

HOW GREAT IS YOUR NAME

Responsorial Song from Psalm 8 for Trinity Sunday [C]
for Psalmist [Cantor, Assembly & Descant
with Keyboard Trinity Accompaniment

TONY BARR

Your majesty shines in the heavens,
while you open the tongue of the voiceless
A song is heard, rising to name you,
as you silence the clamor of contest.

I look to the span of your weaving,
to the moon, the vast carpet of stars.
And here are we, small, yet remembered,
as the children of Adam, we thrill you?

All this you have placed in our hands,
that we nourish, provide what you require.
All things you entrust to our keeping
from the ground of the Cosmos to the end.

As gods, almost have you crowned us,
and have crowned us in splendor and glory
With mandate, we nurture Creation
for the world you have set at our feet.

full of life in their flora and fauna,
with the beasts, untethered to free,
and birds that sport in the breezes,
with the whales that glide in the deep.

Clues provided at the heading of this psalm suggest that it is a special song for the precentor or the choir-master, to be played on the *gittith* (a lyre?), perhaps to a traditional melody or formula, that it may have been associated with a celebration at the wine press. and that it is a pre-exilic, more precisely of the Jerusalem Southern tradition.

Further evidence suggests that it is a Hymn of praise or thanksgiving, with an opening and closing refrain which states the reason for offering praise. This liturgical device was already written into the psalm, to provide the assembly of pilgrims with a refrain in response to the verses sung by the cantor or choir.

It is most likely pre-exilic, originating with the priestly (P) account of Creation in Genesis. The simple language referring to God as Creator also suggests folk origins. There is no complex theology, no attempt to link creation with redemption or resurrection. There are no post-exilic messianic allusions. Instead, we find covenant at its basic: there is a God, who is Lord of Nature and People. This God cares so much about us that we have been entrusted with a power reserved for God alone. We have been given responsibility to share with God as co-Creators, and to safeguard all that has been created. To sing the praises of such a God is to accept these responsibilities and share in the covenant.

An even closer look at the text provides clues, perhaps as to the occasion of use. The New Year Feast of Enthronement, later absorbed into the annual Feast of Tabernacles, affirmed God as Author of All That Is. The *gittith* clearly indicates a worship song always held at the end of the agrarian year, leading once again to the New Year Festival. Tabernacles was the great harvest festival which celebrated the grape or wine harvest as the culmination of another successful year under the wise leadership of the God of Mt Zion.

The reference to the night sky, depicted as the needlework of God's fingers, also featured in the later Feast of Tabernacles, marked by phases of the moon and night-watch vigils. During these nocturnal vigil liturgies, God was honored as God of the past and the Renewal of Earth yet to come, in which we are invited to share in the redemption of humanity and in healing a bruised and damaged world. This we do by our sensible management of the world.

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INTRO ♩ = ca. 54

Musical notation for the first system of the piano introduction, measures 1-4. The music is in 6/8 time and consists of a treble and bass staff.

Musical notation for the second system of the piano introduction, measures 5-8. The music is in 6/8 time and consists of a treble and bass staff.

Musical notation for the third system, including vocal melody and piano accompaniment, measures 9-12. The music is in 6/8 time and consists of a treble and bass staff. The lyrics "How great is your name through-out the" are written below the vocal line.

Musical notation for the fourth system, including vocal melody and piano accompaniment, measures 13-16. The music is in 6/8 time and consists of a treble and bass staff. The lyrics "earth, God a" are written below the vocal line.

SAMPLE

REFRAIN broadly

Descant on selected Refrains

1-5.

17

All
How great is your name through-out the earth, here

Great is your name!

20

among us.

Verses or Refrain

22

your name!

earth, here a-mong us.

Final

rit.

SAMPLE

VERSES Psalmist (Cantor) from the ambo

1. Your ma - jes - ty shines in the heav - en you
2. I look to the span of your weav - ing the
3. As gods, al - most have you in - ton - ed and have
4. full fields in their flo - ra and fa - ctured and the
5. All this you have placed in our mem - 'ry, that

25

1. op - en the tongue of the si - mones. song is heard, ris - ing to
2. moon, the vast car - pet of gra - ves. here are we, small, yet re -
3. crowned us in splen - dor, mag - ni - tude man - date, we nur - ture Cre -
4. wild beasts, un - teth - ered, at large and the birds who ca - vort in the
5. nou - rish, pro - tect what you give to us things you en - trust to our

28

1. name you, while you calm the clam - or of con - test. —
2. mem bered, chil - dren of A - dam who thrill you. —
3. a - tion would you have laid out be - fore us, —
4. bran - ches, with the rivers who glide deep in o - cean. —
5. keep - ing, the earth to the Cos - mos be - yond us. —

31

34 *D.S.*

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36 **REFRAIN** broadly Descant on selected Refrains 1-5. Verses or Final

All Great is your name!

How great is your name through-out the earth, God here a - mong us.

41 **Final**

— your name!

earth, God here a - mong us

VERSES Psalmist (Cantor) from the ambo

1. Your ma - jor - ty shine in heav - ens, while you
 2. I look span your weav - ing, to the
 3. As gods in - toned us, and have
 4. full fields and fau - na. and the
 5. All this you placed in our mem - 'ry, that we

1. op - en tongues - lent ones. A song is heard, ris - ing to
 2. moon, the ve - ar - n of gal - ax - ies. And here are we, small, yet re -
 3. crowned us in mag - ni - fi - cence. With man - date, we nur - ture Cre -
 4. wild beasts, un - d, at large and free, the birds who ca - vort in the
 5. n - ish, pro - te that you give to us. All things you en - trust to our

1. calm down the clam - or of con - test.
 2. bered, the chil - dren of A - dam who thrill you.
 3. a - tion the world you have laid out be - fore us,
 4. bran - ch with the won - ders who glide deep in o - cean.
 5. keep - ing from the earth to the Cos - mos be - yond us.