavens." In this verse, God is likened to a great performer or an actor. His stage is set on earth, but earth is not big enough for the stage of this performer; hence, the stage is moved to the heavens. However, even the heavens are not big enough for the platform for this big actor. His act is so great, His performance is so magnificent, that His platform or stage must be set, not even in the heavens, but **above** the heavens! How great is our God!
 1. He is omnipotent. This means He has all power. Again and again in the Bible, we are reminded of the omnipotence of God. Jeremiah reminds us there is nothing too hard for God. Over and over again in the Bible, we are reminded with such statements as, "With God all things are possible," "With God nothing is impossible," "All things are possible to him that believeth," etc. God has all power.
 2. He is omniscient. This means God knows everything. He is all knowledge; He is all truth.
 3. He is omnipresent. This means God is everywhere.

- II. DAVID REMINDS US OF GOD'S CONCERN FOR LITTLE THINGS. In Psalm 8:1, God is the Great Actor, the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God; but then in verse 2, David reminds us that God hears the suckling child that cries and that He ordains the words that come from the mouths of babes. Ah, how personal is God that He would be interested in the cry of the baby! There are many such reminders in the Bible.

We are reminded that we are to call God our "Papa." In Romans 8, we are reminded to call Him "Abba," which was the familiar word used by the Jews towards one's father. We would say, "Daddy" or "Papa." God is the great God of the universe, but He is still interested in His children and wants us to speak to Him as our Heavenly Papa or our Heavenly Daddy. This is not to be irreverent but rather to be familiarly reverent toward Him.

God reminds us that He clothes the lilies of the field and that He observes every bird. He reminds us that even the hairs of our head are numbered. So many people look at God as just being a great God in the heavens Who controls the universe. Yes, He is; but He is more than this. He is the personal God Who loves us and is concerned about our every problem.

Time and time again in the Bible we are reminded of this. The Son of God is dying on the cross. God Himself is paying the price of our sins, and yet He takes time to say from the cross to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son." Then to John, He said, "Behold thy mother!"

He is in a great parade through Jericho. Thousands are around Him thronging the street. He takes time to look up to a tree where sits a little fellow. He takes time for the individual. Even while dying He took time to speak salvation to a thief.

- III. DAVID IS AMAZED THAT SUCH A GOD COULD BE MINDFUL OF MAN. Read Psalm 8:3, 4. David said when he considered all God has done, he is amazed that God could be mindful of man. "Man" here is the word "enosh," which means "weak man" or "fragile man." David said, "How could a God so powerful be mindful of a man so fragile?"

The word "mindful" means "to think about." Why would God have us on His mind? He loves us so much that, though we are so weak and He is so powerful, He has us on His mind constantly. How beautiful! How sweet is this!

The President of the United States, or some other great man who leads thousands or millions, is a great person to many people, and yet, to some people he is just "Daddy." To the masses of people our God is a great, omnipotent God; but to some people he is "Daddy," "Heavenly Father," and He is mindful of us. How wonderful it is that God thinks about us!

- IV. DAVID MARVELED THAT GOD WOULD FELLOWSHIP WITH WEAK MAN. In Psalm 8:4b, notice the words, "and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The word "visit" means "fellowship," "to chat with," "to talk with." Isn't that something? David said, "God made all the stars, and He made all the moons and the heavens, and He wants to talk to me."

When Lyndon Johnson was running for President, he came to East Chicago, Indiana, and to the surprise and admiration of millions, he went to a typical home and chatted with a steelworker. Listen! The God Who made Lyndon Johnson chats with His people daily. David finds it so difficult to believe and finds it so wonderful.

If God is willing to fellowship with us, certainly we should fellowship with Him.

- V. DAVID MARVELED AT HOW GOD HAS EXALTED MAN. Notice Psalm 8:5-8. Man is the apple of God's eye, and everything else was made for man. David lists the things that were made for man: sheep, oxen, beasts, fowl, fish—literally all things. This simply reminds David of the great love that God has for man. Why? We cannot understand it. David could not understand it, but it is true. God has a great love for us and wants us to be successful.

CONCLUSION: David starts where he ends and ends where he starts with the same words, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" The reason for God's excellence is because a great God is so personal and so interested in the affairs of His creatures. Lead the class to realize today exactly how much God wants to fellowship with us. How wonderful it is that we may have fellowship with the great God of the universe! When a stranger comes to see an executive, he may have somewhat of a time getting through to him. The secretary may try to guard the privacy of the executive, but when one of the children of the executive wants to talk with Daddy, it certainly is made possible for him. Why? It doesn't matter how great the man is, he wants to help his own children. God is certainly the same way. He loves His own!