

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 10

© 2024 Bruce Waltke and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 10, Psalm 8, a Psalm of Praise. It's going to be an exposition of Psalm 8.

But before we get into the Psalm, let us prepare our hearts to hear the word of God.

So, Heavenly Father, we as a class come into your presence, knowing that you love us so much. You died for us, that you chose us beyond our comprehension. We know that every good and perfect gift comes from you.

Even our faith comes from you and the people who brought the word to us. For we all came somehow through somebody bringing a word to us. Thank you that it came to us as the word of truth.

The Spirit of God spoke to our hearts, convinced us of sin and righteousness and judgment, and brought us to the Savior. You are the God who revealed these scriptures and you are the God who gave them to us, who loves us, help us to understand, and to present them in a way that honors you in Christ's name. Amen.

All right. We're in that section of approach called the form critical approach to the Psalms. One type of Psalm, a very dominant and important type is the hymn, the hymn of praise.

We looked at its motifs and the motifs are called to praise. We thought about the imperative. What does it mean for God to command us to praise? The enthusiasm with which we ought to praise, who actually did the praising, choirs, all of Israel.

It calls upon, as we saw, all the world, but he wants only the moral ones, the ones who live holy lives today by the power of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't want the praise of the wicked. It's an abomination to him.

We looked at the cause for praise and there we had a full-on theology. We saw what a wonderful way to learn theology. It's from the people of God who are celebrating the attributes of God, the God of history, giving it back to God.

It comes back to us as the word of God. We hear theology in words of praise, which I think is the best way to learn theology. We noticed that it celebrates his incommunicable attributes, his aseity, his eternity, and what Hirsch calls the under competence, his omnipotence, his omnipresence, his omniscience, all of which we depend upon, but we cannot participate in.

They're not communicable to us to participate. But on the other hand, there are his communicable attributes, namely his mercy, his faithfulness, his grace, and love. These two together make our sublime God for where he is just all omniscient and all-powerful without mercy or grace, he could be a despot as the gods of the pagans may be.

On the other hand, if he was all grace and mercy, he would not have the power to affect it and bring it about. So, it's just this beautiful combination of the incommunicable and the communicable attributes. We talked about the incomparability of Yahweh.

For my mind, that the solution of an evolution of religion is inappropriate for biblical theology. That is, religion advances from polytheism to the worship of only one God while recognizing other gods to monotheism. I think a better understanding is to distinguish between a theological statement that there is no other God and a religious statement because of the reality that people worship delusions and false gods.

God is incomparable to everything humans can imagine and that everything they imagine is only an illusion. So, we talked about that. We talked about other attributes, his love, his faithfulness, and so forth.

Just said a word and that is the God of creation. We looked at how do we hand that they use the myths of the world around them. They use them figuratively to show that God is the one who created it.

They use the language of myth to show that he is the one that conquered the chaos and he is the true God. We ended with saying a word about the songs of Zion and how there too, it's helpful to know about the Ugaritic text and that Bale's mountain is Mount Zaphon and that all that Mount Zaphon was in Baal religion, Zion is. It's the invincible mountain.

It's where God meets. It's where we meet with God on the mountain. It's where he has victory and so forth.

But after getting a broad view, our method is to look at things more narrowly. So, I picked out two Psalms of praise to be considered. One is Psalm 100 that we looked at at the last hour and a very famous psalm.

We took up some of the famous words and we reflected on that all the earth was to celebrate and they would come to God by knowing that the God of Israel is the true God. His people are the sheep of his pasture and they are the mediators of the kingdom of God on the earth. A tremendous change took place in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament for the Gentiles to come to God, they had to come to Abraham. They had to come to Israel. They had to come to the temple.

In the Old Dispensation, Israel did not go out as missionaries to the world to bring the world to God. The nations came and represented through their emissaries and through their kings. They would come to Jerusalem like the Queen of Sheba did.

She met the King Solomon. In the ancient world, ambassadors would come and they would be at Jerusalem and they would see the worship. Israel is saying, join us in worship with the true and living God.

But Israel never went to the other nations. That did not occur. They didn't have missionary activity as such.

The closest you come to it is with Jonah, who went to Nineveh and preached judgment and called the people to repentance. But that is unique. When you come to the New Testament, now it changes.

Now you have to go into all the world and preach the gospel. We're to tell all peoples about the mediatorial kingdom, about the mediator. There's one God, one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus.

It's interesting that in the gospel of John, it's when the Greeks come to Philip and they say to Philip, we would see Jesus. That Jesus now knows the hour of his death has come. Prior to that, in the gospel of John, Jesus says, my hour is not yet come.

It's obvious that Jesus is on a timetable. He knows he's headed up to his death and he says, my hour is not yet come. But when the Gentiles came and they said, we would see Jesus, he said, now my hour has come.

How did that signal to our Lord? His hour had come. It was time for him to die. Well, the gospel would not go out into all the world until atonement had been made for all the world.

So at the beginning of John, John the Baptist says, behold the lamb of God that take us away the sins of the world. So, therefore, the sacrifice has been made for the whole world. So for the whole world to come to him, there must be an atonement made for all the peoples.

So therefore, with that atonement made for all the peoples of the earth, Jesus says, go into all the world and preach the gospel. And so, we bring Jesus to the world. They don't have to come to us, though they may, but we have a responsibility of bringing that gospel to all the world.

That's what we were talking about with Noah that he is God and some change in dispensation at that point. Now we're at Psalm 100 and this is on page 90 of your notes. So let us read this wonderful psalm.

This is the first praise psalm in the Psalter that Psalm 1 and 2 are introduction. Psalm 1 is the wicked gate, we said, and that it's for those who delight in the law of the Lord that are like the tree planted by streams of water. It is those who are righteous because of their delighting in the law.

They've been a new creation that they can enter into the Psalms. As we put it, will lead to the celestial city. The second psalm is a coronation liturgy and introduces us to the main character of the psalm, who is the king.

