

God's Majesty and Human Dignity

Key Verse: “*Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*”

—*Psalms 8:6*

Selected Scripture:
Psalms 8

THE FIRST AND LAST VERS-

es of this Psalm (vss. 1,9) use identical language to frame the wonderful message of God's majesty, “How excellent is thy name in all the earth!” Although the psalmist states that God's glory is “above the heavens” (verse 1), it is the earth and its inhabitants—man—that are of special interest to him. “Heaven

is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.” “I will make the place of my feet [earth] glorious.”—Isa. 66:1; 60:13

One aspect of God's human creation which is of special significance is the babe, or little child. Verse 2 states, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.” Jesus quoted this part of the psalm when he rode into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:16), because, while the children cried in the Temple, “Hosanna to the son of David” (Matt. 21:15), the chief priests and scribes were displeased. Earlier in his ministry, he had asserted, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”—Mark 10:15

As the Psalmist David looked upward into the heavens, he wondered why God would give consideration to this speck of earth and its inhabitants. He says, “When

I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou has ordained; What is man, that thou are mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Ps. 8:3,4) Yet, the psalmist continues by praising God's creation of man, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." (vs. 5) Our Key Verse says God also gave to man dominion over the earth, and the verses following (vss. 7,8) state that this dominion included all the lower animals.

Through man's fall into sin and death, he lost the dominion described above, both as relates to the earth itself, as well as over the lower animals. Even man's life on earth became only a few short years, when compared to eternal life which God originally intended. From this limited viewpoint, it would seem that God's purpose in the earth had failed miserably; however, this is not the case. We turn to the New Testament to see God's purpose in all this.

Apostle Paul quotes the words of this psalm in Hebrews 2:6-7, but after doing so he explains God's long term plan for dealing with the fact that man's dominion over earth, although now not in effect, will one day be restored. He says, "Now we see not yet all things put under him [under man's dominion]. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:8,9) Through the ransom provided by the death of Jesus as a corresponding price for Adam, all mankind will have the opportunity in Christ's coming kingdom to learn righteousness, to fully leave their former sinful ways, and to regain the dominion they lost. As Jesus said at his first advent, "The Son of man [Jesus, an earthly son of Adam] is come to seek and to save [through the ransom and his future kingdom] that which was lost [man and his former dominion].—Luke 19:10 ■