

*The Whole Counsel of God*  
**Study 8**

**CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR**

*“Yet You have made him a little lower than God,  
And You crown him with glory and majesty!  
You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;  
You have put all things under his feet....”*

*Psalm 8:5-6*

In our previous study we looked at the first truth in the doctrine of man, which is given in the words with which man is introduced in the scriptures: “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” (Gen 1.26). These words are followed with the creator’s decree, “...and let them rule.” In the present study we will take up the significance of this decree for the doctrine of man.

**A. THE TWO SIDES OF HUMAN EXISTENCE (Gen 1.26)**

The fact that man is the image of God and that he has the God-given mandate to rule are closely linked. We saw in our previous study that as the image of God man represents the invisible God within the visible and physical world. The image has a function. This function is stated in the divine decree that man should rule. The close link between man in the image of God and his role as ruler has been taken to suggest that man is the image of God not in the characteristics of his created being so much as in his position to rule. This view does not simply connect man’s mandate to rule with the fact that man was made in the image of God but merges the two. This is going too far. The two are inseparable, but they are to be distinguished. They set forth the two ways in which man is related—to God and to the world.

We can see a parallel distinction in the work of the fourth day. First we are told that God created the lights in the expanse of heaven (Gen 1.14). Then we are told that God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to govern the day and the night (vv 17-18). The act of creating the lights and the purpose and function assigned to them are clearly to be distinguished.

God’s purpose stated in Gen 1.26 is carried out in vv 27-28. In these verses we see that God’s decree that man rule is distinguished from his act of creating man in his image. Verse 27 tells us of God’s act of creating man as male and female. Then v 28 states the divine blessing over mankind he created, and part of this pronouncement is the decree to subdue the earth and rule.

**1. Appreciating the distinction**

In our previous study, we focused on the fact that the image of God sets forth man’s relation to God, or more accurately, God’s relation to him. On this side man has no determining role. He does not make himself the image of God. Not even his choice is involved. God made man in his image. The divine mandate to rule sets forth man in his relation to creation. This decree gives mankind a mandate to act. In relation to creation man is not passive but active.

The point we are pressing is of critical importance. The sanctity of human life (as we saw in our previous study) is based in God’s doing alone—that God made man in his image. It is not based on the fact that man rules over the earth or that God enables him to rule. The mandate to rule is simply the responsibility that comes out of being made in the image of God. The sacred status and dignity of human life is not based on what we do or what we are to do. It is not even based in how we relate to God. It is based solely in the relationship that God was established with us. All is based on what God is towards us. This fact gives us both our sanctity and our responsibility.

The balance set in Gen 1.26 between what man is by God's doing and what man is to be and to do in the world is important for all doctrines that touch on the subject of man. God first makes us what we are, and then he gives us the mandate to be in our relation to the world around us what he has made us to be. God make us "to be" and then orders us "to do." This is the order of creation and of grace. We were made to be human by God's will and doing, and so we are to act as human in our will and doing as that is defined by God. We are saints by God's will and work in Christ, and then we are to act as saints in true holiness as that is defined by God in Christ.

## **2. The inseparable connection**

The image of God and the mandate to rule, while they are to be distinguished, are never to be separated. God made man in his image to reflect God in the world. The image of God in man has no purpose or function apart from man's relationship with creation in which he is to rule.

The inseparable nature of the connection that we are pressing is also of crucial importance for the biblical doctrine of man. Because our relationship with the world has been turned into a source of temptation, distraction from God and pain, people often look at this relationship as the evil and affliction from which they must be delivered. This has led to types of spirituality in which the soul would take flight to God away from creation. Rather than engaging with creation, the religious person goes to God to disengage with the world. This orientation goes against Gen 1.26. God created us in his image to rule, and we can only live out what it means to be the image of God in this world.

Jesus picked up the theme of kingdom or reigning in his message. He proclaimed the good news that the kingdom of God is near (Mk 1.14-15). Salvation as taught in the NT is not the escape of the human soul from the physical creation. The apostles' teaching is that we must enter the kingdom of God through our life in this world. Our goal and hope is to reign with Christ. Due to sin and the authority of Satan's kingdom that was established through sin, the kingdom of God had to be gained for us by the work of Christ (Eph 1.18-23; Col 1.13). We must enter this reign through many tribulations (Ac 14.22), suffering (2Thess 1.5) and endurance (2Tim 2.12). The NT rings with this truth: our relationship with God must be lived out in our relationship with the world and within God's original purpose for that relationship.

