

WHAT IS MAN?, Ps.8

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◆ More than 29 years ago, Pam and her husband, Bob, were serving as missionaries to the Philippines and praying for a fifth child. Pam contracted amoebic dysentery, an infection of the intestine caused by a parasite found in a contaminated food or drink. She entered into a coma and was treated with strong antibiotics before they discovered she was pregnant. Doctors urged her to abort the baby for her own safety and told her that the medicines had caused irreversible damage to her baby. She refused the abortion and cited her Christian faith as the reason for her hope that her son would be born without the devastating disabilities physicians predicted. The doctors "didn't think of it as a life, they thought of it as a mass of fetal tissue," Pam said. While pregnant, Pam nearly lost their baby four times but refused to consider abortion. She recalled making a pledge to God with her husband, "If you will give us a son, we'll name him 'Timothy,' and we'll make him a preacher." Pam ultimately spent the last two months of her pregnancy in bed and, eventually, gave birth to a health baby boy August 14, 1987. Pam's youngest son is indeed a preacher. He preaches in prisons, makes hospital visits, and serves with his father's ministry in the Philippines. He also plays football. Pam's son is Tim Tebow, who in 2008 became the first sophomore in history to win college football's highest award, the Heisman Trophy.

◆ There are two phrases in this psalm that I would like to think about with you on this Right to Life Sunday, now 44 years after our country declared it perfectly legal to kill human children as long as they haven't exited the womb of their mother yet. These two phrases, I predict, will cause us to see that this issue is much larger than insuring a pregnant woman has a

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choice. There are always choices. The question is only, which one is a good choice?

◆**1. Consider the heavens.** Have you ever done what the Psalmist suggests here? As we speak, a our small planet is hurtling through space at 67,000 mph, orbiting the same star as 8 other planets in our solar system. The sun, our sun, is just one of hundreds of billions of stars that make up the Milky Way. The Milky Way is one of billions of galaxies of stars in the universe, and also my favorite candy bar. Our little star, the Sun, has a diameter of 864,000 miles, and a temperature of 25 million degrees F. A million planets the size of the earth could fit inside the sun. Every square yard of its surface is constantly emitting enough energy to power 700 automobiles. One two-billionth of the sun's energy arrives across the 93 million mile space between it and the earth.

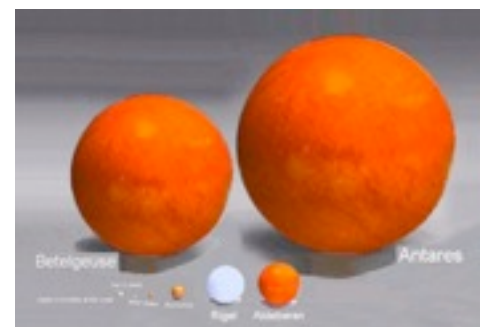
◆Consider the heavens.

◆Still our sun is a small star. If the star Antares were placed where our sun is, our earth would be locate about half way between its center and it's surface. Galaxies are even larger.

It takes hundreds of thousands of years traveling at the speed of light (186,000 mps) to cross a galaxy.

The closest star to us (Proxima) would take 4.3 lightyears to reach. If our sun were the same size as the dot on a "i", font size 12, this star would be 10 miles away. Other stars are billions of light years

away. With the 200 inch telescope on Mt. Palomar, CA, we can see a million different galaxies within the outline of the Bid Dippers bowl alone.



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◆ Consider the heavens.

◆ My father-in-law called for my birthday one year from 80° Florida. I was in our home in Iowa, at 65° below windchill. This difference was on the surface of the same planet at the same time, due to the position of the earth in facing our sun. If our whole planet were a degree closer to the sun, no amount of sunscreen could save you from being incinerated. If our planet were one degree further from the sun, it would freeze like the steak in your fridge.

◆ Consider the heavens.

◆ The next phrase I'd like us to notice is this...

