

# When I Consider Thy Heavens, the Work of Thy Fingers

by John Calvin

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*The Psalmist highlights God's infinite goodness and condescension towards humanity, emphasizing the miracle of God's blessings despite human frailty.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 8:3, Psalm 144:3, Isaiah 40:15, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:4

**Topics:** "Gods Greatness", "Human Insignificance"

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## Description

John Calvin preaches on the Psalmist's reflection on the greatness of God in contrast to the insignificance of man, highlighting the infinite goodness of God in caring for humanity despite their frailty and lowly state. The Psalmist emphasizes the wonder of God's grace in adorning mankind with glory and blessings, despite their unworthiness compared to the majestic heavens. Calvin urges the audience to be deeply moved by God's miraculous love and generosity towards humanity, recognizing the profound contrast between God's greatness and man's humble existence.

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## Transcript

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? --Psalm 8:3, 4

My readers, however, must be careful to note the design of the Psalmist, which is to enhance by this comparison the infinite goodness of God; for it is, indeed, a wonderful thing that the Creator of heaven, whose glory is so surpassingly great as to ravish us with the highest admiration, condescends so far as graciously to take upon him the care of the human race. That the Psalmist makes this contrast may be inferred from the Hebrew word, which expresses the frailty of man rather than any strength or power which he possesses.

We see that miserable men, in moving upon the earth, are mingled with the vilest creatures; and, therefore, God, with very good reason, might despise them and reckon them of no account if he were to stand upon the consideration of his own greatness or dignity.

The Psalmist, therefore, speaking interrogatively, abases their condition, intimating that God's wonderful goodness is displayed the more brightly in that so glorious a Creator, whose majesty shines resplendently in the heavens, graciously condescends to adorn a creature so miserable and vile as man is with the

greatest glory, and to enrich him with numberless blessings.

If he had a mind to exercise his liberality towards any, he was under no necessity of choosing men who are but dust and clay, in order to prefer them above all other creatures, seeing he had a sufficient number in heaven towards whom to show himself liberal. Whoever, therefore, is not astonished and deeply affected at this miracle, is more than ungrateful and stupid. --Commentaries

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