

God's plan for the human race according to Psalm 8

- Vast in scope

Our writer has told us of God's plan for the human race. We were put under probation, under a test. The human race was put in a lowly position – lower than the angels – with the possibility that by its obedience it would rise to glory and honour and so get to be placed above the angels. God wanted humankind to achieve total lordship over the earth, according to the programme outlined in Psalm 8. The letter to the Hebrews underlines what is involved in God's plan ¹ and then makes two comments concerning it ². The writer points out how vast is the scope of what was destined for the human race according to Psalm 8. ⁸*Now in putting everything under the authority of men and women, God left nothing outside their control.* No area of the universe is beyond the scope of his eventual mastery. Every area of the universe, it seems, is for the human race: land and sea, sun and moon, animals and angels, sounds and sights, everything is for men and women, and is to be shepherded by them, enjoyed by them, used for their joy and for their glorifying God. The human race will be next to God in authority. But now the writer has two comments about the fulfilment of the vision of Psalm 8.

¹ 2:8b
² 2:8c; 2:9

1. We do not see God's plan being fulfilled in the human race

1. **He tells us that we do not see God's plan being fulfilled in the human race.** *But we do not yet see everything subjected to the authority of the human race.* The vision of Psalm 8 is not fulfilled. Famine, poverty, overuse of earth's resources, depletion of forests, diminishing fuel supplies, rural poverty, malnutrition, overgrazing, global warming – the writer's point is more obvious than ever! The vision of Psalm 8 has fallen aside because of human sin.

2. But we do see God's plan being fulfilled in Jesus

2. **But we do see the plan of God for the human race being fulfilled in Jesus.** The 'seeing' is different in each case. The first seeing refers to ordinary eyesight. It is very obvious that the universe is not totally under human control. But when he says, 'But we do see Jesus...crowned with glory and honour', the seeing is the seeing of faith. ⁹*But we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death. The purpose in this was that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.* What do we see with the eye of faith?

- Jesus – the man – a second Adam whose task was to rescue the human race

We see Jesus. He is speaking of the man Jesus, the one who was here on planet earth and now is at the right hand of God as a glorified man. Faith sees that Jesus became a man. He too was made lower than the angels 'for a little while'. He too was put under test, just as Adam was. He is the 'second Adam', a new start in the human race. God wanted men and women to pass the test of obedience. Jesus also had an offer of glory – but it involved the obedience of the cross first. He too had an area of responsibility; his task was to rescue the human race. Human destiny can only be fulfilled through Jesus.

- Jesus succeeded in reaching the reward for obedience

We see Jesus now crowned with glory and honour. Jesus has fulfilled the original destiny of man. He is now in a position of supreme authority over all the works of God in heaven and on earth. He is in a position never occupied by even the greatest of the angels. His being crowned with glory and honour was a reward. Yet Jesus has arrived in glory. He has succeeded in reaching the reward for obedience which men and women have lost.

- Tasted death on behalf of everyone

Our writer says, *The purpose in this was that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.* Jesus was obedient unto death, and was given a name above every name because of his obedience to death. Our writer adds something else. There was a purpose in Jesus' coming down to earth and becoming lower than the angels. There was a purpose in his experiencing the suffering of death. It was God's plan that he might taste death for everyone.

The focus – reaching glory and honour

1. The Father’s plan

2. God’s plan is to create “sons and daughters” reaching glory and

• The focus of Hebrews is on the second step – glory and honour

3. God’s provision of a saviour to accomplish his plan

• Not only a saviour from sin

• But also brings many sons and daughters to glory

Verses 10–13 explain further. ¹⁰For it was fitting for him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make perfect the Pioneer of their salvation, through sufferings.

1. **The plan comes from God the Father.** We have reference to ‘him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things’ and his wish to have his ‘sons’ taken to glory. This is obviously a reference to God the Father who sent Jesus as the Saviour. Everything – including the plan of salvation – originates from the Father and continues to exist through him.

2. **The plan is to create ‘sons and daughters’ and enable them to fulfil the programme of Psalm 8 and so reach glory and honour.** There are two steps in God’s plan. First, God takes people to himself, brings them to faith in Christ and so makes them his sons and daughters. In Hebrews this is only mentioned in passing. By a single offering he has ‘perfected for all time those who are sanctified’ ¹. He has secured for his people ‘eternal redemption’ ². We are set apart for God, redeemed for ever, appointed his sons and daughters. The redemption, the ‘set-apart-ness’, the sonship, can never be lost.

But the focus of the letter to the Hebrews is more on the second step. The second phase of God’s plan is that those sons and daughters will serve God, will bring themselves and the world under subjection, and will be rewarded by being crowned with glory and honour. The ‘coronation’ is not the reward of eternal redemption; it is the reward for what God’s people do **with** their eternal redemption. The glory is not simply heaven; it is treasure **in** heaven.

3. **God provided a Saviour to bring his sons and daughters to their heavenly glory.** God the Father felt it was right and proper to send Jesus as the Saviour of his people. But Jesus is our ‘Saviour’ in more than one way. Not only does he save us from the anger of God against sin (a point mentioned in 2:17). Jesus also enables us to overcome everything that might prevent us from achieving high honour and reward in the heavenly glory. Jesus came to bring many sons and daughters to glory despite everything that might stand in the way of their pressing on in faith. How does he do it? It begins with his being able to sympathize with us. What makes him sympathize with us? His sufferings! It was right for God to prepare Jesus to be a perfect Saviour by putting him through many sufferings. Jesus came as the pioneer, founder, initiator, author of salvation. But he continues to lead us and sustain us and – as we trust him – ensure that we reach our heavenly reward.

¹ 10:14
² 9:12



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