

Psalm 8 – Study Guide¹

Psalm 8 is a positive and enthusiastic Psalm about the exaltation of the Lord in creation. Subordinate to this primary focus is the emphasis on the value of man as he exercises dominion over the living creation and the works of the Lord's hands which again return the emphasis to the exaltation of the Lord in creation.

This aforementioned dominion ultimately applies to mankind in general and not Israel exclusively, and not the righteous man only, and not David personally, but mankind as a whole. However, whereas the scope of this Psalm is comprehensive, its audience is precise. The Psalm itself was for Israel and their worship as they are the Covenant People of God who rightfully declare their relationship with Yahweh as their Lord. "O LORD (Yahweh), our Lord."

Finally, by way of introduction I direct your attention to the summary of Psalm 8 provided by Derek Kidner in his commentary on the Psalms. "This psalm is an unsurpassed example of what a hymn should be, celebrating as it does the glory and grace of God, rehearsing who he is and what he has done, and relating us and our world to him; all with a masterly economy of words, and in a spirit of mingled joy and awe. It brings to light the unexpectedness of God's ways in the roles he has assigned to the strong and the weak (2), the spectacular and the obscure (3-5), the multitudinous and the few (6-8); but it begins and ends with God himself, and its overriding theme is 'How excellent is thy name!'"²

Structure Aids

Authorship and Context (Heading)

Opening Praise/Opening Bracket of the Psalm. (8:1)

Continuation of Opening Praise – Not part of the duplicated bracket. (8:1)

Humble Praise Silencing Proud Opposition. (8:2)

God's Handiwork of Creation – A High View of God. (8:3)

The Value of Man. (8:4-8)

The Value of Man – Small in Comparison. (8:4)

The Value of Man – Esteemed by God. (8:5)

The Value of Man – Steward Over Natural Creation. (8:6-8)

Closing Praise/Closing Bracket of the Psalm. (8:9)

Structural Analysis by David Dorsey. Dorsey categorizes Psalm 8 as a Psalm made of a "Four-Part Symmetry" (same structural pattern as noted in Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 - noted to be a common pattern in the Psalms).³

Dorsey provides the following structural breakdown for us.⁴

A **Refrain:** "O Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (8:1a)

B **Question:** In light of Yahweh's glory in his creation of the heavens and in the works of your fingers, of what value is humankind to Yahweh (8:1b-4)

B **Answer:** Humankind is valuable because Yahweh has given them glory and has put them in charge of "the works of your hands" (8:5-8)

A **Refrain:** "O Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (8:9)

¹ Prepared by David Crowe for Pray's Mill Baptist Church Adult Sunday School

ALL Scripture Quotations are from the ESV Bible unless the Scripture reference is in a quote from another author – their original translation was kept.

² Derek Kidner; Kidner Classic Commentaries: Psalms 1-72. IVP Academic (Digital Copy), 1973. (Hereafter: Kidner), Pg. 82

³ David A. Dorsey; The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi. Baker Books, 1999. (Hereafter: Dorsey), Pg.175

⁴ Dorsey, Pg. 177 - The provided structural analysis is Dorsey's work.

Structural Insight from Charles Spurgeon. "The first and last verses are a sweet song of admiration, in which the excellence of the name of God is extolled. The intermediate verses are made up of holy wonder at the Lord's greatness in creation, and at his condescension towards man."⁵

Psalm 8 - Heading

The headings which, as we noted in the first Study Guide on the Psalms, are believed to have been part of the original psalms or at the minimal an early and trustworthy addition. I am persuaded of their original presence with the Psalm. This being said, we have plainly before us that this is a Psalm of David and that it was provided to an unnamed choirmaster. It is therefore concluded that the Psalm was intended to be exercised in Public Worship, however this would certainly not exclude its application in the private and family life of the believer too.

