

Text: Psalm 8

Title: "The Majesty of the Name of the Lord"

Time: 4/14/2024

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Can you remember having ever seen a landscape that was truly majestic? Some of the newer English translations we have translate the word *excellent* in v. 1 as *majestic*. When I think of a majestic landscape, I think of the trip I had as a high school senior with my grandparents to their homeland Switzerland. The Alps there are incredibly majestic.

I remember especially a place called Interlaken – the place "between the lakes." From a mountain above Interlaken, one could see the town nestled between two pristine mountain lakes and surrounded with majestic soaring mountain peaks. That was an incredibly majestic site; something I was not accustomed to seeing growing up in Mentor, Ohio. We had the Headlands Marsh with its dead trees there, but nothing like the Swiss Alps. It was like a real-life painting or greeting card.

Our Psalm tells us that the Lord's name is majestic. When writing commentary on Psalm 8 about the majestic name of the Lord, Charles Haddon Spurgeon thought about a trip he had taken to see the Alps. They impressed him not only with their own grandeur, but also with the greater grandeur of their Maker. He wrote a poem about what he saw:

Yet in all these how great soe'er they be,  
We see not Him. The glass is all too dense  
And dark, or else our earthborn eyes too dim.

Yon Alps, that lift their heads above the clouds

And hold familiar converse with the stars,  
Are dust, at which the balance trembleth not,  
Compared with His divine immensity.

“The snow-crown’d summits fail to set Him forth,  
Who dwelleth in Eternity, and bears  
Alone, the name of High and Lofty One.

“Depths unfathomed are too shallow to express  
The wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord.  
The mirror of the creatures has no space  
To bear the image of the Infinite.

“‘Tis true the Lord hath fairly writ His name,  
And set His seal upon creation’s brow.  
But as the skillful potter much excels  
The vessel which he fashions on the wheel,  
E’en so, but in proportion greater far,  
Jehovah’s self transcends His noblest works.

“Earth’s ponderous wheels would break, her axles snap,  
If freighted with the load of Deity.  
Space is too narrow for the Eternal’s rest,  
And time too short a footstool for His throne.

“E’en avalanche and thunder lack a voice,  
To utter the full volume of His praise.  
How then can I declare Him! Where are words  
With which my glowing tongue may speak His name!  
Silent I bow, and humbly I adore.”

Palm Sunday celebrates the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem, an event that is inextricably linked to the majesty and prophetic hope of Psalm 8 by the children of Matthew 21. Jerusalem took time to humbly adore the majestic Lord

who rode into Jerusalem on that day. As we consider Psalm 8 together this morning, that is what I hope for us to do as well. This Psalm is about “The Majesty of the Name of the Lord.” Let’s organize the Psalm this morning around three truths about the majesty of our God.

I. The majesty of God is His sovereignty over us (vv. 1, 9).

Illustration: God has blessed parents by making their children start out much smaller than they are. You have seen that blessing in action – a young mother trying to get her three-year-old to go in the direction opposite to the one he was intent on going. After an admonition or two, Mom simply picks up her child and redirects him through the air. We have all experienced the need to do that for our very young. When it comes to the home, three-year-olds are not sovereign; parents are.

Application: When it comes to the universe, the majesty of God means that we are not sovereign, He is. We are smaller than He, and He can redirect us at will. David begins the psalm, “O LORD, our Lord.” He is not repeating himself; he is addressing God with two different names. They are both translated *Lord* in our English version, but you will notice that the first *LORD* is in all capital letters, and the second is not. The first is God’s covenant name, *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*, and the second is a word that means *master* or *sovereign*, just like our English word *lord*. David, the king, begins by calling Yahweh, “Our Sovereign Lord.”

Because we are sinners by nature, our flesh prefers to operate under the illusion that we are the sovereign of our life, not David’s God. Because God has not yet redirected us through the air, we conclude that He is not really able to do

so. The story of human history is a story about the rebellion of man against the sovereign lordship of God.

But as the children of God, we must learn to revere David's God as our Sovereign and to yield to our Heavenly Father's lordship over us. We know little of the majesty of our Lord if we are not willing to obey His sovereign will for our lives. Disobeying God happens when we view Him as less than He truly is and when we view ourselves as more than we truly are. As we understand more His majesty, we submit more and more to His sovereignty. Can we honestly say with David, "O LORD, our Lord"?

II. The majesty of God strengthens the weak (v. 2).

Illustration: Getting something good to come out of the mouth of kids can be a challenge. I can remember a vacation we once took as a family back to Danbury, CT to visit our old friends, the Reinhardts. My son Kent was three years old at the time, and Pastor Reinhardt gave Kent a piece of candy. After giving Kent the candy, Dave had some second thoughts and mentioned to Kent that maybe we should check to see if it is ok with Mom first. Kent's three-year-old reply was, "No, I'll just eat it fast!" Pastor Reinhardt enjoyed that comment, but he could not have been terribly impressed with our parenting skills after hearing it.