And so Psalm 2 is, I have set my king upon Zion, my holy hill, and he's going to rule the entire earth. Ask of me, my son, I'll give the heathen for your inheritance, the ends of the earth for your possession. That's the introduction.

And then immediately we get Psalm 3. And this is when David fled from Absalom and it begins, O Lord, my Lord, how many are my enemies? How many rise up against me? Many are saying there's no deliverance, no salvation for him in God. And so, he's in distress and he says, deliver me, my God, from this distress. That's Psalm 3. We look at Psalm 4 the other day, where it's the distress of a drought and the king is in crisis.

Psalm 5 is in distress. Psalm 6 is in distress. Psalm 7 is in distress.

And now we come for the first time to Psalm 8 and we read, O Lord, O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. And now we have praise for the name of God. And so, this is the first praise psalm.

So, it seemed to me appropriate that we consider this very famous psalm as well, this first praise psalm. What's going to happen now, you're going to get 9 and 10 is a lament, 11 is something of a song of Thanksgiving, but with a lot of lament, 12 and 13. And then you get 14 and it's the psalm that speaks how the depravity of man, there is none that do good, none that do right before the Lord.

We're all sour milk. We've all gone astray. That's 14.

It's interesting because 8 and 14 match each other. 8 is how great man can be. You've put everything under his feet and 14 is how terrible humanity is.

Then 15 through 24 make its own unity. Again, I'll discuss that later on when I talk about editing the Psalter. But I'm trying to give you a feel for where you are in the psalms at this point.

So, this is Psalm 8. Lord, this is Yahweh, Tetragrammaton. We call it the Tetragrammaton because it is the four consonants Y-H-W-H. And we think the vowels are A-E-Y-A-H-W-E-H.

So it is Yahweh, but translated normally by the Lord. And then our Lord in lowercase, which is first one is pronounced Adonai and this one is pronounced Adonai. And it means by master, our master.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You who have set your splendor upon the heavens. From the mouth of children and nursing infants, you have laid the foundation of strength on account of your foes to eliminate the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place, what is a mere mortal that you are mindful of him, a common human being that you care for him? You made him lack a trifle from heavenly beings and you crown him with glory and honor. You cause him to rule over the works of your hands. You put everything under his feet, all flocks and herds, even the wild animals, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the one that swims the path of the seas.

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. On page 90, the next page, I guess it's page 90. I have a discussion on the translation of this verse, the use of this verse by the writer of Hebrews with reference to Jesus in Hebrews chapter two, where we're told that instead of you made him a little lower than the angels, you made him for a little time lower than the angels.

It's a little bit too advanced for this point in our study of the psalm, but there I'm discussing the differences between the Greek and the Hebrew text and what the writer of Hebrews is doing to refer to the career of our Lord. I don't want to do that right away. So I'm going to skip that.

We're not ready for it. All right. I come then to page 91.

My major concern here is that we have a basic structure in our mind before we get into the details of the exegesis. So, I'm mainly concerned about the rhetoric on top of page nine, namely the structure of the psalm. This psalm has what we call an *inclusio*, an *inclusio* of its theme.

That it begins with, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. And it ends with, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. So instead of a call for praise, it's a declaration of praise.

It's a little different. One of the things about studying Psalms, it strikes you, this is a really a declaration of praise that all the earth is now praising the Lord. That's a little bit different.

Instead of calling on the earth to praise the Lord, all the earth is praising the name of the Lord is the posture of the psalm. That's the theme. Now the theme is developed in two stanzas.

The two stanzas are in alternating parallelism. First of all, he talks about the creation, the order of creation, and the splendor of God in creation. Then he moves from that to the order of history, the order of redemption, and how God eliminates the evil from the earth.

So, it's the splendor of God in the creation and the splendor of God in history and how he eliminates to eliminate the enemy and the avenger at the end of verse three. Then we come back and again, we have the glory of God. When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon of the stars, and so forth, it's the greatness of the creation.

Then it's the man who rules over it and brings everything under his dominion. So, we go from the order of creation to the order of redemption and back then to the order of creation with more detail to the night sky. Then the order of redemption of mankind brings everything under the dominion of his feet.

So, you could see that's basically the structure of the psalm. I'm going to skip the chiasm and go directly then on page 92 for the exposition. So here I just go word by word, as I usually do to understand it.

We've already discussed the Lord, the I Am, the Yahweh, and I don't need to do that again. Notice it's our, that all the nations should join them, Israel, as we had last time, know that the Lord has made us. So, Lord, our Lord is the people of God are praising this.

You may notice later on the psalm, we move from the our to the king himself. When I consider is the second stanza. So, he moves from the I Am, our sovereign, our master.

So whatever glory the man has, he is a servant of the Lord. He accomplishes his task by his acknowledgment that he serves the Lord in a broad sense, and that God is the master. We talked about the last hour.

When he says, how majestic, this is in your page, page 92, I define the word. It means mighty or splendor in power. It's used of the Red Sea.

It's used of his dominion over the storm and sea. It's used of his right hand that shattered the Egyptian-picked troops. So, this word Adir, how majestic is how powerful is your name in defeating your enemies.

How majestic is your name? Because in this psalm, he's going to defeat his enemies and bring everything under the feet of his people to rule it all. So Adir is the appropriate word for how majestic. I think you can understand why I became a Hebrew professor.

It's when I said, I began to get into theology that I realized everything went back to words. That's when I became absorbed in languages because I could see that I couldn't handle it accurately or with finesse unless I knew what words meant. I knew how to work with languages.

So that's what I'm doing here. We're learning theology, but we're learning it on another level where many people don't want to go. There are a lot of students that spit out the Hebrew and they joke about the Hebrew.