The primary challenge that is faced with this heading is the statement, "According to the Gittith" as the term is no longer known and potentially has a range of meanings – from a location, to a style, to an instrument. John MacArthur provides his conclusion stating that it was possibly an instrument, "...a guitar-like harp associated with Gath in Philistia."⁶ Spurgeon addresses the term differently and believes that there may have been a stylistic component to the term based off of its use in two other Psalms which are said to have a "joyous character" so he reasonably states, "...it may be concluded, that where we find that word in the title, we may look for a hymn of delight."⁷

Individual Verse Aids

8:1

Terms

- Lord:** A title or position for a ruler or master. One who is in a position of authority.
Independent in meaning from "LORD," or Yahweh, the name for the Covenant keeping God (LORD/Yahweh is distinguished by the use of all capital letters both in many Bible translations and this guide).
While an independent term it still has its chief application when referencing Yahweh or God (Elohim) as he alone is the Lord of all Lords and he has no sovereign. This is plainly seen in Deuteronomy 10:17 "For the LORD (Yahweh) your God (Elohim) is God (Elohim) of gods (elohim) and Lord (Adon) of Lords (adon), the great, the mighty, and the awesome God (El)...."
- Majestic:** Mighty, used of the waters that came crushing down on the Egyptians after the LORD parted the sea for Israel's miraculous deliverance - the context of usage was Israel's worshipful song to The LORD. Exodus 15:10 "...the mighty waters."
- Nobles, Lords, and Princes, used for esteemed leaders in various context.
- Mighty, Glorious.
- Name:** Here used in the same manner as is seen in Proverbs, 22:1, addressing not a personal title of identification, but a reputation - identity of character.
- Earth:** Literal earth, the full scope of natural creation and not just poetic language addressing great breadth. He is the literal Lord of the entire literal earth and his name is literally great throughout this earth which was created by him and for him.

⁵ Charles Spurgeon; The Treasury of David, Volume 1 – Psalms 1-57. Hendrickson Publishers. (Hereafter: Spurgeon),Pg.79

⁶ The MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV. Word Bibles, 1997. (Hereafter: MacArthur), Pg.749

⁷ Spurgeon, Pg.79

Glory: Authority, Splendor, Majesty.

Heaven(s): Both the natural (sky/atmosphere/space) and supernatural (dwelling place of God and the abode of angels). Context determines precise usage/understanding.

The LORD, Our Lord – Worthy of Worship

David begins the Psalm with what would appear to be a redundancy of name or title to our English eyes and ears, but he is making a very consequential statement by way of both a personal name and a rightful title. He begins with addressing The LORD (Yahweh), the covenant keeping God of Israel and he then attributes the proper title to him of Lord or Sovereign or Master. David is saying, Yahweh, the covenant keeping God of Israel, is our Lord and his name or reputation is exalted throughout this entire earth! He is both acknowledging and affirming this wonderful truth.

Now regarding this use of Lord or Sovereign note that the established author of this Psalm is David, the King of Israel, who would have functionally been Israel's chief lord in a general/natural capacity. However, he too worshipfully recognizes that Yahweh is their true chief Lord - beyond the capacity of natural man. Yahweh's Lordship is in every way superior as he is the Creator God and what is man that Yahweh is mindful of him or cares for him....

Further, as we will soon see, though the scope of Psalm 8 is addressing the whole of mankind the context of praise is precisely applied to believers who alone would have been in the position to recognize the covenant name of God, Yahweh (The LORD) and by extension affirm his absolute Lordship too.⁸

Note also the breadth of exultation seen here as The LORD's majesty is affirmed to be in all the earth and his glory is above the heavens. There is not an untouched element of the creation that is not compelled to testify to its Creator's magnificence and great glory!

Affirming these truths alone should by its nature provoke a worshipful response of prayer, praise, and song. However, David further develops these full bodied truths for the next six verses before coming full circle and all but demanding you erupt in worship to Yahweh, our Lord.

