

## *To God Alone Be The Glory*

Imagine that you are the Holy Spirit and it's still Old Testament times. As the Holy Spirit one of your jobs is revealing little parts of the Father's plan to save mankind. You will do this from time to time until the Savior is born someday. Now you could reveal the future so clearly that a malicious huckster could become a "poser," claim to be the Messiah, and mislead many poor souls. But instead you reveal just parts of the saving plan here and there, and always in riddles which cannot be fully solved until the real Messiah comes. When the Messiah is born someday, he will fulfill all the prophecies about him, and believers will be able to say, "Yep, that Jesus, he's the real deal. He fits all the patterns of the Messiah revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. I am sticking to Jesus like glue. What he teaches I will believe. What he commands I will do."

Later on, after the Messiah has been born, you as the Holy Spirit will cause the Apostle Peter to write this to Christians: "*Concerning this salvation, the [Old Testament] prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow*" (1 Peter 1:10-11). In fact, after you cause the whole New Testament to be written down, followers of the Christ will

spend at least the next 2000 years noticing how the New Testament lights up the Old Testament and unravels the riddles in which you couched so many details about the Messiah. People who read their Bible regularly will also notice that you revealed enough details to strengthen the faith of Old Testament believers in their coming Messiah.

OK, you're not the Holy Spirit anymore, and you're back to today. Let's look at how the New Testament lights up Psalm 8 for us so our faith can rest on Jesus? ***10 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*** I hope this verse sounds familiar. We sing these words of King David five or six times a year. It's like saying, "Lord, we acknowledge that you created this world. We see your fingerprints all over the earth."

God's name is revealed in more than just all the earth. David says, *16 You have set your glory above the heavens.* I've read that more and more scientists are acknowledging that there's far too much design built into the universe for it to have happened by chance. There's just not enough chaos. The universe is too orderly. Well, you wouldn't have had to tell that to folks at any time in history except during the last few hundred years when man has gotten so smart!

Although the earth, sun, moon, and stars give their testimony about God's glory, it's a testimony without words and without love. Much better are the simple prayers

and songs of little believing children. So David says, *2From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise.* Wait, infants can talk? The Hebrew word for “infant” here means “suckling”; back then many children suckled until they were three years old, well after they could talk. And so God has often had children speak his praises. And why? David answers in Psalm 8: *because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.* One avenger and foe is Satan. He can be silenced simply by praising God, even if little children are the praise-ers. Next time you’re being tempted, start praising the Lord from your heart and see if it doesn’t send Satan sadly away.

Did you know Jesus quoted from Psalm 8? On Monday of Holy Week, Jesus went to the Temple and drove out all the buyers and the sellers. Then, according to Matthew (21:14-16), Jesus stayed in the Temple courts, healing the blind and the lame. It just so happens, there were children in the Temple courts, loudly repeating what they had heard the crowds shouting the day before on Palm Sunday, *“Hosanna to the Son of David!”* (Our first hymn [CW 130] referred to this incident). Well, all this was just too much for the chief priests and teachers of the law on that Monday. *“Do you hear what these children are saying?’ they asked him. ‘Yes,’ replied Jesus, ‘have you never read, ‘From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise’?”* That’s Psalm 8:2, and it seems to have silenced Jesus’ foes. The leaders of Israel should have

taken the lead in welcoming and praising Jesus as Messiah. When they refused, God gave Jesus the glory he deserved through the lips of children. That’s a good lesson for us. If we become complacent in our faith, and decide to take it easy in our spiritual life, and aren’t very much concerned with supporting missions or spreading the gospel right here, God will raise up others to do the work. Instead let’s be the children and infants who are happy to speak the praises of the Lord. Let’s give Jesus his glory!

Parents whose children are steeped in God’s Word like a teabag in hot water report that this kind of thing happens regularly. Some adult will be spouting off at the mouth, and a little child will pipe up, “God says that’s sinful.” Or people are crying uncontrollably at the funeral of a believer, and a little child will ask, “Why is everyone crying? I thought it was a good thing for Jesus to take Grandpa to heaven.” God bless those little children for pointing out from God’s Word what we adults sometimes forget.