I think it's probably the professor's fault who doesn't make it clear to them the value of what they're studying and so forth. Today, the name, his name is majestic. Today I say his name is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There I illustrate the Trinity by the C E G chord and his unity and his name. We glorify his name by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That is the name by which we are baptized into the triad God because that is the finished product of his revelation. I think I need not say any more there. Now we have some reflection.

I did something a little differently here, instead of just strictly exegesis, I'm reflecting a bit and I'm showing how necessary it is that we praise the name of God. I'm going to say something very radical. If we don't praise God, he will die.

That's very radical. Let me explain myself because you know, I don't really believe that, but it's true at the same time. That's a good paradox.

I'll explain it. Some philosophers helpfully make a distinction between ontological knowledge and epistemological knowledge. So, we may be going back in a bit of philosophy, but hang with me.

It may be worth your while to understand why I'm saying, that if we don't praise God, he will die. Ontological knowledge is the way things actually are. Epistemological knowledge is the way humans know.

It's always relative. Ontological knowledge is absolute and certain. Epistemological knowledge is always incomplete.

So, let me illustrate what I'm talking about. When Elena and I moved back from Philadelphia, back from Westminster Seminary, which was a wonderful experience, and went back to Regent, we had a rented apartment. In the apartment house, just the next block from the college, there was an apartment on the eighth floor.

Elena and I could have, she could have been on the balcony of this apartment and I could have been in my office and we could have communicated by semaphore. We were that close to it. It was ideal.

Furthermore, it was beautiful. We overlooked English Bay. My sister said, Bruce, your living room is 30 miles by 30 miles.

We looked over these mountains and bay. I watched the clouds. It was beautiful.

It was absolutely wonderful. And the most amazing part was it was affordable. I mean, we had a limited budget and we could rent this apartment.

It was not big, but it was perfect. There was only one problem with it. They didn't allow animals.

Elena loves our cat. Now we're torn, the perfect apartment, but we have a cat. What's the only one? Our cat is perfect.

It didn't scratch, it was very clean and didn't make any noise. The truth is, no one would know we had a cat. So, we moved in cat and all, because nobody would know we had a cat.

We thought, of course, we couldn't live with this. But anyway, that's what we did. Sin is that we are, we moved in with the cat.

Well, there was a problem. The cat jumped into the window. Now we had a problem because the landlady made, well, there's a cat in the window.

So, Elaine, clever as she is, we had a stuffed cat that looked exactly like our cat, a tabby cat. So, she put the stuffed cat in the window. Deceptive as we were, sin is that we are, she would move the stuffed cat from window to window.

So, if the real cat jumped in the window, the landlady wouldn't know that we had a cat. Naturally, as Christians, we couldn't live with this. So, Elaine says, finally, she said, we'll have to give up the cat.

It's not right. I said, okay, let me have one more chance. So, when it came time to pay the rent to the landlady, I said to her, you know, we in philosophy make, some philosophers make a distinction between ontological knowledge and epistemological knowledge.

Thankfully, she said, what does that mean? So I said, well, ontological knowledge is the way things are, and only God knows. Epistemological knowledge is always relative and that's how humans know. She said I don't understand what you're talking about.

So, I went back to my old philosophy. I said, well, let us take, there's a tree in the North Woods. It's 200 miles removed from all human beings.

Nobody knows the tree is there. The tree falls down in a windstorm. So, by ontological knowledge, the tree fell down, but only God knows it.

Epistemologically, the tree didn't fall down because nobody knew it. She said, what are you driving at? I said, well, take a cat. She got the point.

Ontologically, yes, we have a cat, but epistemologically, we don't have a cat. I was outwitting Bill Clinton on this one. So, she got the point that what I was driving at, nobody knows we have a cat.

So ontologically, yeah, but epistemologically we don't. She said to me, have you darn cat. She got the point.

Now you can see what I'm saying. Ontologically, God exists, but what good is it if nobody knows it? You see, if nobody knows it, he doesn't exist for any practical purposes. See, well, I know maybe Jupiter exists.

Don't believe it. Maybe Zeus exists, but nobody praises him. He doesn't exist.

So, suppose we all stop praising God. You see what I mean? When I say he would die, he would cease to exist. There's a problem with that, however.

The problem is it makes God's existence dependent upon me. And we know that's all wrong. So, I put here the resolution.

Notice what Jesus says. This is in Luke chapter 19, when he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices of all the miracles they had seen. Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, teacher, rebuke your disciples. I tell you, he replied, if they kept quiet, the stones will cry out. There will always be, if humans didn't praise him, the stones will praise him.

God cannot die. You see that he will not, he will always have a people to praise him. He called you and me for his praises.

He exists in our praises to him. This is amazing of our dignity and who we are as we praise the Lord. People know he exists.

So, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic and powerful is your name in all the earth as they're bringing praises to him. So that is a theological reflection on this theme of the psalm. Now this theme is developed and it's in the first stanza, splendor in the heavens.

And then amazing, and this needs understanding from the mouth of children and infants, you've ordained strength and so forth. But the first part is his splendor in the heavens. There are two parts there and I have, well, you set your splendor in the heavens, the order of creation, and now the order of redemption for the mouth of children and infants.

You've laid the foundations of a strong bulwark in order to eliminate your foes, to eliminate the enemy and the avenger. I say that God's rule over the heavens is immediate, but God's rule over the earth is mediated through his people. It's not immediate.

He rules through us. Let's come back to that. First of all, I say displays his glory in the heavens.

Then we're going to come back to the second idea that children eliminate his enemies. First of all, then his glory in the heavens, you who have set you hold the means royal splendor of righteous rulers. I point here out word study, often glossed glory used exclusively of a righteous ruler.

He has this tremendous splendor of a glorious, righteous king. It's normally translated, the preposition *al* is often said to be above the heavens. Maybe he will have set your glory above the heavens, but the preposition *al* can also mean upon the heavens.

