

Psalm 8

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Would you turn please to Psalm 8.

Psalm 8, verse 5.

Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Certain writers appeal to me, but I recognize that that's not necessarily because they are better than other writers, [00:01:06] but I accept that they're good for me because they write in a way that seems to match the way I think. Other people think in different ways, so other writers might be better for them. So with speakers.

For myself, I learn by gaining impressions.

Now, the detail of what we read or hear is important, but perhaps even more important than the detail is the impression we gain.

We get an impression, it interests us, we follow it through, it thrills us and it keeps our souls fed [00:02:01] for perhaps days, weeks or even years, maybe a lifetime.

Yesterday, last evening, we followed through an impression that I've gained over the years by the usage of the word crown.

I said particularly that there wouldn't be time and it wasn't the exercise to follow through with the word crown as it applied to the Lord Jesus, but more as it applied to the believer's life and service.

At the same time, it was mentioned as being helpful to me that in the main, two kinds of crown are referred to in scripture.

[00:03:06] The crown that someone wears to indicate the sort of person he is, the kind of glory and honour that's due to him personally, or because of the job he has to do, the office he has to fill.

I didn't use the word in front of a larger audience because apart from one or two of the elder brethren, most of you are young and agile in your minds and you are students of scripture. So, the two words, the one for the kind of crown that someone wears as a display of their regal dignity or excellence is the word that in English comes through as diadem, tiara, something like that. [00:04:07] The other kind

of crown we've talked about was the victor's crown. I suppose in the original Olympic Games and Roman Games, life was very simple and the one who won the race or the athletic contest, whatever it was, they got a crown of laurel leaves and that was the sign that they were the best of their generation at whatever the contest was. That, instead of the diadem, was the kind of crown that someone deserves because of their achievement. And we notice that relative to the Christian service, it is almost all the time a question of the crown that's worked for, deserved and achieved. And as you Greek scholars amongst you would tell me, it's a word that looks and sounds something like Stephanos. [00:05:08] An example quoted was Stephen, the martyr Stephen, who in the world's eyes deserved nothing but a cruel death because of the stance he took as a Christian believer.

And he was a shining example of that kind of crown. Now, in the time available this afternoon, as briefly as possible, I want to look at the use of the words connected with the Lord Jesus himself. Again, don't take my word for it. Follow it through. The Greek Testament is easy, but when you look at the Old Testament, you'll have to look at the Greek version of the Old Testament. And I would assure you the usage is consistent. [00:06:03] The first one that I'm aware of about the Lord, maybe there's some dark hints or prophecies that I haven't noticed earlier in the Bible, but I'd like to take up first this one in Psalm 8. Validated, confirmed to be right and good by the Lord Jesus and by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 2. Psalm 8, quite clearly, one of the Messianic Psalms. It tells us about the Lord Jesus towards a thousand years before he came into the world.

It tells us about things that should have been true of Adam, given headship over the race of mankind.

[00:07:09] But what wasn't achieved by Adam will be achieved and has been achieved in the lifetime of the Lord Jesus on earth and will, in the future, be fully confirmed and achieved by the Lord Jesus himself. If you want a clue as to that this is a Messianic Psalm, the heading to the chief musician, almost invariably, if not quite, is introducing something where there's joy in the presence of God available because of something that Christ is or has done. So Psalm 8 is Messianic and in this one we do learn that this is said about him, thou hast made him a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honor. [00:08:14] I have to be careful not to get drawn into too much detail. But the question arises, how can the Lord Jesus be lower than anybody or anything? In all things, Colossians tells us, Christ has the preeminence. He's right at the very top and that's proper. But when we think of this and where it's quoted in Hebrews 2, we learn this. Personally, in person, the Lord Jesus is right at the top. None is greater, higher or better than he. But for our sakes, that we might be saved, he became, it says, scholars don't all agree, as well as for a little while or for a little time, he became lower. Not in the sense of being lower personally and certainly not lower morally, but lower positionally. [00:09:25] Now this is where, as you listen, you have to be very careful. I have occasionally been criticized for something people thought I'd said, which in fact I hadn't said. Criticize me by all means if it's something I say and query it with me. As to order of being, note the word I use, being. I'm not saying creature. As to order of being, man is lower in the hierarchy, lower in the scale of things. Man is lower positionally than angels. Angels are nearer to God as beings than mankind is. [00:10:16] And, when the Lord Jesus became a man, he became positionally, or he entered into a condition which was lower positionally in the order of beings. Please, if anyone tells you that I've said the Lord Jesus became a creature, you deny it. I haven't said it. It isn't true. But it is true that the Lord Jesus entered into a condition which, as to order of being, is lower in the scale of beings than being an angel. So, he became lower positionally in becoming man. But, it goes on to say, and thou hast crowned him, speaking to God, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour. [00:11:12] Now, if you check it up, I'm sure you'll find that this is the kind of crown that is deserved. The kind of crown that is

