

# An Exegetical Study of Psalm 8: The LORD Reveals His Majestic Glory

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## Introduction

In an age when human accomplishments are glorified, in a society where humanism appears to reign supreme, we Christians need to remain focused on the glorious accomplishments of God and his supreme reign over everything. We see his glory in part in nature. But his glory is revealed most fully in his work of saving lost sinners. Nothing mankind does, nothing humans accomplish can come close to the majestic glory of God. In Psalm 8, the LORD reveals this glory for us. We are moved to praise the glory of the LORD, not the glory of man. Luther summarizes:

This psalm is one of the beautiful psalms and a glorious prophecy about Christ, where David describes Christ's person and kingdom and teaches who Christ is; what kind of kingdom He has and how it is formed; where this King rules, namely, in all lands and yet in heaven; and the means by which His kingdom is founded and regulated, namely, only through the Word and faith, without sword and armor.<sup>1</sup>

## Exegesis and Commentary

### Title

לְמַנְצִיחַ עַל־הַגִּתִּית מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

For the choirmaster. According to the Gittith. A psalm of David.

NIV: For the director of music. According to gittith. A psalm of David.

AAT: For the choir leader; on the gittith; a psalm of David.

As is typical of 116 other psalms, Psalm 8 has a title or superscription. The title tells us that Psalm 8 was used in public worship. David intended this psalm to be sung in the Temple. Psalm 8 was to be used by the chief musician or choirmaster. הַגִּתִּית, which seems to be related to the city of Gath in Philistia, refers to either a tune to which the psalm was to be sung or an instrument which was to be used to accompany the singing of the psalm. Most likely, this tune or instrument originated in the city of Gath.<sup>2</sup> This term is also used in the titles of Psalms 81 and 84. Both of those psalms are also songs of praise extolling the LORD for his glorious and gracious works for his people. מִזְמוֹר, a song, poem, or hymn, is used as the title for 57 other psalms. It is a term that was used to indicate that the psalm was to be used in public worship.<sup>3</sup>

The editors of Christian Worship must have taken this into consideration when they chose to include this psalm in our hymnal. Psalm 8 is the Psalm of the Day for the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter in all three series. In addition, it is the psalm chosen for Christmas Eve in the one-year lectionary, as well as the Psalm of the Day for the Name of Jesus and the commemoration of St. John, apostle. This is an appropriate psalm for these worship occasions. The 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter focuses on Jesus' exaltation and his rule over all things. Psalm 8 speaks of Christ's incarnation. It is also notable that this psalm is used in the festival half of the church year when our thoughts are especially focused on Christ for us.

### verse 1

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<sup>1</sup> Luther, p98.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible that this term also comes from גֵּת, "winepress." In this case, it would be a tune that was sung during a grape harvest or while workers pressed out the grapes for wine.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the information in this paragraph was gleaned from Professor Gawrisch's *Introduction to the Psalms*.

יְהוָה אֲדֹנָינוּ מִה־אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ:

אֲשֶׁר תָּנָה הוֹדְךָ עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם:

LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You placed your glory above the heavens.  
NIV: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

AAT: LORD, our Lord, how wonderful is your name all over the earth! Your glory is sung over the heavens.

David is encouraging God's people to praise יְהוָה אֲדֹנָינוּ. יְהוָה is the special name by which God has revealed himself to us (Ex 34:6-7). יְהוָה is the God of free and faithful grace. He remains true to his Word, both Law and Gospel. He justly punishes those who disobey his commands. He remains true to his promises to forgive lost sinners. He is completely independent and constant. He does not need our praise. He does not need our service. Yet our gracious God invites and accepts our lives of worship. אֲדֹנָינוּ is the LORD'S title. אֲדֹן has the basic meaning of "lord," "master," "ruler." Sarah called Abraham אֲדֹנָי (Gn 18:12). Here we are using the majestic plural to refer to יְהוָה as our Lord, Ruler and Master. He is the King of the Universe (1 Ti 1:17, 6:15-16). The first person plural suffix is also noteworthy. He is our King. He has made us his subjects.

