
Article III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

(Sermon Title)

Psalm 8:1-9

Accompanying this article in the BFM are a dozen or so scriptures that are not proof texts but supporting texts for the ideas that are brought together in this statement. I have chosen Psalm 8 as a representation of a couple of ideas that we find in this doctrinal statement. More importantly, we find them taught in God's word, so, I would like for you to join me in Psalm number 8. I am reading from the Holman Christian Standard Bible: remember these are the words of the Lord. Psalm number 8 beginning in verse number one says:

“LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth! You have covered the heavens with your majesty. ² Because of Your adversaries, you have established a stronghold from the mouths of children and nursing infants, to silence the enemy and the avenger. ³ When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you set in place, ⁴ what, is man that you remember him, the son of man that you look after him? ⁵ You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You made him lord over the works of Your hands; You put everything under his feet: ⁷ all the sheep and oxen, as well as animals

in the wild, ⁸ birds of the sky, and fish of the sea passing through the currents of the seas. ⁹ LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth! Psalms 8:1-9 (HCSB)

Introduction:

I have problems. Dr. Mike Burns diagnosed my problem a long time ago. When I was his student in general psychology class he would talk about people who would do some *stinkin thinkin*. Well I am the chief among the *stinkin thinkers*. I struggle with *stinkin thinkin*. I was saved at the age of 25 and prior to then my view of mankind was not too optimistic. I did not like people who were not exactly like me; I am not referring to racial color or anything of that nature but in how they thought. I thought that anyone who was not like me was less than me. I looked at people as an opportunity. I looked at people as something to be used and later discarded. You may say, 'John you were a terrible person.' Yes I was: I was lost and a sinner . . . *stinkin thinkin*. I would like to claim that when the Lord Jesus redeemed me my *stinkin thinkin* went away. I would like to be able to say that I stand before you today and look at you and do not look at you with those same, *stinkin thinkin* eyes: as something to be used. Instead, I want the eyes of the Lord Jesus and have a compassion in them that wants to make a difference. I wish I could tell you that today, but I still have a problem with *stinkin thinkin*. It's better than it used to be. On the better days I do see people as the Lord Jesus would see them, but on most days not so much. My problem is that for me the sanctity of human life and the innate dignity of humanity are areas that I devalue; however, the Lord has been developing my understanding in them. Every day, I see Him as who He really is and I see myself as who I really am in Him. I see more of who these folks around me are and can be in Him, and I am changing.

I want to use Psalm 8 today to explain exactly what I believe the psalmist was trying to convey. David's purpose in writing the psalm was for it to be a declaration of praise to God, but today we need to think primarily about what this psalm teaches about mankind. Who are we in light of who he is? I ask this question today, when you look at mankind what do you really see? My goal today is simple; I want you and myself to value mankind as God's special, crowning, pinnacle creation. Let us look at the Psalm together. Notice in verse one and verse nine you have this wonder refrain: "Lord our Lord, Yahweh our Adonai. Lord our Lord how magnificent your name is throughout the earth." One thing that we know today is that the Lord has spread his name and fame before us and before all people everywhere. Even before I came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, I was aware that there was a God. I was aware of a supreme divine being that was at work in the world. Well, maybe other people don't believe that. I believe that all people believe this truth in some way or another. They flesh it out some way, but we know that the image of God is placed within them just as the doctrinal statement reads. There is in every person this understanding, maybe not

developed, there is a God. We see in this verse the psalmist is declaring how wonderful and glorious the name of God is throughout all of the earth. It is a statement that speaks of the general revelation, the revelation of the glory of God. I do not know about you this morning but the glory of God was all around you as you walked out of your house. Normally, when we think of the glory of God in creation we think of all of the sun, moon, stars, and the beauty of nature around us. If you live in the little string of apartments where I live, these days there would be no power in the hour of need. Right in the middle of my shower the light goes off. I told my son, "Turn the light back on." He said, "I didn't do it." How many times have I heard that "I didn't do it?" You see the Lord has spread his name and fame before us, and it is not just in the beautiful things that we see. It is present and is resident at all times. Many times we can see it; many times we can visualize it. But often times it is skewed in our mind. We only see it when it looks good to us. The psalmist is declaring the revelation of his glory in creation which results in praise and adoration. In verse two of the psalm he says, "because of your adversaries, you have established a strong holds," or some have translated "you have ordained set forth praise, from the mouths of children and nursing infants to silence the enemy and the avenger." The true revelation of God's glory spreading his name and fame before us will result in praise and adoration. My praise and adoration prior to Christ was much different than it is today. We will talk about that special revealed glory in just moment, but the truth is that every person who walks the face of the earth can see the revelation of God in a general sense and can be aware of the presence of a divine being. However, is that enough? We have the great commission statements. I tease Dr. Elligson all the time, "What do y'all do in Missions class? Well week one we do Matthew 28 in week two we do Mark 15... we do all the different statements until we will work our way to Acts 1:8, then I don't know what you do the rest of the semester . . . Missions." We have a strategy, "Go and tell, teach and baptize them." "Still down!" you especially need this. It's not enough to say that God has revealed himself, and everybody will get it. No, they will not! They will only get it when he has revealed it especially to the person through the Lord Jesus. That is the only time they will get it. The Lord has spread his name and fame before us and revealed his Glory generally in creation, which results in praise and adoration. This should cause us to pause, to think, and to ponder.