8:2

Bridging Praise – From Macro to Micro

Derek Kidner helps establish a unity between the second portion of verse one and the content of verse two stating, "This adoration is ardent and intimate, for all its reverence. The God whose glory fills the earth is our Lord: we are in covenant with him. His praise is chanted on high, yet acceptably echoed from the cradle and the nursery. It is the theme of the whole psalm in miniature."⁹

This contextual connection by Kidner was very helpful to me as the second verse appeared to be an aberration from the flow of the Psalm as I was seeing it, and this after copious amounts listening, reading, and expository work.¹⁰ Now to further clarify this contextual connection Kidner went on to argue that there is a poignant contrast with the celestial and terrestrial praise of God demonstrated here. It is set up between those who would find it fitting and acceptable to oppose such praise and with the humble response that put the opposition to silence and shame, namely the praise to God from the weak and immature babies and small children.¹¹

⁸ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch; Keil & Delitzsch: Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 5 – Psalms. Hendrickson Publishers, 2001. (Hereafter: Keil & Delitzsch), Pg.91
⁹ Kidner, Pg.83

¹⁰ Note that this is a point in case for having strong resources and trusted friends who are skilled in exposition and who have done exceptional work that we can learn from and build off of too. However, we need not go to our resources too quickly. Further, every time I have a situation like this where I found resolution not from my work, but another's work I want to understand why so that I can mature, grow, and progress accordingly. I hope the same for you too.

¹¹ Kidner, Pg. 83

In their Psalms Commentary, C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, join Kidner in this conclusion that sees the praise of God extending from the macro to the micro and that those who seek its silencing will themselves be silenced by children who actively glorify their majestic God. Keil and Delitzsch state that the Lord's glory extends from the heavens even down to these humble children, "...all over the earth, despite its distance from the heavens above, Jahve's name is glorious; for even children, yea even sucklings glorify him there, and in fact not mutely and passively by their mere existence, but with their mouth."¹²

Charles Spurgeon continues this theme, but approaches it not from the perspective of praise given, but of praise received. "He who delights in the songs of angels is pleased to honour himself in the eyes of his enemies by the praises of little children. What a contrast between the glory above the heavens, and the mouths of babes and sucklings! Yet by both the name of God is made excellent."¹³

Theology of Humble Praise

While not the central focus, an element that naturally presents itself is the satisfaction that the Lord has in making much of his name with little in addition to the grand, and both in their proper place. The Psalmist, David, will soon make reference to the magnificence of the inexhaustible wonders of creation, but first, he establishes that praise will be attributed from the one who has at best only begun to speak. "God has chosen the weak things of the world (such as the praise of children) to confound the mighty (compare 1 Cor. 1:27)."¹⁴

Developing this same line of thought MacArthur and Keil and Delitzsch tie their statements to the immediate context of the Psalm which includes a measure of conflict here with praise for the infants and children being the effectual element in silencing those in opposition to the things of God. MacArthur states, "The introductory irony about infants set the stage for a contrast between the dependent and the foolishly self-sufficient."¹⁵ Continuing with this same conclusion Keil and Delitzsch tie together both the immediate context of the Psalm and the larger principle articulated in 1 Corinthians 1. "Those meant, are the fierce and calumniating opponents of revelation. Jahve has placed the mouth of children in opposition to these, as a strong defensive controversial power. He has chosen that which is foolish and weak in the eyes of the world to put to shame the wise and that which is strong (1 Cor. 1:27). It is by obscure and naturally feeble instruments that He makes His name glorious here below and overcomes whatsoever is opposed to this glorifying."¹⁶

8:3

The Magnificence of the Creator

Beginning with verse three through verse eight the theme of the Creator prevails – demonstrating itself directly through the works of God's hands to his entrusting his creation to the care of man. The focus will now be God's handiwork in creation and man's relationship to him in the context of the creation.

