

Psalm Sundays

Text

Psalm 8

Topic

**Mankind will once again wear the crown and be given
dominion over God's Creation**

Title

"The Promised Crown Affair"

I didn't know there were so many spectacular theaters in America. You know how there are top-ten lists for everything? And there is always a #1, even if it is just that person's favorite? The closest I could get to a list of ten was twenty-four theaters. They were not ranked because any one of them could be #1.

The Kaufman Center in Kansas City; the Fox Theater in Detroit; The Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville; the Walt Disney Concert Hall in LA; the Orpheum Theater in Phoenix; Just to name six.

Radio City Music Hall was on the list. They said of it, "The theater is superlative in multiple ways. It is the largest indoor theater in the world, and features the largest stage curtain - in shimmering gold - in the world. Many people also consider it to be one of the most perfectly equipped stages ever built."

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Radio City Music Hall is in Midtown Manhattan, in New York City, in New York County, in New York State, on the East Coast, in the United States, on the North American Continent, in the Northern and Western Hemispheres of Earth, the third planet in the Solar System, in the Orion Arm of the Milky Way Galaxy, in the Virgo Supercluster of Galaxies, in the Laniakea Super Cluster of Galaxies, in the Universe.

Imagine there **is** Heaven, and you are standing alone, on that stage, with no audience, as I read Psalm 8:3-4.

Psa 8:3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

Psa 8:4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

David wrote those words emphasizing his absolute wonder that God was “mindful” of the human race, and himself in particular. Poetically, He pictured God as pinpointing him from a position beyond the Universe. David was outdoors, in Israel, not in a spectacular theater. But I suggest it was no less a stage.

The Universe is the backdrop, the Earth the stage, upon which God’s redemption of mankind is being providentially performed.

Wherever you are standing, even though you are a tiny speck - God is “mindful” of you. So much so that He “visit[s]” us.

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I'll organize my comments on Psalm 8 around two points: **#1 When God Visited, His Excellent Name Was Proven In All The Earth**, and **#2 When God Visits, His Excellent Name Will Prevail In All The Earth**.

#1 - When God Visited, His Excellent Name Was Proven In All The Earth (v1-2)

We are teaching selected psalms. One approach to selecting psalms to teach from out of the Psalter is to make lists of various categories of psalms. I became interested in two categories especially: Messianic psalms, and psalms quoted by Jesus.

- 👤 A Messianic psalm can, and often does, relate to the immediate circumstances of the author; but it prophetically describes the coming Messiah.
- 👤 As far as quotes, Jesus quoted from the Book of Psalms at least eleven times - **more than He did any other Old Testament book**.

In terms of my categories, Psalm 8 is a double: It is both Messianic, and Jesus quoted from it. One of those quotes come from the Gospel of Matthew. On the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, right on schedule as the prophesied Messiah, we read,

Mat 21:15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant

Mat 21:16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND NURSING INFANTS YOU HAVE PERFECTED PRAISE'?"

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Jesus quoted from verse two of Psalm 8. It reads a little differently in some of our translations, but it's definitely from there.

Quoting it as He did, about Himself, establishes that the psalm is indeed Messianic. It gives us a handle, you might say, for interpreting and applying the psalm. It spoke of something that would happen at His first coming. Let's call it His first "visit."

Psa 8:1 To the Chief Musician. On the Instrument of Gath. A Psalm of David. O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!

Worship in the Tabernacle had been structured and organized by David. He delivered this psalm to one of his Chief Musicians, who we might call a producer.

It was written to be played on "the instrument of Gath." Some say that means a particular style of music, like we would say "rock," or "reggae," or "R&B."

Others translate it as "gittith," and say it is the name of an instrument associated with the city of Gath. Like we might associate which instrument with Hawaii? The ukulele, obviously.

- 🗣️ "O Lord." He is the sovereign, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, omni-everything-that-is-marvelous God.
- 🗣️ "**Our** Lord" is an exclamation that God had made a covenant with Israel. Several, actually, involving their land, their continued existence, and their being a blessing to all the other nations of the earth.

