

All Things Beneath His Feet

Psalm 8

Like psalms 81 and 84, Psalm 8 is *al Gittith*, “upon an instrument of Gath”, which may be a joyful tune to accompany this beautiful meditation. David weaves together God’s excellence and glory both in creation and redemption. The New Testament reveals to us the whole counsel of God, His plan to redeem mankind and remake the world through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Surprising Strength

Yahweh our Lord, His name is excellent through all the earth (v. 1). David raises his eyes to see the shining stars, 5000 or so (of 100 billion in the Milky Way galaxy) visible to the naked eye on a clear night, and beholds His expansive glory. And then looks down. The God of the heavenly hosts employs His power through the smallest people: “Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy and the avenger” (v. 2). After Jesus rides into Jerusalem and cleanses the temple, the chief priests and scribes indignantly ask Him if he hears the children crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David!” He responds: “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?’” (Matt. 21:16). When the disciples ask Jesus who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He sets little child in front of them and says whoever humbles himself like the child is the greatest, and whoever receives a child like this in His name receives Him (Matt. 18:4-5). Jesus also insisted that little children be brought to Him for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:14). We can be too proud, cynical, or biblically illiterate to see the place and example children have in Christ’s kingdom, but He will use them to overcome His enemies anyway. Covenant children brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord are used powerfully from the chubby get-go in the kingdom of God. This is why we welcome them into worship, to baptism, to communion, to membership in the church and all the blessings of Christ’s kingdom.

A Little Lower than the Angels

Given the scope and beauty of the cosmos, what is man that God knows about him, much less cares for him (vv. 3-4)? Even getting up in a plane provides perspective on how puny we are amidst the breathtaking scope and grandeur of the world. But David is not committing a fallacy of size, assuming that because something is bigger means it is more important. Your backside is larger than your brain, but less useful. It’s a question of design. God made mankind a little lower than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor (v. 5). God made this enormous, teeming, and fertile world full of endless possibilities, and put man in charge of all of it: “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (Gen. 1:28). This dominion mandate means that mankind is to steward the creation, turning it from a wilderness into a garden city, filling it with the praise and glory of God. When Adam sinned, the curse applied to the ground: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field” (Gen. 3:17-18). Adam and Eve’s work would be frustrated, but not eliminated; he was still tasked, but would toil to make progress. People object to this anthropocentric view of the world, but then turn around and insist we have to save the planet. But you can’t have it both ways. If the earth is a tiny part of a meaningless accident, then why do we need to save it? Who put us in charge—21st century population

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control boards? Stewardship only makes sense if we are made in the image of God and tasked to steward what He has given us.

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How does Psalm 8 speak about our redemption? The New Testament teases it out in many places. In Hebrews 2, we learn that all things were placed under Christ's feet:

For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we do not yet see all things put under Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. -Hebrew 2:5-9

God made man lower than the angels, but Jesus Christ took on flesh, died, rose and was crowned with glory and honor as the one who tasted death for all of us. He swallowed it up whole for all of His people. We were made a little lower than the angels, but in Christ we have risen above all principalities and powers. Paul prays that the Ephesians would know the power of God toward believers, "which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23). So we're not just talking about animals and land being under our dominion. In Christ, every name that named, all principalities, powers, might, and dominion falls under the power and authority of Christ the king, the savior of the world. We know we are on the right track when the author anticipates our objections: "But we do not yet see all things put under Him. But we see Jesus..." (Heb. 2:8-9). Christ is the reigning king, but we don't see all the effects of His rule. So what happens until we do?

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. -1 Corinthians 15:22-28

We don't see all things under Jesus yet, but we see Him making progress. Death will be the last thing He defeats. This kingdom hope is the most practical doctrine in the world. It changes how you respond today and plan for tomorrow. We carry these truths in jars of clay, so we know it's not because of us, and yet we are crowned with glory and honor. We will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3). See Christ and thereby see who you are in Him and what He is doing through His gospel.