So, I think it's more likely that as you look up in the next one, it's the moon and the stars that reveal his handiwork and his greatness. So, I'm more inclined to think this should be translated, you put your glory upon the heavens. So, as you look up to the heavens, you see the splendor, you see this awesomeness of God.

The heavens is, we call it the sky, but actually in their phenomenological way of looking at it, what was translated as the firmament in Genesis 1 is translated the dome or vault in modern translations is actually the sky is looked upon as a transparent crystal dome holding up the water above it. It's purely phenomenological. That's the way it appears.

So in Egypt, for example, it shows the sun in a boat going across the watery waters above. Interestingly, it's phenomenological. It's a way of speaking about God and understanding things.

In Shamash, the sun God, or one of the representations of him, he sits on his throne and he sits on the flood. We saw that in Psalm 29, God sits above the flood. The flood is the imagined waters up there that we're talking about.

So anyway, his glory is upon the heavens, that dome that's up there using that kind of phenomenological visualization of the world. I thought, well, let's reflect upon that because if that was true in David's world, how much more true is it in our world with the Hubble telescope? It's utterly beyond all comprehension. I talked there about the size of things.

I mean, it's just beyond all, the glory of God to me is our galaxy is what a hundred thousand light-years across. So going at the speed of light, 186,000 miles a second, it would take you 100,000 years to get across our galaxy. Then we learn now at the Hubble telescope, there are more galaxies than there are sand on our seashores.

There are billions of galaxies. That's beyond all comprehension. I went to the, what do you call it? Where you have astronomy.

No, not the observatory. It'll come to me where they show stars and they teach you about astronomy and so forth. I went to the one in New York and there they showed a galaxy.

It was in the shape of a crab. Between the two legs of the crab, as it were, there was a space of 700,000 light years, seven times the size of our galaxy. And there are billions of it.

I mean, it just absolutely addles your mind, the size of this whole thing. The truth is, and here's where the problem comes from many people, Jupiter is six times larger

than the earth. So, if you were on Jupiter, the Earth would be six times smaller in brightness.

From the edge of our galaxy, 100,000 light years. Oh, from the edge of our planets with Pluto, for example, and so forth from the edge of our planetary system, the size of the earth is the size of a pixel on a TV screen. It's that small.

And from the edge of our galaxy, it couldn't be even, it couldn't be seen with the Hubble telescope. It's that small and seemingly that insignificant. And then you stop to think and it will raise the question, what is our little houses? They're microorganisms.

And what are we on the scale of that? What does it all amount to? And there are many people who feel, well, we're just nothing, which denies what we know. And as I view it, the earth is a stage. And on this stage, a drama is being played out between right and wrong, justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, Christ and Satan, the church and the world.

The great spiritual issues are being played out on this earth and I think nowhere else. And that gives tremendous significance. You don't need a big stage.

A stage compared to the whole world is just almost infinitesimal. But on that stage is played out truth. And that's how I understand the earth.

This is the stage within the whole cosmos where the spiritual struggle is being played out. And we're part of that play and who we are. What is man? That's what he's going to say.

We rule the whole thing. We're going to conquer evil. We're going to conquer injustice.

We're going to conquer delusions and lies. That's what we do in this play on this infinitesimally small planet Earth. So, it has, it's very significant, not in size, but in truth.

So I list some of that. I have a few pictures in here of these galaxies. And yeah, these are some galaxies that the Hubble telescope has seen.

I just thought I'd add them. They're beautiful really in their own way. I mean, we live in a marvelous age that we can see these things.

And the second thing I've reflected on is not only the size of the Earth but the speed of everything. So I began with the speed of the earth. That's at the equator is rotating at a thousand miles.

What is it? 25. Yeah. Thousand miles per hour.

We are traveling at a thousand miles per hour. The galaxy is spinning around the center of the galaxy at 120 kilometers per hour. No, no, I skipped one.

The Earth, the orbit of the Earth, we are hurtling around the sun at 66,000 miles per hour to complete the circuit in one year. It takes, you have to go at 66,000 miles per hour. I think the satellites go at 18,000.

So, we're going more than three times the speed of a satellite. Then the sun is revolving at the same time. Finally, space is expanding.

This is the great mystery of astronomy. That space is expanding at 1.8, the speed of light. It is the speed of light, 186,000.

Space is expanding at about 360,000 miles per second. Who can comprehend that? It's just how your splendor upon the heavens. We have more knowledge of that splendor than anybody could before us had.

That's why, because it's expanding so fast, that's why I think it's, this is a whole discussion, but I think, I don't think the Bible dates the earth. I think the problem is the fossil record. As I understand Genesis 1, the earth is already here when you begin.

I don't think you can talk from the Bible about a young earth or an old earth. You can't prove it any which way. So, I'm very open to the idea that the earth is 13.9 billion years old or 14 million years old.

Because when I pick up Genesis, the earth is already here, but it's in chaos. That's how I understand the chapter. So, therefore, it's not an issue for me.

But that's why I accept that we're so many million years old, but that's why I can understand with the speed of space, the quasar, for example, is 24 billion light years away. How did it get so far? That's much older than the Big Bang Theory. The reason is earth is expanding at this tremendous rate of speed.

The big question today is where is the energy coming from to push out space? How can we comprehend space within something that's not space? This whole thing is beyond comprehension for me. But all of that, I think that's where we are. So the whole thing to me is a proof of God.

I give you some quotes here from Einstein. As I said, what is incomprehensible is that it is comprehensible. This is out of my Old Testament theology where I'm discussing this a bit.

On the basis of the hypothesis of the Big Bang, which is almost everyone accepts. And on the basis, if you wish to work with it, of evolution. Some secular and Christian scientists have abducted the anthropic-cosmological principle.

According to this principle, physical qualities, such as a strong nuclear force constant, a gravitational force constant, the expansion rate of the universe, the average distance between the stars, and the values of other physical qualities had to be so precise to affect through evolution, a thinking creature who could reflect upon their origins. The point of the, if you accept the Big Bang, which I do, evolution, which is, I think, not to be discussed here. And that's a whole discussion.