With an exclamatory phrase, David relates that we are praising the LORD our Lord because his name is majestic in all the earth. The name of the LORD is more than just his name, יְהוָה. It is more than the various titles that are given to him. It also involves his "existence, character, and reputation." The name of the LORD is everything that he has revealed about himself to us. "The name of God also signifies the whole self-disclosure of God in his holiness and truth."<sup>4</sup> Luther brings out this thought when he basically equates God's name with his Word in his explanation to the First Petition. "God's name is kept holy when his Word is taught in its truth and purity..."

God's name is mighty, majestic (אֲדִיר). It is superior to all other names. No one else has revealed himself so gloriously as has the LORD. No one else is seen as perfectly holy, righteous and just. No one else is seen as perfectly faithful, gracious and loving. Therefore the name of the LORD is majestic.

And where is it majestic? It is majestic בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ, "in all the earth." Again, as Luther explained, "God's name is certainly holy by itself." God's name is majestic by itself. Whether people believe in the LORD or not, his name is superior to all other names. That is why Paul can tell the Philippians that "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Ph 2:8-9; also Rev 5:13). This cannot be said of any other name or person. Only the LORD's name is praised and worshiped throughout the world and throughout the universe, as David goes on to say.

The relative אֲשֶׁר connects this phrase to the opening exclamation of praise. One reason why the LORD's name is majestic in all the earth is that his glory is evident עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם, "above the heavens." הַשָּׁמַיִם refer to everything that is above the earth, from the atmosphere to the far reaches of the universe, including also "heaven" as the dwelling place of God. Here David would seem to be indicating the sky and outer space. It is a fact that God has placed (תָּנָה, qal) his הוֹד in all the heavens. הוֹד is a uniquely Hebrew word, often used in connection with אֲדִיר. הוֹד also has the idea of majesty, glory and honor. All one has to do is glance at the

<sup>4</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Volume 2, p934.

vastness of our universe or marvel at the orderly rotation of our solar system around the sun or examine the powerful weather patterns of our atmosphere to understand that “the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Ps 19:1). That astronomers and other scientists who devote themselves to studying the universe cannot acknowledge the presence and glory of God is simply denying the majestic evidence of God’s glory before them.

Summary: The name of the LORD, the God of free and faithful grace, the Ruler of the universe, is majestic in all the earth. There is no place where God’s name is not praised. One reason is that he has made his glory clear for all to see in his created universe. He has revealed his power in his creation.

## verse 2

מִפִּי עוֹלָלִים וְיִנְקִים יִסְדָּתָּ עֵז

לְמַעַן צוֹרְרֶיךָ לְהִשָּׁבֵית אוֹיֵב וּמִתְנַגְּמִים:

From the mouth of children and infants you appoint strength because of your enemies, to destroy the enemy and avenger.

NIV: From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

AAT: From the mouths of children and babes You have established strength despite your foes, in order to silence the enemy and the avenger.

Even though the LORD has placed his glory in the heavens for all to see, it only takes the voices of believing children to send his enemies away. מִפִּי עוֹלָלִים וְיִנְקִים stands in sharp contrast to the majestic glory of the universe. עוֹלָלִים are children in general, as opposed to adults, while יִנְקִים refer to children who are still nursing. Jewish mothers typically nursed their children until the age of three. Therefore, this can be taken literally.<sup>5</sup> That is exactly what Jesus did on Palm Sunday. “The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they were indignant. ‘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”?’” (Mt 21:14-16). The “Hosannas” of little children, their songs of praise to their Savior, was enough to quiet Jesus’ enemies.

עֵז presents a little problem. Its basic meaning is “strength, might.” However, the Septuagint, from which Jesus quoted, translated עֵז αἶνον, “praise.” Since it is the spoken praise or confession of the smallest believer that defeats God’s enemies, the translation of the Septuagint and Jesus’ use of that translation make perfect sense.