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His "glory" is "above the heavens" means, among other things, that He is outside of the Universe as its eternally existing Creator.

"How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth" both begins and ends the psalm. David was singing at a time of spiritual and material prosperity for Israel that gave testimony to the nations that his God was, indeed, excellent.

Psa 8:2 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.

Remember, this is not prose; it is poetry. This is a poetic statement declaring that the weakness of God is more powerful than the strength of any enemy. The apostle Paul put it in prose when he wrote, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (First Corinthians 1:25).

David was extolling the power of God, saying He could and does accomplish His will using the weak things of the world. A fierce, fell, foe is no match for a nursing infant, should God be involved.

Jesus quoted this on Palm Sunday. In just a few days, it would be Good Friday. Jesus would submit Himself to death on the Cross. He'd be dead, entombed. It seemed an incredible failure - a flaw in God's plan, a failure to keep His promises.

We know that it WAS God's plan. The Lord was in command on the Cross. He dismissed His own spirit. We read, "[Jesus] disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in [the Cross]" (Colossians 2:15).

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God's name was never more excellent in all the earth than when Jesus defeated sin, Satan, and death - making the total redemption and recreation of Creation both certain and imminent.

We prefer strength: In numbers, in finances, in resources... In everything. Even though we read story after story about God being exalted in our weakness, we prefer strength. We listen as God whittled down Gideon's army to a pitifully insignificant number - only to give him victory so that God gets the glory. That's great - for Gideon. Give me more, not less, is our mindset.

Stories like Gideon's let us know that our God can do great things. But they should also remind us that His power is available in what we would consider common things. Things like problems in our marriages; or trouble at work. Or struggling with sin.

If you are weak today... Embrace it. Endure it. Do I dare say, Enjoy it? **You are strong in that God's grace is sufficient for you. Be that broken vessel that the light of the Lord shines through.**

#2 - When God Visits, His Excellent Name Will Prevail In All The Earth (v3-9)

The Burbs. It will be remembered as Tom Hank's most meaningful performance. It opens with you traveling from a vantage point in outer space to the earth, getting closer and closer, until you are on the cul-de-sac where the dramedy will unfold.

In Psalm 8, it's mankind that is pinpointed - David being our representative.

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Psa 8:3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

One Bible puts it, "Your handmade sky-jewelry, Moon and stars mounted in their settings" (MSG).

The Universe God created can be thought of as a "setting," as a set, for the earth, upon which He created man in His image, to love and fellowship with.

Psa 8:4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

"Son of man" is referring to mankind; to the human race. In comparison to the very evident awesomeness of the Creator, it is humbling to realize He is supremely interested in us. He has a personal, intimate concern for **every** human being.

Before Adam and Eve sinned, God had a personal, intimate concern for them. He visited them daily. After their fall, His concern only deepened as He described how He would "visit" in the future, to save them and their believing offspring.

Having spent 230 days in space, Nasa veteran Leroy Chiao suggests it is 'arrogant' for humans to think we are the only living beings in the cosmos.

David was saying that it is arrogant to think we're not, because that ignores the obvious. God created all this in order to "visit" with us. If we are not unique, then it's all random, and we become self-ruling and self-sufficient, saying, "There is no God."

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Psa 8:5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

Though not "angels," though not on par with them, God nevertheless entrusted humankind with His Creation; we were "crowned," as it were, to be its stewards. You read about it in Genesis.

Gen 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Gen 1:27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Gen 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Gen 1:29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

Gen 1:30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground - everything that has the breath of life in it - I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

Gen 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the sixth day.

Wow. Nice digs; animals subordinate; no global warming; visits from the Almighty. What could go wrong?

Before we go on, there's something I want to pause to discuss. The word translated "angels" is the Hebrew word, *elohim*.