◆ **2. What is man?** In Hebrew, if you're interested, it's "ma enosh". What is man? Imagine if you can, traveling through the Milky Way galaxy. Your eyes settle on a small planet near a dying star. You descend to its surface and scrape up a little dust from the ground and make ... a man. This is the story of the Bible. The God of wonders, the mastermind of constellations, to whom earthquakes are but the buzz of a cell phone in the pocket, or to whom atomic reactions are but a breath of warm air –this big God, to whom moons and stars and belts of asteroid, each a billion times larger than the earth -are the work of his fingers. And of all that he has made, what is it that he daydreams about. What is he mindful of? The Andromeda Galaxy, two million lightyears from here? The red giant star, Betelgeuse, one hundred thousand times more luminous than the sun? 700 million miles in diameter? The earth maybe. The Grand Tetons, or at least big animals like giraffes, or maybe whales.

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- ◆What is man... that you are mindful of him? Men and women are what God is most mindful of.
- ◆That line is the center line in the poem of Psalm 8. What is the “son of man.” (Ben-adam. Two of my boys names in that phrase!) “Son of dust.” The verse tells us that God “cares” for mankind. The term is “to number”, to “count”, to “keep track of” -hence, to care about. Does God ever have to ask the angels if they’ve seen number 571 anywhere? No. Can I share with you some of how God considers you?
 - ◆*“As a young man marries a maiden,...as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.” Isaiah 62:5, NIV.*
 - ◆*“As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.” Psalms 103:13, 14, NIV.*
 - ◆*“I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them.” Hosea 11:4, NIV.*
- ◆What is man?... to God, the most loved of his creation. The song picks 2 things to point to the majesty of God. Check it out...
 - ◆*O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! #1) You have set your glory above the heavens. #2) From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise.” Psalms 8:1, 2, NIV.*
 - ◆Both the heavens’ grander, and the miracle of man display the greatness of God. Calvin put it, “suckling babes are advocates sufficiently powerful to vindicate the providence of God.” The biblical writer is telling us that the speechless mouths of infants, devoid of

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lecture material, or college degree are on a level of enormity as incomprehensible as the constellations. No, they are even more. For God is mindful of them. What is it that the Psalmist knows that makes a human child so poignant in the display of God's greatness? Well, verses 6-8 are quoting Genesis 1:26 where God says to mankind.

◆ *"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:26, 27, NIV.*

◆ What is it? The image of God. Men and women, boys and girls, all bear the image of God. They are the only creatures to bear his image. People are family to God. Nothing else in all creation bears the image. Nothing else is placed as ruler, caretaker of creation. It is the image of God that makes a child a treasure. Not whether we want a daughter or not. Not whether the child came from a person we don't like anymore. Not whether the child has downs syndrome or not. Not whether the baby will grow up to be useful to society, or even live a tingly, bubble-filled life of pleasure.

◆ I wish I could help this sink in somehow. Calvin said "If we are not astonished we are pitiful and stupid!" Cal didn't know about politically correct language back then!

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◆What is man? Ma Enosh? Man resembles God. Man is the only creature God sent his son to represent and save. Not even angels have this privilege.

◆“But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour and put everything under his feet.” Hebrews 2:6-9, NIV.

◆Guess what it says a few verse after quoting Psalm 8!

◆*“For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:16, 17, NIV.*

◆It is the image of God in men and women that is the reason why it is wrong to kill. It is the image of God in men and women that is the reason why we lay down our lives for the freedom of others. It is the image of God in men and women that is the reason why we preach the gospel of Jesus across the world. It is the image of God in men and women that is the reason we help the refugee even if they don’t accept our God.

◆**Conclusion** What is man? The image bearer of God. We began thinking about the life of Tim Tebow, whose mother refused to abort him under the supposed futility of his future life. But don’t read it wrong. Saving that infant’s life isn’t powerful because he became a star or even a preacher in jails. What if Tim had suffered from say, Downs Syndrome. My niece Anna does. Her life is just as precious. The point is that God makes

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beautiful things out of dust, the crown of which is people, who are each formed in his image. Let's prize life as God prizes us!