The LORD appointed this strength from the mouth of little children because he has enemies, צוֹרְרֶיךָ. There are people out there who are hostile to the LORD, his name, his people. These enemies line themselves up against Christ’s church. They are guided and controlled by one great enemy (אוֹיֵב), the devil. This enemy has already been destroyed by the work of Jesus (Gn 3:15; 1 Jn 3:8). Yet, he still prowls around this world seeking to destroy the church (1 Pt 5:8; Eph 6:12). God does not let Satan and his cohorts have their way. He does not let them hinder the revelation of his glory in all the earth. He musters his strength to oppose them. But this strength is not found in the immensity of the universe. It is not found in the mighty weapons of this world. His strength is in the still, small voice of the Gospel (1 Kg 19:9b-13; Eph 6:13-17) Luther commented, “This is the way Christ’s kingdom is established, namely, not with human force, wisdom, counsel or power, but with the

<sup>5</sup> Luther takes this to mean “plain, simple, unsophisticated people, who are like infant children in that they set aside all reason, grasp and accept the Word with simple faith, and let themselves be led and directed by God like children” (LW:12, p108).

Word and the Gospel preached by infants and sucklings. The Turkish emperor strengthens and fortifies his kingdom with the sword. So does the pope. But Christ founds, strengthens, and fortifies His kingdom only through the oral Word.” The 3 year old making a joyful noise, “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so,” is enough to send Satan scurrying back to hell. The 1<sup>st</sup> graders singing, “I am Jesus’ little lamb,” is enough to silence the harshest critics of Christianity.

By way of application, this passage could certainly find appropriate use in defending the Bible’s doctrine of infant baptism in the face of attacks from Baptists who claim that little children are not capable of believing. All people are conceived and born in sin (Ps 51:5), even though a newborn might appear to be so innocent. God can bring that tiny, sinful infant to faith through baptism. And he can move little children to express their faith.

Summary: The LORD faces and defeats his enemies, not with his mighty power as witnessed in the universe, but with his Word, even as it is spoken by little children. “This world’s prince may still/ Scowl fierce as he will/ He can harm us none/ He’s judged; the deed is done!/ One little word can fell him.”<sup>6</sup>

### verse 3-4

בִּי־אֲרָאָה שָׁמַיִךְ מַעֲשֵׂי אֲצַבְעֹתֶיךָ יָרַח וְכּוֹכָבִים אֲשֶׁר כּוֹנְנָתָה:

מַה־אֲנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֶנּוּ וּבֶן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקְדֶנּוּ:

When I inspect your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set, what is man that you think about him, the son of man that you pay attention to him?

NIV: When I consider you heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

AAT: When I look at Your heavens that Your fingers made, the moon and the stars that You set up, what is man that you should think of him, or a son of man that You should come and visit him?

Our attention is again directed to the wonders of God’s creation. אֲרָאָה, the qal imperfect of רָאָה, has the literal meaning “to see with one’s eyes.” But one of its extended meanings has the idea of looking closely at something with the hope of learning.<sup>7</sup> David gazes at the expanse of the universe and again marvels at the majesty of what God has created. He uses an anthropomorphism<sup>8</sup> to picture God’s created universe. This figure of speech, together with the suffix on שָׁמַיִךְ and the mention that the LORD placed the moon and stars in their position in the sky, emphasizes the great care that God took in creating the heavens and the earth. Our universe did not appear by accident.

While we gaze in awe at the immense expanse, beauty and vastness of God’s universe, a thought strikes us. What are we weak human beings in contrast to all of this? Why has God concerned himself with us? אֲנוֹשׁ is a word normally used in poetry. It means mankind in general, as opposed to God. It “is a term which sets off man’s frailty and mortality, his transitoriness, in strong contrast to the grandeur and duration of the heavenly bodies.”<sup>9</sup> Despite our mortality, God concerns himself with us. תִּזְכְּרֶנּוּ, qal imperfect of זָכַר, means “to remember,” “to think about.” Why in all this vast universe, would God think about the frail mortals on a tiny planet in an out-of-the-way solar system?

<sup>6</sup> CW 200:3

<sup>7</sup> BDBG, p907, meaning 7.

<sup>8</sup> An anthropomorphism is a figure of speech in which human form is ascribed to God. It is another example of the Almighty God accommodating himself to our frail human minds as he reveals himself to us.

<sup>9</sup> Lillegard, p29.

