

Destined for Glory and Honor

A Messianic Mediation on Palm Sunday

Texts: Psalm 8; Matt. 21:1-17; Heb. 2:5-13

Psalm 8:3–4 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Matthew 21:12–16 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.” ¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant, ¹⁶ and they 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 infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise**’?”

Hebrews 2:5–13 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere, “What is man, that you are mindful of him, **or the son of man**, that you care for him? ⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹ But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.

That is why **he is not ashamed to call them brothers**, ¹² saying, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.” ¹³ And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “**Behold, I and the children God has given me.**”

Introduction:

The footprint before you this morning is arguably the most famous footprint in the world. It was made in July of 1969 when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to step foot on the moon!

This moment was witnessed by more living people at one time than any other televised event – ½ billion people watched the live telecast from 240,000 miles away. This small step for man truly was a giant leap for mankind! But where have we landed since that leap? Where have we gone as a race since Armstrong’s monumental footprint?

Who is this creature that could break the bonds of time and space and more importantly what has become of him?

This question stands at the core of human identity – and even the most disconnected observer of our race would have to conclude that Mankind is suffering the devastating and dehumanizing consequences of a shocking identity crisis! In short – the race that came of age on the moon has profoundly lost its way on the earth since Neal Armstrong left his footprint in the dust of the moon.

As a race, we have lost our sense of what it means to be truly human in the fullest sense of that expression. This loss has resulted in three horrific consequences:

1. A profound devaluation of human life evidenced by

- Abortion (1.5 billion abortions worldwide since 1970)
- Infanticide
- Euthanasia

2. A disconcerting loss of God-given human self-identity with regard to

- Gender identity
- Human sexuality
- Marriage and Family

3. A tragic Dehumanization of human personhood

- Demoralization of morality
- Dehumanization of humanity - What is happening in the fields of bio, nano, and cyber technology are not only pushing the borders of human existence they are on the verge of redefining what it actually means to be human!

So – how did a race that charted a course to the moon become so lost on earth? And more importantly, how can we find our way again?

The answer to the question asked by David in Psalm 8 would not fully be answered for almost 1000 years until one day, one of his descendants, a prophet from Nazareth rode up to Jerusalem on a donkey and made a stop at the temple on his way to a hill where he would taste death for every man and thus provide a stunning and unequivocal answer to David's original question: **“Who is Man? And why does he matter to much to God?”**

The day that Jesus rode a donkey through the gates of Jerusalem has come to be known as Palm Sunday and is commemorated by millions of his followers around the world on the Sunday that initiates Passion Week.

So, let's begin our search for the answer by going all the way back to David's original question in Psalm 8 and let's follow the successive stages of this psalm that lead us to a stunning and profoundly personal answer. ***And David begins with a profound recognition of something we seem to have lost as a race- the profound significance of Man.***

I. The Recognition of Man's Significance (8:3-8)

A. Observed in a Profound Consideration (vv 3-4)

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

David looks at the heavens and is overwhelmed by the majestic grandeur of a vast universe! He sees the stars that fill the heavens and the moon that shines in their midst and is moved by the sheer majesty and grandeur of the creation above him – and all this leads him to consider two things about the Universe:

1. Creation is Majestic in its Singular Origin

- These are your heavens. They come from you. They belong to you.

2. Creation is Majestic in its Spectacular Design

- They are designed by you – the work of your fingers
- They are sustained by you – you have ordained all of them in their course.

So what is so unexpected in all of this?

- At the very heart of this Psalm is a question – and we are expecting that question to be about God who is the author and sustainer of all that David sees. ***BUT instead in a question that we totally did not see coming or anticipate – David asks God about Man!***
- In essence, David asks, “*When I consider your Heavens – I have a question – Why do you Consider Man? Why does man matter to you? Why is he on your mind and in your heart?*”
- Centuries earlier Job asked the same question: “*What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him?*” (Job 7:17)
- Now you must admit – we didn't quite see this question coming! But how do we know we are tracking David's question correctly: ***How do we know that Man does in fact matter to God? How do we know God has us on His mind and in His heart?***

B. Established by Divine Confirmation (8:5-8)

1. He made Man just a little lower than Himself (v 5a)

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings,

2. He Crowned Man with a share of His own glory and honor (v 5b)

and crowned him with glory and honor.

