

Psalms: The Songs of the People of God

The Doxology of Dominion - Psalm 8

Sunday, March 18, 2018

Introduction

This week the theoretical physicist, cosmologist, and author Stephen Hawking died. In an interview a few years ago Hawking said this:

There is probably no heaven and no afterlife. We have this one life to appreciate the grand design of the universe, and for that, I am extremely grateful.

Hawking spent his life looking at the skies, but his final conclusion was that after this life there is nothing else. We can enjoy the grand design of the universe while we live, but in the end we cease to exist.

When we come to Psalm 8, as David looks at the skies he has a very different conclusion. David's response is one of worship and wonder.

David is amazed by God's creation and by God's relationship to man, and David's amazement leads to worship.

Declaring the Majesty of God

Before getting to the central question of the Psalm David begins by praising God and His majesty.

- **The Majesty of God's Name (8:1a)**
 - While the English translation seems repetitive, David's use of LORD, Lord is a way of addressing God that shows great honor.
 - Talking about *the "name of God"* is a shorthand way of speaking of the reputation or character of God. The *"name of God"* represents who He is in His fullness. David says that God's *"name"* is majestic.
- **The Majesty of God is Revealed in The Sky (8:1b, 3)**
 - As a shepherd David probably had a lot of time under the night sky and he saw it as a great display of the majesty of God (Psalm 19:1). There are millions of stars and from millions of miles away we get to see their light. The moon is equally amazing. How big and mighty and how full of wisdom must our God be that He could create all of this?
- **The Majesty of God is Revealed in His Strength over Enemies (8:2)**
 - At first glance verse 2 is hard to understand, but it really adds to the rest of the song. The main point of the verse is that God can take what is small and weak and use it to defeat what appears to be strong and impossible to overcome. Not only is God the One who created all things, He the one who rules all things. God can use the simple to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:25-31).

The Central Question: How Could a God of Such Majesty have Such Great Thoughts Toward Man? (8:3-4)

As David contemplates the majesty of God his response is this question: How can a God as great as ours even think of people like us? And yet He does – and He shows us favor.

The God of Great Majesty Has Shown Favor to Man (8:5-8)

- **God has Given Man an Exalted Position (8:5)**
 - When God created man he didn't make us a slightly higher than animals, he made us slightly less than divine (heavenly beings). We are made in God's image (Genesis 1:26) and have been set apart from the rest of creation by God.
- **God has Given Man an Exalted Authority (8:6-8)**
 - After making us in His image and crowing us with glory and honor, God has called us to be the overseers of His creation. God is the creator, but He has entrusted us with the stewardship of His creation.
- **The Purpose of our Position and Authority – It Puts the Greatness of God on Display**
 - We must remember that even as David talks about our position and authority, this is a Psalm of praise. The favor that God has shown us is not meant as a reflection of how great we are, but as a reflection of how great God is.
 - For David, this awareness led to this "Doxology of Dominion." To recognize God's care and favor for us should lead to praise.

Seeing Jesus in Psalm 8

As is often the case, the use of the Psalm in the NT adds another layer of meaning and application. We see that through the use of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2.

- **The Inadequacy of our Dominion (Hebrews 2:5-8)**
 - While God created us in His image and gave us dominion over the earth, through the fall in Genesis 3 everything changed. Because of the fall we have become imperfect image bearers and imperfect stewards over creation. The reality is that our world is not in submission, but in chaos (Romans 8:19-23).
- **The Perfect Fulfillment of our Dominion: Jesus (Hebrews 2:9)**
 - Because of the fall we have been unable to fulfill our calling to put all things in subjection, but Jesus (the second Adam) has been granted all rule and authority and will accomplish dominion in a way that we never could (1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Ephesians 1:21-23).

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