David parallels this thought with the question, “What is... the son of man that you pay attention to him?” The use of אָדָם first brings to mind the special care that God took in creating the first Adam (Gn 2:7). From the ground (אֲדָמָה), he carefully formed and breathed life into the first man (אָדָם). By adding בֶּן, however, the emphasis is that this is fallen mankind. Jesus often employed the title “Son of man.” With this title, he identified himself with those he came to save (see also Da 7:13). God pays attention with great care (תְּפַקְדָנוּ) to the descendants of Adam. He is concerned about the well being of us who are born sinful and doomed to death. How extraordinary that the LORD, whose glory is visible in the vastness of his creation, would be concerned with such weak, mortal humans! In God’s sight, we are more than the highest link on the evolutionary chain. Verse 5 will show the care that God has demonstrated for fallen, frail mankind.

Commentators have difficulty with these verses and the ensuing ones. Leupold claims that this verse speaks about the historical event of creation.<sup>10</sup> That misrepresents the Hebrew words that David uses to describe the human race. Delitzsch sees an emphasis on God’s continuing care of mankind.<sup>11</sup> In his more liberal thinking, he sets aside the New Testament interpretation of this verse in Hebrews 2, which we will discuss in the following verses. Lillegard and Luther both take this verse to be referring strictly to Christ.<sup>12</sup> In the light of Hebrews 2, such an interpretation could be plausible. But one would have expected David to use אִישׁ instead of אָנוּשׁ. Perhaps Pastor Lyle Luchterhand provides us with the best interpretation in the introduction to his book.

How small is Earth when compared to the great masses and vast distances of the other bodies in the universe! Smaller still is the sum of humanity that inhabits Earth. Poor, helpless man... helpless before natural catastrophes like earthquakes and floods... helpless before the winds and the tides.

The psalmist asked God, “What is man that you are mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:4). The question begs for an answer. What is man that the powerful God who created this marvelous universe would pay any attention to him? And why would God want to sacrifice his only Son on a cross to take away man’s sins?<sup>13</sup>

Summary: As we gaze at the vastness of God’s created universe, as we marvel at its beauty and orderliness, we cannot help but ask, “Why does God care about weak, frail, fallen, mortal mankind?”

### verse 5

וּתַחֲסִרְהוּ מֵעֵט אֱלֹהִים וְכַבֹּד וְהָדָר תַּעֲטִרְהוּ:

You caused him to decrease a little from the angels and with glory and honor you crowned him.<sup>14</sup>

NIV: You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned with glory and honor.

AAT: You make Him lower than God for a little while; then crown Him with glory and honor.

The concern the LORD has for human beings goes far beyond making them the crown of his creation. The care the LORD provides for mankind goes well beyond providing for physical needs and protecting from harm and danger. There is a reason why mankind is mortal, frail and helpless. Sin has so permeated us humans that we are spiritually dead (Eph 2:1). We are enemies of the Almighty (Ro 8:7). We are on the fast track to hell from the moment of conception. This path we are treading is deserved. But the LORD paid close attention to our sad situation. The LORD acted on our behalf. This verse gives a brief synopsis of that action.

<sup>10</sup> Leupold, p103.

<sup>11</sup> Keil & Delitzsch, p153.

<sup>12</sup> Lillegard, p29; Luther pp122-124.

<sup>13</sup> Luchterhand, p7.

<sup>14</sup> Or: But you made him lack apart from God for a little while.

The first part of this verse poses some problems in translating. The verb, וַתַּחַטְּרֵהוּ, Piel waw-consecutive imperfect, means “to cause to lack or decrease.” The waw-consecutive indicates that this is an historical event. That is easy enough to understand. The first problem arises with the adverb מִעַט. It can refer to either a short period of time or a small difference.<sup>15</sup> The second problem is with אֱלֹהִים. The most common usage is as a name for the true God, with special emphasis on his almighty power. It is also used when identifying false gods. Occasionally, it can mean angels, heavenly beings.<sup>16</sup> The meaning of angels is supported by the Septuagint which translates it ἀγγέλους. The Septuagint translation is what the writer to the Hebrews used when he quoted this passage (He 2:5-9). So either God caused this man to be lower than the angels or God, or God caused this man to be apart from God for a short period of time.<sup>17</sup> Both options are biblical. I tend to favor taking אֱלֹהִים to mean angels and מִעַט to have the small difference idea simply because of the Hebrews passage.<sup>18</sup>

The second part of the verse is a little more straightforward. וְכָבוֹד וְהָדָר is in emphatic position, contrasting the lowliness of the first half of the verse. כָּבוֹד brings out the idea of greatness and glory resulting from a position of responsibility and authority or some sort of heroic act.<sup>19</sup> הָדָר refers to the honor and splendor usually reserved for royalty. In keeping with the idea of royalty, David uses the verb תַּעֲטֶרְהוּ, piel imperfect, “to crown.” This man has been crowned with the glory that he has earned and the honor that belong to him by right.