To divorce the fact that man was made in the image of God from the role of ruling in creation is to tear our relationship with God from the setting in which it is to be lived out. In studying what it means for man to be made in the image of God, we were dealing with what is invisible, even as God is invisible. In dealing with the mandate to rule, we are looking at the practical and concrete side of the first truth in the doctrine of creation.

## **B. WHAT IS MAN? (Ps 8.4-8)**

The first answer the Bible gives to the question raised in Ps 8.4, "What is man...?" is that man was made in the image of God. This is not, however, what Psalm 8 focuses on. Rather, the Psalmist takes up the theme of the decree of Gen 1.26: man is God's appointed ruler.

### **1. The vision of man as ruler set up by God**

The decree of Gen 1.26 states man's work on earth, his job. Psalm 8 gives us a view of the one who is to rule and introduces the theme of glory and honour involved in this rule. This theme is taken up and developed in the NT, which makes it important for our study of the biblical doctrine of man.

**a. Analysis of Ps 8.4-8**

Psalm 8.4-8 follows the pattern of thought found in Gen 1.26-28. The Psalmist begins by enquiring into the God's thoughts of man (Ps 8.4 answering to Gen 1.26). It is important to see that the Psalmist is narrowly focused on God's thoughts toward man and what God has made him to be. He is not at all considering what man is as a result of his own doing. From enquiring into God's thoughts, the Psalmist turns to God's act of creating man (Ps 8.5a answering to Gen 1.27). Finally he considers (and this is what he dwells on) what God has done in making him ruler (Ps 8.5b-8 answering to Gen 1.28).

The Psalmist refers to God's creation of man as follows: "Yet You have made him a little lower than God" (Ps 8.5a). Here we should make a note on translation. In the LXX which was the Greek Bible used in the Gentile churches at the time of the apostles, the word *elohim* was translated as *angels*, and this is cited in Heb 2.7. The word *elohim* was taken as a genuine plural noun in the sense of gods or God-like beings, i.e., angels. But, we must remember that the word *elohim* is commonly used for the one God in the OT. The reference to God as *elohim*, connects Ps 8.5a with Gen 1.26-27.

The Hebrew expression translated with "made a little lower than God" literally means "made to lack a little from God." Man is seen to be rather close to God, only lacking a little of what God is. This is what the Psalmist finds so amazing. What the Psalmist is contemplating answers to the fact that man was made in the image of God. By making man in his image, God made man to be close to him, like him, but lacking a little of what God is.

What separates man from God is the difference in natures. God is spirit whereas man is flesh, and this makes him weak and mortal (Ish 31.3; Ezk 28.9). While the quotation of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2 follows the LXX and refers to angels, the writer of Hebrews has clearly grasped the OT point that the difference between God and man is that of natures which is also the difference between angels and man. In nature the angels are spirits like God. The difference in nature between angels and man is what Hebrews 2 focuses. Jesus was made lower than angels because of the suffering of death which requires the mortality of flesh (v 9). The Son of God partook of the flesh and blood of the children (v 14) and gives help not to angels but to the seed of Abraham (v 16). In resurrection, Jesus has a body that is no longer of the weak and mortal nature of flesh and blood. His resurrection body has the immortal nature of God's life.

God has conferred upon man in his inferior nature that which makes him like God within the world. This is expressed in Ps 8.5b. The Psalmist points out man's exalted position in these words: "And You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him rule over the works of your hands." The crown referred to is a wreath or metal ring placed on the head as a symbol of honour conferred on someone. This crown is used on a few occasions for a royal crown, but it is mostly used for some dignity conferred on someone. When Ps 8.5 says that God places a crown of glory and honour on man, it is not referring to the act of creating man but to the dignity that God places on the man he created. In other words, the Psalmist is referring to the divine decree that man is to rule. This decree is seen as the act of placing the crown of glory and majesty on the head of man as king of the earth.

Psalm 21 which celebrates what God does for the king sheds light on the royal imagery used in Psalm 8. Verse 3 says, "For You meet him with the blessings of good things; You set a crown of fine gold on his head." God acts on behalf of the king and does all that gives him the kingship. Verses 4 to 6 opens up what is involved in this: "He asked life of You, You gave it to him, length of days forever and ever. His glory is great through Your salvation, splendor and majesty You place upon him. For You make him most blessed forever; You make him joyful with gladness in Your presence." Notice the two words, *glory* and *majesty* are used for what the king receives from God. God gives the king life, great glory through deliverance from his enemies in battle (the salvation) and splendor and majesty. All is conferred upon him in the presence of God.

Psalm 21 shows that glory and majesty is given to the king through God's relationship with him and God's work in establishing him. This is reflected in Ps 8.5b and 6. The Psalmist puts the statement that God crowns man with glory and majesty in parallel with the facts that God makes him ruler over the works of

his hand and put all under his feet. God confers glory and majesty by setting man up to rule and subduing all under him.

