

# What is Man?

**Psalm 8:1** *To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.*<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

<sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

<sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for [appoint] him?

<sup>5</sup> Yet you have made him a little lower [younger] than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup> You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

<sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

<sup>8</sup> the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

<sup>9</sup> O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

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Psalm 8:1-9

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<sup>1</sup> "For the end, concerning the wine-presses, a Psalm of David. " (Ps 8:1 LXA)

# What is Man?

**WHAT IS MAN?** The accidental evolution of a colossal cosmic collision? What is **his place**? Highest of a violent chain of randomly evolved animals? What is **his purpose**? A meaningless existence doomed to eternal nothingness for eternity? This is the yarn being spun in our entertainment, our media, our government. It is being broadcast loudly and often from the moldy halls of the establishment in our universities. Many have succumbed to its nihilistic nonsense. It has created the postmodern man, whose origin is meaningless, whose purpose is nothing, whose destiny is annihilation.

He is summed up perfectly by the poet, himself struck down in a senseless act of meaningless yet wicked violence:

He's a real nowhere man  
Sitting in his nowhere land  
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody  
Doesn't have a point of view  
Knows not where he's going to  
Isn't he a bit like you a me?

John Lennon's "Nowhere Man" is a famous song. His song tells a story. It tries to tell Nowhere Man that it really isn't like he thinks it is. He is missing something. Something is just beyond his vision. If he could figure it out, the world would be at his command. But at the end of the song, he is still just Nowhere Man.

Story through song is one of the highest, grandest, most impactful means of instilling purpose (or destroying it) in which human beings can engage. Sadly, I'm not very good at it. But I know someone who was. His name was David. He was the king and the great singer, the sweet psalmist of Israel (2Sam 23:1).

David's songs have stood the test of time—3,000 years longer than Lennon's. David's lyrics were inspired, not by the pressure to come up with another tune to fill a recording contract, but by the Holy Spirit of God who led the king to sing about something which, in our Psalm today, is so unimaginable it would take the another King's coming in the future to make it's meaning fully understandable. Even then, its story is such amazingly good news, it is hard to believe it is actually true.

# The Eighth Psalm

Psalm 8 tells its story not only in what it says, as we will see in how it is used other places in the Bible and how it was interpreted in the ancient world (especially in the NT), but even by its position in the Psalter. This begins in the superscription: “To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David” (Ps 8:1).

We start at the beginning, or rather the end. Or maybe, as we will see once we are finished—both. “To the choirmaster.” This is the beginning of the Psalm. We have seen this statement in Psalm 4:1, 5:1 and 6:1. It appears in 55 Psalms. Yet, as it always does, the LXX translates it “For the end.” And as they so often do, the Church Fathers see “The End” as Christ. This interpretation can be no truer anywhere in the Psalter than it is here. For the end here is the eighth Psalm. Athanasius puts it so memorably:

Everywhere extended, when you behold the Savior’s grace,  
So many being rescued from among the human race,

If you raise your voice to the Lord, sing The Eighth.<sup>2</sup>

The **Gittith** is yet another **lost word** of the Psalms superscriptions. It might mean a musical instrument. The Targum says, “**The lute that he brought from Gath,**” perhaps referring to the time when David fled Saul and went to the old stomping grounds of Goliath for refuge. It might be a musical notation. It could refer to a festival or ceremony of some kind. The LXX translates it as “**concerning the wine-presses**” (from the Hb: *gat*). Combining the last two, there were traditions in the early church (Jerome, Theodore of Mopsuestia, etc.),<sup>3</sup> which some scholars still argue today,<sup>4</sup> that David composed this Psalm as a blessing for the people to be sung on **the Feast of**

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<sup>2</sup> **ATHANASIUS** *ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALMS* 16. This is my poetic version of two translations. “As you see the grace of the Savior extended everywhere, so many being saved, if you wish to raise your voice to the Lord, sing Psalm 8” (in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Psalms) and “When you behold the Savior’s grace, which has been extended everywhere, and the human race, which has been rescued, if you wish to address the Lord, sing the eighth” (In Bruce **Waltke**, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 245.

<sup>3</sup> See **Waltke**, 245.