The images that David draws from are those of the night sky, the heavens, the moon, and the stars. On account of these images, the lack of the grandeur of the sun, and Psalms of similar illustrative wording it is concluded that this is a Psalm composed under the wonder of the night sky. "For the primary thought of the Psalm is this, that the God, whose glory the heavens reflect, has also glorified Himself in the earth and in man; and the situation of the poet is this, that he has the moon and stars before his eyes...."¹⁷

¹² Keil & Delitzsch, Pg. 92

¹³ Spurgeon 81

¹⁴ The Layman's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Volume 9. Arnold B. Rhodes. John Knox Press, 1966. (Hereafter, Rhodes) Pg.36

¹⁵ MacArthur, Pg. 749

¹⁶ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg. 93

¹⁷ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg. 91

Further, as David establishes, it must be emphasized that these celestial elements of creation are not just calling out in praise to God, but that they are God's possessions and his mighty works. They are "his heavens," they are the "work of his fingers," and he has "set them in place."

Thematic Sidebar

Note how The LORD draws Israel's attention to his awesomeness as the Creator when extending them comfort in Isaiah 40:

- 40:1-2, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.
- 40:12 "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?"
- 40:15 "Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust."
- 40:25-26 "To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing."
- 40:28 "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable."

8:4

Terms

- Man: Two different terms for "man" are used - the first is a general term for man and the second, also a general term, is also the term used for man in the creation account (and the name of the first man, Adam).
- Mindful: Remember (attention by recollection).
- Care: Provisional oversight.
Visit, Overseer, List, Appoint, Numbered, Mustered, Punish.

Man In View of the Creator

Establishing a high view of God as the majestic Creator almost compels the question that if man is brought into the equation how is he to be understood?

"The poet has the starry heavens before him, he begins with the glorious revelation of Jahve's power on earth and in the heavens, and then pauses at man, comparatively puny man, to whom Jahve condescends in love and whom He has made lord over His creation. Ewald calls it a flash of lightening cast into the darkness of creation."¹⁸

Spurgeon masterfully address the immensity of the observed universe and its extraordinary elements of celestial bodies that put not only earth, but ultimately man in such a small place comparatively. These known and infinitely unknown members of creation that are beyond both our reach and observation make it clear that we are not as esteemed as we often think ourselves to be by comparison. However, this is not where the Psalmist ends. This

¹⁸ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg. 90

sobering reality gives way to a most undeserved esteeming of man as the unique image bearer of God and steward of his immediate creation here on earth.

Note the affectionate care toward man, that the Creator is mindful of man, and that he goes beyond this and even cares for him. Further this appears to be a common grace to man in general as David is using general terms for man in the context of the common experience of creation and makes no qualification to restrict its application

Finally note that the emphasis that the text puts on the Lord as the Creator and it is in this context that man finds both his value and role. It is in this context that one must respond properly, with a big view of God, a right view of God, and from this a right view of man, and ultimately a right view of the Son of Man.

God Remembers!

God remembering/mindful of his people

God remembered Noah, Genesis 8:1

God remembered Abraham, Genesis 19:29

God remembered Rachel, Genesis 30:22

The LORD remembered Hannah, Samuel's mother, 1Samuel 1:19

God remembering/mindful of his promise(s)/covenant(s)

God will remember his rainbow promise, Genesis 9:15-16

God remembered his covenant with the Patriarchs, Exodus 2:24

God remembered his covenant, Exodus 6:5

God will remember his covenant, Leviticus 26:42, 45

Request for God to remember

Requests for God to remember the Patriarchs, Exodus 32:13, Deuteronomy 9:27

Samson requests to be remembered by The LORD, Judges 16:28

Hannah, Samuel's mother, requests to be remembered by The LORD, 1 Samuel 1:11

Hezekiah pleads to be remembered by The LORD, 2 Kings 20:3

Solomon prays that The LORD would remember his love for his father David, 2 Chronicles 6:42

