

## Opening Words

In all the universe with all its vastness and glory, in all the earth with its beauties that we behold, there is something even greater that has been made to show the glory of God. You might be surprised at what it is.

## 08 SS Psalm 8 – Part 3 What is Man?

Many years ago, a skeptic was with his Christian friend. The two were looking at the heavens one night and the skeptic, wanting to give his friend a hard time said, “Astronomically speaking, what is man? We are less than a speck of dust floating on a dirt ball in a sea of galaxies.”

But the Christian was undaunted and replied, “Astronomically speaking, we are the astronomer.”

Hello everyone and welcome to our broadcast today, another in our periodic series called Soul Satisfaction where we examine the psalms and the third one in our reflection on Psalm 8. We have looked at verse 1 in our first two broadcasts, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth who have displayed your splendor above the heavens.” We have looked at the name of God. We have seen how God created everything to manifest the majesty of his name. We have probed some of the wonders of God’s creation from the size of the universe to the DNA in our bodies and discovered that God has made all things that men might marvel at his greatness and bow before him.

But there is one more component of creation that David sings about. It is not just that man’s body is an amazing machine amid an amazing world amid an amazing solar system and galaxy amid an amazing universe. It is that man is special. Man, is the astronomer. Let’s pick up the psalm in verse 3.

<sup>3</sup> When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;  
<sup>4</sup> What is man that You take thought of him,  
And the son of man that You care for him?  
<sup>5</sup> Yet You have made him a little lower than God,  
And You crown him with glory and majesty!  
<sup>6</sup> You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;  
You have put all things under his feet,  
<sup>7</sup> All sheep and oxen,  
And also the beasts of the field,  
<sup>8</sup> The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,  
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

David asked one of the great philosophical questions in the history of the world, “What is man?” Philosophers and religious leaders have asked and attempted to answer this question. Most of the answers have been wrong. On one end of the spectrum are those, living mostly in modern times,

who say, “Man is insignificant. Man is the product of time and chance. The universe is an accident. Life is an accident of evolution. We are nothing more than complex chemical reactions.”

On the other end of the spectrum are those who say that man is a god. You have the pantheist variety of this belief that says that the universe itself is divine and since we are part of the universe we are divine too. There is the Mormon variety that says that the Father in heaven we worship was once a man and evolved into a god and we who are men can one day become gods.

Here is how King David answered the question, “What is man?” He said, “You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty!” Man is given sovereignty in the world! Man may be small compared to the size of the universe but man is given the biggest job in the universe. He is given authority to manage God’s creation.

The Hebrew word for God in this verse is Elohim and sometimes it is used to refer to heavenly beings which we know as angels. The inspired writer of Hebrews 2 understood it this way. He quotes extensively from Psalm 8 in his words about the work of Jesus and there he says that man has been made a little lower than the angels.

It is these two truths we must hold together or our thinking will swerve out of control and onto extremes. Man is lower than God and angels, but he is still important. These two truths keep us from pride and from a life without meaning.

When David wrote these words, he had Genesis 1 in mind. He had heard the stories written by God’s people ages ago and preserved through Moses and his people. God made the earth and all that is in it. Then, on the sixth day God made man in his image and said,

“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”<sup>29</sup> Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;<sup>30</sup> and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given every green plant for food*”; and it was so.

That is the blessing and that is the problem because, as you know, we have taken this amazing and highest privilege and have sought to establish our own authority apart from God and this glorious earth that was made to show the wonders of our creator is now filled with conflict, suffering, evil, injustice, and death. Yes, the glory of God is still brightly seen, but the greatest way God wanted to show his glory in the world was through man in his image and man ruling the earth for God’s glory. But now man rules the world for his own glory.

This is the reason why Jesus Christ has come and this is the reason why the writer of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 8. After quoting David’s words, the writer says that God subjected all things to humanity but we do not see all things in subjection and working in harmony. We do not see a world of peace but we see a world of chaos and disorder. We see men fighting men, men fighting and exploiting nature. We see nature fighting nature, and nature fighting man. We see a world of chaos and disorder.

But then, the writer of Hebrews says, “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus. Because of the suffering of death, he was crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.”

In this verse, we find the writer of Hebrews putting the life of Jesus within the larger story of God’s creation. Jesus has come not just to save us from eternal judgment. Jesus has come to restore man as the ruler of the world. This is the full meaning of salvation. Salvation is indeed the restoration of our relationship with God. That is the foundation. But salvation includes the restoration of our purpose to rule the world over a restored creation.

And so, we see the eternal God who lived in glory, who created all things, who is above all, who is the great I AM, humbling himself and becoming a man. Hebrews 2 says that for a little while he became lower than the angels that he created. He became a frail man. He then suffered and died. But three days later he rose and then weeks later he ascended back into heaven where he was enthroned as a glorified man at the right hand of God and he was crowned with glory and honor. The glory and honor that God bestowed upon him was the glory and honor that Adam was supposed to receive but forfeited by his sin. The glory and honor that God bestowed upon him was the glory and honor that you and I were created for but lost because of Adam’s sin and our own. But the glory and honor he received is the glory and honor that will be restored to us by his grace for he tasted death for everyone, the writer says, and he then goes on to say, “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.”

Did you catch that phrase in verse 10, “he is bringing many sons to glory”? When the Father crowned Jesus with glory and honor he did that so that he could eventually crown us with glory and honor. His purpose is to restore our full humanity in his image. And this is the reason why so many places in the New Testament talk about us reigning with Christ over a restored creation.

There is one more verse in Psalm 8 we haven’t touched on. It’s verse 2 and it says, “From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease.” Do you remember what happened to Jesus when he entered Jerusalem on the donkey and then entered the temple? Yes, the children came up to him and were saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David. Hosanna to the Son of David!” Well, the Pharisees were indignant over this and said, “Do you hear what these children are saying?” And Jesus replied, “Yes, and have you never read OUT OF THE MOUTH OF INFANTS AND NURSING BABIES YOU HAVE PREPARED PRAISE FOR YOURSELF?”

The leaders would not praise him, but the children did. The leaders lined up to fight God and his Messiah, but the children saw the truth and gave glory to God. The leaders would eventually kill him, but the children would later come to know him as the resurrected Messiah and Lord of all.

And in this psalm, we find the conflict of the world and the choice of the world. The conflict of the world is that the forces of rebellion and chaos array themselves against the Creator and his plan to bless mankind. They don’t want God to be in charge. They want to be in charge. But God gains his

victory over them through those who are young, those who are weak, those who are helpless, like infants and babes, like you and me.

Is this not why Paul said, “For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.”

In Psalm 8 we find the first psalm that is completely devoted to the praise of God. He is to be praised for his name. He is to be praised for the heavens and earth he made. And he is to be praised by mankind. The question is, will we persist in our rebellion, or humble ourselves like little children and give him the glory that he deserves?

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.”