

Psalm 8

Judaism and Christianity, at least in their orthodox profession, shun any form of polytheism, pantheism or syncretism. They are strictly monotheistic, recognising only one God, the one who has revealed himself to them. Accepting Genesis 1 dates back to Moses (in its oral tradition), Moses' intention was surely to expel Egyptian creation myths from Hebrew minds. One God, the LORD, created everything. He commanded order out of chaos, culminating in the creation of human beings on the sixth day, then crowned his creation with the glory of the sabbath - the seventh day on which he ceased from his work and rested. The sabbath was duly set apart for all creatures to rest, and for humans to worship their creator.



The impression the psalmist gives is that he looks up at the night sky (v.3) and is overwhelmed by both God's majesty (vv.1, 9) and the special honour he has bestowed on human beings (vv.4-8). The latter is all the more remarkable because of the magnitude of the former. There is only one fitting response: to worship God who has revealed himself as the creator. His name, or we might say his signature, is written all over it, such is its beauty and majesty. We will hear more on this in Psalm 19.

Having reflected on the greatness of God's majesty, the psalmist is moved to marvel at the place of humans in this great universe. Surely they pale into insignificance under the mighty canopy of the sky, and in the light of the moon and the stars? Yet, in spite of all this, humans are like royalty: they alone, of all God's creatures, are made in his image. They have qualities and characteristics which rank them second only to God himself (v.5). God has given them dominion over all creatures (v.5), not to do as they like but to perform the role of his stewards, caring for creation in the same way as he cares for them (v.4).

The psalmist recognises, however, that not every human acknowledges the one true God, the Creator. He has foes – enemies and avengers (v.2). This is laughable (see Ps 2.4) and countered by God in the most withering way: the praises of babies and infants overpower and still their voices. This was demonstrated in the life of Jesus, the one through whom God created everything (Jn 1.3), and whose power over creation was undeniable. The voices of those who opposed him were drowned out by children who cried out "Hosanna", prompting Jesus to silence his opponents with these very words from Ps 8.2 (see Matt 21.14-16).

To ponder

What is one element of God's creation that has moved you to awe and wonder recently?

To pray

Almighty God, the heavens declare your glory, the sky proclaims your handiwork. I praise you that you have made me in your image and appointed me a steward of your creation. Grant that I may serve you well, caring for the world you love. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen