



Psalm 8:1-9

God's Glory Perfectly Revealed in the Son of Man

Perhaps it was while David was attending sheep on a clear night with the stars brightly shining that he picked up his Gittith, a stringed instrument in the shape of a wine press, and began to strum and chant these amazing words of the Psalm he had written. What a tremendous God! How marvelous is his name! How majestic is our God! David's Psalm reflects on God's glory and the amazing fact that it is entirely under his control.

THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE CREATION OF MAN (8:1-2)

All of creation reflects his glory.

The stars display the glory of God. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky displays his handiwork" (NET).

The earth is full of God's glory if we will but examine it.

God is sovereign over his creation (v. 1)

"O Lord, our Lord, how magnificent is your reputation throughout the earth! You reveal your majesty in the heavens above!" (Psalm 8:1 NET).

One of the dominant messages of the Scriptures is that the Lord God is sovereign over his creation. The creation reflects his glory because it is his handiwork. It is perfectly under his control. No "big bang" theory could produce such a magnificent piece of clockwork as our universe. The more universes and galaxies the scientists discover only emphasizes the glory of the Lord God.

An increasing number of scientists are preferring to the intelligent "design" of biological systems, inferring that a creator God is at work over against an evolutionary process. There is a Master designer behind the immense universe. The intelligent design is becoming increasingly evident to the skilled scientist.

The glory of God is magnified in his creation. The exalted position of man is the capstone of the entire universe.

Wonder of wonders is the fact the Lord God can hold the Milky Way in one hand and take infinite interest in me.

The beauty of God's glory is expressed by infants (v. 2).

God's ways are not our ways. Modern man emphasizes beauty, intellect, wealth, family heritage and position. In contrast, God emphasizes the weak and foolish in the eyes of the world. In the humility and innocence of a child, He has established strength.

"From the mouths of children and nursing babies you have ordained praise on account of your adversaries, so that you might put an end to the vindictive enemy" (Psalm 8:2 NET).

God can reveal Himself in such marvelous ways that children, and babes can grasp what He means. God is so secure in his honor and majesty that He can leave the defense of his name to babes.

Uncorrupted and unbiased minds recognize God without any difficulty. The praise of little children is a symphony in the ears of God. Jesus cared for the little children (Mark 10:16; Matthew 18:2-10). We have to become as little children before we can enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 21:16). What had impressed this man was the fact that the transcendent glory of God could still be grasped and expressed by a child. His greatness that was far above all the heavens could still be comprehended and appreciated by a child.

What the Psalmist teaches is confirmed by an incident from the New Testament. In Matthew 21:16 the Lord Jesus quotes the words of this psalm on a certain occasion. Matthew tells us:

"The blind and lame came to him in the temple courts, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the experts in the law saw the wonderful things he did and heard the children crying out in the temple courts, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they became indignant and said to him, 'Do you hear what they are saying?' Jesus said to them, 'Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of children and nursing infants you have prepared praise for yourself?'" (Matt 21:14-16 NET).

This was not a children's choir, trained by the temple leaders. This was a band of ordinary children in the streets of Jerusalem who happened to be there at the time Jesus healed the blind and the lame. However, when these children saw these wonderful things they began to cry out, "Praise be to the Son of David! Hosanna to the Son of David!" The scribes and chief priests were indignant. They thought Jesus ought to silence these children. Instead, he said, "These are the ones who comprehend the truth and the will of God. They understand that here is being manifested the healing power of God. This is the prediction of David in the eighth Psalm that God's marvelous simplicity can be conveyed to a child much more easily than it can to an adult."

Jesus said on another occasion, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to little children" (Matt 11:25 NET). God has ordained, has chosen, the weak things and the things that are not to set at naught the things that are -to show them up, to expose them -and to convey messages

things that are to show them up, to expose them and to convey messages through weak, foolish and obscure things. He has the ability to convey himself to the childlike, humble mind. The reason for this, of course, is that children (and those who are childlike) are filled with humility. The apostle Paul expressed a similar observation in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!" (Matt. 18:3 NET).

Even though the universe is a marvelous handiwork of God, man is the greatest expression of God's thought. How much greater is he than the stars. The destiny of the redeemed man is eternity in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. However, the destiny of the stars is fire (II Peter 3:12). Not only do we see the glory of God in his creative handiwork, but we also see it in the highest form of his creation. We see God's glory in the consideration of man.

THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE CONSIDERATION OF MAN (8:3-5)

When you spend time gazing into the starry heavens you can begin to wonder about the value of man. "When I have gazed into these stars," wrote Carlyle, "have they not looked down upon me, as if with pity, from their serene spaces, like eyes glistening with heavenly tears over the little lot of man?"

