

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Psalms 8

Romans 5: 1 - 5

John 16: 12-15

### **Notes on the Psalter Lesson**

Twice in the last few weeks (April 18 and May 2), we have seen how people in the biblical era regarded creation as a three-tiered universe. This concept appears again in this week's Psalter lesson in verses 1 and 3. (For a full treatment of this concept, please refer to the Lectionary Archive at [www.jibe-edu.org](http://www.jibe-edu.org) and see the comments on the texts from the book of Revelation in the April 18 and May 2 notes.)

The primary point to be understood is that in verse 1, the writer is referring to physical places and things. "(Y)our glory" is the *shkinah* or "the glory of the Lord" which is the physical presence of God himself. "(T)he heavens" are the series of upside-down bowls of which humans can only see the lower one in which the sun, the moon, and the stars are placed. Above the highest of these heavens is the abode of God. When the people in Genesis 11 were building the Tower of Babel, they were trying to construct a building tall enough to reach to that highest heaven so that they could have access to God on their terms.

The translation of verse 5 ("you have made them a little lower than God") in the NRSV is to be preferred over most other translations. The literal Hebrew is "heavenly beings" or "divine beings". This should not be confused with angels as in the KJV. There is actually no Hebrew or Greek word that translates as "angel". The Hebrew *mal'akh* and the Greek *angelos* both literally meant "messenger" in the biblical period. It was later Jewish and Christian piety that transformed these messengers into semi-divine beings.