



Sharing in the coronation of Christ

Glorious crown jewels! That describes man at His creation. David sings in Psalm 8

"You have made him a little lower than God" (RSV, NASB).

That sounds almost blasphemous! But in saying this David does not deny the infinite qualitative difference between God as Divine Creator and man as human creature. Rather, David highlights the wonderful qualities, abilities and virtues with which man was created – qualities, abilities and virtues that reflected (though dimly) the same qualities, abilities and virtues in God. Through his creation in God's image and likeness, man reflected the glory of God, like the moon reflects the light of the sun.

Man was created with a measure of God's glory, so that man, as God's vice-regent on earth, might glorify God. Using these God-like qualities, abilities and virtues man was able to bring great honour to God.

But sadly, through His rebellion and fall into sin, man robbed himself of most of these god-like qualities, abilities and virtues. And whatever remained of these gifts corrupt man uses to dishonour God.

Job's 'friend' Bildad was not wrong when he said that man is a maggot, and the son of man a worm (cf. Job 25:6). God called the sons of Jacob a worm (cf. Isa 41:14). To what depths of shame and ignominy man has fallen!

In Psalm 8:4 David expressed his amazement when he writes,

"What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?"

In David's word we hear an echo of a much earlier voice. Job wrote,

"What is man, that You should exalt him, That You should set Your heart on him..."

(Job 7:17)

Job and David – and we today – stand amazed that God continues to take an interest in fallen man in his low and debased state.

With even greater amazement we marvel at the grace of God, who intended to raise man from his shame and corruption, and to restore man as jewels in His divine crown (cf. Mal 3:17, Zech 9:16). But at what expense! For it would require nothing less than the humiliation of the glorious Son of God incarnate.

Jesus had *"the form of God"* (cf. Phil 2:6). That is, He was equal with God. He bore *"the brightness of God's glory and the express image of (God's) person"* (Heb 1:3). Unlike us who reflect God's glory like the moon reflects the light of the sun, Christ shone as the sun itself, because He was true God. To see Christ is to see the Father (cf. John 14:9). God's full glory is reflected in Christ. We receive *"the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"* (2 Cor 4:6).

Nevertheless, to restore us to glory the glorious Son of God incarnate had to take upon Himself our shame. And so He did! In the well-known Psalm that begins with the lament *"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me"* (22:6), David also wrote *"I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people"* (v. 6). These were prophetic words that found fulfilment in

Christ. He, who was divinely glorious, became a worm, despised and rejected by both man and God.

Only through His deep humiliation could He restore us to glory. And He did! After descending to the depths of humiliation and shame, He Himself was glorified. This was the reward of His degradation that He looked forward to, and for which He prayed.

"O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

(John 17:5)

At His ascension and enthronement at His Father's right hand Jesus received again His rightful glory.

Now the good news is that we share in Christ's ascension and enthronement, and we share in Christ's glory. As we confess in Lord's Day 19, the ascended Christ pours out upon the Holy Spirit, who is Himself both a gift and the giver of gifts. *"By His Holy Spirit (the ascended Christ) pours out heavenly gifts upon us...."* Through the Spirit Christ again infuses into us the qualities, abilities and virtues with which we were first created. And through these gifts we are recreated in God's image, and we again begin reflect the glorious image of God. We are being restored as precious jewels in God's crown. We are made partakers of the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4). We are being remade a little less than God.

May this work of grace in us cause us to glorify God through the good words we speak, and the good works we perform. For one of the purposes of Christ's ascension is – to renew us by His Spirit and cause us to produce many good works by which the Father is glorified.

But the work of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ in us is not yet complete. In fact, Christ's work in us has just begun. As a result, we do not yet glorify God with the perfection we ought and desire. Yet we take comfort in the knowledge that He who has begun a good work in us will bring it to completion at the Day of Christ. And when that Day comes, then we will also be enthroned in glory in the presence of God. For Christ who Himself ascended into the presence of God, and is now enthroned in glory at God's right hand, promised us the same. On the new earth we shall glorified (cf. Rom 8:30), and we shall reign with Christ forever and ever (cf. Rev 22:5).

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