That brings up the question: Who is this man made lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor? Delitzsch claims that this verse “refers to the fact of the nature of man being in the image of God,... to his godlike position as ruler in accordance with this his participation in the divine nature.”<sup>20</sup> This expresses a misunderstanding of the image of God (Gn 5:1-3; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). Leupold likewise sees in this verse reference to man before the Fall.<sup>21</sup> Hengstenberg views it as a prayer of thanks that God has given man authority over his creation.<sup>22</sup> They all mention that it also refers to Christ, but not primarily. They see the emphasis on the dignity God has given to mankind.

Scripture, however, gives us a clear answer to our question in Hebrews 2:5-9. “It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: ‘What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.’ In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” This passage makes it very clear that David, by inspiration, is speaking of the promised Messiah. He is describing his person and states. The Son of God became lower than the angels at his incarnation. The power he wielded over all things, including the angels, was set aside for the 33 years he visibly walked this earth. He subjected himself to the same human needs we all have. He placed himself under the same demands of God’s Law under which we all live (Ga 4:4;

<sup>15</sup> Brug, p66.

<sup>16</sup> Brug, p66; BDBG, p43, meaning 1b.

<sup>17</sup> Luther: eine kleine Zeit von Gott verlassen sein; Vulgate: minus ab angelis

<sup>18</sup> “The New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New explained.”—quoted in *The Cross and the Common Man*, by Herman Gockel.

<sup>19</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Volume 1*, p943.

<sup>20</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, p154.

<sup>21</sup> Leupold, p104.

<sup>22</sup> Hengstenberg, p127.

Heb 4:15). He even accepted help from the angels at the time of his temptation and in Gethsemane.<sup>23</sup> His enemies refused to accept his position as the divine Messiah. He was mocked and ridiculed. He endured the shame of the cross, suffering the guilt and punishment of humanity's sins (Ph 2:6-8; Is 53; Heb 2:14-15; Ro 3:23-26; etc.). Yet, his humiliation, his suffering, his vicarious sacrifice – those are the heroic acts which resulted in glory and honor (Ph 2:9-11). Because God was so concerned about Adam and his fallen descendants, he sent his Son to be the second Adam (Ro 5:12-19; 1 Co 15:22,45). Because Jesus completely and perfectly finished the work of our redemption, he was exalted to the position of honor that was rightfully his as the Son of God. He paraded through the streets of hell proclaiming his victory (1 Pe 3:19). He rose triumphantly from his grave and our grave (1 Co 15:20,55-57).<sup>24</sup> He ascended on high to take his position of power and authority which the next three verses of this psalm will detail (Eph 4:8-10).

Summary: The LORD's care for fallen mankind is seen by making his own Son to be a man, a little lower than the angels, our perfect Substitute. Because Jesus endured this humiliation for us, he received the glory and honor that was due.

### verse 6

תַּמְשִׁילֶהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדָיךָ כֹּל שֶׁתָּה תַּחַת־רַגְלָיו:

You caused him to rule over the works of your hands; everything you set under his feet:

NIV: You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:

AAT: and make Him ruler over what Your hands have made, putting everything under His feet:

David now describes the exalted position of authority that the Messiah is given. He is seated at the right hand of God. תַּמְשִׁילֶהוּ is the hiphil imperfect of מִשַׁל and expresses the hiphil sense of causing to rule or making someone a ruler. The LORD caused Jesus, in his exaltation, to rule over the works of his hands (בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדָיךָ). This brings to mind verse 3 when David spoke of the works of the LORD's fingers... There he was describing the heavens. Here he refers to everything he has created. כֹּל is in emphatic position. There is nothing in God's creation that does not come under Jesus' dominion. The LORD has made his Son ruler over everything.<sup>25</sup>

Just in case we might be tempted to think that this refers to mankind before the Fall (Gn 1:28), we again turn to the New Testament where this verse is quoted and alluded to.<sup>26</sup> Luther states:

Adam in Paradise is also made lord over God's creatures and works, but not everything is put under his feet. Yes, according to the first creation no man is made lord over another man, much less over angels... In comparison with the dominion of Christ, that is still a small dominion, namely, a dominion of human reason over fish, birds, and animals.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Brug, p67; Schuetze, p17.