<sup>4</sup> **Goldingay** 2006b:154; **Koehler** and **Baumgartner** 2001:206–207; **O’Connell** 1997:904; **Tate** 2001:344; **Wolf** 1980:361. See **Dan T Liroy**, “From Dignity to Disgrace: A Comparative Analysis of Psalms 8 and 14,” *Conspectus* 15 (2013): 211.

Tabernacles, when the feast of crops happens, hence the title “winepresses.” Augustine and others interpreted the winepresses as referring to the church at the end of days. All of this is really quite interesting given the content of this Psalm.

If this Psalm was used at the Feast of Tabernacles, *its placement* in the Psalter at the eighth Psalm would make greater sense. For Psalm 8 begins, as we will see, with the LORD our Lord (*vs. 1*) making his foes “*be still*” (*2*). The word used here is *shabath* (*sabbath*), a theme that fits perfectly with the context of the Psalm as speaking about creation and being sung at this feast, for the Feast of Tabernacles was the “a Sabbath” feast—in fact it was the Sabbath of sabbath feasts as it was the seventh of seven yearly feasts. But this was one of those OT feasts which had the “Sabbath” on the “*eighth day*” (*Lev 23:36*). Hence, the Eighth Psalm.<sup>5</sup>

*How Majestic is Your Name O LORD, Our Lord*

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<sup>5</sup> Its Messianic overtones are also heightened, as the Messiah is the fulfillment of the feast of tabernacles. He tabernacle among us (*John 1:14*; cf. *7:2-10:21*). Also, its Gentile (pre-Jewish) themes are heightened (cf. *Zech 12:10*; *Rev 19:15*).

So **what is the story of Psalm 8?** We can see the setting and main actor(s) of the story by examining the structure. **Vs. 1 and 9** are identical: “**O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**” This is how the psalm begins and how the psalm ends. This God is the object of praise as he is in all the Psalms. This repetition tips us off that we might have a kind of chiasm here. A chiasm is a literary memory technique where ideas are paralleled to one another throughout a text. Here, the chiasm is:

A. Praise to the Name of the LORD, our Lord	(1).
B. God’s Suzerain Rule Over Creation	(2-3)
C. Man’s lowliness	(4-5a)
C <sup>1</sup> . Man’s greatness	(5b)
B <sup>1</sup> . Man’s Vassal Rule Over Creation	(6-8)
A <sup>1</sup> . Praise to the Name of the LORD, our Lord	(9)

The structure reveals that the setting, at least initially, is creation. There are all kinds of “guest stars” and “extras” in this story, but the main actor is **the center of the poem**. He is called *enosh* and *ben-adam*: man and the son of man. Actually, I’m going to argue that we have here not one person, but a Best Actor and a Best Supporting Actor. This is not one person, but two. And via a glorious supernatural

union, this expands to many, many more. But let's turn to our story.

We start with God. **The LORD**. Yahweh. Three in One. Our Adonai. The God of His people. “**Our Lord**” (**Ps 8:1**). But he is not just our God. He is God. “**How majestic is your name,**” where? Just here among Israel? Only in Jerusalem? Only where his people gather together on the Lord's Day? No. His name is majestic “**in all the earth!**” The word “**earth**” (*erets*) is parallel to something else later in the verse. “**You have set your glory above the heavens**” (**1:1**). **Heaven** and earth. God's name is majestic in all the earth for he has set his glory above the heavens.

The word for “glory” (*hod*) here is used to describe kings. “**And the LORD made Solomon very great in the sight of all Israel and bestowed on him such royal majesty (*hod*) as had not been on any king before him in Israel**” (**1Chr 29:25**). God gives David the king great “**splendor (*hod*) and majesty**” (**Ps 21:5**). Indeed, God is the King of heaven and earth.

## *God's Suzerain Rule of All Creation*

Heaven and earth have this nice way of taking our mind back to **creation**. Ours is a story that begins at creation. This is where the Psalmist goes next, though he gets there in a round about way. “**Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger**” (**Ps 2:2**). You ask, what do babies have to do with creation?