If you were to accept that, everything had to be so precise to bring into existence a human being, a thinking creature. That's the only point I wish to make. Everything had to be so precise.

So according to the best explanation is that there was an intent and design from the beginning. Nobel Laureate, Professor Steven Weinberg, though a skeptic notes, life as we know it would be impossible if any one of several physical quantities had been slightly, had slightly different values were they off just a bit. We wouldn't be from just physical viewpoint.

Roger Penrose, Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University and Wolf Prize winner for his analytical description of the Big Bang finds these quantities so fine-tuned for life that an intelligent creator must have chosen them. For him, it's irrefutable. The only way he can explain it.

It's so precise. One constant that requires fine-tuning has to do with the energy of the Big Bang. Weinberg quantifies the tuning of one part in 10^{120} to the 120th power.

It had to be, that is a 10 with 120 zeros. It had to be that precise for us to be here. Michael Turner, a widely quoted astrophysicist from the University of Chicago describes that tuning with a simile.

The precision is as if one could throw a dart across the entire universe and hit a bullseye one millimeter in diameter on the other side. That would be the possibility. If you were a hundred thousand miles away you could throw this dart and it would hit a bullseye that was one millimeter thick.

So just a few things here that, you know, that before the Hubble telescope, the size of the proton is 1.836, larger than the electron. We're at a fraction different. The proton larger than the electron, matter would not exist as we know it.

It's that precise. The sun has to be exactly 93 million miles away. The further away we freeze, too close, we burn up.

Whether the earth closer to the center of the cosmos, we would be destroyed by radiation. We are just in exactly the right spot. We're also in the right spot to observe elsewhere.

There's too much light. Here we have enough darkness that we could see the sky. There's just so much.

That's incredible to me. This is one of the strengths of Hugh Ross's book, *Reasons to Believe*. He also points out, he did his major at Cornell in astrophysics.

What I didn't know until I read the book that the Earth would spin at two and a half cycles. No, it would spin one cycle every two and a half hours. The reason it's 24 hours is the moon is going in the opposite direction.

The moon is a brake that keeps us from rotating faster. Can you imagine if we had a circle around every two and a half hours? But the moon slows it down. It's all perfect.

Water expands. And that fascinates me. It's the only matter that fast.

If it didn't expand, we'd become an ice cube. The earth's reflectivity has to be perfect. That is to say, the light that hits the earth is a certain amount that it absorbs.

It's a certain amount that it reflects out into space. If that is not precise, photosynthesis does not take place. Life would not exist.

When I consider your splendor, you have set your splendor upon the heavens. So, Aristotle says, should a man live underground and converse with the works of art and mechanism and afterward be brought out up into the day to see the several glories of the heavens and earth, he would immediately pronounce them the work of such a being as we define God to be. So, Aristotle is saying that if anyone knows anything about mechanics and art, and they had been in a cave, they have studied human art and human mechanics.

Then they stepped up out here. It would be so much more glorious than any human could have achieved. And he said you would pronounce whoever did this, God.

But Paul gives a theological element to it. He says, the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. Since what may be known about God is plain to them because God has made it plain to them.

But since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power, and defined nature have been clearly seen being understood from what has been made so that people are without excuse. So, for Paul, it takes on a theological dimension of a moral imperative. Well, now having spoken about the greatness of God and having spoken of the earth as a stage, how does God eliminate the evil? And we read from the mouths of babes and sucklings, nursing babes, you have laid the foundation of strength to eliminate your foes and to eliminate the enemy and the avenger.

That's going to be a good explanation. I've read that many times. Is that all about? It reminds me of my father.

He thought that he could keep his mind from atrophying by memorizing Scripture. So, he would memorize large portions of Scripture in his late nineties even. So, he would go along and he'd quote Hebrews 11, one of his favorite chapters.

He would quote large portions of John. He just loved the Scriptures. And so, he memorized it for selfish reasons, but just really for Godly reasons.

So, he came to Psalm 8. So, I remember from the King James, of course, O Lord, O Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth. You who have set your glory upon the heavens from the mouths of babes, you've established strength to eliminate the enemy and avenger, whatever it is there. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moons and the stars, you have set in place.

What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you visit him. And you've put all things under your feet and so forth. So, my dad would recite it and he would say, O Lord, O Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth.

You have set your glory upon the heavens out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you've attained strength. When I consider your heavens, the moon and the stars. And when he was finished, I said, but dad, you eliminate verse 2b to eliminate the foe and the avenger.

And dad said, yeah, I know, but I don't know what that means. So, one way to solve it is just not recite it. So, I'm going to do my best to make it clear now what this is talking about from the mouths of children and babes.

First of all, the exegesis. I think it should be, these are figures of speech. I think it should be clear that a mouth cannot lay the foundation.

It must be a metonymy. And what he's talking about, the mouth refers to the petitions and praises of the psalm. So, it's through their petitions and praises that you eliminate the foe.

So, the mouth obviously has to be a figure of speech because the mouth cannot build a bulwark or eliminate people. Then more than that it's children and nursing babies. So how can nursing babies give petitions and praises? It must be a metaphor for people who are no stronger or greater than, and they're just like little nursing babies.

So, it's from the petition and praises of people who are no more than most weak that you could think of, the weakest person. So, I think Luther is right here. Luther rightly interprets the children and nursing babies as a figure, I would say a metaphor and hyperbole to describe the kingdom of God's unique character of humility.

And unless you become like a little child, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. So it's from people who are not depending upon themselves. They are not claiming any strength in themselves.

All of their strength is in the Lord and it's their petitions and their praises. And then strength is probably another metonymy for a citadel, a place of protection. So even the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

It's a place of, and that's why the NRSV, I think has a bulwark or protection. So, the strength is it can't be defeated and it will triumph. So, it's really compounding figure of speech upon figure of speech to get across the point very tersely.