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I thought *elohim* was a name for God? What gives? To get right to it, here is a quote:

The *elohim* are beings who inhabit the spiritual realm. In that realm there is hierarchy. Yahweh possesses superior attributes with respect to all *elohim*. But God's attributes aren't what makes him an *elohim*, since inferior beings are members of that same group. The Old Testament writers understood that Yahweh was an *elohim* - but no other *elohim* was Yahweh. He was [and is and always will be] species-unique among all residents of the spiritual world.

This is not the only place other heavenly beings are called *elohim*. Archangels, Seraphim, Cherubim, angels, Satan, principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual *hosts* of wickedness... Are all, technically speaking, *elohim*.

Maybe this will help. POTUS is said to be the most powerful person in the world. The President of the United States is a citizen of the United States, but not every citizen of the United States is the President of United States.

Why is this important enough to interrupt our study?

- 🧠 It's what the Bible plainly teaches.
- 🧠 It's in the text we are discussing.
- 🧠 It is necessary to know this in order to understand certain Bible passages, e.g., Psalm 82, where we read, "God [Yahweh] [*elohim*] stands in the divine assembly; he administers judgment in the midst of the gods [*elohim*]."

Tuck that away for now. We'll pull it out when we get to Psalm 82.

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Psa 8:6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all *things* under his feet,

Psa 8:7 All sheep and oxen - Even the beasts of the field,

Psa 8:8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths
of the seas.

This sounds like Genesis chapter two. In passing, I'd say that David was a young-earth creationist.

God gave this "dominion" to Adam and Eve, and through them, to their descendants.

Something is terribly wrong:

- 👤 On film, Aquaman can communicate with sea creatures. In real life, it's more like *Jaws*.
- 👤 The "birds of the air" are terrifying in Hitchcock's, *The Birds*.
- 👤 We may have domesticated beasts like "sheep and oxen," but if you want to see a bear go to town, watch that clip from *The Revenant*.

When our first parents exercised their free will to sin, Creation went into free-fall. Satan, the tempter, is now called the "god of this world" (Second Corinthians 4:4).

God came to them, in the Garden. He promised our parents He would redeem mankind and Creation. He promised Satan defeat and punishment.

He did it by visiting us; by leaving Heaven, coming to the pinpoint location of Bethlehem to be born a man.

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Talk about weakness. He was a "babe," a "nursing infant," as Joseph and Mary whisked Him away to Egypt so that the powerful and bloodthirsty King Herod could not kill Him. The strongest person on earth was a baby in God's providence.

He won... But He waits. If you are here today, and you are not in Christ, *He's waiting for you*. He's not willing for you to perish, but rather that you would repent and be saved.

His longsuffering can't wait indefinitely. Jesus will "visit" us again:

- 👤 He will come in the clouds to resurrect and rapture His church.
- 👤 God will release the four horsemen to begin the seven-year Great Tribulation on the entire earth - the entire time still seeking men to save.
- 👤 Jesus will return, in Person, to defeat His enemies.
- 👤 He will rule and reign on the earth for one thousand years.
- 👤 We will rule and reign with Him.

Dominion will be restored and "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den." (Isaiah 11:6-8).

Then what? Sometime this week, read the last three chapters of The Revelation. **That's what.**

Psa 8:9 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth!

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Repetition. Some folks complain praise songs are too repetitive. Talk to David about that when we get to Heaven. Meantime - Aren't most songs we listen to, or sing, by our favorite artists filled with repetition?

Grand Funk Railroad may not be your favorite rock band. (It should be). But you've heard, *I'm Your Captain* on the radio. It ends with Mark Farner singing, "I'm getting closer to my home" *at least 19 times in four minutes*.

"All the world's a stage" is from what? Elvis Presley; it's the beginning of his spoken word in *Are You Lonesome Tonight?*

Whether Shakespeare or the King, those are puny uses of the stage David expounds.

The earth, its history, is a stage by which God's romance of redemption is making its way providentially to the creation of a new earth and heavens.

- 🧑 Any moment we might exit 'stage righteous' in the rapture.
- 🧑 Don't be among those who exit 'stage left-behind.'