The language of the second half of this verse strongly parallels that of Psalm 89, where we find multiple words from almost every verse:

Vs 1	God’s “name”	(89:16)	“earth”	(89:12)	“heavens”	(89:11)	“enemy”	(89:11)
Vs 2	“established”	(89:12)	“strength”	(89:11)	sabbath (“still”)	(89:10)		
Vs 3	“heavens”	(89:11)	“moon”	(89:38)	“adversaries”	(89:23 English only)	“ordained” or “set in place”	(4 vss)
Vs 4	“thought”	(89:43)	“sons of men/ son of man”	(89:43)	“care for”	(89:33)		
Vs 5	“heavenly beings”	(89:5, 6)						
Vs 6	“rule/dominion”	(89:10)						
Vs 8	“seas” <sup>6</sup>	(89:10)						

<sup>6</sup> For many of these see the conclusion in **Mark Stephen Kinser**, “*All Things Under His Feet*”: *Psalm 8 in the New Testament and in Other Jewish Literature of Late Antiquity*, a dissertation (Ann Arbor: MI: University of Michigan, 1995), 28.

As you can see, most of these occur in a small span of **Ps 89:10-12**. In other words, the parallels are not accidental. Psalm 89 is, in some ways, an expansion of Psalm 8. In those verses we see God, who is ruling from his “**throne**” (89:14), in the skies, that is heaven, over the sons of the divine council (5-7). In Psalm 89, God is seen glorified in majesty because he rules the raging sea (9). His enemy is the wicked sea-monster Rahab (10), a picture of chaos and an image of the supernatural evil that lies behind the nations raging at God (Ps 2). The point is, the whole world belongs to him (11). Because he is the God of creation (the context of God’s victory here is seen at creation, vs. 12), praise be to “**his name**.”

The connection is here in **Psalm 8:2**. God is established over his enemies, and in strength he brings sabbath to his throne. The very same thing is happening in Psalm 89, and both are talking about creation. The irony here is that **infants establish this among men by their mouths**. But all infants do is cry. This isn’t to be taken literally, but

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[https://www.academia.edu/737651/ All Things Under His Feet Psalm 8 In the New Testament and In Other Jewish Literature of Late Antiquity](https://www.academia.edu/737651/All_Things_Under_His_Feet_Psalm_8_In_the_New_Testament_and_In_Other_Jewish_Literature_of_Late_Antiquity)

figuratively. It is ironic because God's enemies feel so strong, so powerful. But babies and infants are the weakest among us. This is God's way, to confound the wisdom of this world with foolish things. God uses the weak and the helpless of his creation to show forth his power. The very people our society thinks are the most worthless, God sees as the most precious.

**Psalm 8:3** now adds, “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place.” Creation. The God of creation has been showing himself so since creation, over any who would seek to set their throne above the stars of heaven. But they can't. He sits enthroned above them all.

In the Babylonian and Canaanite world, the great enemy is **Yam**—the sea, or **Tiamat** the chaotic ocean depicted figuratively as a sea monster. The same is true in Psalm 89. In all of these, God is seen as a warrior winning victory as King over them. In Genesis, of course, there is no battle. God just speaks and it all comes exactly as he says it. But in other biblical passages on creation (like Psalm 74, 89, etc.), the writers use the language of God destroying his enemies in order to show the whole world that nothing and no one

can depose him. He is King of heaven and earth. The moon (thought of as the powerful god Sin, as in Sinai), the stars (thought of as the heavenly beings; **Job 38:7**), the sea, nothing is too powerful to overthrow Yahweh, our Lord.

### *Man's Lowly Estate*

David now has us contemplate this powerful truth as **he introduces us to someone**. Or is it someones? “**What is man that you are mindful of him?**” (**Ps 8:4**). The setting is still creation. The creation of man himself comes into view in the next verse. “**Yet you have made him...**” God is our creator. “**Who made you?**” asks the Children’s Catechism. “**God made me,**” comes the answer from our little ones. “**What else did God make?**” we ask them again. “**All things,**” they reply as even today out of the mouth of little children God is established for all to see. The creation idea continues in the next verse when it speaks of God giving man “**dominion**” (6), and again in the next two verses as it talks about his authority over **sheep and oxen, beasts** (8) and **birds, fish** and the tantalizing “**whatever passes along the paths of the seas**” (8). What might that be?

