

Gospel and the Kingdom of God — 2

(Psalm 8)

Introduction to Psalm 8

David wrote this psalm. The first verse (v1) and the last (v9) are the same. They are about God's awesome majesty in creation. The verses between the first and the last are about God's excellent plan for man in all creation. Our praise of God (in v1 and v9) must set the boundaries of man's value on earth (v2 - v8).

In Psalm 8, we see the dignity of man as being God's representative on earth. Man is given honour and glory almost like the angels (v5) and dominion over all earthly creatures (v6 - v8) — in both cases, almost like God Himself.

Outline of Psalm 8

1. Majesty of God in creation (*Ps 8:1-2, 9*)

His Name and Glory (v1)

His power over His enemies by even using infants (v2)

2. Dignity of man in creation (*Ps 8:3-8*)

Man's insignificance (vv 3-4)

Man's exaltation (vv 5-8)

1. The majesty of God in creation (*Ps 8:1-2 & 9*).

His name and glory (vv 1 & 9): *LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.*

LORD our Lord: (Yahweh-Adonai) David addresses God as **Yahweh**, which means "Eternal God who is Israel's covenant keeper Redeemer. And Adonai means He is also our Master and Ruler."

David expresses overwhelming admiration for God's majesty and excellence. God is infinitely more glorious than all the angelic heavenly beings and heavenly bodies like the moon and stars.

His power over His enemies by even using infants (v2): *Through the praise of children and infants, you have established a stronghold against your enemies to silence the foe and the avenger.*

We could see this verse in three ways:

- i. Perhaps David was inspired to write this verse by his triumph over Goliath. David was a mere child compared to the mighty giant, Goliath (*1 Sam 17:42*). David owes his victory over Goliath to God's power (*1 Sam 17:45-47*).
- ii. When we face oppressive problems and still praise God, we enthrone God over us (*Ps 22:3*). Weak as we are, we will defeat the devil's power. **All Christians must know and use their authority over the devil daily because daily, the devil harasses the saints of God.**
- iii. The chief priest and scribes objected to children singing hosannas to our Lord Jesus in *Matt 21:15-16*. Then Jesus answered them with *Ps 8:2*. In *Matt 11:25*, our Lord Jesus thanks the heavenly Father for

giving spiritual revelation to children and hiding these matters from the wise and the learned (the proud Pharisees). The principle is that we need to be like little children — trusting, humble and open, to receive spiritual revelation (Luke 18:17). We can overcome the devil only with a spiritual revelation of who Jesus is (Ps 8:2).

2. The dignity of man in creation (vv 3- 8).

Man's insignificance in creation (vv 3-4): *When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?* David was probably looking into a clear night sky, for he did not mention the sun. David sees the wonder of creation and realises his insignificance. He sincerely asks **the question** in v4 (*What is mankind that you are mindful of, and human beings that you care for?*).

About one billion galaxies in the universe are known to man. In each galaxy, there are about 100 billion stars. Our sun is only one among the 100 billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy. Yet even a matchbox-sized portion taken from the middle of the sun and kept 100 miles away from our major cities would contain sufficient energy to burn up that city completely. There is so much energy in the universe, and our planet Earth is tiny among the mighty stars. A man living on this small planet Earth is tiny compared to Earth. David is in awe when he contemplates whatever he knows of the enormous universe. He is overwhelmed that God should ever be mindful of humanity and deal with them so compassionately and tenderly, despite the pride and arrogance of sinful man.

The question in v4 is still relevant today. **What is man?** From where did he come? Why is he here on Earth, a tiny dot in the universe? What is man's purpose? Where does a man go after he dies? Is there meaning at all to man's existence? From world literature, we can see **only three basic answers** to man's existence:

- a. **The Hindu answer** (adopted by New-Age people). Hinduism is a world religion. It offers many different philosophies yet has two common principles — karma and rebirth. The principle of karma is that people get what they deserve, if not in this life when reborn in the next life. The principle of rebirth is that people get reborn after death in forms dependent on their performance in their previous life. Hinduism gives no assurance of an escape from an endless cycle of rebirth and offers little hope to the suffering, tiredness and pain that humanity faces today.
- b. **The Islamic answer** (adopted by all legalistic people). Islam is also a world religion. It teaches obedience and submission to God. In principle, it teaches that people must earn their salvation through good deeds. On the positive side, many who practice religions based on legalism are genuinely pious people who believe in a Creator God but do not have any assurance of salvation. On the negative side, legalism tends to incite pride and rebellion within us. It brings division to all levels of society — between man and man, between man and woman, and between clergy and laity. Eventually, the dignity of man will suffer.
- c. **The Biblical answer** is that God is the Creator of the universe. Even though God is everywhere, He is not part of the universe. By His grace, God has given man great dignity, honour, dominion over the earth, and a great future ahead of him. This answer we shall examine in Ps 8:5-8 below.

2.2 Man's exaltation in creation (Ps 8:5-8): *You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. ⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

Two realities in vv 5-6 give the Biblical answer to man's existence.

The First Reality: Man is unique in God's creation (v5): *"You have made them a little lower than the angels".*

The Hebrew word for *angels* is “*Elohim*” — translated elsewhere in the Bible as *God*. Therefore, we could also say God created man a little lower than Himself. We get a sense from the Bible that man is the closest creature to God. Even though man has fallen due to sin, God loves man so much that He sent His Son Jesus to redeem humanity (*Jn 3:16*) and live in them by His Holy Spirit. **It is the gospel, the good news**. The purpose of God was to create humans to have fellowship with Him. And Jesus Christ meets this purpose fully. Indeed, God has crowned man *with glory and honour*.