## **b. Glory and majesty**

The two words, glory and majesty, are translated in the LXX with the Greek words for glory and honour. These two words, which are closely related, are quite significant in the teaching of the NT.

The Hebrew word translated with *glory* is *kebod*. Its basic meaning is weightiness or heaviness. By extension, this word took on the meaning of magnitude and fullness. The glory of people or of things in the OT is the fullness that they enjoy and that distinguishes them. This glory stands in contrast to deprivation and lack.

The Greek word for glory is *doxa*. The basic meaning of this word is opinion and was used for the estimate formed of something and so for what was esteemed. The connection that this word has with the Hebrew word *kebod* is in the fact that the magnitude and fullness shown was impressive. *Doxa* refers to the mind's estimation of *kebod*. In studying the NT text, we must remember that OT ideas are taken over and referred to by the Greek terms. This means that when the word *doxa* refers to a concept taken from the OT we ought to think of glory as it is presented in the OT. We hear the Hebrew notion in Paul's expression, "eternal *weight* of glory" in 2Cor 4.17. The sense of fullness comes through in Jn 1.14 and 16. The apostles beheld the glory of the Word become flesh, and this glory was *full* of grace and truth.

The Hebrew word translated with *majesty* (in the NASB) is *hadar*. Its basic sense is *honour*, and that is how it was translated in the LXX and represented in the NT. This honour in a king is majesty.

The glory of a king is the full possession of all that is involved in ruling well. By the very nature of ruling, this glory must be displayed and impress people. The glory lets all see who is king and what it means for him to be king. The king's majesty or honour is that which he has that makes all around him confer honour and respect on him. The glory refers to what is his that is displayed by him and the honour refers to what is conferred on him in his relation with others.

Glory and honour belong to God, and God gives them to man. When God crowns man with glory, he does for man all that secures for him the fullness of authority and power to reign and this is shown in his rule. Coupled with this regal glory is the majesty or honour that gives man his dignified position in creation.

## **c. The time reference**

There is an interesting change in time reference in the Hebrew text of Ps 8.4-6, which is represented in the text of the NASB. Hebrew only has two tenses. The perfect tense which refers to completed action and is usually rendered into English with the past tense. The imperfect tense which refers to incomplete or ongoing action is usually translated with the present or future tense. In light of this, let's take note of the tenses.

"Yet You have made (past, completed action) him a little lower than God, And You crown (present, continuous action) him with glory and majesty! You make (present, continuous action) him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put (past, completed action) all things under his feet."

The first and last statements refer to what has been done. In creation God made man and placed all things under his feet. But, the divine act of crowning with glory and honour and making man to rule are continuous. God is not seen as simply having given a decree in the past. Rather, he is continually endowing man with the rule over creation. What God decreed to be in creation, he continually realizes by his gracious action.

In our previous study we saw that man never ceased to be what God made man. Now we see that God's act of endowing man with the reign over creation has never been revoked, not even due to the fall. In God's thoughts toward man and in his action, he continues to uphold man in the divine purpose set in creation.

In Gen 1.26-28 we see God creating man in his image and then ordaining man to rule. Psalm 8 takes up the divine decree for man to rule and looks at this from the point of view of God's continuous involvement with man. It is not that God did his work in the past and left man to rule. Man rules only by the decree of God, and this is the word of God's power that is fulfilled by his ongoing action. God is ever active in a personal relationship with mankind and puts man continuously in the position in which he placed him by his decree in creation.

## **2. Realizing the glory and honour (Heb 2.5-10)**

Psalm 8 does not take into consideration the fall of mankind and its effect on man's relation to creation. The Psalmist is considering man in his ongoing position of ruling over the earth and sees all as it was set in creation. The reason for this is that he is only looking at God's thoughts of man and what God does. This view of what God is doing in his purpose for mankind is squared with our historical reality in Heb 2.5-10.

### **a. What has not yet been realized**

Hebrews 2.5-10 takes up the themes we have been looking at in Psalm 8. The author's first concern is to show that God did not subject the world to come to angels (Heb 2.5). After quoting Ps 8.4-6 the writer of this letter takes up the theme of the last line he quotes: "You have put all things in subjection under his feet." He points out that "...in subjecting all things to him, He (i.e., God) left nothing that is not subject to him" (Heb 2.8). Here the writer is taking up the perspective of Psalm 8. From God's side, all has been done. In the decree of creation, God placed all under man. But, what is a fact by God's doing must still be realized in human history.