The word for “man” here is *enosh*—a common enough Hebrew term for a human. The term seems to be used when mankind in general is in view. Sometimes it means one man, other times it means all males and females. In a story that predates the Jewish people, and a verse that is eerily similar to those we will look at now, Job asks, “What is man (*enosh*), that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him” (Job 7:17), or in another translation, “What is man that Thou does magnify him, and that Thou art concerned about him” (NAS). Is David reflecting upon himself and his people as pre-Israelites like Job was? I think so. Why? Because of the context.

Vs. 5 continues, “... you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings...” The word “heavenly beings” is *elohim*. Without the article, as we have here, it is usually translated as either “God,” or more often as “gods.” Only with the article do you know it is God. Without the article (“the”), you can’t tell if the word is plural or singular just by looking at its form (it’s ending *-im* is plural), anymore than you can tell if “sheep” or “deer” are singular or plural. You

need a context. This is why you find the translation “God” in some English Bibles (NAS, ASV, GNV, RSV).<sup>7</sup>

But this is incorrect, as the oldest translations, including the LXX, the Targum, and most importantly, Hebrews say this is not talking about God but “angels” (Heb 2:7, 9).<sup>8</sup> Angels being called “gods?” What’s with that? I think what was going on is something similar to what goes on now. When you say “gods,” people wrongly think, “idols” and fairy tales, and fiction, and there is no such thing. But when you say angels, this word has not brought about the same confusion. Angels come to men throughout the Bible. Especially the Angel of the LORD. So let’s use a word that is easier to understand, since it is trying to help us grasp a bigger point. I’m fine with that, so long as you know that the Bible, God’s word, calls some angels *elohim*, gives them

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<sup>7</sup> Also Aquilla (2<sup>nd</sup> cent.), the Jewish translator of the OT into Greek and Symmachus (2<sup>th</sup> cent.), perhaps a Samaritan converted Jew translator of the same.

<sup>8</sup> What sense does it make to say that God made man “a little lower” than himself? No. As Creator and creature, there is no comparison. There is a comparison between men and angels and the Son of God—who is God, but only as he takes on the created properties of “angel” or “humanity.” In his essence, is it not blasphemous to say that man is only a little lower than he is?

real existence, but never sees them as anything other than created beings.<sup>9</sup>

### *Lowly Man: The Son Now One of Us*

This is the reason, I believe, why Hebrews quotes this verse with regard to Jesus. This point is missed by almost everyone. Hebrews 2 says, “For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, ‘*What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, 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

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<sup>9</sup> Perhaps, if we understood that all religions have some form of an uncreated first deity or pair (be it Chaos with the Greek or Apsu and Tiamat with Babylon or even the whole universe with pantheistic religions), then gods—even when they tried to usurp heaven—were never thought of as uncreated or anything like that. I’m not in any way trying to justify their understanding of the First Cause. I’m just saying most people have one, even as Atheists today do. What I’m saying is that this would help us out immensely if we understood it. But angels usurping other angels? That’s pretty much exactly what we find though out the world’s religions, and especially in the Bible.

everything in subjection to him” (Heb 2:5-8). What a completely bizarre way to start a book, talking about Jesus Christ being superior to angels? What sense does this even make? And so most people think the point is what should otherwise be absurdly obvious, that Jesus the Son is greater than angels. That is true, of course. But it misses the whole point of the story of Psalm 8. It is not *merely* because of his deity that he is superior in Hebrews. **It is something more.**

Jesus became a lowly man. What is man that you are mindful of him? Jesus became one of these. Born of a virgin. What is the son of man that you care for him? Jesus became this. Fully man in every way, but without sin. Highest of all, lower than angels. Yet, there is something hidden about this that we now need to see.

### *Man Raised High: The Son of Man—Rule and Dominion*

You see, Psalm 8 is telling us something incredibly important about the created function and purpose and authority *of man*. Hebrews is doing the same thing. It is something that ancient Jews, Christians, and believe it or not even Muslims (since they stole the worldview from us)

understood. Many of us have forgotten. Let's remember against that we are dealing here with the language of creation: **made-man**, **dominion**, **animals**, the **moon** and **stars**, **heaven** and **earth**. This is the language of Genesis 1 and 2. Psalm 8 is in some ways an inspired commentary on these chapters of the Bible.

