**Crowned with glory and honour** 2/1/22 dkm

Read: Psalm 8, Hebrews 2

Text: Psalm 8

Psalms: 19:1-9, 104:24-36, 119:89-96, 117

NASA recently put on an exhibition called ‘Neighbourhood Earth’ here in Sydney. In an audio-visual presentation they showed pictures sent back by various spacecraft orbiting the planets of our galaxy. Some of these craft take years to get to these places, and ours is only one of thousands of galaxies. Thankfully, this presentation did not start speculating about life on other planets, as many are eager to do. To say the universe is vast is an understatement, but to say that whatever exists in the universe is created by God, and hence known to God, is to state the truth. Man’s response to the wonders on planet earth, and in the universe, should be to bow down and worship God. The words of this Psalm are given that we might do just this: ‘O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth’.

God’s power and glory are seen in his creation. But this Psalm goes beyond this to say that God has crowned man with glory and honour (8:5). This is a Psalm of praise, but is it in praise of man or of God? It is both, because man, being made in the image of God, is to the praise of God. In this Psalm David takes us back to the six days of creation, particularly to day six when he made man in his own image, ‘male and female he created them’ (Gen 1:27). Sin seriously blurred this image but God did not give up on his creation. In fact, he started preparing for a new creation through the man who truly is the image of God, our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 1:3).

This wonderful Psalm of praise begins and ends with words praising the name of the Lord, words that we know so well from singing this Psalm. Praise is given to God because he created the heavens and the earth, and everything that exists. The climax of his creation was man.

The title of the Psalm gives no indication of its historical context; it simply contain instructions for the ‘Chief Musician’. The translation, ‘on the instrument of Gath’ is not certain; Leupold translates, ‘after the tune of the treaders of the winepress’. It is another Psalm of David, not by tradition but by title.

**1. Doxology- prologue**

David addresses God with two titles, both translated ‘Lord’. The first is Yahweh, IAM who I AM, the name God gave to Moses. It is God’s covenant name, the name by which God is to be praised in all the earth- although the Jews dared not utter this name. The second name comes as the personal ‘Our Lord’. Yahweh is a personal name but this ‘Lord’ is more personal. In Psalm 110 the first ‘Lord’, Yahweh, speaks to the second ‘Lord’ who turns out to be Messiah. To the extent that this Psalm is messianic, ‘our Lord’ may refer to Messiah or Christ.

Jesus is the focus of the ‘the son of man’ in verse 4 according to the NT (Heb 2:6-9). We know Jesus to be the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man. And it is appropriate for Jesus to be worshipped along with God the Father or Yahweh. Jesus is ‘the name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth’, and ‘Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father’ (Phil 2:9-10).

‘Yahweh’ and ‘Jesus’ are majestic or excellent names, worthy of all glory and praise in the heavens above and the earth beneath. Actually, David says ‘above the heavens’, and Paul writes of ‘those under the earth’. There is no place in the entire universe and beyond where God’s name will not be praised. How foolish to think that the God of the Bible, or that Jesus Christ our Lord, is the God of the Jews or the Christians only. Let man explore the universe, but let him do so humbly, acknowledging God as the creator (Heb 11:3). Astronomers and scientists exploring the universe marvel at what they see through their telescopes and cameras, but most have no idea how these stars and planets came into existence, apart from the pathetic claim of a ‘big bang’. If only they would read the Bible!

The same is true of what they see here on earth. We marvel at the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef, and the majestic Himalayas, even as we face the challenges of an invisible virus. We marvel at the complexities of our own bodies, and at an immune system that fights these viruses. The vaccines we are relying on to combat disease are simply manipulating this amazing power of our bodies. Some who marvel at the beauty and the mysteries of this world, like David, pause to give glory to God, but many worship the creation itself.

When sin entered the world, human hearts were plunged into darkness. Some of our ancestors worshipped trees or seas, and tragically such worship is returning in our generation, even if it is called science or environmentalism. This world is being polluted and corrupted by sinful human beings who refuse to acknowledge the God who made this world.

**2. Defence of God’s glory by babes**

The apostle Paul was accused of turning the world upside down by preaching the gospel (Acts 17:6). In truth, the world was turned upside down by sin, and only through Jesus Christ will it be turned right side up. Sin is rebellion against God, and at the heart of this rebellion is pride; a proud heart rejects authority, especially the authority of almighty God. Much of so-called science is based on the theory of evolution, a theory designed to exclude God from our thinking and worship. The inevitable outcome is that people start worshipping the creation itself and especially themselves (Rom 1:21-24). They fail to give honour and glory to almighty God.

God delights in bringing down the proud and the mighty, and in raising up the weak and the humble, or as one writer says, the immature and the immaterial. Listen to the words uttered by Mary: ‘He has scattered the proud… He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly (Luke 1:51-52). King Herod tried to kill baby Jesus, but an old man called Simeon, and a widow called Anna, praised God for the salvation and glory they saw in Jesus.