Nehemiah prays that The LORD will remember his command to Moses, Nehemiah 1:8

Nehemiah request that God would remember him, Nehemiah 5:19, 13:14, 13:31

Son of Man

MacArthur addresses that this Psalm provides a strong theology of man and one that clearly ties the son of man with the "Son of Man," particularly noting the association made by the author of Hebrews which will be addressed in greater detail later in the guide.¹⁹

Son of Man is a consistent and consequential title attributed to Jesus, by Jesus in a Messianic capacity:

- Matt.8:20 "...the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."
Matt.9:6 "...the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...."
Matt.10:23 "...before the Son of Man comes."
Matt.11:19 "The Son of Man came eating and drinking...."
Matt.12:8 "For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."
Matt.10:32 "And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven..."
Matt. 10:40 "...so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."
Matt.13:37 "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man."
Matt.13:41 "The Son of Man will send his angels...."
Matt.16:13 "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
Matt.16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father...."
Matt.16:28 "...not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."
Matt.17:9 "...until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."
Matt.17:12 "So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands."
Matt.17:22 "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."
Matt.19:28 "...when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne...."
Matt.20:18 "And the Son of Man will be delivered over...."
Matt.20:28 "...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve...."
Matt.24:27 "...so will be the coming of the Son of Man."
Matt.24:30 "...the sign of the Son of Man... they will see the Son of Man coming...."
Matt.24:37 "...so will be the coming of the Son of Man."
Matt.24:39 "...so will be the coming of the Son of Man."
Matt.24:44 "...for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."
Matt.25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory...."
Matt.26:2 "...the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."
Matt.26:24 "The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!"
Matt.26:45 "...the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."
Matt.26:64 "...you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power...."
Mk.2:10 "...the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...."
Mk.2:28 "So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."
Mk.8:31 "...the Son of Man must suffer many things...."
Mk.8:38 "...of him will the Son of Man be ashamed...."
Mk.9:9 "...until the Son of Man had risen from the dead."
Mk.9:12 "And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer...."
Mk.9:31 "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men...."
Mk.10:33 "...the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes...."
Mk.10:45 "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve...."
Mk.13:26 "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."
Mk.14:21 "For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!"
Mk.14:41 "The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."
Mk.14:62 "...you will see the Son of Man seat at the right hand of Power...."
Lk.5:24 "...the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...."

¹⁹ MacArthur, Pg. 749

Lk.6:5 "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."
 Lk.6:22 "...revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!"
 Lk.7:34 "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking...."
 Lk.9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer many things...."
 Lk.9:26 "...of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when comes in his glory...."
 Lk.9:44 "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."
 Lk.9:58 "...the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."
 Lk.11:30 "...so will the Son of Man be to this generation."
 Lk.12:8 "...the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God...."
 Lk.12:10 "And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven..."
 Lk.12:40 "...for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."
 Lk.17:22 "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it."
 Lk.17:24 "...so will the Son of Man be in his day."
 Lk.17:26 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man."
 Lk.17:30 "...so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed."
 Lk.18:8 "...when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"
 Lk.18:31 "...everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished."
 Lk.19:10 "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."
 Lk.21:27 "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."
 Lk.21:36 "...to stand before the Son of Man."
 Lk.22:22 "For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!"
 Lk.22:48 "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"
 Lk.22:69 "But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God."
 Lk.24:7 "...that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise."
 Jn.1:51 "...the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."
 Jn.3:13 "No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man."
 Jn.3:14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up...."
 Jn.5:27 "And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man."
 Jn.6:27 "...for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you."
 Jn.6:53 "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man drink his blood, you have no life in you."
 Lk.6:62 "Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?"
 Lk.8:28 "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he...."
 Lk.9:35 "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"
 Lk.12:23, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."
 Lk.12:34 "How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is the Son of Man?"
 Lk.13:31 "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

8:5

Term

Heavenly Beings: The term here for "heavenly beings" is actually elohim (god), therefore translating the word by its common use without regard to context could be expressed as a little lower than the gods or a little lower than God. There are some reasonable arguments for translating it a little lower than God in the context of man as the image bearer of God. However, Hebrews 2 provides precise clarification here as it unambiguously quotes this as "angels."