earned by the person involved. And that is the word Stephanos. Now, is that important? I think it is. Not so long ago, I spoke on a subject. One of the audience came to me afterwards. She's the sort of person who can say anything to me and get away with it. Not just because she's my wife. But after the meeting, she said, what you said was all true. But is it important? I had to think hard, of course. And I said, well, I think it's important because it's what scripture says. [00:12:15] And I think it's important that we, over a period, we consider a wide range of scriptures. We need all the truth. We get some things which are obviously important because they are about the Lord Jesus. And clearly significant. Other things, I may not see at the time, what good it will do me. But I have to remind myself, I don't need to be a dietician or a biochemist or something like that to enjoy my food and see that it does me good.

[00:13:05] I don't need to analyse every little bit of food I have and to know what it's made of and all the Latin names for every little piece and be able to give a lecture on in what way it will do me good. So, I pursue what a very good friend of mine, who's now with the Lord, described as organoleptics. Now, it's a word that I haven't been able to find in the dictionary. I'll have to consult one of my medical friends to establish how right it is. But my friend, who was a meat inspector, told me once about a process by which he examined meat. If I've told you here before, you're going to suffer it again. It's a good principle about food. Housewives, please note. If it looks good and smells good and tastes good, the likelihood is it'll do you good. A lot of you good ladies, when you shop, you do look at it, don't you? If possible, in the right kind of light. [00:14:25] You certainly smell it, I would think. You may well look on the package if there is one and see what the ingredients are. But while you're cooking it, you will test the odour and you'll say, hmm, not quite sure about this. Is it alright? The same lady I was telling you about, I'll tell you another secret about her. She has a very good nose. She can detect by smell things I would never guess at. Now, as to scripture, I'm happy to consider scripture as spiritual food. The Bible says it is. And without quoting several scriptures, some I'm sure will come to mind. [00:15:16] So, even if there are things I don't understand or I cannot see the significance of, I'm prepared to take in the spiritual food of the Word of God, whether I understand it at the time, knowing that it will do me good. But there are special verses where the benefit is obvious and Psalm 8 verse 5 is one of them. Because if the beginning of the verse, Thou hast made him or he has become a little lower than the angels and contrast that with the phrase, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, [00:16:04] I get a marvellous contrast and comparison. The first verse tells me about what the Lord Jesus is in person, positionally. Even if you like, officially. Whereas the second part of the verse tells me what he has achieved, what is true of him morally. Now, quite often, as you study the scripture, you'll have to compare what the Lord Jesus or any person is, positionally or officially, with what he is morally. Now, some people are good in one way, not in another. But what the Lord Jesus, having become a man, is morally, matches what he is personally and officially. And I think that's wonderful food for the soul. [00:17:01] If I'm not careful, I'll spend all the time on one verse and it's not my intention. Would you move over, please, to Psalm 21? Again, to the chief musician? Ah, music, joy, praise.