The focal point of the Psalm is “man.” This, of course, is also the focal point of the Genesis creation story. For the apex, the climax of that story has God creating man—male and female, and then resting as king over his creation. His rest is the rest of a monarch being enthroned on high over everything, not of a mortal being tired and needing a nap.

Now, it just so happens that in our story of Genesis, we have not only man, but also the most infamous heavenly being, someone masquerading as an “angel of light” (**2Co 11:14**), if you will. It is that fateful, sorrowful, tragic, terrible story of **the fall of Adam and Eve**. The woman is tempted by the serpent, whom we later learn is called **Satan** (**2Co 11:3**) or the devil, also called the dragon (**Rev 12:9**). His power is likened to leviathan (**Isa 27:1**) or Rahab (**Isa 51:9**). Have you ever wondered what in the world motive Satan could have possibly had for tempting our first parents

to sin? I'm not talking about his job as an accuser (*devil*) or his role as an adversary (*satan*) in the heavenly council bureaucracy. I'm simply talking about **motive**.

All three of great monotheistic religions of the world tell the same story here.<sup>10</sup> I'll use the version compiled by the famous Christian **Ephrem the Syrian** (306 – 373 AD), in what is called the *Cave of Treasures* (a book in the NT Apocrypha).<sup>11</sup> I use him because he was able to merge various traditions into the best summary of the view I know about, and because he was a very well respected Church Father.

On the sixth day ... God the Father said to the Son and Holy Spirit: 'Come, Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.' When the heavenly host heard this voice they were afraid, saying to one another, 'We

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<sup>10</sup> **Going Deeper:** I don't actually think **Islam** started as a monotheistic religion, but as a polytheistic religious cult that rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Allah was most likely a name for the moon god (ironic, given Ps 8). Clearly though, Islam became monotheistic as Allah became the usurper *par excellence*, taking the title from Baal and holding the belt for the last 1,400 years in too many parts of the world. For an exhaustive look at this see the book *Moonotheism* by Yoel Natan. [http://www.pdfarchive.info/pdf/N/Na/Natan\\_Yoel\\_-\\_Moon-o-theism\\_Religion\\_of\\_a\\_War\\_and\\_Moon\\_God\\_Prophet\\_Volume\\_1.pdf](http://www.pdfarchive.info/pdf/N/Na/Natan_Yoel_-_Moon-o-theism_Religion_of_a_War_and_Moon_God_Prophet_Volume_1.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> There are many of these books, and they are to be distinguished from the much earlier Jewish Apocrypha, which some branches of Christianity consider canon.

will see an awesome sight today, the likeness of God our maker” ... And God created him by his holy hands in his image and according to his likeness. When the angels saw his image and the glorious appearance of Adam, they trembled at the beauty of his likeness. The wild and domestic animals and birds were assembled and passed before Adam and he gave them their names. They bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before him. The angels heard the voice of God which said: ‘I have made you king ... and I have made you ruler over all which I have created.’ [And when the heavenly host heard this voice, they all blessed him and prostrated themselves before him.] And when the chief of that lower order saw that great dominion had been given to Adam, he was envious of him from that day and did not wish to worship him with the angels, and said to his host: ‘Don’t worship him or give him praise with the angels. It would be [more] proper that he worship me, for I am made of fire and spirit. I cannot worship dust which is made from soil. (*Cave of Treasures*, “The Creation of Adam”).<sup>12</sup>

Though I don’t agree with every detail of this story (it

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<sup>12</sup> As translated in Kisner, p. 70.

is just an uninspired commentary after all), I do agree with the main argument. Importantly, the scene takes place during Genesis 2 and the naming of the animals (again the link to Psalm 8), after the creation of Adam (another link). This is [the occasion for the fall of Satan](#). Satan was basically ticked off that God created man. Why? Not because God created him. But because God gave dominion of this earth to him rather than Lucifer—the Bright Shining Star of heaven. Though this is the only good reason I’ve ever heard anyone give for why Satan would do this to us, and though it is the most widely circulated reason in the era of the NT, this isn’t just fanciful imagination. There are actually markers in Psalm 8 that lead people to think this way.

