

The God of Wonders: Jesus Christ

Think back to the time when you were a young boy or girl. It didn't take much to leave you in a state of awe and wonder. Maybe it was a shiny new bike, or a toy train, or a pretty baby doll. You were transported into a world of wonder and excitement.

Sadly, when we grow older the sense of wonder and awe is greatly diminished or even lost. It becomes harder for us *grown ups* to be left in awe and wonder over things. The new bike doesn't have the same appeal. The toy train loses its allurement. The pretty baby doll fades in attraction.

Losing the wonder and awe can also be felt in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We can go through times in our lives when we forget just how special and dear the Lord is to us.

We look back on the days of our Conversion with great fondness because it was then when we were especially on fire for the Lord. The Bible was a living book. Prayer was as natural to us as breathing. Worship was something that we looked forward to with great anticipation.

But now there are times when we struggle with just reading our Bibles on a daily basis. Prayer feels like plowing concrete, and it seems so difficult and hard to do. Worship for us sometimes becomes more of a dry duty than an heart devotion.

How can I get back to the wonder of Christ?

I believe Psalm 8 transports us back into the world of wonder. This Psalm is made up of holy wonder at the Lord's greatness in creation, condescension, and redemption towards man. It is interpreted of him, both by our Lord himself in Mt 21:16, and by the Apostle Paul in 1Co 15:27 and Heb 2:6-7.

A Christian once prayed, "Dear Lord, grant me the grace of wonder. Surprise me, amaze me, awe me in every crevice of Your universe. Delight me to see Christ in ten thousand places. Each day enrapture me with Your marvelous things without number. I do not ask to see the reason for it all; I ask only to share the wonder of it all."

Therefore, the title of my message is simply, *The God of Wonders: Jesus Christ.* I would like to adopt this title as the theme for the church in the new year.

It is my prayer as we enter 2011 and go forward that we might experience afresh the wonder and awe of Christ in creation, and in redemption. There are four main points I would like to consider from Psalm 8 today.

1. Psalm 8 teaches us the Wonder in a name.

This Psalm begins and ends in the same manner: Exalting and praising the name of Jehovah.

We read in verse 1 “**O LORD**, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.”

Then the Psalm ends in verse 9, “**O LORD** our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

Whenever you read the name LORD in all capital letters it refers to the name Jehovah, the covenant keeping God.

Louis Berkhof writes, “The Jews had a superstitious dread of using the name Jehovah because of Lev. 24:16, “He that nameth the name of Jehovah shall surely be put to death.” Therefore, in reading the Scriptures they substituted for it either Adonai or Elohim.”

The name Jehovah contains the assurance that God will be for the people of Moses’ day what He was for their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It stresses the covenant faithfulness of God.

What a wonder to think the great and holy Jehovah would enter into a covenant with sinners, into a Covenant of Grace whereby Christ has promised to redeem a people for Himself! The name Jehovah is the name above all other names.

We read in I Chronicles 16:15-17, “He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.”

Now in today's society, we simply choose names for the person of identification, and to distinguish one from the other. Sometimes we may look through a list of names for boys and girls in a book and if it has a nice ring to it we decide that's the one but of course it means absolutely nothing at all. It has no significance whatsoever. It's just a sound. It's just a name.

But in Biblical times, it was all together a different matter. A persons name had great significance. The name meant something. It had meaning. The name stood for the person themselves. It represented something of that person's character, and nature, and being, and their work. And this is especially true of the names ascribed to Our Lord Jesus Christ. The names of Christ are inseparable from His person, because they represent His character, nature, and His work. Christ is revealed to us in the Scripture by many names.

For instance we read in Isaiah 9:6 four different names of Christ, "...his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah actually chooses the word *wonder* in one of the names, "Wonderful Counselor," to show the awe and wonder of God's name.

The Scripture goes on and calls Christ, *The Great Shepherd, the Pearl of Great Price, the Bright and Morning Star, Emmanuel, Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the Rose of Sharon.*

There are so many more names in the Bible that describe the person and work of Christ, both in his humanity deity, but we don't have the time to look at them all today.

Notice how David identifies himself with Jehovah in verses 1 and 9, not in the singular but in the plural, **our Lord**. David includes himself with God's people. David sees himself as a part of the whole. The phrase "our Lord," identifies God's covenant people who worship and adore the one and only true God.

Today, can you say that you are one of God's people? Is Christ your Savior and Lord? Are you numbered among the saints?

The Lord Jesus Christ has many names in the Scripture and when we study them we are left in awe and wonder. Psalm 8 teaches us the wonder of a name.

2. Psalm 8 teaches us the Wonder in worship.

We soon discover in this Psalm that David was not alone in his praise of Jehovah. Verse 2 adds, “**Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings** hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.”

During his earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus applied this passage to the Jewish children, who, seeing his miracles, cried out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

We see how the chief priests and the scribes were offended because of these things; and as the Psalm wholly concerns Jesus Christ, it is most probable that in this act of the Jewish children the prophecy had its primary fulfillment; and was left to the Jews as a witness and a sign of the Messiah, which they should have acknowledged when our Lord directed their attention to it.

As Jesus entered the temple courts we read how he began to heal the sick. He began to open the eyes of the blind and perform miracles that authenticated Jesus as the Messiah.

When the little children in the temple saw what Jesus was doing they couldn't remain silent any longer and they burst into praise. "Hosanna" they sang "to the Son of David."