Praise. Therefore, the likelihood is there's something about the Lord Jesus in the Psalm. Verse 3, Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness. Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. Alright. Even if I've never read it before, I will take a stab in the dark, if that's the kind of phrase you're used to, and say, this is good. It's going to tell me something about the Lord Jesus. He deserves, because of what he's done, he deserves a crown of gold. [00:18:11] Why does he deserve it? Now, the next three Psalms let us into the secret why he deserves a crown of gold. A symbol of his moral greatness, because of what he's done. And in this lovely trilogy, Psalm 22, 23, and 24, we learn about something that's involved in the Lord Jesus as the good shepherd. Psalm 22, that gave us life

for the sheep. Psalm 23, in resurrection, the great shepherd alive from among the dead, something that's true because of that. And in Psalm 24, when he appears in power and great glory, the chief shepherd to distribute and display the trophies that his saints have deserved. [00:19:16] So I can see a happy introduction to Psalms 22, 23, and 24 by that little phrase in Psalm 21. Psalm 132.

Some things that are important in the Bible are referred to only once. There's a unique reference always worth following through.

But some things, because they are important, are referred to several times. [00:20:04] I think it's right to say that the only miracle that is given in all four Gospels is the feeding of the 5,000. It must be important.

And it is important because it's a picture of the way the Lord Jesus will distribute blessing in what the Bible calls the world to come, in what many Christians call the millennium, the thousand years reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, given in six times, that phrase in Revelation 20 verses 4 to 6. And in the Psalms, there's built into the structure of the Psalms, this lovely Psalm 132, which gives a picture of what is developed in the Gospels as the feeding of the 5,000. [00:21:21] Look at verse 15.

The Lord, the distributor of the blessing to the nation of Israel and through Israel to the nations, this is what he says. This is what he says. I will abundantly bless her provision. I will satisfy her poor with bread. You could take that as a heading, particularly over the record of the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6. Now, what is God's response to someone who can feed his earthly people and through them everybody on earth on such a grand scale?

[00:22:13] What will God do to exhibit his approval on such a person? Verse 18. His enemies will I clothe with shame. God will restrain and eventually devour the enemies of Messiah, but upon himself shall his crown flourish. Again, a crown he deserves, not only because of what he is, but what he has done. Quickly then, Ezekiel 21.

Again, a prophetic portion. Ezekiel 21 verses 25 to 27. [00:23:02] And thou, profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, remove the diadem, take off the crown. This shall not be the same. Exalt him that is low and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him. These three verses, good material for a conference when you get a suitable venue. Very good, these three verses. Man at his worst, opposing God, treading down the people of God.

God says, I will not allow this to continue. It can't go on. Eventually, God says, after one world empire gives way to another, then another, then another, eventually, I will bring in my king, my Messiah, the one whose right it is. [00:24:20] And he says, take off the crown from this usurper. He doesn't deserve it. I will give it to the one who does deserve it. In this little word, crown, in these verses, again, consistent with the use to which it's put in other parts. Now that's Ezekiel 21.

Matthew 27, we're not doing so bad for time. Matthew 27, I'm going to read the words in Matthew, Mark, and John, where the Lord Jesus was given a crown of thorns.

[00:25:09] I leave to your meditation why it is that there's no reference in Luke's gospel to the crown of thorns. There's a reason for everything that's put in scripture. There must be a reason why certain things are excluded where you might expect them to be there. I leave it to you why you don't get the

crown of thorns in Luke, unless I've missed it and you can put me right. Matthew 27, verse 29.

When they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head and a reed in his right hand, and they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him and took the reed and smote him on the head. [00:26:03] And after that, they mocked him. They took the robe off from him and put his own raiment on him and led him away to crucify him. Mark 15, verse 17.

They clothed him with purple and plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head.

I'll only extract that because it's the parallel scripture. John 19, verse 2.

And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

[00:27:08] Verse 5.

Now, you've got the message. You've followed through the Greek, at which you are better than I am. You look at these verses and you say, it's got to be Stephanos.

Can't be the diadem here. And you're right. But what a contrast.

The Romans, the Jews, the Greeks, they were at one with each other.