3. He Gave Man Dominion and Authority over all of the works of His hands (v 6a)

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;

4. He Placed Man over every sphere of Creation and over every creature in those spheres. (vv 6b-7)

you have put all things under his feet, ⁷ all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

But why do we matter so much to God? Why does He take such particular interest in us and exercise such providential care over us?

II. The Reasons for Man's Significance (8:1,9)

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

- Why does man matter so much to You?
- Why do you have Him on your mind and in your heart?
- Why have you created Him above all the rest of the creation?
- Why have you crowned Him with your own glory and honor?
- Why have you given Him Dominion over all of your creation?
- **Why have you done such an astonishing thing? The answer is even more astonishing.**
- The answer is in a repeated declaration of praise that David makes at the front and back end of the Psalm – and this repeated statement is the theme of this Psalm.

A. Because You Have Put Your Glory Above the Heavens

- Yahweh – you who are our very own Lord – Your Name is excellent – it is majestic and supremely beautiful (glorious) **above** all other names throughout the earth!

B. Because You Want Your Name to be magnified in all the Earth

- And so that your majestic name and glorious beauty might be made known and acknowledged in all of the earth – you have made a majestic creature in your own image – you have given him Your own glory and you have vested him with your very own authority!
- And when he rules in your stead – because this creature man – is like you – the entire creation under him will know what it is like to be ruled by you and will give you glory and praise for who you are and what you are like as they experience those realities under the rule of Men who are like you!

III. The Response to Man's Significance (8:2)

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

- Now comes the massive unstated question – because all of these statements that David makes are declarations of what God has done – not just what He intends to do. SO – obviously something horrific has happened. Something has gone terribly wrong with the grand scheme and divine design!
- And the evidence that something has gone wrong is that this magnificent creature (man) has usurped God.
- The glory that was given to Him by God he seized for himself. The dominion granted to him to be used for God's glory and the good of others he turned to selfish and oppressive ends.
- Instead of a man ruling in recognition of and submission to God's greatness – like Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Man has proclaimed the supremacy of his own authority and power!
- And instead of the whole earth praising and exalting God's name – the nations rage against God (Psalm 2).
- HOW DID SUCH A HORRIFICALLY UNTHINKABLE THING HAPPEN?

A. *Opposition from an Ancient Enemy*

- The explanation for this devastating turn of events is that there are enemies who oppose God and they are driven and energized by someone seeking to avenge himself against God!

B. *Resolution from a Surprising Source*

- So – how does God plan to resolve all of this? That answer is perhaps the most astonishing thing in this entire Psalm and it is ultimately the most impacting truth for us this morning!
- And that answer is in the last half of verse 2

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

1. ***God has ordained or appointed a strength that will crush his enemies and silence the Avenger.***
2. ***God has decided to display this strength by using the mouth of infants (the smallest and most powerless members of this marred race) to declare God's rescue of this race and its restoration to its original magnificence.***

3. *This strength that God has displayed through the mouth of infants – is a particular praise to a particular member of this race that appears on the scene riding a donkey into the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday!*

So, who are these children and what is the strength God has given them by which this ancient enemy will be silenced and stopped?

IV. The Ramifications of Man's Significance

- The answer to this question comes in a phrase David uses in his original question – *“What is man that you are mindful of him, and the **Son of Man** that you care for him?”* (Psalm 8:4)
- There is a particular member of the human race who David singles out and identifies as “the Son of Man.” Who is this person and why is he called by this unusual designation? The answer to this question is found in two important NT accounts where Psalm 8 is mentioned in association with a particular individual.