Next King David says to the Lord, *3When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place...* Finger work: that paints a picture. Can you see God sitting down on the fourth day of creation to do some fine embroidery or needlepoint, and, voila!, all the stars in the universe are set in place. Wow! If the stars are like needlepoint for God, just imagine how immense God must be! \*Now consider

how small man is. All seven billion of us humans fit on this tiny little planet in the corner of the universe. We amount to a microcosmic speck compared to one star. And there are many stars out there. Since that's so, it makes sense for us to ask God, *what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?* The answer lies in Genesis: mankind is the crown of God's creation. God created Adam and Eve to have complete dominion over the whole universe. So all those stars and planets and moons out there were made to serve mankind. God even made the first humans in God's image so that they were holy and righteous. And why? so we could live in a happy fellowship with God and enjoy humble dominion over the creation he made for us.

But that dominion is gone. So is most of the humility. Adam's sin ruined it. Our sins have made it worse. Now animals kill humans, humans kill animals, and man slaughters man. We have tried to conquer bacteria through antibiotics, but some of the germs are no longer impressed. New and deadly viruses come along every so often. Then there are weeds, pests, floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, tornados, hurricanes. Why, even the machines we build sometimes kill people, and many inventions poison people with their pollution. \*For these reasons a number of Bible scholars believe Psalm 8 stops talking about mankind in verse 4 (*what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?*) and switches focus to the ultimate Son of Man,

Jesus Christ, true man and true God. That would make Psalm 8 a Messianic Psalm, a Psalm about Messiah.

The New Testament helps us confirm this assertion. Remember how, instead of calling himself "the Son of God" all the time, Jesus usually called himself "the Son of Man"? Psalm 8:4 is one of only 2 or 3 Old Testament passages (Ps 144:3, Da 7:13) that Jesus could have taken this Messianic title from. So in v. 4 the words "Son of Man" could be capitalized to show that they refer to Jesus. If you look at Psalm 8 in our hymnal (p. 67), you'll notice that "Son of Man" is capitalized to remind us, "This Psalm is about the promised Messiah."

Verse 5 is a difficult verse. *You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings.* Literally the Hebrew reads, "You made him lack God a little." This could mean, "You let him be forsaken by God for a little while," which is exactly what happened while Jesus was hanging on the cross. Remember how Jesus asked, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" If that's what these words refer to, then the Holy Spirit was revealing that the coming Messiah would take on the punishment for our sins. God can't stand sin; those who sin must not remain in his loving presence. So when Jesus took our sin on himself, the Father put his only-begotten Son out of his loving presence. It sounds horrible for Jesus, but that's how God paid for our

sins so that we can now stand in his loving presence. As the hymn says, “What wondrous love is this! that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the awful curse for my soul.”

The epistle to the Hebrews (2:6-8) quotes verse 5 of Psalm 8 as a summary of Jesus’ life on earth, from his birth to his burial, what we like to call in Catechism class “Jesus’ state of humiliation,” the time when he set aside the full use of his divine power: “*You made him a little lower than the angels.*” Remember how the angels had to come and attend to Jesus after the 40 days of temptation in the wilderness, and also in Gethsemane? “*You made him a little lower than the angels.*”

But later Jesus was exalted. He didn’t stay in his humble condition. So David adds: *[You] crowned him with glory and honor. 6You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: 7all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, 8the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.* Remember when Jesus had finished his work of defeating sin and Satan for us, he ascended to heaven. God seated Jesus at his right hand and 6“*placed everything under his feet.*” In 1 Corinthians 15:27, Paul quotes Psalm 8:6 as if to say, “Jesus has fulfilled what was prophesied about him in this Psalm.”

God always planned to have Jesus rule all things for the benefit of the Church. But did you know God’s plan to save us included giving back to us the dominion over creation that Adam lost? But not directly. Jesus will share his rule with us in heaven. He will even share the judgment with us. According to Revelation, we will add our ‘Amen’s to the Lord’s verdict on his enemies. According to 1 Corinthians 6:3, we will judge the evil angels. The world loves this quotation of Jesus, “*Judge not and you will not be judged*” (Matthew 7:1), because they don’t want to be called on the carpet for their wickedness. But if they would listen to God’s judgment about sin now, they won’t have to bear God’s judgment on the Last Day. God wants them to repent of all sin now before they must stand before him for judgment.

God should have condemned us all for our sin. But instead he decided to redeem us all through Jesus, the Son of Man and Son of God. Psalm 8 reminds us of God’s saving decision. No wonder King David opens and closes the Psalm with the words: ***9O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*** May we always hold Christ dear in our hearts, so that on the Final Day we might join the crowds in heaven in a repeat of Palm Sunday, shouting, “Save us, Son of David,” or to use the Palm Sunday word, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”