<sup>24</sup> See Jaroslav Vajda's hymn "Begin the Song of Glory Now."

<sup>25</sup> The Formula of Concord references this verse in Article VII, paragraph 27 (Tappert, p598) to show that Christ's human nature also actively participates in all the divine characteristics. "But now since he ascended into heaven, not just like some other saint but, in the words of the apostle (Eph. 4:10), far above all heavens that he might truly fill all things, he is everywhere present to rule, not only as God but also as man, from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth, as the prophets foretell (Ps. 8:6; 93:1; Zech. 9:10) and as the apostles testify that he worked them everywhere and confirmed their message by the signs that attended it (Mark 16:20).

<sup>26</sup> Again, Leupold, Hengstenberg and Delitzsch hold that this refers to the position of authority that humans have over the natural kingdom. In my opinion, it is unfortunate the Pastor Luchterhand chose to use this as a proof passage that God gave Adam and Eve authority over his creation (p25).

<sup>27</sup> Luther, p133.

Paul quotes this passage directly in his first letter to the Corinthians. “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he ‘has put everything under his feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything’ has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ” (1 Co 15:25-27). It is significant that the context is speaking of Christ’s exaltation. Paul wrote of the importance of Christ’s resurrection for our faith and preaching and used it as a springboard to speak of the Last Day. By quoting this verse, Paul comforts us with the knowledge that Jesus is still reigning and will continue to reign over everything until he returns in glory to make his reign visible to all (Col 3:1-4). Paul also alludes to this verse in his letter to the Ephesians (1:20-23). Again, the context is Christ’s exaltation. The assurance we receive in Ephesians is that the glorious inheritance of heaven which we members of Christ’s church have been given is safeguarded because everything has been put under Christ’s feet for the church. He governs the history of the nations and guides the course of our lives for the spiritual and eternal benefit of individual believers (Ro 8:28) and his church as a whole.

Summary: The glory and honor with which the Christ is crowned is evident in the fact that he has been made to rule over everything. He truly “is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.”

### verses 7-8

צֶנֶה וְאֵלִפִּים כָּלֵם וְגַם בְּחַמּוֹת שָׂדֶי:

צְפוֹר שָׁמַיִם וְדָגֵי הַיָּם עֹבְרֵי אַרְחוֹת יַמִּים:

sheep and cattle, all of them, and also the beasts of the field; the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea who are passing through the paths of the sea.

NIV: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the sea.

AAT: All the sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too, birds in the air, and fish swimming in the paths of the seas.

I believe that it is these verses that cause many commentators to go awry regarding the previous verse. They see the obvious parallel to Genesis 1 and they see the limited part of creation that is mentioned and assume that verses 5-8 must refer primarily to mankind, either before the Fall<sup>28</sup> or presently<sup>29</sup> or even idealistically. In light of the “everything” of the previous verse and the New Testament usage of Psalm 8, the only correct conclusion to draw is that this is simply a representation of what has been placed under Christ’s rule. In addition, the parallel to Genesis 1 serves to remind us yet again that Christ took the place of fallen mankind in order to restore for mankind the life God had originally intended. This life will be enjoyed eternally in heaven (Rev 7:9-17; 22:14). Two commentators are worth quoting in this connection.

Christ has recaptured for fallen man his original Lordship and reclaimed for it his God-intended honor. All who join this Son of man, all who believe on His name, will on the last day have part in the rule of Christ.<sup>30</sup>

Just as Adam brought death to all people, so Christ, the second Adam, won life for all people. Adam lost the dominion which had been entrusted to him, but Christ is now ruling the world for the benefit of his people. He will share this dominion with them in the new heavens and the new earth. There the peace of Eden will exist once again.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Leupold, pp104-105.

<sup>29</sup> Delitzsch, pp154-155.