Notice in verse three this is exactly what the psalmist is writing about. He says, "When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers the moon and the stars which you set in place." We have all done it when we are out on a clear night and see the stars. We know just enough about the location of the stars that we begin to look for constellations and all kinds of formations. I am pretty good at this I try to pick out the big dipper, but I see it in about four or five different places usually. There it is, well it's supposed to be the big dipper. The little dipper is over there all turned this way and that. We trace in the sky and look at the glorious expanse of the heavens. We begin to see

the wonder of it all. We see the planets and the moon. We think about those things in our galaxy beyond what we can see. The expanse is amazing. By the way, there are a many a star gazer in the world today who sees the expanse knows that it is there and knows that it is not happenstance, yet they still do not know the name of the one who set it all in its place. His name has not been revealed to them. The amazing thing is the psalmist says, "I look at your heavens the work of your fingers the moon and the stars that you set into place." This begs the question, "how vast is space?" There is progression here; it is a progression of amazement. You look off into the skies and are amazed at the glory and the splendor of it all. You see the vastness and you see the space between the stars. You begin to wonder, "is that really, for me it is this far, but it is so much further?" Then, in that progression of vastness and amazement, you seem to reflect back on yourself. Oh little I am in comparison to the greatness of the heavens. I can't wrap my mind around what God did to set it all into place, but I am surely thankful that he did. The psalmist is amazed and there is progression, but that's not enough to say that I am amazed. It is amazing; it is wonderful.

It begs the question in verse four, "what is man; who am I?" It begs the question, "what is man?" The question is answered by God's providence and the position that man has taken in creation. Notice in verse four, he says "What is man?" It is the question for you to remember him and the Son of Man for you to look at him. It is amazing to me to think that God is such a providential God; he would remember us and look after us. He would provide life, sustain life, and give us the privilege of life, day after day. It is amazing to me to think of this special revelation of himself to man. The psalmist says, "What is man that you remember him, the son of man who you look at him." The word man in this passage is referring to a general cover of mankind. Son of man is a little more defining of who the psalmist is writing about here. "Who is man, that you would remember him?" Who is man who are we that you would remember us, that you would look after us? As we can see, many times in the psalms there is a declaration to the answering of the question, "Who is man that you would remember and look after him?"

In verse five we learn that God made Christ a little less than God, your translation may say a little lower than the angels, the heavenly beings. The word here really is the same word we use for God *elohim*. God you made him a little less than God. When I reflect on what the psalmist wrote of the vastness and amazement, I see myself a lot less than God. I don't see many halo's out there today. Not many people saying, "well I tell you what my name is Saint John." Not many of us today affirm our walk with God in such a way as to brag, "Hey I've got it going on." No, most of us today are in our right mind, and in regard to this, we are thinking of ourselves as we rightly should. Now some of you are wallow in sin and mire that you need not wallow in, and you are there by your own desire. That's a whole other sermon. The question was begged what is man that

you should look after him. Well God has specially revealed himself, and he has made man a little less than God and has crowned him with glory and honor. You may say, "Oh man, I don't feel very glorious today; my GPA stinks." Some of you say, "I do not feel very honored today; nobody even asked me to sing or preach." Well this has nothing to do with us; it has everything to do with Him. He has crowned man with glory and honor. Does it mean you are the perfect representation of his glory? Absolutely not! Are you the perfect representation of the honor that God is due? Absolutely not! You are imperfect, and you are a sinner hopefully saved by grace in the process of becoming more like Him. The providence of God is an amazing thought that he would remember and look after us, especially revealed to us in this way and give us a position of being a little less than God that we would be crowned with glory and honor. Some of you are thinking, "Well, when I look at you John, I can't see the glory and honor of God." No, you can't at times for sure.