We may think that what God did through his creative decree ceased to be realized through the fall of mankind. The truth is not that simple. According to the decree of creation, man was to rule the whole earth. Due to the geographical limitation of our bodies, Adam and Eve by themselves could not realize that. So, the blessing was that they were to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and rule..." (Gen 1.28). This shows that establishing mankind's rule over all was the original goal of history and that the realization of God's decree would take human history to fulfil.

The fall of mankind brought in a whole new problem for the realization of God's creative decree. Here we must draw on what we saw from Psalm 8. The fall could not overturn God's decree. If it could, the word that man rule would have proven not to be the real word of God, for God's word will always be fulfilled. The writer to the Hebrews underlines this point. What God has done by his word remains a fact and covers everything. All that the fall did was delay, complicate and raise new issues for the realization of the divine decree.

After the fall the need is not simply for man to fill the earth so that as he establishes himself in new locations the divine decree is being progressively fulfilled. Even where man is firmly established, creation is not fully subjected to him. We see man's potential to rule. We see man subduing animals and the ground, but this is not the complete subjection by the work of the creator. When God put all under man, nothing can rise up against him. Man's kingdom is a gift from the Almighty working on his behalf. After the flood, God said that the fear and terror of man would be in all animals (Gen 9.2). In this we see a shadow of man's position of ruling, but we do not see the realization of man as ruler with all creation subject to him. The fact that creation is not truly subject to man in actual experience on earth is a sign of a deeper problem.

Man is cut off from God and lives under the reign of death. Whatever is realized of man's position to rule over creation in a partial and temporary way is wiped out by death. God's decree is not only challenged by the fact of death but by a fact of human life. Hebrews 2.15 points out that through the fear of death people

are subject to slavery all their lives. Man who was and still is placed by God over creation is himself subjected to slavery.

Under ideal conditions, God's decree that man rule would only take time to fulfill. In the fallen world, it takes a deeper work. The enemies of the Lord's Anointed have to be made a footstool under his feet (Heb 1.13). Satan who has the power of death, with his whole kingdom of spiritual evil, must be rendered powerless and the slaves to the fear of death must be delivered (Heb 2.14-14). This means that the realization of God's decree that man rule over creation has moved beyond man ruling over animals. The kingdom of God is not a global petting zoo.

By the way, the realization of man's rule over the earth did not only require a victory over Satan after the fall. God let Satan tempt mankind in the Garden, and this means that man could only realize his God given purpose by defeating the tempter. So, even in the original and sinless state man had to realize his rule over the earth by triumphing over Satan. What changed through the fall is that now this triumph involves a struggle unto death.

#### **b. What has to be realized first**

Hebrews 2.8b-10 follows the logic in the order of Ps 8.4-6. Before all things are seen as placed under man's feet (Heb 2.8a), man is crowned with glory and honour (v 7). At present, even after the first coming of Christ, we still do not see all placed under the feet of man. But, the condition for this is being realized. We now see (realized through history) Jesus crowned with glory and honour.

The glory and honour by which man is to rule has been achieved by Jesus. What follows this is the subjection of all things under his feet, but this must await his second coming. In the mean time, God is bringing many sons to glory through the work of Christ (Heb 2.10). This does not refer to bringing people to heaven after they die. The word glory in v 10 takes up the expression, "crowned with glory" in v 7 and again in v 9. Man must reign as the exercise of the glory with which he is crowned by God, and now through Jesus God is bringing sons to this glory.

#### **c. The glory of God's reign**

The glory with which Jesus is crowned is different from the crown of glory which Adam knew. Jesus' crown of glory was gained through the suffering of death. It was the glory of resurrection life. Hebrews 2 goes on to clarify why this glory was necessary to fulfil God's will set in creation. People had to be freed from the hold of death (vv 14-15). Where a usurper has entrenched himself, a king's rule must first be conquest. Reigning requires the defeat of Satan who has the power of death (2.14), and this means that in order to reign Christ had to triumph through death in resurrection. For us to enter the reign of God requires coming to glory, the very glory of Christ in resurrection.

