

*O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength because of all your foes,
to still the enemy and the avenger.
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him dominion over the work of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,
All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens,
and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Psalm 8

"Out of the Mouths of Babes and Infants..."

Pastor Stephen Ridge

For the third week in a row, we are looking at the Christ child on the way from the perspective of David, his great, great grandfather a thousand years removed. So last week, old King David pictured Jesus as the Royal Son, descended from David down the family line of Mary his mother, but Jesus' father was the Father, the Almighty in heaven, who by his Spirit would conceive a child in Mary's womb, a boy who was entitled not only to be king in Israel, but to reign in his Father's name over all the creatures in all creation. Because last week in Psalm 2 we heard the Father say to Christ: "*You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.*"

Also last week, we heard prophecy from Hannah in 1 Samuel 2, and from Mary in Luke, chapter 1 and from David in Psalm 2 that Christ when he came would be confronted by the powers that be, the high and mighty of this earth, who would not accept any ordinary looking man from any ordinary looking place as their Savior and Master. In David's day, this opposition to God's Christ took the form of foreign pagan armies, crowding onto a battlefield and howling for the death of God's Anointed King.

So the first true Christ, David, was forced to be a giant killer in his day, to conquer a holy city and to set up a royal house so that Jesus, a thousand years later would have time and place to attempt a different kind of conquest against a different kind of enemy. Not pagan warlords like Goliath, armed to the teeth and ready to fight, but Israel's own priests and scribes and rabbi's, who had made themselves the masters of a religion centered on their strengths and their ideals, practiced in their buildings under their oversight.

The scribes retained enough from Moses to be essentially orthodox, they were correct after a fashion, but it was an orthodoxy that left them center stage, too high and mighty to need or want a Savior. And it led to a sort of closed mindedness and hatred that caused Jesus' disciples to start singing the same words from the same psalm, Psalm 2, that David had sung about giants and Philistines on the battlefield. Because old Israel's religious leaders weren't too much less violent than the enemies David had fought. They crucified Jesus, and stoned Stephen, and stabbed James the fisherman with a sword in his jail cell.

Psalm 2 was about Judgment Day, David warning the high and mighty and powerful that when God sends his Son as a Savior, there's no such thing as staying high and mighty, doing what you want, when you want to whoever you want, over and against God and Christ. What David sang was that once Christ appears, the long sad human story will wind into the home stretch and the high and mighty will get from Christ what they've long had coming. "*Be wise, O Kings, be warned, O rulers of the earth! Serve the LORD with fear, rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he become angry ...But blessed are all who take refuge in him.*"

This week in Psalm 8, David will look at the same set of facts, but less from the view of the high and mighty and their delusions, and more from the meek and small and the convictions they learn from God. He sings "*O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*" The first word "*LORD*" really isn't Lord at all. If it's in caps in your Bible, in Hebrew, it's Yahweh, God's proper personal name which Old Testament believers constantly used before the Pharisees forbade the practice. "Lord" is a title, a rank. Yahweh is a personal name which means something like "*He Lives*," much in the same way that the name Jesus means "*He Saves*."

So David begins his psalm: "*Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*" In other words, the beauty and wonder of the world outside us fairly shouts of how real and good and alive is the God who made it all and made it alive. "*He Lives*" and so we exist. David sings on to God, "*You have set your glory above the heavens!*" The ancient Hebrews thought of the world as a great big room, kind of an alpine lodge with a ground floor and clouds for balconies, all under the atmospheric sky where birds flew and weather happened. But then on a clear night, that sky would become transparent and a second heaven with brilliant bodies of light could be seen, some moving slowly, a few quickly, most stars holding their place stable and sound. Some guessed that the bodies of light were lesser heavenly beings, but that God lived beyond our sight.

And it's in this sense that in awe and wonder David sings that God had set his glory *"above the heavens"* beyond our sight and reach. It was the taunt that Israelites had always heard from their pagan neighbors *"Where is your God?"* Old Israel worshiped and celebrated and sacrificed to a God who could not be physically seen or touched at their festivals. And yet God's name, *"Yahweh,"* said of him that he was alive unlike the statues pagans housed and carried and dressed and painted. The night sky and the wind and waves told David all he needed to know about how real and powerful and alive his God was up in a third heaven beyond us.

But God had way even more powerful than nature to communicate the weight and power and meaning of his name. David sings, *"Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have established strength, because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger."* Last week, when the high and mighty banged their shields and boasted against him, God had promised to set a *"King in Zion."* One day God's own Son, the Christ, would rule and judge the world from Zion. But between now and then, David tells us, God has *"established strength"* from *"the mouths of babes and infants."* The point being that, between now and Judgment Day, God will use the meek and small and powerless, *"babes and infants...to silence the enemy and the avenger."*

David goes on in the next stanza to almost question the strategy. You mean us, ordinary people? You're going to use us to stop all this trouble? That's the best you got? He sings to God: *"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him?"* But then David comes to his senses and answers his own question: *"Yet you have made man little lower than the heavenly beings, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the work of your hands!"* The point being that in the beginning God made us with high hopes, physical creatures with the hopes and dreams and ideals of heaven woven into our souls.

But there's a sense in which David was right to doubt the strategy. Because we fell! We can't be God's solution to the problem while we are still part of the problem. We've all lost our way with God and David was no exception. The world would wait another thousand years after David for that babe, born to a woman, whom God would make strong enough *"to silence the foe and the avenger."* 400 years after David, Daniel in Babylon would see in a vision the answer to David's question, *"....what is the son of man that you care for him?"* In a vision Daniel saw *"one like a son of man" descending through the clouds."*

We learn in the book of Hebrews that the Son of Man Daniel saw in his vision was Jesus. But why become a man when God the Son was already powerful and good and right in heaven? Why did Jesus appear on the stage of history a helpless babe in a stable feed box? Why was the solution to mankind's problems an unarmed village carpenter with no apparent wealth or power? Because God likes to start small, God likes to go humble, build in the background, and win in the end by out loving and outlasting the hatred that would have taken us down had not the Son of Man come looking for us.