A. What is the Strength that will Stop God's Ancient Foe? (Matt. 21:1-17)

- This account is the story of Jesus riding up to Jerusalem from Galilee to celebrate one of the three most holy weeks in Israel's year – the week-long celebration of the Feast of Passover.
- During Passover week, Jerusalem's populations swelled from 30,000 inhabitants to 180,000+ Jewish people from all parts of the Mediterranean region.
- Matthew 21 records the last several miles of a very long journey where Jesus asks his disciples to do a very strange thing – to procure for him a donkey that had never been ridden.
- This is a strange time to request the use of a beast. Jesus has just rested for the night and is fresh for the final leg of the journey. No one is injured. Why request a donkey this late in the journey? Clearly, Jesus has something more than transportation in mind. He is signaling something massively important to the crowd that surrounded him!
- Matthew tells us why Jesus did this – to fulfill an ancient prophecy found in Zechariah which told Israel they would recognize their Messiah-King when he rode up to Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey!
- And the crowds immediately picked up on the significance of what they were witnessing because they began to cry out with loud and joyful shouts of praise – “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!”

- In fact, so great was the sound of their celebration that the citizens living in Jerusalem were shaken by what they were hearing. The term “stirred” (21:10) is the word used for the shaking of the earth during an earthquake! The whole city was shaken by this massive group of people acclaiming joyful praise to someone they had identified as David’s long-awaited Son!
- They demanded to know the identity of the person who the crowd was praising – and to their shock, it was someone with whom they were very well acquainted – it was the prophet from Nazareth, Jesus. The healer and miracle worker from the hill country of Galilee – hardly the sort of person who would come from David’s royal line, much less be the actual Messiah!
- Immediately, Jesus goes to the temple and does two unimaginable things:
 - a. He cleanses the temple of the corruption brought about by the Jewish leadership in charge of the House of God.
 - b. He opens the way to the House of God to those the priests and temple leaders had denied entrance – the blind and the lame. By the way, this is exactly what the OT prophets predicted would happen when the Messiah appeared, the blind would receive their sight again and the lame would leap for joy.
- However, the Chief Priests and the Scribes are furious at what they are witnessing and incensed by what they are hearing come out of the mouth of the children in their midst who, pointing to Jesus, are saying, “That’s him! That’s the Son of David!” And these children are repeating a word they heard their parents use earlier on the way to Jerusalem – “*Hosanna! Son of David!*”
- This word is actually a cry that originally meant, “*Save us! Deliver us!*” In other words, these children are pointing to Jesus and saying, “*He is the Son of David who will deliver us! He is the appointed, anointed champion who will save us from our enemies!*”
- This is the “strength” that David said God would put in the mouth of Children – they would use their mouth to identify, exalt, and ask the Son of Man to deliver them from their enemies!
- By the end of that week, Jesus would actually deliver them from more than just their human enemies, He would silence and stop their most ancient enemy, Satan and in so doing He would deliver them from his power and bondage.
- So, now we know the identity of the strength God promised who would silence and stop Satan. But who are the children?

B. Who are the Children who use this Strength? (Heb 2:5-13)

- The answer to this question is in the second major NT passage where Psalm 8 is quoted – Hebrews 2:5-13.
- The writer of Hebrews begins this section by observing that God has promised to subject the world to come not under the authority of angels (as powerful and glorious

as they are) but rather to Man – and more specifically, to one particular man, the Son of Man.