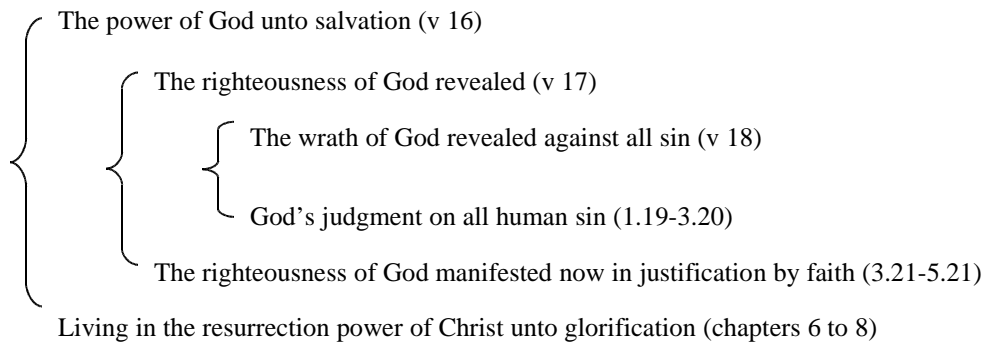
The world in which all things will be subject to man is called "the world to come" (Heb 2.5). But, the entrance, the divine work of bringing many sons to glory is taking place now. The way into the eternal kingdom is the way through the cross, which path is in this world, to the resurrection glory.

### **C. THE RELATIONAL DYNAMICS INVOLVED**

The theme of glory in the relationship between God and man is developed in Paul's exposition of the gospel in Romans. We will chart Paul's development of this theme to arrive at an understanding of the practical side of the first theme in the doctrine of man: that God made man in his image and that man must work out what this means in his existence within this world.

## **1. The theme of glory in Romans 1 to 8**

Paul lays out the three themes in his exposition of the gospel in Rom 1.16-18, which themes he takes up in reverse order. We will lay this out:



Paul begins (1.21, 23) and ends (8.17-30) this whole exposition on the note of glorification.

**a. Human sin and God's judgment (Rom 1.19-3.20)**

In Rom 3.23, Paul summarizes his whole discussion on human sin with the theme of glory. He says, "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The word *sinned* is in the aorist tense. This means that the fact that all sinned is viewed as a simple accomplished fact. The phrase, "fall short" is in the present tense. It refers to the present and ongoing effect of the fact that all sinned. What Paul packs into this simple but profound statement must be seen from his development of the theme of the glory of God in his discussion on universal sinfulness in Rom 1.18-3.20.

*i. The Gentile state (Rom 1.19-32)*

The Gentiles are viewed in light of the knowledge of God given in creation. Paul will only, just like the rest of scripture, view man within God's relation to him. The knowledge of the divine nature of the creator is given to all, and this leaves people without excuse (v 20). The first thing people are responsible for is to glorify God as God (v 21). This means that people are held accountable for their response to God. They are to ascribe to the creator the glory of the divine nature as this is defined by the attributes of the creator, i.e., "His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature" (v 20). We should pause here and note that Paul is taking up the theme that he will pursue through Romans. He ends in Rom 15.5-12 on this theme—the converted believers are called to glorify God with one voice (v 6).

The sin that initiated the downward spiral of degradation was the sin of not glorifying God as God. As we trace this fall, we see how people function as the image of God in their sin and degradation. People's own spiritual state reflects their response to God. From the outset, when they did not glorify God as God, their foolish heart was darkened (v 21).

The first downward turn led to the next. They exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the image of the likeness of corruptible creatures (v 23). We should take note of how Paul sees glory here. God's glory is his incorruptible nature as the eternal and the creator. In contrast, the creature is corruptible. The immediate result of exchanging the glory of God for what is corruptible is the corresponding corruption of the people (vv 24-27). This is followed by a third downward spiral: the pandemic of relational vices that leaves people stung with the sentence of death in their own judgment (vv 28-32).

In Paul's analysis of the downward spiral of the Gentiles, we see how man's nature as the image of God works in his sin and degradation. Man is by his very constitution an image of God. If he turns away from God, this constitution will work so that man will reflect in the darkness of his heart his neglect of God and he will take on in his very own person the corruption of the corruptible nature that he puts in the place of God. In the end he images in his own judgment the divine death sentence over him.

ii. *The principle of judgment (Rom 2.1-16)*

In Rom 2.1-16, Paul sets forth the universal and impartial principle of God's judgment which places the Jew on one footing with the Gentile before God. The decisive issue in the divine judgment is the search in life for glory and honour and immortality, and these are found in eternal life (v 7). Here we have the couplet of glory and honour with which God crowns man in Psalm 8. The glory and honour are associated with immortality, which stands in contrast to death. Death is the opposite of glory and honour which are found in eternal life. In making this link, Paul thinks along the line we saw in Hebrews 2 where we saw that Jesus was crowned with glory and honour in resurrection life.

