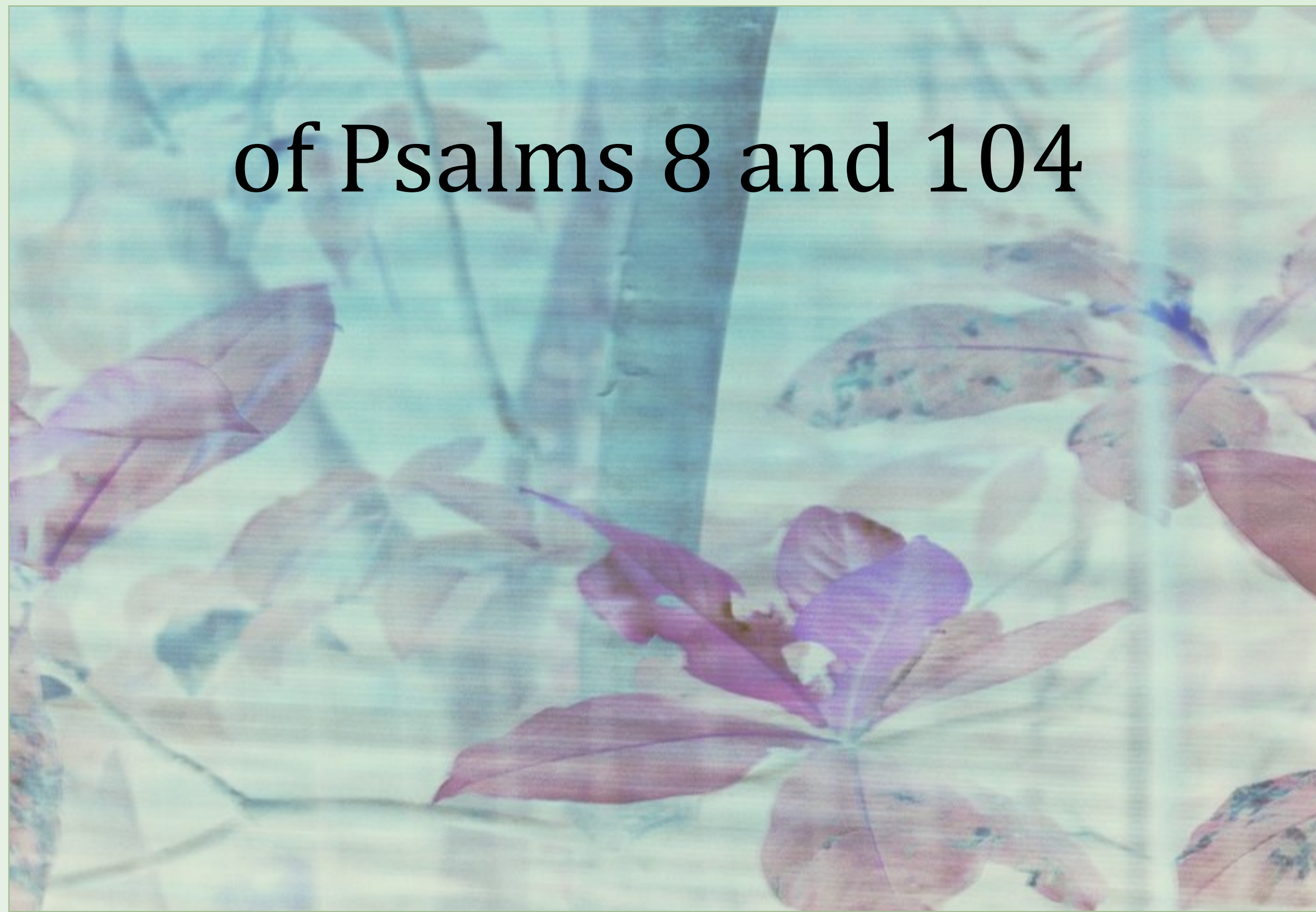


An Ecological Reading

of Psalms 8 and 104



Do our readings of the Bible endanger the planet?

An examination of current proposals leading to a new approach.

Methodology

- Descriptive analysis of five current approaches to reading:- Earth Bible, Hilary Marlow, Exeter University, Ernst Conradie, and Katharine Dell.
- Historical critical exegesis of the texts (incorporating new proposals and analysis of intertexts from Hosea 2 and Ps 115).
- The parallel application of the diverse reading approaches to the same selected texts.
- The readings are compared and aligned with the major postulates of the burgeoning field of environmental ethics. This field is particularly dependent on environmental science.
- A new ethical approach is investigated which is based on literary theory and linked to an affected reader response. The term "poethics" is used, which has only recently been introduced in Biblical studies.

Outcomes

- Historical critical exegesis of texts is always the first determinate for an ecological application.
- Environmental science, and related ethics must be also brought to bear.
- These two prerequisites oftentimes lead to ambiguous possibilities in the reading. E.g. are humans benign stewards of the earth or overbearing overlords? In many situations it is the tradition, or community preference that determines the reading. This may cause some texts to be rejected in favour of others.
- Poetical texts in particular evoke an emotive response in individuals or groups. They are persuasive for thought and action, i.e they work in the realm of ethics. This is true of the Old Testament poetical texts as they relate to ecology.



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