I am the father of three sons . . . pray for them. The first two were born when I was in my lostness. It was a neat experience that I'll never forget holding them for the first time and realizing with my oldest son that children are born with finger nails. That was one of the most amazing things to me. Hey, I am as dumb as a box of rocks, and most people know it. Fingernails, I told my wife that he had fingernails and she was like, duh! I didn't know it . . . fingernails growing . . . life. The second one came along man he was twice the size of the first one. The first one was 4 pounds, 14 ounces: a little guy and he came six weeks premature. The second one was two weeks over baked, and he was 9 pounds and looked like a boxer. I looked at him and said good lord how are we going to feed this guy. That's about as deep as it got and I was amazed. Now the third one came along just after I had gotten saved. I looked in that little baby's eyes and not that he was any different than the other two, but I saw something that I didn't see in the other two. I saw a God who created us; I saw the perfect image of a holy God a sinless perfect little baby. He was new born man, I didn't care that had fingernails and I didn't care how much he weighed. By the way he weighed a lot and was going to cost a lot to feed. Oh, I wish I had known that when I looked at him and was amazed. I didn't back up and say oh honey look what we did. No, I looked at him and said, "Oh God, look what you've done!" My perspective had totally changed. Now the other two had the image of God in them no doubt, but my perspective, my *stinkin thinkin* had changed.

Lastly, he has given us stewardship over everything. Notice what he says here, "You made him Lord, master over the work of your hands you put everything under his feet seep oxen, animals of the wild, birds fish passing through the currents of the sea." He is using these images to place in the mind of the person who would sing the song of the mastery that God has handed down. The stewardship, the investment God has made in mankind. You may say, "Man I don't think we are master over it; it seems to be loitering over us." Well, that is true in some regard, isn't it? Remember, because of the

fall, we lost part of our mastery. The writer of Hebrews in Hebrews chapter 2 I won't take time to go there but the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews chapter 2 has explained this text for us a little bit. Today you and I don't feel a little less than God; we feel a lot less than God. We don't feel like we have been crowned with glory and honor, because we don't measure up, we are sinners. We don't feel like we are master over anything, because the world is in chaos around us. We have not mastered it; it seems to be mastering us. The writer of Hebrews does discuss this subject some. We are crowned with honor and glory, but we are not master over everything, because we do not have that full experience yet. We do see Jesus though; at least that is what the writer of Hebrews explains. We see Jesus; we see the perfect, God-man, the fulfillment of all things. When we look on the Lord Jesus Christ, we don't see a little less than God in his humanity. What do we see? We see a complete man who is fully God in the person of our savior and Lord. When we look at him we don't see a diminished glory and honor we see him as the perfect presentation of the glory and honor of God embodied in humanity. The sinless Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld him as glory of the Heavenly Father. In the Lord Jesus we see the perfection and we see our ultimate glory in eternity.

Several years ago, I took a trip to the mountains: me, my wife, and our youngest son. He hated it. We stayed at the Ridgecrest conference center with no TV. He hated it. He was thirteen at the time, and he hated it. Did I tell you that he hated the trip? Well why? Because we were going to look at the leaves; it was October. Not many thirteen year olds want to go with mom and dad to look at the leaves or anything like that . . . God forbid. So, we went off in our little white car, off to the mountains, and it was an amazing trip. I tried to make it as fun as possible for Sammy, and he hated it. We got up to Ridgecrest and checked into the hotel; you could stay there for 35 dollars a night. It was a good deal! We checked into the room and there was nothing: no phonebook, phone, paneling, dark paneling, and no TV. He hated it! We got out and drove around, tried to make it as fun as possible, and we stopped in a lot of neat places. However, Ann and I wanted to go up in the mountains; we wanted to see the glory and the splendor of the color, all the majesty of that time of the year in the mountains. Man, we loved it. We enjoyed it and drove all over the place, and Sammy hated every minute of it . . . hated it. One day we were at the pinnacle of the Blue Ridge Parkway and were cruising over the top headed down toward the other side of Gatlinburg. We were right at the pinnacle of the mountain; everything was all blazed with color and was perfect. It was the perfect trip for senior adults, or Ann and me. Not for Sammy, but it was great. Well in the midst of enjoying all that glory and splendor, my brakes go out. Not good . . . Blue Ridge parkway . . . very, very steep! We decided we could not go back over the mountain into Gatlinburg, and our hotel is way back over there. We had to get off the mountain. Here I am in the glory and the splendor of God. I say things like, "Honey look at this; isn't our God a good God. Look at this! It is glorious and beautiful, it is wonderful.