God made man lower than then *elohim*, than the angels if you must. He made us lower than them. I think we all realize that part. As did Satan. That is exactly why he was so angry that God gave man dominion over the earth. As the Wisdom of Solomon puts it, agreeing with this story, [“For God created us for incorruption, and made us in the image of his own eternity, but through the devil’s envy](#)

death entered the world” (**Wis 2:23-24** NRS).<sup>13</sup> Satan was envious. Jealous. This stemmed from his own pride. And it became the occasion for his fall.

What made him so angry is that God gave Adam “dominion” over the works of our hands; and put all things under his feet. “All things” includes, guess what? The Psalm gives us the obvious: sheep and oxen. But also “beasts of the field” (**Ps 8:7**). Who is likened to the “beasts of the field” in **Genesis 3:1**? Satan: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field...” (NAS). Again, Adam is given dominion over the obvious: birds and fish. But also “whatever passes along the paths of the seas” (**8:8**). What might that be? Though out the biblically inspired commentaries on Genesis, we find that these include Rahab and/or Leviathan, the sea monsters which are likened to Satan.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This is one of the Jewish Apocrypha (see note 11). It seems to put Satan’s envy in relation to Adam’s being made an image bearer, which is possible, even though I believe (at least certain) angels also bear the image, because they are “sons of God.” The image in Genesis is primarily a function of “ruling” and of being called God’s “son.”

<sup>14</sup> Kinser sees other, more obscure textual markers such as the language that “lower” could mean “younger,” which has connections to the Cave of Treasures and to 3 Enoch’s Metatron figure who is an exalted human being who ends up having dominion even though he is “the younger.” Also the word “care for” can be

Now, the key to the entire psalm is something I've been deliberately saying little about. In the Hebrew parallelism, there is a synonym or counterpart "man" (*enosh*). This is the phrase "son of man" (Ps 8:4). "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" Is this a synonym or a counterpart? One person or two people? Or many? The answer to all of these questions is "yes."

The phrase appears only four times in the OT up to this point (Num 23:19; Job 16:21, 25:6, 35:8). Every time it uses the term *ben-adam*, which always refers to human beings. But it seems in part based on its usage here, that the term came to be used in some prophetic literature<sup>15</sup> for a very special particular man. Take Daniel 7 for example. Daniel 7 shares much in common with Psalm 7 and Psalm 89.<sup>16</sup> It begins with four great beasts coming up out of the sea (7:3). Sea monsters. These beasts are controlled by Yahweh, but given dominion for a while upon the earth.

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translated as "appointed," meaning that God gave man this authority. See Kinser, 70-79.

<sup>15</sup> Especially 1 Enoch.

<sup>16</sup> For our later study of Psalm 89 see Paul Mosca, "Ugarit and Daniel 7: A Missing Link," *Bib* 67, 496-517; cited in Mark S. Smith. *The Priestly Vision of Genesis I* (Kindle Location 2888). Kindle Edition.

While a symbol for the human nations and the supernatural powers behind them, the similar imagery needs to be kept in mind.

Next, we have a **divine council** scene, where Daniel sees the Ancient of Days taking his seat (9), and a host of other thrones around him upon which are seated heavenly beings (10). Suddenly, dominion is taken away from the beasts (12). *Dominion*. Then behold, “I saw in the night visions ... with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man,<sup>17</sup> and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (13-14).

The amazing thing is that “one like a son of man,” is only “**like**” a son of man here. He is not a son of man. In fact, he is in heaven and is a heavenly being. I would argue with others that he is, here, an angel. For he is the Angel of

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<sup>17</sup> Of the dozens of later occurrences, this verse and Psalm 144:3 alone use “*enosh*,” but this is also a synonym for a human being. The word “*ish*” refers to human beings as well, but this word is also used to describe angels.

Israel, the Angel of the LORD. That's fine, because this is a prophecy. It hasn't happened yet.

This is the reason why Hebrews is concerned with Jesus Christ being superior to angels. The point it is making is that even though the Son of God appeared at many times in the OT as the Elohim-Yahweh-Angel, he is superior to all of the angels because this is his only-begotten Son. Hence, he quotes Psalm 2, “You are you my Son, this day have I begotten you,” and Psalm 8, “You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion ... and put all things under his feet.” This is Daniel 7 as well.