This is poetry. Poetry, you have to expect terseness and figures of speech. And this is very terse.

So, mouth is petitions and praises. Babes and nursing babes is the weakness of those who offer up human weakness at faith. And they are strong and they eliminate the foe and the self-avenger.

To me, that makes wonderful sense. The avenger is the faithless who do not petition God to avenge the wrong. They are strong in themselves.

And so, they avenge themselves. Whereas the church doesn't avenge itself. It depends upon God and lives in faith that God will right the wrongs and so forth.

So, I have reflections. The psalm assumes a hero, a protagonist in spiritual battle against an enemy, an antagonist. The protagonist prays, I am.

This is from, so through the praise of children and infants, you have established a stronghold against your enemies, the savage, the foe, and the avenger. And the antagonists are those who do not praise, but avenge themselves instead of trusting God. So, we're engaged in a battle, a spiritual battle of faith versus force.

We're in a spiritual battle and God is going to be the victor. We're going to win through faith. That's the struggle, faith, and unbelief.

We have, we're being thrown at us the darts of unbelief today. Satan is strong, but we know Christ is stronger. Here's Psalm 149.

Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of saints. Let Israel rejoice in the maker. Let the people of Zion be glad in their king.

Let them praise his name with dancing and making music to him with tambourine and harp. For the Lord delights in his people. He crowns the humble with salvation.

Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their bed. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples. To bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shekels of variant to carry out the sentence written against them.

This is the glory of all the saints." Notice the double-edged sword is, well, their praise is in their mouth and a double-edged sword is in their hands. We'll talk about this later. It is not that God's people don't use means.

They don't use means. They don't avenge themselves, but in the Old Testament, they did have swords and there was a use of the sword. But I'll talk about that more when I get to Psalm 3 and how faith and means go together.

I think it's worth that while. You know, Bruce, the thing that I think of, how to, you know, we don't live in a, like in an adversarial environment right now, anyway, from having a major battle going on, you know, these kinds of things. So, we, but we have other types of battles, you know.

I'm landing over here battling gainful employment, right? Battling what? Gainful employment. Here's a highly talented, skilled international lawyer that does transactions with international companies, but now the oil patch is dead. And he doesn't have work.

And Bill, the young guy, his business is literally teetering on collapse because of the economy. So there's a struggle, there's a fight, there's a, that's going on here. It's sort of like this, all this is talking about a real battle.

But there's other types of battles that aren't physical. They're dealing with circumstances. And that's a big challenge out there today.

People need encouragement. They, you know, where do you turn in these kinds of situations? Right. And these kinds of situations too, that's where we have to meet them with praise on our lips and faith in our hearts.

God is faithful. We turn to the second stanza, the glory in the heavens and the splendor in the mortal's rule over the earth. The second stanza is an alternating parallel as an alternating parallel reinforces and expands the faith.

First, the nation's celebration of I Am as creator and ruler is now narrowed down from, and here are the changes, from our people to I, when I consider. He's talked about the heavens and now specifically to the moon and stars housed in the heavens. And now from the elimination of the enemy to the rule over the earth.

So, the first part is the prayers of the people, of the meek. And now it's the Lord who stoops down and visits them to take care for the mortal. How majestic is elaborated upon in the first stanza, in the order of creation, majestic splendor upon the heavens.

And in the order of redemption, majestic splendor through answered prayer. In the second stanza, the majesty of the name of the Lord is his majestic splendor of the moon and the stars. And in the order of redemption, it's the majestic splendor through his caring for the meek.

So, in the first stanza, they're in prayer. In the second stanza, God is caring for them. He's visiting them.

He's remembering them and he's making them ruler. So, it's a kind of a parallelism that gives you two viewpoints. They're in prayer and he's visiting them and helping them.

Let's look then, we have the three parts here in the second stanza. We have this glory in the heavens at night. And then we have, he stooped to help the mortals.

That's in verses three and four. In verses five and the next verses after that, he crowns the mortal to rule. The next quatrain crowns the mortal to rule.

And then we're told what the mortal rules. So, first of all, we have the crowning of the mortal. Then we have the rule of the mortal.

And then we have what the mortal rules in these following quatrains. First of all, the glory of the heavens in the night sky, when I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place. It says, wise about,

consider when I consider, when man gazes up at the illimitable expanse of the heavens studded with stars, the difference between God and man is revealed in all its magnitude.

The whole contradictory quality of that difference is made manifest when I consider. You look at the night sky and you realize this is totally different than what we are. Your heavens, the work of your fingers, notice God is the owner.

It's the work of his fingers. He owns it by creation. It's his product.

And when it says, you set it in place, it means it's permanent. It's firm. But now this great God of the whole creation, he stoops down to help mere mortals.

So, he raises the question, what is a mere mortal? The Hebrews are going to give that. What is a mere mortal? That you are mindful of him, a common human being that you care for him. We go word by word.

There are four words for man in Hebrew that are translated, that refer to what we call the mankind in general. The one word is enosh, which speaks of man and his weakness. That is when Seth gave birth to Enosh, which is in human weakness.

That's when man began to call upon the name of the Lord. Now you understand why they began to call upon the name of the Lord, because it represented, he recognizes the weakness of man. That's enosh.

Adam refers to human being generically. Ish, as I said, we had someone as individual. And then the Gebor is the strong man.

So, you have to be aware of these four words. In this case, the Gebor is sufficient and the Enosh is weak. So that's why he uses it.

What is this weak man that you are mindful of him? The mindful, the essence of God's remembering says Brevard Childs, Brevard Childs lies in his acting towards someone because of a previous commitment. That is to say that you remember him. I understand that to mean he remembers that he commissioned man to rule the earth.

So, he is mindful of him because that's what he commanded the man to do is rule his creation. And then he says, what is the son of man? And that's a whole discussion, but I think it simply means human being. That's where we get off on the book of Hebrews.

