



WOW: Word Of the Week

Aurora

July 23, 2025

It seems that the aurora borealis has been in the news quite often this year. No need for an in-depth science lesson, but the sun has been actively sending more charged particles toward earth. These particles are directed toward the poles where they energize oxygen and nitrogen atoms and molecules, increasing energy and causing them to emit light.

Aurora was the goddess of the dawn. Boreas was the god of the north wind. Combined, we get northern dawn or northern lights. The aurora borealis is indeed spectacular!

Many Christians have favorite psalms. One of mine is Psalm 108. Words of praise coupled with prayers for God's help—that is a summary of many of my prayers. Psalm 108 is an orphan psalm—no author is mentioned. Psalm 108 combines parts of Psalms 57 and 60—both of which are psalms of trust. Those who trust God will steadfastly exalt him. In Psalm 108, the psalmist writes that he will wake up the dawn. He will sing the sun up. When dawn comes, he will be fully awake and already praising God. Paraphrasing: "I awaken the dawn with praise to the Lord because of his great love and faithfulness and glory."

Getting up early is not common in the U.S. A research study a few years ago found that only 8% are awake by 5:00 AM on weekdays, 20% by 5:30 AM, 30% by 6:00 AM. Many awaken because of work and school schedules and sleep in on weekends. Studies show that about 15% are genuine morning people, naturally awaking early. Did the psalmist make a special effort to get up early? Or was he already up?

[I think often about the psalms since I have just sent my new book, Dwelling in the Psalms, to my editor.]

When I was a youngster, I remember getting up early at Grandma's house around 4:00 AM, to eat a bite of breakfast and go to the barn with Uncle Otis to milk the cows. The cows were always up when we got to the barn. The hearty breakfast came after the chores were finished, before the heat of the day.

My family used to get up very early to start long car trips (in the days before air conditioning). Mother would be on the road by 2:00 AM or so. Even if I woke up to begin the day, I remember getting sleepy again pretty quickly.

Aurora. In literature, especially poetry, aurora is used to mean dawn. Do you begin the day alert to the glory of the dawn, the sunrise, our God? Are you more apt to awaken the dawn or be awakened by the dawn?

Regardless of your sleep habits, you can begin the day with praise to God on your mind and on your lips. Regular prayer, meditation, quiet time, study, reading. Where is God already at work? How can you join him today in his work in your little part of our world?