Man is judged as a being that exists in personal relation to God. He is to glorify God as God by ascribing to him the fullness of the divine nature. But, man is also to seek as the pursuit of his whole life the glory of eternal life that he ascribes to God. This answers to what it means for man to be the image of God. God created man by imparting to him the features that define God. Man must live within the relational dynamics this sets. God made him to be aware of God. He is to consciously and willingly respond to God and ascribe to God the glory that sets him apart from the corruptible nature of the physical creatures, which corruptible nature he shares. In doing this, he is to seek full likeness to God and live to obtain from God the glory of eternal life.

iii. *The Jew who dishonours God (2.17-29)*

We saw that in Rom 2.7 Paul introduced the double theme of glory and honour. The Gentiles sinned and suffered the consequences in the first area—not glorifying God and being corrupted. The Jews did not sin in the same way. They were monotheists and ascribed to God his glory as the eternal and the creator. But, their sin in relation to God was that through breaking the law they dishonoured God and brought dishonour to God among the Gentiles (Rom 2.23-24). Paul reviews the status of the Jew from the perspective of honouring God and seeking honour from God.

Paul sets up the Jew as making a claim to the name "Jew" and boasting in God (v 17). The apostle ends with a play on the word Jew. The name Judah means "praised." In Gen 29.30 we read that the praise at Judah's birth was given to the LORD. Jacob in his prophetic blessing played on the word Judah and said, "Judah, your brothers shall praise you" (Gen 49.8). Judah was born to the praise of God and was to be praised. Paul takes up the association of the name Jew with praise and says of the true Jew, "...his praise is not from men, but from God" (Rom 2.29). The Jew who dishonours God loses the praise of God. Through sin he ceases to be what a Jew was to be (to the praise of God) and so loses God's praise. The Jew boasted in God, but this was not a matter of honouring God. For dishonouring God, the Jew lost the honour that comes from God.

In Paul's review of the Jew's status before God, we see again the reciprocal relationship between God and man. God sets up man to glorify and praise him, but as man dishonours God he loses his honour and position before God.

For the Jew to be denied the praise of God means to be cut off from all covenant status and blessing. This means death. Here the Jew stands alongside of the Gentiles who fall short of the glory of God in their degradation and under the condemnation of death. Thus all, both Jew and Gentile, sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3.23).

**b. Justification by faith and the glory of God (Rom 3.21-5.21)**

Paul sets forth Abraham as the great example of justification of faith in Romans 4. In vv 1-8 he shows how the boast of the Jews (referred to in 2.17) is excluded by the example of Abraham's faith. Then in Rom 4.17-25 he works through the type of Abraham's faith on the theme of giving God glory (raised in 1.21 with reference to the Gentiles).

Abraham exercised his faith before God as God is identified by his attribute of making the dead alive (Rom 4.17). As the Gentiles are under the sentence of death (1.32), so Abraham stood before God “as good as dead” (4.19). The patriarch believed in God to make his body alive and bring life from him who was as good as dead and from the deadness of Sarah’s womb. By this faith, he gave “glory to God” (v 20). For ascribing to God the attribute of being the God who makes the dead alive, Abraham received life from the dead.

The revelation of God as the one who makes the dead alive is realized once and for all through the resurrection of Jesus as Lord (Rom 4.24-25). By referring to Jesus as Lord, Paul is pointing to the fact that Jesus is the LORD who carries out the role of God in relation to people in this world. In the resurrection of Jesus, God’s glory as the God who makes the dead alive is revealed. To believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead is to give to God the glory of being the source of resurrection life.

When we are justified by faith “we exult in hope of the glory of God” (Rom 5.1-2). Through sin we fall short of the glory of God. Through faith, we have the hope, and that means the assured expectation, of receiving the glory of God.

We have noticed how the dynamics of sin work within the relational dynamics of man as the image of God. Now we see that the faith by which we are justified also works within our created constitution. God is revealed as the God of resurrection in Christ. This is his glory in the world under death. We must respond and ascribe to God the glory he shows to us. We do this by giving our whole being over to God as he is revealed in Jesus our Lord. Then, the glory of God is imparted to us.

### **c. Living in the resurrection power of Christ unto glorification (chapters 6 to 8)**

Paul begins and ends his discussion on the life of those who are in Christ with the theme of glory. He says in 6.4, “...as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father (picking up the theme of 4.24), so we too might walk in newness of life.” In Rom 6.1-8.14, Paul opens up to us what it means to live in the resurrection life of Christ. Then in Rom 8.15-30 he moves over to the theme of our hope—to be glorified with Christ.

This glorification is still future. At present we suffer with Christ in this corruptible creation, and this suffering leads to glorification with him (8.17). Our glorification involves all of creation. When we are finally glorified and revealed in our glory, “...creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (8.21). Here we see that the link between God’s work in us and our relationship with creation is inseparable.