The Psalmist writes: "When I look up at the heavens, which your fingers made, and see the moon and the stars, which you set in place, Of what importance is the human race, that you should notice them? Of what importance is mankind, that you should pay attention to them" (8:3-4 NET).

Some wag has added, "If God so cares for the stars, will he not much more care for our souls?" It reminds us of the words Jesus said to his disciples, "Look at the birds in the sky: They do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you more valuable than they are?" (Matthew 6:26 NET).

The Westminster Catechism reminds us, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." It pleased God to make a people for himself. God created all things for his glory. God has so invested man with a position and dignity that is second only to the Godhead. He created man for a divine purpose.

"Of what importance is mankind, that you should pay attention to them?" (Psalm 8:4a). The word for man here is *Enosh*, frail man, mortal man, and puny man. It describes man from his impotence, frailty, mortality, and inability to fulfill God's purpose because of sin. Yet, he is still the crown of creation. Man is God-made, not self-made. We bear upon us the fingerprints of the infinite. Man is not the plaything of the universe. Strange that man can reach such heights and depths, majesty and meanness, angel and devil, deity and dust, honored and horrible, fellowship and foolishness.

"And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him?" (v. 4b NASB). The word of man here is *Ben Adam*. God visits the "son of man." He is the special object of God's love. Man in sin and shame can not visit God. However, God in his mercy chose to visit man. "Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We saw his glory—the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father" (John 1:14 NET). The "Word" was none other than the second person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ. He chose to redeem us. "We see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God's grace he would experience death on behalf of everyone" (Hebrews 2:9 NET).

The love of God condescends to this frail man who has come short of the glory of God. That condescension is seen in the Son of God. "For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NET).

The apostle Paul wrote: "But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8 NET).

Because of his creation, man has a unique relationship to God (v. 5).

Verse five forcefully declares: "Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God (*Elohim*), and dost crown him with glory and majesty!"

God made man to be a little less than God is (8:5). Some perhaps are startled by that translation, for the King James Version says, "a little lower than the angels." However, it was the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which used the phrase "the angels." The Hebrew actually says "little less than *Elohim*," i.e., a little lower than God.

There is no place in the Old Testament where *Elohim* means angels. The Septuagint *LXX* translation passed the New Testament at Hebrews 2:7. Genesis 1:26, 27 man is made in the image of God, not angels.

What is included in that remarkable expression is the revelation of God's purpose for man. According to the Bible, angels were created as ministering spirits, but man was created in the image of God. No where are we told in the Bible that angels were created in the image of God.

The Primordial Man (Genesis 1:23-24; 2)

The Psalmist is obviously referring to the primordial man, the first Adam before the fall, in the fullness of his power and attributes at creation. Adam is the very reflection of the majesty of the Creator, who had patterned man after Himself. He is the handiwork of God and the expression of his image.

Secular humanism never describes man's dignity asserted clearly and boldly than in this psalm. Every Christian has struggled with such exalted thoughts of God's creation because we fully comprehend that we are radically depraved sinners. One scholar says, "The statement is so bold that the early translators, beginning with the *LXX* and continuing up to the Authorized Version, have substituted the word 'angels' for God." The reference is to man before the Fall, to primordial man. *Elohim* should be translated in its plain, simple, and regular meaning "God." "Angels" is a very uncertain translation. The New Testament quotes from the *LXX*. "We are strongly of the opinion that *élohim* should here be translated in its plain and regular meaning 'God,' a meaning which it has almost without exception" (Leupold, p. 107).

The God-Man (Hebrews 2:7-9)

The Psalmist is thinking of primordial man, first Adam before the Fall and the position of the redeemed in Christ the ideal man. Hebrews 2:7, 9 helps us to understand the correct interpretation of these words of the Psalmist. "But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. . . but we see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God's grace he would experience death on behalf of everyone" NET).

In Philippians 2:8-9 the apostle Paul contrasts the extreme humiliation of Christ and the high exaltation of Him by God the Father because of his obedience.

Him by God the Father because of his obedience.

The fullest realization of man's dignity and excellencies find their fulfillment only in the person of Christ Jesus. Man originally created sinless is a clear foreshadowing of Christ. "We see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God's grace he would experience death on behalf of everyone" (I Corinthians 15:45-46 NET). The "first Adam" prefigures much of that which becomes vital in the life of the "last Adam." It is only in the person of Jesus Christ that we see the true character and essence of Adam before his fall. In Christ Jesus we see the fullest realization and true dignity of Adam who prefigures Jesus Christ as a type. He is a clear foreshadowing of all the excellencies of Jesus Christ. What was said of Adam may well be claimed for Christ, but in a far more perfect manner. The glory of God is perfectly revealed in the Son of Man's dignity.