The NT does something else with this Psalm. For again you see, we believe that Jesus Christ did not come as an angel, but **as a human being**. He is fully man and fully God. Jesus appeared publicly in his ministry for three or so years in the early part of the first century. During the last week of his life, we have two stories, one in Matthew and one in Luke, which depict some very similar things, but also some interesting differences.

**Luke 21:14-16** tells the story of Jesus descending the Mount of Olives. Suddenly, a whole multitude of

“disciples” began to rejoice and “praise” God singing **Psalm 118:26**, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.” But a group of Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke the disciples. Jesus answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

**Matthew 21:14-16** tells a very similar story. It is a couple days earlier at the temple. Jesus was healing many. But a group of priests and scribes, who had seen watching the wonderful things he was doing, saw some “children” crying out in the temple. They were likewise “praising” Jesus with the same verse, “Hosanna to the son of David.” Jesus rebukes them this time by quoting Psalm 8, “Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have brought perfect praise?’” Now, the Hebrew (as we have seen) says that God establishes “strength” through these babies. But the LXX says that the babies give him **praise**, and this is what Jesus quotes here.

What is the point of this? The point is that Jesus is fulfilling Psalm 8! This is in fact why God’s enemies—here the priests, scribes, and Pharisees are so indignant. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD? Psalm 8: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the

earth. Why does David use both Yahweh and Adonai here? It is because he is addressing the Son, his Lord (Adonai). Remember Psalm 2? The Yahweh has a Messiah (2:2). But Yahweh laughs from heaven, while Adonai holds them in derision (4). **Psalm 110:1**—David has two Lords: Yahweh and Adonai—Father and Son.

What Psalm 8 is doing, I believe, is addressing the Son—Adonai in these other Psalms. He is calling him Yahweh! Yahweh is the name of the Father. Yahweh is also the name of the Son. “**Yahweh (the Son) rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from Yahweh (the Father) out of heaven**” (**Gen 19:24**). Two Yahwehs. One God.

Again, Psalm 8. The babies are crying out Hosanna. To whom? The son of David. This is a deliberate royal title of Jesus’ humanity. He is one like the son of man. The Pharisees were indignant! He must be stopped for accepting such blasphemous praise.

One more fact about those days, when Jesus left the temple to go up to the Mt. of Olives (**Matt 24:1**), he began preaching that great end-times sermon. At one point, late in his talk he said, “**Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn,**

and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (30). This is Daniel. Jesus is saying that he is Daniel’s Son of Man, not not “like” a son of man, but actually the son of David, the son of Adam. The priests were there. They sought to kill him.

A couple of days later, they succeed. During his trial, Jesus was commanded under oath by the high priest to tell him if he was the Christ, the Son of God (Matt 26:63). Jesus instead said, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven” (64). Caiaphas tore his robes. The blasphemy was complete. Jesus was crucified.

But in that painfully horrendous moment that will live forever as the greatest act of sacrifice in human history, something happened. We have to return to Adam. Adam was giving dominion *conditionally*. If he were to obey God in the Garden, he would be given full dominion of this earth forever. But Adam and his wife Eve who came from his body, sinned. They were cast out of the garden and from that moment onward, other dominions and powers in heavenly places began to fight with men for dominion of

this blue, beautiful sphere. Satan became the “**ruler of this world.**” Man’s original gift of ruler and dominion had been shattered.

But in that moment on the cross, Jesus did something Adam did not do. This is why Paul now uses Psalm 8 to tell his part of the story. The Apostle is now focused on the event that shattered the heavens three days after the crucifixion. Jesus rose from the dead. But the Corinthians were doubting this proposition, even though Paul told them that there were over 500 witnesses that saw him at the same time (**1Cor 15:6**). So he said, “**But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man have come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive**” (**20-22**).

Here is where we have the most fully developed theology of Christ as the “**last Adam**” (cf. **vs. 45**). There are only **two men in the Bible that are called Adam**: Adam and Jesus Christ. One is first, and to him was given dominion. One is last, and he is David’s son and the “son of man,” and to him is given permanent dominion because in Jesus’s death he has obeyed where Adam failed. And Jesus’ resurrection

is the proof to the world that Jesus has been victorious, that the Rider of the Clouds has come to bring salvation and to defeat all of his enemies.