This glorification of the sons of God is the goal of God’s eternal purpose and of his work (Rom 8.29-30). In God’s purpose and work, our glorification is spoken of in the same tense (the aorist tense indicating accomplished action) as God’s foreknowledge and predestination in the eternal past and as his calling and justifying us in our past. All is an accomplished fact in God’s view. But, in our experience it is not yet seen. The work of God is going on now by which we are brought to glory. This is the view that we saw in Hebrews 2.

## **2. The practical side of the first truth in the doctrine of man**

In our previous study, we looked at the first truth about man that the Bible gives us: God made man in his image. This truth sets forth the relationship between God and man, and in this relationship all is determined by God’s will and action and not by man. That man is the image of God is foundational for how we regard human life and dignity for all that we do in our active human life.

In the present study, we have seen that this first truth does not stand alone. It is coupled with the decree that man rule over creation. This decree sets forth the human role. We have our sphere of action and our achievement in relation to creation. In this we see how the fact that we are the image of God is to be practically lived out. This is what makes the decree of Gen 1.26 so important for our study. If we limit our

study to the truth that man is made in the image of God, we would be left with a doctrine that is quite abstract. It is when we go over to look at what it means to reign that we see how people must live and act in the world as the image of God.

The practical side of our existence as the image of God is worked out in scripture along two lines. The first is set in Gen 1.26-28. The goal of our life on earth is to enter the rule that God ordained. The second is set forth in Psalm 8. We receive this rule by God's gracious relationship to us in which he as the Almighty creator works on our behalf and we receive the rule as his gift. The decree of Gen 1.26 sets forth the objective goal. This is about what we are to do and accomplish in the physical world. Psalm 8 looks at the spiritual side of this. It is a matter of God's favourable action for us and what God continues to give to us. The two themes we are considering touch on the deep human problem that we all struggle with, and the biblical teaching gives us profound insights into the psychological issues that the people are preoccupied with in our secular age.

**a. When the world does not yield to us**

The goal and the burden of human existence on earth concerns kingdom or reign. By our created constitution, we are designed to rule our world. This divinely set goal which is built into our existence poses a deep problem for us. The world in which we live does not yield to us. In fact, at every turn everything faces us with a threat to our well being and life. Hebrews 2.15 points to this existential reality. People through the fear of death are subject to slavery all their lives. Just think of it. Whether we have a job, a business, a pleasure or a relationship, at all times we are governed and at times even driven by the fear that comes from sensing that all tends to death. As we see our world and all in it passing away, we are gripped with the fear for our own lives in this world. This slavery of fear afflicts all. Because it is universal, we accept it as normal, but at times it becomes so crippling (as in depression) and destructive (in aggressive and destructive behaviours) that we will treat it as a disorder or illness.

Through the universal fear of death and the subjection to slavery it brings, Satan holds the power of death (Heb 2.14). We see this in the story of Job. Satan knows, as he asserts before God, that he can manipulate and control human nature through its fear of loss, suffering and dying.

The natural human ambition and striving is to secure our reign over our world so that the world around us will serve our present desires. This runs very deep. People naturally define their worth and dignity by the way their world yields to their will and ambition. Failure in this area is taken as the collapse of their existence. Without God, in the modern age people seek a psychological solution to the problem. Here, the biblical truth that we are studying speaks in to us who are Christians. The rule that God decreed for man to have over creation, in which the creator in his almighty power places all under man's feet, is not to be realized in the here and now at our will and by our manipulation. If people gave up defining themselves in terms of their control over their world and how the world yields to them, a major cause of stress and a main root of mental ill would be removed. The issue runs deeper than what we count as mental disorder. Even when things are seen to hold us up we are in spiritual bondage. Our surrender to the truth of God frees us from Satan's hold over life (even when it is seen to be full for the moment) under the universal death sentence. But, it is against our nature to let go. We are designed to rule so that we cannot disengage with the problem of failed rule. Added to this is the effect of original sin by which mankind made itself to be like God. By nature we have taken our created mandate and turned it into a deathly grip on things that we have no power to release. The solution does not lie in merely letting go, which is impossible for us. People never let go, they only assert themselves by throwing things away. They only let go on one thing that they perceive to be going against them to cling onto something else. This is true of suicide and all the twisted ways in which people try to kill off aspects of their being. They will blow the mind or kill the body only to hang onto their sense of what they think they deserve, even if that comes down to the merely negative demand of painlessness at the cost of all.