I don't want to get into that at this point. It says, Job if even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less a mortal, an enosh, who is but a

maggot, a human being, a ben adam, same word as here, who is only a worm. I'll let it go with that.

Now we come to, you were mindful of him. You care for him. And this is where we get the idea.

He stoops down to meet the petitions of his people. The Hebrew word is pakad. It means to visit in the sense to take careful note of one's situation and to act appropriately.

It does not mean, if the old King James said to visit, that you visit me, the visit would mean to me to come to visits, to come into someone's presence. That's not what it means. The NIV sometimes renders the verb to come to the aid of.

When God committed to his human image, the rule of creation, he did not abandon them. Implicitly by his taking careful note of his vice-gerent's situation and acting appropriately, he visits with salvation those who in childlike meekness depend upon him. He told us to rule and those who depend upon him, he visits, he understands the situation and he comes to enable them to do what they were commissioned to do.

Let's reflect a bit on this. What is man? How do we think about man? How you think about yourself is fundamental to your being. That's what I'm raising here.

Says Emil Brunner, the most powerful of all spiritual forces is man's view of himself. If you think of yourself as an animal, you will behave brutishly. How do you think of yourself? The way in which he understands his nature and his destiny.

In other words, if you understand you're the creation of God and your destiny is heaven, that's going to totally alter everything you think about what you want to do here, how you should behave. So your understanding of who you are is fundamental to your whole behavior and theology. Indeed, it is the one force which determines all others, that influence human life.

I think it's overstated. I think it's what you think about God is altogether important, but I think he's making a point that he's altogether important. So how do we think of ourselves? What is man? It's interesting as without revelation, thoughtful people tend to denigrate us themselves.

For Aristotle, he defined man as a political animal. The more I look at history, I understand. In other words, what distinguishes humans, we engage in trying to persuade one another of a position.

I don't think animals do that. They just kill one another, but we are political animals that are trying to get a consensus of some kind of rule. That's how he defined it, but it was an animal, a political animal.

For Edmund Burke, we're a religious animal. So, I give you these different definitions. So, for well, I began with Schopenhauer.

He was a pessimistic philosopher. I began with him and Schopenhauer was one time sitting on a park bench. He was a pessimistic philosopher.

Hair all disheveled, suit all crumpled up, one shoe off. A park attendant said to him, who are you? He said, I would to God I knew. He had no idea who he was.

Apart from revelation, he had no idea. Then I'm talking about like for Aristotle, a political animal. For Edmund Burke, he's a tool using animals, but they all define them as an animal and various definitions.

So, you get that. And for Gilbert, Doubtless with Sullivan's Approval, he said in one of his famous songs, he's nature's sole mistake. That's Gilbert with Doubtless with Sullivan's Approval.

For Robert Louis Stevenson, he's a devil but weakly fettered by some generous beliefs. Very negative view, but fettered by some generous beliefs. That was his view.

For E. R. Wilson, we've lost our dignity. Man has lost his dignity. We began to lose our dignity when we lost our address in the Copernican revolution.

We don't know where we are. So, we lost more dignity when Freud discovered we're not even masters in our own houses. We're governed by this id that he proposed.

So, we're not even that. We lost all dignity when IBM's Big Blue out over our chess champion, Karpov, some years ago. So we have lost all dignity.

So, we went from an animal to a devil, weakly fettered, and now we have no dignity whatsoever. I'm quoting outstanding thinkers. That's how they define it.

That's how David says, you've crowned him with glory and honor. What a different viewpoint and how that's going to change the way you live with that viewpoint. You're meant to rule everything.

I like what C. S. Lewis said at the crowning of Queen Elizabeth back in 1952. He said the placing of that huge and heavy crown upon her young and inexperienced head is symbolic of all humanity. That God has crowned us with a crown to rule and we're inexperienced and we're young and incapable.

The end of that is we need God to enable us to rule. So, Elmer Martin, his book, God Design, he says, if you think of a scale of one to 10, and God is a number 10 and the brute is a number, a one, at a scale, brute animal, one, God 10, man is an eight or a nine, a little lower than angels. But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor above the angels in the book of Hebrews.

That's new, that's when you put the psalm against these worldly philosophers, it begins to shine in all of its glory for me. So, I put some of that data in there for you. Now he crowned the mortals to rule all the earth.

And here we have two parts. The mortals are crowned with splendor and they're commissioned to rule. So, you made him lack a trifle from heavenly beings.

Now the heavenly beings is debatable. The Hebrew word here is Elohim and many translations have it. You made him a little lower than God.

But Elohim can mean heavenly beings. When Samuel came up out of the ground these psychics, the witch of Endor. She said I see an Elohim, a divine being coming up out of the ground.

It can mean a divine being. What's interesting about the Witch of Endor story is that the witch sees, but she hears nothing. And Samuel hears, but he doesn't see anything, which tells you you're in a parapsychological state, a spiritual state of some sort.

It's not physical because one can see and the other one can't. One can hear and the other one can't. According to the mission of those who were with Saul, they neither saw nor heard anything.

So, we're in a different spiritual realm in that sort of a story. Anyway, you made him lack. So, the Elohim can mean heavenly beings.

This is not a conclusive argument, but you would think, since he's saying you have made him, you would expect it to say, you have made him a little lower than yourself. Why does it change from the second person to the third person, for example. So, the Septuagint, who are these heavenly beings translated it angels.

I think that's what happens in Hebrews. I think it's a good translation. I think that's the thought.

You've made him a little lower than heavenly beings. Also, this psalm is thinking about Genesis 1, but that's going to take me too far afield. So, we'll get done with the psalm if I do that.

Okay. So, I give you the citation from the 1 Samuel passage. And then he says, and you crowned him with glory.

That means glory means social weight and with honor. And I'll drop it there. Now the mortals who have been crowned, they are now commissioned to rule all the earth.