Arnold Rhodes is among those who contend that this Elohim should be translated for God proper and that the text is communicating in a poetic way that man was created in the image of God, thereby stating that man as a little lower than God is not a formal or official status, but a poetic reference to this unique relationship to God.²⁰ My resolution is when Scripture interprets Scripture it appears to be clearly a reference to angels.

A Little Lower Than Angels

The reference to man being a little lower than the angels is not a diminishing of man's special role among the creation, but a recognition that in his natural person man neither has immediate access or capacity to be in the presence of God in his natural person and man suffers the fate of natural death until his resurrection. In this regard man, subject to the constrictions of the natural is a little lower than the angels, but he is also uniquely esteemed as both the image bearer of God and the immediate steward of the Lord's creation. Further, man finds exceptional value in that the majestic Lord crowns him with glory and honor!

8:6

Terms

Dominion, a stewardship of care

God's Steward for Creation

Man is given an extraordinary privilege and responsibility over the work of God's hand. As the image bearer of God he effectively serves as kings of creation, "...he is the lord of all things, the lord of all earthly creatures."²¹ However this is not some autonomous right, but an entrusted responsibility given by the Creator to whom man will give an account.

Note the scope of this stewardship of care. "Man is king, and not a king without territory; the world around, with the works of creative wisdom which fill it, is his kingdom."²² Then further expounding an articulation of the scope of his rule, it is to include the beast and beyond them to all of natural creation. "If man thus rules over every living thing that is round about him from the nearest to the remote, even that which is apparently the most untamable: then it is clear that every lifeless created thing in his vicinity must serve him as its king. The poet regards man in the light of the purpose for which he was created."²³

²⁰ Rhodes, Pg. 36

²¹ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg. 94

²² Keil & Delitzsch, Pg. 94

²³ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg. 95

Stewardship of Creation

The idea of stewardship is clear, but it is framed in the larger context of praising the Creator God and recognizing the unique and cherished role of man. However, this does not mean that we disregard the matter altogether, simply because it is not the direct thrust of the text. Rather, it is texts such as this that compel us to give proper thought to such matters.

Evangelicals are struggling to strike a balance with a naturalistic non-God-fearing world for two major reasons as I understand it: 1) we rightly see the world as created rather than a sub-divine entity that would require its own measure of worship and 2) we understand the declared end of the natural world in the context of the sovereign exercising of God's plan and authority. But knowing that we will be in residual conflict of theology, ecology, philosophy, and often practice with an unbelieving world we should still strive to be the best biblical conservationist as we are the chief stewards of this magnificent creation. This does not mean hugging trees and killing men over slugs and whales, but neither should we develop a cavalier perspective in our care of the magnificent works of God. Like headship in the home the extension of authority does not provide an authorization to abuse one's oversight and care. Stewardship does not come with the authority to abuse. Abuse of any nature is always a vulgar tragedy and it will result in condemnation and/ or the loss of stewardship.

The Foundation of Stewardship

Day 1: light (day and night)

Day 2: heaven/expanse

Day 3: separation of water/dry land seas/earth and vegetation

Day 4: Sun, Moon, and Stars

Day 5: Swarming and Flying Creatures

Day 6: Livestock, Creeping Things, Beasts of the Earth, Man (in the image of God)

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And **let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and **fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**'"

God is the active agent here, the sovereign, and he delegates this stewardship to mankind (not exclusively believers, but mankind as a whole - just as marriage and work are creation elements applicable to all men, so is the stewardship of creation - the difference is we are not walking in rebellion and as with marriage and work should be the exemplars of its stewardship).

Exercising dominion given directly by The LORD God: "Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and **brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.** But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him."

