

Like trumpeters at the front and back of a royal procession, Psalm 8 is book-ended with the proclamation; *Your majestic name fills the earth!* (NLT). Think about that, a name: stretched across the sky like a great billowing cloud, or flowing in the sea like a giant kelp bed, or calling forth with the quiet cry of a newborn child. His name. Seen everywhere. The majesty of His name fills the earth!

The baby's cry strikes me particularly – the psalmist declares that praise was ordained from the lips of children and infants, yet an infant's main sound is a cry! When I was up all night with little ones it didn't always sound like praise to me, but now even a glance at a newborn evokes wonder at God. An infant may be crying to say, Look at me!; the Creator uses an infant's cry to say, *Look at Me!*

*The moon and stars You set in place
A baby's cry contains Your praise
Your finger's work on full display
Who am I that You know my name?*

As the psalmist wonders at this glory, set so far above the heavens, he finds himself feeling very small. What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? And here some delicious ambiguity comes into the psalm. I'm a big fan of lyrics with multiple meanings because it allows me to make new discoveries inside of something I'm already enjoying. When David writes that the son of man is crowned with glory and honor, is he talking about all of humankind, or about Jesus, who so often referred to himself as the son of man? Since David wasn't available I asked for some advice (I'm not going to say who but his initials are BP and he led us in praying Psalm 8 just before I wrote this song) and the ambiguity was unambiguously confirmed: both. The psalmist writes about something he knows and alludes to something he doesn't entirely know. Jesus is the image of the invisible God, we are created in His image, and likewise creation itself bears God's image. All three are crowned with glory and honor, and can thus reflect that glory to all the earth:

*All that has breath came by Your word
From deep to deep Your spirit stirred
Crowning Your image with honor
Reflecting glory to (all) the earth*

In the midst of this majestic and intimate poem, the most surprising element is not the mention of God's enemies, but rather the weapon recommended for opposing them: praise! And here we read that praising doesn't just slow down the enemy – it silences him. The enemy loves to chatter at us, calling us names, reinforcing old images, reminding us of past arguments or even focusing us on future non-existent arguments! We are up to bat and some days it seems the entire infield is yelling, *Hey batta batta*; if we manage to tune out the 1st baseman's voice, the shortstop's comes into focus, then right field, then 3rd.... I hear the psalm saying, Don't just play defense with your ears –

play offense with your mouth! Praise Him – and use the power of scripture, especially memorized scripture, which works in ways we cannot understand:

*Your glory's set above the sky
Yet through the weak You show Your might
When foes would come and whisper lies
The pow'r of Your word takes the fight*

*Silence the enemy with your praise
Praise is the weapon you ordained
Rehearse Your glory all our days
See the majesty of Your name*

Nothing gets me deeper into a psalm than rewriting it. You probably have your own way of enjoying a scripture. Since I had an assignment for a small hymn-writing group to write a song in meter, Psalm 8 ended up in 8-8-8-8 – that is, four lines of eight syllables each. (Many hymns were written with a certain number of syllables in each line so that they could be used interchangeably with common tunes of the day). Sure, that's a cool math fact, but it also means this song, *Rehearse Your Glory*, can be sung to any number of tunes including, *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*, which just might come in VERY handy some December afternoon.