

# FRAGILE & FABULOUS

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## Psalm 8

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

<sup>2</sup>Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

<sup>3</sup>When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;

<sup>4</sup>what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

<sup>5</sup>Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup>You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,

<sup>7</sup>all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

<sup>8</sup>the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

<sup>9</sup>O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

## REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. What do you notice about Psalm 8 and the creation poem of Genesis 1?
3. Theologians have long pondered the question raised in Psalm 8: "what are human beings that you are mindful of them?" In other words, what is it about a human being that is different from other creatures, if anything? Based on your

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experience and ideas, how would you answer the question: What does it mean to be human?

4. Throughout history, theologians described how humans, made in the image of God, have a particular trait or feature that defines human existence, like *reason* (conscious thought) or *will* (the ability to choose and decide). Others claimed it is something about how relational humans are (we need and thrive in environments and with others). Still others claim there is something distinctly *vulnerable* about being human—humans are especially susceptible to suffering and transformation.
  - a. How do these ideas—or others—resonate with your experience, your faith, scripture, or your understanding?
  - b. Does the psalm offer a way of answering the very question it poses?
  - c. If, as some theologians contend, Christ is at once both truly *God and truly human*, then what does the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ reveal about what makes us human?

5. In the age of AI (artificial intelligence), the question of what makes a human truly human has emerged with new force. Pope Leo has written an encyclical on this very matter, entitled *Magnifica Humanitas*.
  - a. What is your experience with AI, if any?
  - b. What worries, excitement, or uncertainty do you carry toward this technology as it develops?
  - c. Pope Leo contends that technology is never neutral. All technology, including AI, reflects those who make it, benefit from it, are harmed by it, etc. Why might this insight be important?
6. One of the reasons why the question “what makes us human” is practical and crucial is that it helps us better understand what it means to flourish or thrive as humans. What do you think leads to a flourishing or thriving life? What prevents life from flourishing or thriving? How might Psalm 8 help with an answer here?

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