Do not lose sight that it is an entrusted dominion to man by the Creator of all things.

Man is Steward, The LORD is Lord

Note that giving stewardship of the earth is not a forfeiting of Lordship of the earth by its Creator:

Genesis 14:19	"...God (El) Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth...."
Deuteronomy 10:14	"Behold, to the LORD (Yahweh) your God (Elohim) belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it."
Joshua 3:11	"...the LORD (Yahweh), the Lord (Adon) of all the earth...."
Joshua 3:13	"...the LORD (Yahweh), the Lord (Adon) of all the earth...."
1 Chronicles 29:11	"Yours, O LORD (Yahweh), is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD (Yahweh), and you are exalted as head above all."
Psalms 97:5	"The mountains melt like wax before the LORD (Yahweh), before the Lord (Adon) of all the earth."

8:7/8

Man is the steward of the natural creation and of its natural living elements and while this list does not appear to be exhaustive it does serve to demonstrate exhaustiveness.

The "all things" sweep covers land, air, and sea - all living creatures....

As stated, this is not a license to abuse... such a disposition is wicked and unrighteous.

Proverbs 12:10 "Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel."

8:9

The Psalm begins and ends the exact same way with the first sentence/proclamation being repeated at the end, but this is more than repetition, it is a return to the due praise of God, but with the ability to do so with a fuller capacity and with greater understanding.

Keil and Delitzsch further argue that the repeat of this praise is a more complete or robust one as the opening statement of praise has been put on display throughout the Psalm and now the conclusion beckons a recognition of this unpacked wonder.²⁴

Kidner too provides his support stating, "At its return, the refrain will be sung with fresh understanding. It also renews the primary emphasis, which is on God and his grace. For man's dominion over nature, wonderful though it is, takes second place to his calling as servant and worshipper, to whose very children the name of the Lord (that is, his glory and goodness: Exod. 33:18f.) has been revealed."²⁵

²⁴ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg. 95

²⁵ Kidner, Pg. 85

Psalm 8:4-6 and Hebrews 2:5-10

"For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, 'What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.' Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering." Hebrews 2:5-10

- 2:6 MacArthur states that this verse affirms the unique value of man, "...the incarnation of Christ is the greatest proof of God's love and regard for mankind. Christ was not sent in the form of an angel. He was sent in the form of a man."²⁶

Note that this, properly understood, does not evoke pride, but humble thanksgiving.

- 2:7 Regarding the superiority of angels as mentioned here, it is stated that Angels have access to the presence of God and are not subject to death.²⁷

- 2:8 Having seen how full and comprehensive the lordship or stewardship of man is in relation to the creation we can see more clearly how infinitely more comprehensive and perfectly comprehensive Jesus' truer/greater Lordship is and will be in his time.

Jesus is seen as having all things put in subjection under his feet in a much more comprehensive manner (not yet having come to a culmination) - not just as a steward, but as Lord.

- 2:9 Note that Jesus was made lower than the angels only for a little while....

Jesus himself is identified as being crowned with glory and honor - not a universal application to all men (here the greater application/fulfillment) - it is applied to Jesus specifically on account of his suffering and death.

We see a similar counterpart to this with Jesus being begotten as the Son, the greater David in conjunction with his resurrection (see page 10 in the Psalm 2 Study Guide: Psalm 2:7/Romans 1:3-4). Here it is a closer association with his unparalleled esteeming and exultation following his obedience to death and resurrection (Philippians 2:5-11). MacArthur making this point goes on to state, "As the Second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:47), He was for a short time lower than the angels. Now He has glory and honor, and all things (including angels) are subject to Him."²⁸

- 2:10 Jesus, the founder of our salvation, is also he who created all things (and for him all things were created) - Creator stepped into and redeemed and his creation.

²⁶ MacArthur, Pg. 749

²⁷ MacArthur, Pg. 749

²⁸ MacArthur, Pg. 749