<sup>30</sup> Stoeckhardt, p34. Lillegard treats his idea at greater length (pp31-32).

<sup>31</sup> Brug, p67.



Summary: Christ is indeed ruler over all things. Even the creatures of the animal kingdom are in his domain.

### verse 9

יְהוָה אֲדִינּוּ מִה־אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ:

LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

NIV: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

AAT: LORD, our Lord, how wonderful is your name all over the earth!

The opening line is repeated as a refrain. The glory of the LORD's name is again extolled. No reference is made this time to his glory as revealed in creation. Rather, his majestic glory is revealed in his redemption of sinners. Praise the LORD that this revelation has gone out into all the earth. Lillegard's comments on this verse are noteworthy.

It is very significant that the singer at the close of his meditation repeats the exclamation of wondering worship with which he began, but omits all reference to the glory of Jehovan Adonaj, manifested in the heavens. This teaches us that the glory of God is revealed not so much in His creation as in His redemption, not so much in the visible heavens as in the kingdom of heaven, established on earth. Through the redeeming and uplifting work of the humiliated and exalted Son of Man, through His restoration of mankind to his original kingship over creation is the name of Jehovah-Adonaj and His real character as a God of grace and power revealed throughout all the earth .<sup>32</sup>

Summary: The name of the LORD, the God of free and faithful grace, the Ruler of the universe, is majestic in all the earth. There is no place where God's name is not praised. The most important reason is that he has made his glory evident in the work of his Son. He has revealed his grace and power in his salvation of sinners.

### Sermon Suggestions

As was mentioned previously, Psalm 8 is the Psalm of the Day for the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter. That Sunday follows Ascension and usually focuses on the ongoing results of Christ's ascension. While we may suffer here on earth, his glory is still revealed in his Word. The Gospels are portions of Jesus' high priestly prayer (Jn 17) where Jesus is praying that his believers might be protected. In keeping with the general theme of those Sundays, a sermon on Psalm 8 would especially focus on Christ's rule over everything. Our sinfulness is exposed as we view the cause of our mortality. Creation does not bow to the will of mankind because of sin (Gn 3:17-19; Ro 8:20-22). Yet, the LORD's mercy and grace moved him to consider humanity's sad state of affairs and act. Jesus took on our humanity. Jesus suffered our death. Jesus is now glorified. Even though the events in our lives often seem to be out of our control, even though the morality of our world seems to be sliding downward ever faster, we are reminded in this psalm that Jesus is in control. Everything, without exception, is under his rule. Our LORD's majestic glory is revealed to us.

Several sermon outlines are here offered.

The Lord Reveals His Glory

- I. In creation
- II. In salvation
- III. In our confession

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<sup>32</sup> Lillegard, p32.

## Our Savior Rules Everything

This rule...

- I. Was earned by his humiliation
- II. Was realized in his exaltation
- III. Is carried out for our eternal salvation

This Psalm is also an option for Christmas Eve.

## The Lord Reveals His Glory in the Manger

- I. By considering our sinful state
- II. By sending his sinless Son

### **Conclusion**

This psalm would certainly fall into that category of prophecies about which Peter writes (1 Pe 10-12). If we limited ourselves just to Psalm 8, we would be filled with questions as to what God is telling us through David. In his infinite and gracious wisdom, God has brought to light in the New Testament the meaning of the psalm for us Christians today. The LORD revealed his majesty and glory at creation. Even though sinful humans have done their best to ruin that creation, his glory is still evident. The LORD's majesty and glory is revealed in the confession of even the youngest of believers. Even though we sinners seem to be constantly waging a losing battle against Satan's temptations, the voice of our LORD's Gospel, as proclaimed by the church, still silences him. The LORD revealed the full extent of his majesty and glory in the person of his Son (Jn 1:14; Co 1:15-19, 2:9). Even though sinful humans continually tread all over God's holy Law, in his love and mercy God sent his Son into our world to live our life and die our death (Ro 5:6-8; 1 Jn 4:10). Christ's glorious victory is seen on Easter and Ascension and every day after as he rules the universe for the benefit of his believers. Can anything be more comforting and assuring as Christians face the uncertainties of their life and death? Praise the LORD that he has revealed his majestic glory to us.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

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