



Recreating Mankind

Gen 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; Acts 2:14a, 22-36; Mt 28:16-20

Pastor Jim Rademaker

David stared into the night sky and was amazed at what he saw. It's estimated that there are at least 10 billion galaxies in the universe, with each galaxy containing perhaps 100 billion stars. In other words, not only are the stars we see amazing, they're a mere *fraction* of what's really out there.

Maybe you've looking up on a bright, clear night and stood there in amazement! And what did you feel like? Like a little speck? A speck of nothingness? Tiny. Insignificant. Why are you here? Where are you heading? What is your purpose in life? Why are you here and where are you going?

"Who am I?" King David asks a similar question in Psalm 8. *"When I consider 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, the son of man that you care for him?"*

Was David having an identity crisis? No, he was having a worship experience! Picture David lying on his back on a hillside outside of Bethlehem, gazing up at the moon & stars, his heart filled with the wonder of it all. And when he considers the majesty and greatness of God, David feels insignificant by comparison. Have you ever felt that way?

When David realizes just how vast and magnificent God must be, he's even *more* amazed that God would take the time to notice him; to bother with him, a mere mortal, a mere speck in the universe. Psalm 8 is a burst of praise for who God is and what He thinks of you and me. *"O LORD our Lord, how excellent, how majestic, is your name in all the earth!"*

That God should focus His attention and lavish His love on us, is proof of our dignity as creatures, made in His image. In other words, you matter because you matter *to God*. Apart from knowing God, we have little understanding of who we really are or what our purpose is in our vast universe. (from Scott Bayles) Scientist and philosophers have long debated and discussed the origin of the universe. But Genesis is clear, *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*

But God not only created the universe, He created *you*. David says, *"You made him [man] a little lower than the heavenly beings, and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands. You put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas."*

You're not an accident. You're not a fluke of nature; a product of natural selection. You were handmade by God Himself; the pinnacle of His creation. Made in His image! Created for fellowship with God. Created to follow God. Created to live under His loving, caring, shepherding lordship.

Part of being made in God's image is that we too, in a lesser sense, under His shepherding care, are shepherds, caretakers of creation. A creation that is subject to our loving care, our loving lordship. Being good stewards of what God has so graciously given us.

In Psalm 8 David is looking all the way back to Genesis, where God crowned Adam and Eve, and by extension all of humanity; placing them over all creation. God said, *"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."* (Gen 1:26)

But we don't see that now, do we? What do we see instead? When we look at God's creation today, in its fallen condition (where mankind often has a domineering and hostile attitude toward creation, where animals are often hostile towards humans, a world filled with diseases, natural disasters, the evils of people against one another, with death everywhere coming to every person) it certainly doesn't look like we're in charge of the world or that it's in submission to us. Instead, it looks more like the predatory animals and things like disease and natural disasters have dominion over us, not the other way around.

What happened? Where did all this death and destruction come from; this domineering attitude of self over God, over others, over creation? Genesis 3 recalls how mankind soon wished to overthrow God's rule and be in charge ourselves. To become our own gods. And we've seen throughout history how that turned out. We see today how our world is when we try to usurp God's rule and try to rule things on our own; to be our own gods.

What was God's response to our rebellion? Not what we would expect. His response was to recreate. Recreate through judgment; taking the punishment for our rebellion. God recreating, not by domineering, but by submitting Himself to death; even death on a cross. Shepherding us under His loving care.

Now in putting everything in subjection to him [man], he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely JESUS, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:8b-9)

God's loving care for humankind is ultimately demonstrated by Jesus on the cross. As insignificant as humanity may seem in relation to the whole of the created universe, it was still for us that Jesus died. *For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

If that doesn't tell you how much you are worth to God, then nothing ever will. On a whole other level, Psalm 8 is about Jesus. David's words come true in the person of Jesus. God recreating us by the blood of the Lamb. Bringing things back to the way they used to be; the way they were meant to be. The way He created them. Good!

... Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep." Without form and void. Wild and wooly. Null and void. Chaos. Without order. And dark.

But then into this darkness and chaos God brings Light and Life. Not by letting this orderless darkness gradually evolve over millions of years into a well-ordered universe, but by speaking. God proclaiming order and order happens, according to His careful and purposeful plan. No accidents here, but gift. The gift of recreation from God to you.

"God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Perfect. All in total harmony with each other and with God. Exactly as planned. The planets and stars and universes, the land and the water, the plants and birds and fish, the creatures of every kind, and finally man. Good.

But how far we've come from the "good" that God created. And there was no greater darkness and disorder than when the created killed its Creator! When mankind, created to love, instead in hatred, silenced the Word of God made flesh in death. *Even death on a cross. Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.* (Acts 2:36) " ... you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead." (Acts 3:15)

But just as in the beginning God created, bringing light and life out of the orderless darkness, so in Jesus He recreated to bring good once again. For *this Jesus*, Peter preaches of in Acts, the Creator who was crucified and killed, was *delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God*. Or in other words, no accidents here either! Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, descended into the depths of our *wild and wooly world*, or wild and wooly hearts, to bring light into the darkness and order out of the chaos. A new creation, to dethrone the darkness that has claimed the rule of this world and the rule of our lives. To make these *enemies of God His footstool!* (from James Douthwaite)

How does God bring Life and Light once again? How does He recreate? Through His Word, He's once again making followers; made in His image. Created to fellowship with Him. Created to follow Him. Created to live under His loving, shepherding Lordship. Created to live out loving, shepherding lordship over creation. Things once again in their proper relationship and order. Mankind restored in our relationship with both Creator and creation. Loving God and loving neighbor. And one day, all will be perfected as it was meant to be in the beginning. A new heaven and a new earth. Christ reigning and we reigning with Him. The way it was in the "good" beginning.

"... for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God." (1 Peter 1:23-25) In the beginning God created and brought order and light into the darkness and chaos. And God is still bringing order and light into the chaos of our lives; the chaos of our world. Into our darkness of sin and death. Recreating through His Word. Through His Son, given for you.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ... And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt 28:16-20)

When Jesus ascended to the Father, His work in *saving* us was over. But His work of *proclaiming* this good news and drawing us to Himself, His work of recreating, of working faith in our hearts, of calling us to believe in Him and follow Him - *that* work was just getting started.

As David sat back with his quill in one hand and parchment in the other to reflect on God's glory and majesty, he grappled with the same questions we still face today. "Who am I?" "What is man that you would take thought of him?" "Who am I that the Lord of all the earth should care for me?"

General, or natural, revelation can only take us so far; to the point of wondering "Who am I?" Concluding what? "I am nothing!" God's Word gives us *another* answer. God created us and put us on earth. Then we went astray from Him and went our own way. Why would God be mindful of us? Why didn't He just wipe us out once and for all?

Psalm 8 not only looks backward toward creation, but forward toward recreation in the coming of Jesus, who at His birth, was "made a little lower than the angels." Jesus was "crowned with glory and honor." Jesus has "everything under his control." And in Jesus, we truly discover who we are. In Jesus, we're recreated, the way we were meant to be in the beginning. Perfect. Righteous. Right with God and the world. In Jesus, we recover our majesty. In Jesus, we become the people God created us to be; His dear children. We looking to Him. He loving us. We loving Him. Perfect union.

"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"