People shift around from letting go of this to hold onto that in order to design their world to yield to their will in the here and now. In this manipulation, they are losing their souls. Here Jesus' message of the kingdom comes in as the word of true salvation. Salvation is being delivered from man's self-willed rule

that he is crafting out of his relationship with the world. This deliverance is given to us as God's doing through the gift of the cross, and through the cross Satan's power of death is broken. The true rule is God's gift, and it is given in resurrection life and glory. We are to enter the rule or kingdom of God by God's work on our behalf. This alone frees us from the hold of human power on life that is only the glove of Satan's hold on human life.

**b. The problem of lost human dignity**

We saw that the theme of glory is integrated with the theme of reigning, and this theme shows up another dimension of the human problem. As Paul works out in Romans 1 to 3, mankind struggles under the reality of falling short of God's glory. Human life is afflicted with personal degradation and relational disintegration. For it all, from within a sense of condemnation unto death settles over the human heart. The combined problems of degradation or loss of dignity and of guilt underlie all of mankind's psychological problems.

People labour to remove their psychological problem in various ways. Religion is a scheme of working the problem off, whether by working up a sense of justification or by the disciplines of the soul to remove the feelings of degradation and guilt. Philosophy is engaged in rationalizing the problem, in redefining our world to define our weakness and need out of existence and in giving the comfort of the intellectual mastery over reality. In the modern world, we have developed psychology to mentally manipulate our defeat, and we have made extensive use of chemical solutions (i.e., drugs) to suspend the need of having to deal with our issues.

When we engage with the human problems and the array of attempted solutions, we must take our stand on the foundation of creation. Man is constitutionally the image of God, and no matter what he thinks or says about himself, he will always function according to his created design and purpose, whether it is for self destruction or for salvation. This is a reality that is not open to be changed by us. It is not subject to the human will or whim. An atheist turns his mind from God, but he does not make God cease to exist or work in his own existence. We change our thoughts about reality, but we cannot change reality as set up by God. In our wilful shifts, we only bring it about that the way God made us and governs the universe will destroy us for our sin. This is a hard truth, but it is high time that at least Christians face it and stop playing the capricious mind game with sinful mankind.

Sin turns people within themselves. They no longer see themselves in relation to God as having the duty and need to ascribe to God his glory and to receive their glory from God via their active relationship with him. They start from within themselves and seek to define the truth out of their nature. This is what is involved in professing to be wise (Rom 1.22). In doing this, people turn to that relationship in which they have power, and that is their relationship to the world. God made man to rule the physical creation, and man in sin ever seeks to know truth and define himself in this relationship. This is the trap. Man's dignity is in his transcendence over his world and over his own body. This transcendence is ever in God, and man only receives it in his relationship with God. If he does not ascribe to God, as his creator, this transcendence over the corruptible nature, he loses his own transcendence and sinks into the corruptible nature. Taking what he is from the world around him that is inherently corruptible and passing away, man finds himself existing in the fear of the mortal threat that encroaches on him. As this reality moves in on his soul, he finds his very life a dying existence. The psychological side of this is dark.

The problem we are considering is ancient, as the history of Gentile nations shows. In the modern world, we have developed a secular, apparently nonreligious, approach in psychology. The attempt to understand man and solve human problems scientifically involves deriving what man is from the visible creation in which man has his sphere of authority and operations. Romans 1 points out the mistake and disaster in this, and Christians should heed the warning. This is a recipe for professing to be wise and becoming utter fools. The result will be the downward spiral into sexual disorientation and the conflagration of vices that will destroy all relationships. This statement needs to be corrected somewhat. I said that "the result will be...." It would be more accurate to say that "the result is....," for our society is well on the way outlined in Romans 1.18-32.

There is the pressure on us to engage with people in their definition of themselves. Here we must resist. We must only look at man as he is set up before God and under the moral responsibility of the knowledge of God given to him. Man's primary ethical duty is to respond to God. In a way, it all about worship. Here we must take in what we observed from Romans 4. The faith that is counted as righteousness is the faith that gives glory to God. There is the constant danger that we see faith as an act of invoking God's power to make life, as we define it in our relationship with the world, work. We have to take in the spiritual horror of this. When we do this, we no longer define ourselves from what God is in relation to us as that is revealed in Jesus as Lord. Rather, we draw God into the way we define ourselves in our relationship with the world, and in this we are defining God within the sphere of our "reign" and as power to be subjected to us. This kind of faith does not connect us with God. In fact, it blocks us out from God. This is why so much professed Christian faith is devoid of any reality of God's power in Christ. This kind of faith never puts us before God in his glory, as was the case with Abraham.

The dynamics of sin and of faith must be understood in light of what it means for man to be the image of God needing to attain the glory of God. If we miss this, we miss all. Then all is out of line and turns us away from the relational reality between God and man.