- This is a title drawn from Daniel 7:13-14 where Daniel is granted a vision of a scene occurring in the throne room of the Universe. Someone more ancient than days is sitting on the most powerful throne in the universe surrounded by the myriads of majestic angelic armies of the universe.
- In the presence of this amazing sea of dazzling creatures, an individual appears on clouds and presents himself before the throne of the Ancient of Days. He is identified as “The Son of Man.”
- And the Ancient of Days does something stunning – He gives to this person dominion, glory, and a kingdom so that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:14).
- And in an even more stunning turn of events, the Ancient of Days grants to this person “The Son of Man” a group of people who will follow, serve, and rule the earth with him. They are called “the saints of the Most High” (7:22) and they will possess the kingdom and share the dominion with him (7:22). Listen to how the Ancient of Days states the promise: “And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him (7:27)
- Now the writer of Hebrews quickly notes that although the decision to subject the world to this individual has been made, at the present time, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him (Heb 2:8).
- But ... we do see something! The person to whom all will be subjected has actually appeared and we see him – namely, Jesus! (2:9)
- And what He has done is taste the horrific suffering of death in the place of every man in order to deliver them from that death (2:9b).
- And the reason the Ancient of Days (God) subjected His Son to experience death is that through that death, he (the Son) would bring many sons to Glory! And not only would he bring them to Glory, He would sanctify them – cleanse them from all unrighteousness – set them apart to Sonship – where they would be transformed from rebellious enemies to full members of the family of God with all the rights and privileges of ruling sons and daughters of God.
- So who are these people? Jesus speaks and tells God that He will announce God’s name to his brothers! (2:11). This is exactly what Psalm 8:1,9 identifies as God’s desire – that His majestic name be known throughout the earth. And here is Someone declaring His name to a group of people He describes as brothers!
- Moreover, Jesus goes on to say to His Father, “I will put my trust in You! Behold, I and the Children you have given me!” (2:13)

- So, now we have the whole picture – the children that David talks about in Psalm 8:2 – the brothers and sisters of Jesus! They are the people (children) that God has given to His Messiah that Daniel described as the “Saints of the Most High!”
- In a word, the children in Psalm 8:2 are you and me! And the “strength” God has put in our mouths is the truth we have come to know and believe about Jesus of Nazareth – is the anointed and appointed champion God promised to send His people. He is the long-awaited descendant of David’s line! He is the Son of Man that stood before the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7 and received glory, honor, dominion, and an everlasting Kingdom!
- He is the One who will defeat the Ancient enemy, lift the ancient curse, and restore all things to their rightful state and place before God!
- And we know His identity! We know who He is! He is our older brother! He is our dearest friend! He is our Lord and Savior!

So – what does all of this mean for us on a practical level?

Conclusion:

A message like this forces us to think deeply about our own personal relationship to Jesus of Nazareth by confronting us with four hard-hitting, destiny-determining questions:

1. Do you believe this truth truly?

Do you believe David, Matthew, and the writer of Hebrews are telling you the truth about Jesus when they identify Him as the Son of Man, the King of the Earth, and the Champion God sent to deliver people like you and me from our sins? Do you believe what the Scriptures have told us this morning?

2. Have you received this truth personally?

Have you personally embraced the truth about Jesus, and have you asked him to deliver you from your sins? Has your recognition of His true identity actually moved you to ask Him to forgive your sins and to rule your life? Has your head knowledge made its way into your heart and life?

3. Are you committed to this truth wholly?

If you have embraced Christ as your savior and Lord, have you surrendered your life to Him to use as He pleases and for His purposes – or – did you come to Him because of what you perceived He could do to enhance your life, enable your plans, and bless all that you choose to do? Asked differently, are you serving Jesus and using your life to advance His kingdom, or are you expecting Jesus to serve you as you build your kingdom?

4. Will you announce this truth faithfully?

You know the identity of the One person who can change everything! He can forgive any sins. He can restore all relationships. He can repair all that has been broken and ruined by sin! He can deliver from all bondage and oppression. And you know His name! He wants His name to be known by those around you – are you willing to point your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and those God sends across your path to Jesus?

As God's Children and Messiah's Brethren, a glorious destiny awaits us. Until then, let us join the children in the temple and cry, "Hosanna! Son of David!"