*Col 1:27: To them, God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery: which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**.*

The Second Reality: Man has dominion over God’s creation (v6): “You have made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet.”

Here David is not just talking of the God-given ability of man to enforce his dominion over the creatures of the Earth’s land, air, and sea so that they obey him. But David also refers to Earth and its creatures’ willingness to accept the rule of man. Remember, in the Garden of Eden, the animals came to Adam so he could name them (*Gen 2:19,20*). It was God’s original plan for man, though much changed after the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Even today, we see such evidence. Notice how domesticated **animals** (horses, dogs & cats), **birds** (parrots and other birds) and **fish** (dolphins) willingly accept the rule of man over them.

After the Fall, the earth resisted spontaneously responding to man by yielding thorns and thistles. Man, too, became rebellious and selfish. Instead of ruling the earth, we began to ruin it by polluting the air and the sea, cutting down trees and dirtying the land with garbage. The mess on earth constantly reminds us that man cannot *put everything under his feet*, contrary to *Ps 8:6* above. God solved this problem in Jesus Christ (*Heb 2:8-9* — **which is the gospel, the good news**).

*Heb 2:8-9: “In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet, at present, we do not see everything subject to them. **But we see Jesus**, who was made a little lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone”.*

Heb 2:8 starts with repeating *Ps.8:6*, yet admits that this is presently not true: “*Yet at present, we do not yet see everything subject to them*”. *Heb 2:9* then says that we should look to Jesus for our answer. Jesus came just like us (*a little lower than the angels*) and suffered for our sins, even unto death. But, He rose again, and God crowned Him with the glory and honour God intended for humanity before the Fall. Let us consider Jesus as He lived on earth as a man:

Jesus lived as a man entirely depending on His Father.

John 5:19: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing because whatever the Father does, the Son also does.

John 5:30: By myself, I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

John 6:38: For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

John 8:28: I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

Jesus lived as a man with dominion over land, sea and air

He walked on water (*Matt 14:25*). He calmed the sea and storm (*Mk 4:39*).

Jesus is the beginning of a new creation that God is making.

We see daily that man cannot rule the earth but makes a mess because of his wickedness. Yet we know it

is also true that God is silently building a new creation behind what is evident. God will not be defeated by man's wickedness nor by the devil's schemes.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new has come!

God's purpose for man is to become like Jesus. In the new creation, God promises to work all things together for our good, so His purposes in us are fulfilled (*Rom 8:28-30*). God is doing something fascinating, and the whole earth is groaning and waiting for God's work (His mature sons) to be revealed (*Rom 8:19*). All our trials and problems are producing in us that glorious work of God (*2 Cor 4:17,18*)

When *1 Cor 15:27* quotes *Psalms 8:6*: "You put everything under his feet", it refers to our Lord Jesus, who even put death under His feet. In Him, we, too, can say that even death has lost its sting (*1 Cor 15:55*), for we will rise again to eternal life.

Psalms 8:7-8 shows man initially ruled the earth even over creatures of land, sea and air. But because we sinned, powers of darkness now rule the earth. Jesus defeated those powers of darkness through His death and resurrection (*Col 2:15*). Jesus invites us to partner with Him to bring His kingdom on earth—by **praying in His Name, walking in His character and preaching His gospel**.

2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

1 Cor 3:9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

Beloved in Christ, we are God's new creation. We can co-labour with God to bring His Kingdom on earth by praying in Jesus' Name, walking closely with Him and declaring His word by faith. In like manner, we can co-labour with God to bring His kingdom to our families, churches, and all over the face of the earth. We can free people groups in the darkness that covers them and allow them to receive the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We will now examine the three answers to the question of man's existence and see the difference:

- a. **The Hindu or New-Age answer:** We see here a futile existence, humanity facing an endless cycle of rebirth, having no answers to suffering and pain.
- b. **The Islamic or Legalistic answer:** People here strive for perfection but with no assurance for the future.
- c. **The Biblical answer:** We see a vastly different picture here. When we receive Christ as Lord, we see a picture of glorious hope, purpose, and a glorious future. God has given dignity and honour to man, whom He made in His image. Even though man has fallen, he is redeemable by the great price our Lord Jesus paid. Knowing this, we must respect every human being. The biblical answer to man's existence leads us to:
 - Partner with God Almighty — what a privilege! What an honour!
 - *Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before our God* (*Micah 6:8*).
 - Be against social evils like abortions, sex and drug trafficking, racism, casteism and disrespect for women.
 - Have concern for the poor.
 - Be in awe of God's holiness.

We are overwhelmed by God's majesty and excellence as we meditate on God's excellent plan for humanity (vv 5-8). We to exclaim, ***O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*** (Ps 8:9)

1 Cor 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

Isa 64:4 Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

Ps 40:5 Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you. Were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

Human philosophy says: "**Man is the measure of all things.**" (Greek philosopher Protagoras). But the Bible teaches us the way of humility, looking up to God and humbly saying, "**What is man that thou art mindful of him**"? Between these two lines lies the great distance between man-centred and God-centered views.