If you see Adam only as a glorified ape, you will never see the beauty of God's handiwork. The "first Adam" prefigures the "last Adam." The first Adam prefigures what Christ is. What is seen in the first Adam is perfected in the last Adam. Each time I read the gospels I marvel at the perfect Man manifesting so perfectly the image and glory of God.

The New Testament offers over fifty different titles that people gave to Jesus. However, there is one title that no one gave him. He alone called Himself by the title Son of Man. No one else did. He is the one Son, *par excellence*. He does what the Father does. He creates a new humanity, and a new heaven and a new earth.

This Psalm helps us to understand our present position in Christ.

No where else do we find such high dignity of man than in the Scriptures. God has placed man at the height of creation. Even if fallen and depraved man, sinful and undone is the apex of creation, what is the unique position of redeemed man? The glory of God is seen in the dignity of man because man is made in the image and likeness of God. We are kin to God. He is our next of kin. Man reaches his fullest realization only in Christ.

Thus, redeemed humanity has been elevated by means of the new birth to highest rank of all created beings. We are elevated to the most sublime height possible short of becoming members of the trinity itself. Salvation is a restoration to what God intended when He made man in the first place. When we see Jesus, we see how far we have fallen and what God intended man to be. Now that we have been redeemed, God sees us in Christ. He is the pattern of normal humanity.

True greatness of man can only be manifested as the Holy Spirit renews him, and as he comes to grow up in Him in all things who is the head, even Christ.

Note to what heights the child of God is raised. God has exalted redeemed humanity to such a sublime height that it is impossible for Him to elevate them further without breaching the Godhead. See how much God loves you! See what He has done for you in his grace. He has invested man with a dignity that is second only to his own and made him ruler over the world that He has created.

Do you wake up every morning and say to yourself, "I am a child of God. I have been forgiven of my sins. I am accepted in God's family. He has marked me out as his own. He has put his Spirit within me, releasing to me the full life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every power that Jesus himself had to perform his life upon earth, I have in him. I am equipped to handle whatever comes today. I can take whatever life throws at me because I have him and all the fullness of his life." This is where you find identity, security, significance and sufficiency for your spiritual life. We are his handiwork! You are made in Christ!

THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE CONSUMMATION OF MAN (8:6-9)

God's original intent for man was to have dominion over the earth.

Man was created to have dominion over God's creation (see Genesis 2:6-9). However, man has perverted it by trying to have dominion over his fellow men.

Man has not tamed the wild life. We see attempts at it in the circus and zoo. The child does not play with the adder. The lion and the lamb do not lie down together.

This perfect dominion is true only in Christ. He alone is Lord of all creation.

Psalm 8:6-7 can be ultimately true only in the God-Man, Jesus Christ. "You appoint them to rule over your creation; you have placed everything under their authority, including all the sheep and cattle, as well as the wild animals. What awesome power!" (NET).

I can think of a few examples from the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.

- Remember how Jesus changed water into wine at a wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11).
- He quieted the winds and the waves of a raging storm on the Sea of Galilee with the words, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39).
- Christ rode an unbroken colt into Jerusalem (Luke 19:30-36).
- At the trial of Jesus a rooster crowed at the precise moment just as he had predicted to Peter (Matthew 26:34, 74-75).
- At the command of Jesus, Peter cast his net into the sea and caught a certain fish with a coin in its mouth. That coin in the mouth of the fish was of the exact amount needed to pay the Temple tax for the two of them (Matthew 17:27).

Everything is under the sovereign dominion of Christ. Mark 1:13 tells us that while being tempted in the wilderness for forty days by Satan Jesus "was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him." One scholar notes the verb suggests companionship between them and Jesus. It foreshadows the day when all creation is under his dominion in Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25.

We shall be like Him (I John 3:2)

The dominion of Christ is not limited to the animal creation. Christ is the head of his church. Am I dominated by a spirit of worldliness or by the Lord Jesus? Am I overcoming the world and dominating it by the Holy Spirit? Is He Lord and Master of my life? Am I obedient to Him?

The apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:25-28, quoting Psalm 8:6 in v. 27 the following verses: "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be eliminated is death. For he has put everything in subjection under his feet. But when it says 'everything' has been put in subjection, it is clear that this does not include the one who put everything in subjection to him. And when all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that

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subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all" (NET). Did you notice that the last enemy to be conquered is death?

When Christ comes a second time we shall be just like Him. I John 3:2 says, "Dear friends, we are God s' children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that whenever it is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is" (NET).

In Philippians 2:9-11 the Apostle Paul declares this great exaltation of Christ at his Second Coming.

"As a result God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (NET).

With the Psalmist we can only conclude:

"O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Thy name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:9).

Title: God's Glory Perfectly Revealed in the Son of Man

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