When the religious leaders, the Scribes and Pharisees, heard of this they were indignant and filled with rage, and they tried to get Jesus to stop them from singing this. They said, This is blasphemy. "Don't you hear what they are singing. Stop them." Jesus replies, "haven't you ever read Psalm 8."

We read in Matthew 21:16 the words of Christ, "And he said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" These religious enemies of God were silent by the lisping of infants singing God's praise.

How often this is true in history. God uses the weak things in the world to confound the mighty, even little children.

A children's hymn says it best, "Every little child who sings from the heart all things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small all things wise and wonderful the Lord God made them all is silencing the enemies of God."

Listen to David's words in I Chronicles 16:9-14, "Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his **wonderful** acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. **Remember the wonders** he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced, you his servants, the descendants of Israel, his chosen ones, the children of Jacob. He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth."

Do you approach the Lord in worship like these little Jewish children singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David?" Have you lost the wonder of worship? Psalm 8 reminds us how special worship should be to the children of God.

3. Psalm 8 teaches us the Wonder in creation.

We read in verse 3 “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.”

The first thing to notice is the sun is not mentioned. Why? The reason is because this is an evening Psalm. David was gazing at the stars at night and he was overwhelmed with a sense of the size and scope of the universe. Today we have powerful telescopes and probes that can reach far into the interior of the universe and yet it is like we have just scratched the surface.

Our sun is one star in a galaxy of stars called the Milky Way Galaxy. Astronomers have recently estimated that there are at least 100 billion stars in our galaxy.

On a clear night it is possible to see 3 thousand stars and all of these stars belong to the Milky Way Galaxy.

The reason why we don't see more than three thousand is that most stars in our galaxy are too far away to be seen with the naked eye however with a powerful telescope it's possible to see millions of other stars in the galaxy.

Even though this solar system is extremely large it actually forms a tiny part of the Milky Way Galaxy.

The diameter of the Milky Way Galaxy is about one billion billion kilometers which is about one hundred million times bigger than the diameter of our solar system. And there are billions of other galaxies in the universe. It's mind blowing. We can't fathom and understand such astronomical figures. The Wonder of Creation shows how excellent God's name is on all the earth."

We read in Colossians 1:15-17 how the Apostle Paul identifies Jesus Christ as the Creator of the universe, "Who is (referring to Christ) the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

An Old Testament commentator writes, "There is much in the scenery of a nocturnal sky; to lift the soul to pious contemplation. That moon, and these stars, what are they? They are detached from the world, and they lift us above it. We feel withdrawn from the earth, and rise in lofty abstraction from this little theatre of human passions and human anxieties.

The mind abandons itself to reverie, and is transferred in the ecstasy of its thought to distant and unexplored regions. It sees nature in the simplicity of her great elements, and it sees the God of nature invested with the high attributes of wisdom and majesty."

The Wonder of Christ in creation.

4. Psalm 8 teaches us the Wonder in redemption.

I believe there is one thing that exceeds the wonder and awe of creation and that is the work of redemption. How does redemption exceed the work of creation? When God created the universe he simply spoke it into existence by his Word. However, it was not so with redemption. God couldn't *just* speak redemption into existence with a word.

The Apostle John tells us in John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

In order for God to redeem sinners, Christ had to take upon himself human flesh, live a perfect life according to the law of God, make an atonement on the cross for the sins of his people, and rise from the dead. You could say that the redemption of sinners was harder for God to accomplish than the creation of the cosmos. The wonder of it all. Christ came into the world to save sinners.

We read in Psalm 8 verses 4-6, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.”

Charles Spurgeon adds, “My readers must be careful to mark the design of the psalmist, which is to enhance, by this comparison, the infinite goodness of God; for it is, indeed, a wonderful thing that the Creator of heaven, whose glory is so surpassingly

great as to ravish us with the highest admiration, condescends so far as graciously to take upon him the care of the human race.”

Psalm 8 seems plainly to be this: to display and celebrate the great love and kindness of God to mankind, not only in his creation, but especially in his redemption by Jesus Christ, whom, as he was man, he advanced to the honour and dominion here mentioned, that he might carry on his great and glorious work.

A.W Tozer writes, “My brethren in the Christian faith, stand with me in defense of this basic doctrine: The living God did not degrade Himself in the Incarnation.

When the Word was made flesh, there was no compromise on God's part! It is plain in the ancient Athanasian Creed that the early church fathers were cautious at this point of doctrine.

They would not allow us to believe that God, in the Incarnation, became flesh by a coming down of the Deity into flesh, but rather by the taking of mankind into God. That is the wonder of redemption!

In the past, the mythical gods of the nations were not strangers to compromise. But the holy God who is God, our heavenly Father, could never compromise Himself! He remained ever God and everything else remained not God.

That gulf still existed even after Jesus Christ had become man and dwelt among us. This much, then, we can know about the acts of God-He will never back out of His bargain. This amazing union of man with God is effected unto perpetuity!”

Jesus Christ humbled himself and became a servant. We read in Philippians 2:5-8, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

The wonder of redemption! Until you are born again, you will never experience the wonder of redemption. Ask the Lord to save you from your sins and make you into a new creature!

Perhaps you are here and in a backslidden state. You have sunken deep in your sin and drifted far from Christ. You need to come back to the Lord! Confess your sins and trust in Christ and the Lord will restore the joy of your salvation.

In closing, David reminds us in Psalm 8 of the wonder and awe of Christ. Christ truly is the God of Wonders. We see this wonder in a name, in worship, in creation, and the greatest of all in redemption. Let us never lose the wonder of Christ in our lives. May the Lord bless us with the grace of wonder for 2011. Let us pray!