Look at the stream, the babbling brook, and feel the coolness of the air. Look at all of this; How can people deny there is a God?" Then all of a sudden *PSSHH*; we broke the brake caliper on the front driver side in two. I can't do a good metal on metal sound, but it is the worst metal on metal sound you have ever heard. It was like fingernails on a chalk board. You can't get off a mountain without brakes. So, I start doing some unique down shifting in an automatic and am doing all I can to get us off the mountain. All of a sudden, the splendor and glory of God is gone, and I see the littleness of man. I am thinking, "If I get off us this mountain, my son will love me, and I will be a hero. If not, we were prayed up and ready." You know what I mean? It was bad! When we got off the mountain we all thanked the Lord Jesus. Its dark . . . broken brakes . . . Ridgecrest, NC . . . and I don't know a soul. We went back to the room with dark paneling and no television. He hated it! Found a phonebook that do not think existed when we left earlier that day, called a mechanic and asked him, "Is there any way you can help me?" It was dark, and I was amazed they were still at the shop. He said, "Yes sir I can, come here." I said, "I will be right there." He gave me directions, and my wife, my thirteen year old kid, and I sat in his shop while a man and his son reworked the brakes and turned the rotators on the tires. They did a brake job in the middle of the night for people that they didn't even know; we didn't even look like we could pay. He didn't ask for money up front or anything. When he got it all done I offered him money for staying late. He wouldn't take a dime extra and as a matter of fact did it cheaper than anything else I have ever had done on my car. I wasn't the hero I thought I would be in Sammy's eyes for getting us off the mountain and getting the car fixed. He hated it. I wasted 3 hours of his life in a mechanics shop. He hated it. Well as Ann and I drove away, I said, "you know, we came up here with a limited budget, were staying at the lowest rent place we could, because we didn't have the money to spend for the accommodations. We get up here and see all this glory and grandeur, and the stinkin car brakes. We get our self off the mountain through God's providence and prayer. We find a man that doesn't rob us blind, which was a blessing to us. This is amazing!" I told them, "We need to take a moment and praise here." So, we did; you know, I did not pray to the mechanic. "Oh mechanic, mechanic thank you for fixing my car, oh you are wonderful, you are matchless." I did not pray to my wife who prayed for me as I got us off the mountain. "Oh honey, oh honey you're glorious, I thank you. I did not pray to my son. "Son, even though you don't think I am the hero that I am, I still love you." I didn't do that. I'll tell you what I did immediately; I turned to the one who provided it all. I prayed to Him, "Oh God, Oh Lord, Oh Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth." You say, "John that sounds like a good story. What does it mean? What does this text mean?" See, the truth is you and I could go away from here shouting at the tops of our lungs about the glory of God as revealed in creation in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I am telling you today the impetus for all we do in the church, for all that we do as the people of God is based upon our understanding of who man is in

light of God. You will not win one soul to the Lord Jesus if you don't see in them the glory and honor, the dignity that has been placed in there by a holy God. "Well John, I see people as something to be used and abused." The problem there is that we do not see the image of God and the dignity that is resident in every person.

I could put up two images on the screen that I promise that every one of us in this room would have trouble looking at and saying there is the image of God in him – Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. I could list many more people that you would not find the dignity of God in. Here is the truth today, until you and I realize that even the most heinous among us has not only the potential in the eyes of God, but has within them the image of a Holy God. Man is the crowning work of creation. May you and I leave here today saying with the psalmist, "Lord our Lord how magnificent is your name throughout the earth," I see it in them and in them and in them and in them; everywhere we go, we proclaim the glory of God.

Would you pray with me? Lord, it is easy for us who have experienced salvation to shout and rejoice in you. Lord it is easy for us to pull back and to see how little we are and how imperfect we are and how glorious and wonderful you are, but oh father, today it is very difficult, because of our sin nature and our skewed *stinkin thinking* for us to look at mankind and all peoples everywhere and see the your glory in them or to see their worth and value. Lord, we sound the alarm about the sanctity of human life in regard to the unborn, but we let millions upon millions die without once hearing the name of Jesus. Lord, they are both sins, none greater than the other. Father, we desperately need to remember what man really is. Mankind is the crowning glory of your creation. Lord, remind us of that today. Lord, when we have to be around difficult people remind us of their worth and dignity. Lord, help us; this is my prayer in Jesus name. Amen!

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