[00:28:03] And they said, we will show the whole world what we think this Jesus deserves. And they gave him a crown of thorns. They mocked him. They did everything they could to humiliate him. And the record is in Matthew, in Mark and in John, so that there's no mistake. Morally, they said, that's what he deserves. That was man's answer to what they thought. They esteemed him worthy of mockery and hate.

Again, I leave Luke to you as to why it's not there. In the one that depicts the perfect manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, we don't get the answer in the Gospels by use of the term. [00:29:02] But we do get answer in God summing up of everything that's going to happen. The book of Revelation, if you will turn please to that. Revelation 6.

Verse 1, I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals. And I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder. One of the four beasts saying, come and see. And I saw. And behold, a white horse. And he that sat on him had a bow. And a crown was given unto him. And he went forth conquering and to conquer. It was said yesterday in the book of Revelation. [00:30:07] After the prophetic history of the church on earth is outlined in chapters 2 and 3. The horizon changes instead of standing on earth looking at things on earth. The seer is transferred to heaven and he sees things from God's point of view.

A picture of the rapture of the believers.

In chapter 4, the throne of God is seen to be the source of the necessary judgments. In chapter 5, the Lamb of God is seen to be the executor of the judgments. And in chapter 6, we begin to see the details of the judgments pronounced. [00:31:04] And right at the outset, having revealed in chapter 5, the worthiness of the Lamb who receives every acclaim. You get this little injection at the beginning of the prophetic revelation. That the one who will execute God's judgment on the ungodly.

That he is the one who deserves to do so because of his moral achievements. And I'm sure that's why it says a crown was given unto him. Chapter 14, please. Verse 14. I looked and behold a white cloud and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man having on his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle.

[00:32:17] You've heard of the law of first mention.

We looked at an example in the use of the term crown in Genesis 49 yesterday. The law of last mention also has significance, at least to me. In the New Testament, the first reference to the Lord Jesus as Son of Man is given in Matthew chapter 8 verse 20.

The foxes have their holes, the birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay his head. [00:33:10] The first reference in the New Testament to the Lord Jesus as Son of Man is a nobody. Nobody's interested, he's insignificant. Without a home, without a friend. The last mention of the Lord Jesus as Son of Man is Revelation 14, 14. Where it says, on his head is a crown of gold. The first reference to the Son of Man, Matthew 8, 20, is in line with the crown of thorns that men gave to him, recorded Matthew, Mark and John. But the last reference to the Lord as the Son of Man is God's answer. [00:34:02] Not now a crown of thorns, a crown of gold. What a happy thing it is that when we come to this reference to the Lord as the Son of Man, he has a crown of gold upon his head. And again, it's the crown that's deserved, not the one of regal splendor on display, but the one that's been earned morally because of his moral fitness and his achievements. Lastly, Revelation 19, verse 11.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. [00:35:01] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. Let me tell you again, after the dramatic, symbolic revelation of all the judgments, the point comes where it comes back to historical fact.

Oh you see, history is about what's happened in the past. The future is prophecy.

My suggestion is, when God says something's going to happen in the future, it's just as much historical fact as though it had already happened. [00:36:10] Because if God says it will happen, it will happen. We can be assured of that. And God says, Revelation 19, the day will come when the Lord Jesus will come forth in power and great glory, defeat the enemies of God, and establish the will of God upon the earth. And then, it says, because he's morally worth it, because of what he's done as a man in the world, when he comes forth, it will not only be with the kind of moral crown that he's deserved by what he's done, he will then come forth in kingly glory. So you and I are not surprised that when you get this last reference, as well as what he deserves from what he's done, it's right because of who he is that he comes to execute the judgment of God. [00:37:17] So you and I now are not surprised that when it says here that he has on his head many crowns, that these are diadems, which he will display because they are his by right. I hope some of the detail registers, but more than that, I trust that we get right impressions. That it's well worth studying the detail of Scripture. It thrills our souls, the things that we learn from Scripture, the words that the Holy Ghost teacheth. It would have been nice if we left time for more speakers, but on this occasion, perhaps time doesn't permit it.