Jesus found the words of verse 2 applicable to what happened to him when he entered the temple on Palm Sunday (Matt 21:16). When the Jewish leaders complained about what children were calling out in praise of Jesus, Jesus asked these leaders if they had read this Psalm: ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise’. Little children have no difficulty in praising God; it is when parents, and so-called experts, teach them lies, rather than the truth of the Bible, that they stop praising God.

In this world the rich and powerful are given all the glory and praise, but in the kingdom of God these enemies of God, and vengeful people, will be silenced (8:2). Jesus welcomed little children saying, ‘Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven’ (Matt 18:3).

**3. Drawn by the majesty of creation to worship God**

Whenever we look up we see the majesty of God’s creation. God told Abraham to look at the stars and count them, if he was able (Gen 15:5). Have you ever counted the stars? Who put all the stars in the heavens? In the daytime you will see the sun, so powerful that you cannot even look at it. Who made this huge ball of fire? In his prayer, David speaks of ‘Your heavens’ the work of ‘Your fingers’, which ‘You have set in place (8:3). When David stops to consider these works of God he is drawn to worship God.

‘What is man that you consider him?’ (8:4). ‘What is man’ is the subject of lengthy studies in philosophy, but David answers this question in this short Psalm. In considering the heavens, David realised how small and insignificant he was as a man. He was king of Israel, but in the big scheme of things he was nothing. He would be swallowed up by the mighty universe, by the power of nature if you like. But the power and the person behind this universe was mindful of this puny, insignificant creature called man.

While David was looking at the heavens, he was aware that God was looking down on him, not to crush him but to communicate with him: ‘That you visit him’ or care for him (8:4). Did David have in mind the Lord God communicating with Adam in the Garden of Eden? From his words that follow this seems to be the case, but the NT gives us a different perspective on the ‘son of man’. The writer to the Hebrews views this Psalm as prophetic, as messianic and prophetic. The ‘son of man’ David is referring to is Jesus: ‘We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels … crowned with glory and honour’ (Heb 2:2:9).

As the second Adam, Jesus is the man through whom God came and visited fallen mankind in order to save us from sin and death: ‘He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone’ (Heb 2:9). Scholars doubt that David had such thoughts when he penned this Psalm, but why not? He was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And if we say it cannot refer to both Adam in the garden of Eden and Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, again we say, why not? Paul sees Christ as the second Adam (Rom 5).

**4. Dominion and honour given to man**

The first Adam was made in the image of God. God gave him dominion over everything else that he created, over creatures named by David in this Psalm: sheep and oxen, birds of the air, and fish of the sea (8:7, 8). It is as if David is quoting Genesis 1:26-28. God gave man the responsibility to manage what he created. But when man sinned, his relationship with God was severed and he was cut off from the wisdom of God; he chose to listen to Satan rather than God. This situation has continued down through the ages until today. It is written in the Bible: ‘A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel’ (Prov 12:11). A man born in sin becomes righteous when he is born again in Christ Jesus. The long era of darkness and corruption has been broken by the Light that God shone into the world through his Son.

This Psalm speaks of the glory and honour of man but it is glory and honour given by the Lord (8:5). How demeaning and demoralising it is to say that man who is made in the image of God is descended from monkeys. The theory of evolution that removes God from the scene, tells us that man is made in the image of mice and monkeys! Knowing that God created man in his own image gives dignity and honour to man. God made man to rule over his creation, to obey his commands to worship Him. God has given us an exalted position within his creation.

‘Made a little lower than the angels’ is actually, ‘a little lower than God’ here in verse 5. The reading we have comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew that is found in Hebrews 2:7. Eve wanted to be like God but this desire led to sin and the fall of humanity. Still today, men and women want to be like God, but this desire leads to all manner of wickedness and despair. Thankfully, God is his grace and mercy sent his Son, Jesus, to redeem us from this life of frustration and hopelessness. Jesus left the glory of heaven to take on human flesh. He suffered and he died as our representative and our substitute. But God raised him from the dead and crowned him with glory and honour. This is what this Psalm is telling us, according to Hebrews 2. Still people say we do not find Christ in the Psalms!

‘In Christ’ we share in this God-given glory and honour. The image of God is being restored in us; we ‘are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory’ (2Cor 3:18). This Psalm speaks of God crowning us with honour and glory, but this comes in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, the true ‘Son of Man’, who is also the Son of God. The dominion God gave to man at creation becomes, in Christ, dominion over all creation, including the nations of men: ‘that God may be all in all’ (1Cor 15:27).

**5. Doxology- epilogue**

‘The God who can create such a being as man must be superlatively great’. But David does not allow us to end on the note of man being crowned with glory and honour, and with dominion over the creation. Such honour and glory comes from God through our Lord Jesus Christ, so all praise and glory must go to the Lord. ‘O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth!’ (8:9).