He crowned them and now comes the commission to rule the earth. You made them rulers over the work of your hands. You put everything under their feet.

This is a paraphrase of when God said, rule over the works, the rule over the work of your hands is a paraphrase of and let them rule over the fish and everything. When it says put under their feet, that's equal to the prose subdue. When it says everything, it includes the serpent and the dragon.

You have to put everything under your feet, including the monsters, the serpent, the dragon, the Satan, everything evil, put everything under his feet. Theological reflections than that, well, I add at the end there, the verbs of subdue or rule over, put them under your feet, imply the mortal must struggle to win dominion over the creatures, over the horse to pull the chariot, over the oxen to plow the field, over the flocks to give milk and fleece. So, to put it under their feet and to use it implies a struggle, got to work, work.

That's right. And to put it under your feet and put everything both the, and we'll talk more about what humankind rules. Theological reflection.

This is, I say, an elaboration, a poetic elaboration of the cultural mandate in Genesis 1, where God created the man and told him to subdue everything, to bring everything under his dominion. This is now putting that into poetry. So it's a reflection of the cultural mandate.

There are two parts to the cultural mandate as I would see it. One is to subdue the physical world, the fish, the oxen, everything, as I said, the oxen to plow and the horse to pull and so forth. But I think it also includes the spiritual world because in Genesis 3, we meet the serpent and they should have brought the serpent under their feet.

But what happened is the serpent brought them under his feet. It was a spiritual war that they lost because we are fighting not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. The enemies, spiritual enemies fighting us are stronger than our own spirits apart from God.

They lost the battle because they did it in their own strength. We cannot conquer in our own strength. That's the point.

We have to depend upon God. So, in the physical realm, it's utterly amazing what we have achieved. I mean, it's astounding.

And so, I just list some of the fields, look at communication. I mean, I communicate and Bill more, far more than I do with students all over the world. Look what we're doing with biblical training here.

He's going to send this now over computers, I guess, Bill, whatever, all over the world. What an amazing achievement. We can now preach the gospel readily.

This is wonderful. We have instantaneous contact everywhere. It's a marvelous achievement.

I talk about energy. I mean, the harnessing of the water to produce the electricity and now the harnessing of the atom, that tremendous energy that we can now harvest, harness, and that lights up our cities for thousands of homes. I mean, a hundred years ago, they didn't have this.

Well, they're just beginning to have it with electricity or with medicine. We have eliminated polio. We've extended human life significantly with our medicine or with travel.

We travel at the speed of sound. Just a hundred years ago, the Wright brothers, if you read Kala's book on the Wright brothers, just a little over a hundred years, they flew 30 feet. And now.

If you go to the Smithsonian, if you ever get to Washington, I assure you, go to the Smithsonian and the Wright Museum. Have you been there? And in the same room, you have the Wright brothers and you have this Apollo spacecraft all in a period of 70 years. What man can achieve is phenomenal in communication and energy and medicine, but the spiritual utter failure, everything we produce that's good turns against us.

So now in our communication onto the internet, there is pornography that's destroying families, destroying youth. So, you can, when you open it up, you have prostitutes in Russia offering themselves to you. It's just incredible the evil that's coming across on it and destroying homes and destroying people.

I'm amazed at how many lies I read. Often from the extreme right, they just make stuff up, and also from the left, but it's just full of lies. You always have to check it out.

Is this true or not true? So, it's full of evil. You talk about energy. Well, the atomic bomb, we harness the energy, but look what it can do.

It can annihilate the human race. As I was saying the other night, explode a hydrogen bomb off the coast of Florida, it will send a tsunami wave 400 feet high over the entire state. That's horrible.

We live in fear as a result. Medicine, we've done wonderful cures, but we fear biological warfare. We can annihilate the human race through our chemicals and our knowledge of chemicals.

Everything turns against us. Our travel, we can put them on rockets, but we can put a hydrogen bomb on the end of the rocket. We're concerned about North Korea and what they'll do with the bad man.

So, the result is physically we have done the mandate, but spiritually we have failed miserably. So, all of our good boomerangs against us. I think that's worth our reflection.

Now we have, I'll jump to the middle of page 102, the ruled creatures, all flocks and herds and the animals of the wild, birds in the sky, fish in the sea, and the one that swims the path of the sea. I notice with the land creatures, all flocks and herds and so forth, all the animals of the wild. So, in other words, it includes the clean and the unclean.

The animals of the wild are the unclean. The flocks and the herds are clean. So, it is a merism, all domesticated and wild.

But then it says, moves to the birds in the sky and birds and fish went together, our creation. But now note what happens here. In other words, all flocks and herds, they produce life.

The animals of the wild, they produce death. Now birds in the sky, fish in the sea, that's life. They produce life.

But the one that swims the path of the seas, I think is Leviathan, the evil, the symbol of evil. He matches the animals of the death, of the wild, and death. So, it's a way of saying we ought to rule over the forces of life and the forces of death.

Essentially, all the others are plural, but the one that swims the path of the sea is singular. Singular. I talk about air and water creatures.

What do you think that Leviathan is? It's just as a figure of speech for the devil. Yeah, I think they refer to the great sea monsters by that reference to that Leviathan. But I

think it comes out of Greek, well, no one in Greek mythology, I mean, in Canaanite mythology, the Leviathan is a representative of evil.

He's chaos and evil. The theme is restated. So, the inclusio I am, how majestic is your name, sets the psalm's boundary and sounds its theme.

The rest of the psalm develops that theme in two stanzas. But notice how God is majestic in all the earth. He's majestic directly in creation, but he's majestic in the order of redemption, mediatorially through his people.

So therefore, yeah, he's majestic through us because it seems as though he's praising man, but in truth, man is his agent and that's who we are. We are here to bring all things under our feet, both life and death, good and evil, and we will win because our God will not fail. Well, that's Psalm 8. It's a great psalm phrase.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 10, Psalm 8, a psalm of praise.