And so Paul continues that Christ must “**destroy every rule and every authority and power**” (24). This is human power. This is heavenly power. All power. All rule. All authority in heaven or on earth. “**For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet**” (25). Psalm 8. “**The last enemy to be destroyed is death**” (26). “**For ‘God has put all things in subjection under his feet.’**” Psalm 8. Just like Hebrews and Matthew, Paul applies Psalm 8 to Jesus. This time in connection to his eternal dominion as the second Adam, the Son of Man.

What a story this is? But we are not quite finished yet. For these are a couple more place I want to tell you about Psalm 8 appearing in the NT.<sup>18</sup> The first is **Philippians 3:20-21**. Here, Paul again talks about **the resurrection**. But not Christ’s. Ours. He speaks about the mystical union we have in Christ if we are truly saved by faith alone. “**But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform out lowly body to be**

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<sup>18</sup> Other NT passages that hint at Psalm 8 are **Eph 1:18-23** and **1Pe 3:18-22**.

like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” Psalm 8. This time, Christ’s subjection of all things means his own people will be raised from the dead.

The next one is **Romans 8:18-21**. Now he is talking about Christians as “sons of God.” This was the title that was given to the “heavenly beings,” whom God made us a little lower than. This is a deliberate connection Paul is making. “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed [in]<sup>19</sup> us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility ... in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

You may not see Psalm 8 here, but it is. Earlier in the book, Paul had said that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (**Rom 3:23**). He then goes on to tell us that, “Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we

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<sup>19</sup> I prefer the translation “in” to “to” here.

rejoice in the hope of sharing the glory of God.”<sup>20</sup> As Kinser says, “Those who formerly fell short of the glory of God now have a confident hope that in the coming age they will possess it.” Paul then starts talking in the only other place he does this in all of his letters, about Christ and Adam (5:12-19).

Laying behind all of this “glory” language is Genesis 1-2 and Psalm 8 about “the ordering of creation under the authority of Adam and his descendants,”<sup>21</sup> something Adam lost a firm handle on, and which creation itself is suffering the consequences of now. The opposite of glory is Paul’s “futility.” The restoration of glory is Psalm 8:6, being given again dominion over the work of God’s hands and putting all things under not just the Son of Man’s feet, but “man’s,” feet if he is in Christ.

Psalm 8 has David looking at creation, wondering about the lowly position of man, and yet contemplating both a lost past in Adam and a glorious future in Jesus Christ. In Christ, and in the age to come, those who are called sons of

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<sup>20</sup> This is the translation of Kinser (p. 235), and I am indebted to him for explaining these NT passages in his dissertation.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 237.

God will be given their full return of dominion over this earth. Sheep and oxen, and beasts of the field. Birds and fish and whatever passes along the paths of the seas. As we have seen, “all things are put in subjection” includes the heavenly beings. And this is what Paul says, “**Don’t you know that you will judge angels?**” (1Co 6:3).

This is a return to the way it was before the fall. The beginning. **But it is better**, because the time of testing has now past. A Psalm for The End. The Last Adam has recaptured all of what the First had lost. Christ has been given authority and dominion over heaven and earth. Why? Not just because he is God. As God, he always had that sense of authority as the Suzerain. But now also as man, as Vassal King ruling for the Father. Why? Because this was how God was pleased to save his people. This is what God is pleased to do for his church. We are not nowhere men. In Christ, the world is—or one day will be—at our command. Because it is at Christ’s command. This is how God is pleased to let his glory cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

David asks, “What is man?” The answer is that though he is made in the image of God, by himself he isn’t much

more than a sinful rebel who has lost his ability to rule and made wise decisions in God's world. But in Christ, the glory is regained, the authority is reinstated. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For he is the King of kings, his kingdom and his dominion are without end. Only by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ with all of your heart and all of your soul will you find your purpose and place in this world and the hope of Psalm 8 for yourself.

If you have, then sing, “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” This is our story. This is our song. Sing it once. Sing it twice. Sing it on the first day. Sing it on the eighth day. Sing it every day and shout it out to the world as his disciples, as his little children who have become his sons and daughters. Blessed is he who has come in the name of the LORD. Hosanna to God in the highest. Hosanna to the son of David. Hosanna to the Son of Man.