Application: The psalmist prophesies that the majesty of God would be glorified through the mouths of infants and babes. Christ cites the fulfillment of this prophecy on Palm Sunday in Matt. 21:16. The children cried to Christ in the temple complex, "Hosanna, Son of David!" When challenged by the chief priests about what the children were saying, Christ quotes our verse in Psalm 8, claiming to be not only Messiah, but also the Lord of this Psalm. Jesus's enemies thought they were dealing with a lowly man, but

as a lowly man, Jesus was their majestic God. He is ours too.

It is part of the majesty of the Lord that He uses the lowly and weak things of the world to deal with those who think they are stronger than He is. (1 Cor. 1:27, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.") Young children do not have a lot of smarts, or experience, or education, or funding, or fame. But on Palm Sunday, God used them to expose the ignorance of the Christ-haters who did.

The reason God can use the weak things in a way that He cannot use the strong things is that weak things learn to trust Him with child-like faith. In fact, we cannot be saved unless we become like little children before our majestic God (Luke 18:17, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein").

Have you received the kingdom of God, meaning His kingship over your life, as a little child? Do you believe that He is your Savior-King? Are you willing to be one of the weak things in whom He ordains His saving strength?

III. The majesty of God defines what man is (vv. 3-8).

Illustration: Kids can ask some great questions sometimes. I will never forget that the first question I ever fielded in Sunday school as the new pastor of New Boston Baptist Church came from a young grade-school girl, who asked me, "Pastor, why doesn't God just save Satan?" Well, in spite of all my years of seminary training, I was not ready for that one. I had to say, "I don't know." I still have to.

Application: The rest of the Psalm before us this morning is dedicated to answering a great question, "What is man?" (v. 4). It is important that we know the answer to this question. Is man a complex of molecules, a mere animal, a product of evolutionary time and chance processes of nature? Is man what he imagines himself to be? Or is man something more? The psalm gives us three answers:

1. Man is God's creature, one design in a universe of well-designed creations (vv. 3-5a). The reason we call all physical reality a *universe* is twofold. First, the word *universe* recognizes that creation is a well-ordered, finely tuned unity. For instance, 93 finely tuned physical constants have been identified as absolutely necessary to life. Creation is a universe, not a poly-verse. It coheres together as a unit.

The second reason we call physical reality a *universe* is that it came into existence with the spoken word. *Universe* means *one-word*. The creation account of Genesis 1 repeats the phrase, "And God said." How did the universe get here? God said something. What is man? Man is the product of God saying, "Let us make man" (Gen. 1:26).

2. Man is God's image (vv. 5b-8). Man's glory and honor is God's image in him (Gen. 9:1-17). We are made in God's image, and part of this image-bearing includes our sovereign Creator's appointment as sovereigns over His creation. Animals can be eaten, but we cannot be eaten. In addition, we image bearers are instructed to bring more image bearers into a world protected and blessed by God's covenant.

In response, man denies that he is made in God's image, feels free to butcher others like his unborn, and chooses the barrenness of feminism and homosexuality. He uses God's gift of the rainbow to celebrate his rebellion against God.

Nevertheless, human life is sacred and precious because it is made in the image of God. It should not be something that we manufacture or use for experiments. It should not be something we kill and throw in trash dumpsters. It should not be something that we euthanize to save money. Man has been crowned with glory and honor by majestic God as the recipient of His image, and no man has the right to take the crown of that glory and honor away.

3. Man is the object of God's saving grace (vv. 4-5). Did you notice that verse 4 actually has two questions? The first, "What is man?" is followed by a second, "What is the son of man?" The word for *man* in the second question is actually the word for *Adam*. So the second question actually asks, "Who is the son of Adam?"

A seminary teacher I had wrote a book that said this about the second question: "I would suggest that Psalm 8 provided the foundation for Paul's analogy between Adam and Christ [the son of Adam in Romans 5]. . . . The first clue comes from the opening statement, 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.' The word 'made' is not a word of creation that we would expect if the reference were to the first Adam. Rather, it literally means 'to diminish,' 'to take away from,' or 'to deprive.' . . . The word translated 'a little lower' can be a temporal as well as a spatial word. The idea is that for a little while God positioned His Son beneath the status of angels" (Mike Barrett, *Beginning with Moses*, p. 306).

So the answer to the question, "Who is the Son of Adam?" is "He is the eternal and incarnate Son of God, who for a little while was diminished below the angels to save sinners." So what is man? He is the sinner Jesus came to save in grace and love.

Conclusion: Do you remember what the kids were shouting on Palm Sunday? “Hosanna (Save us), Son of David!” The kids understood the truth of Psalm 8 better than their religious leaders.

The Son of David, the Son of Abraham, and yes, the Son of Adam was entering the city of Jerusalem to complete His work of being diminished and deprived of His own majesty in order to save those who were lost.

Later that week, He would die the sinner’s death on the cross of Calvary for you and for me. Have you ever understood this amazing love the way these children did? Have you ever bowed before him with the cry, “Save me, Son of David”? Today would be a great day to become a little child of faith and cry out with these babes and sucklings – “Son of David, save me!”

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*