

Psalm 8

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of David.

“Psalm 8”: Though the bulk of the psalm describes man and his dominion over the universe, the first and last verses make clear to the reader that the psalm was written primarily to exalt the Creator. “A little lower than the angels” (verse 5), is literally “a little lower than God” (Hebrew [Elohim], the normal generic word for God). The Septuagint translated the word as “angels”, however, and this translation is quoted (in Hebrews 2:6-8). The word may be taken in loose sense, “divine beings”, in which case it could refer to both God and the angels. Three interpretations of man’s position are described (in verses 5-8):

- (1) It refers only to man’s original condition (Gen. 1:26-28);
- (2) It refers to man’s present, actual position, though ruined somewhat by the Fall;
- (3) It points to man redeemed and restored in the future to his exalted position.

The second view is preferred since the psalmist seems to be observing life as it is in the present: “When I consider” (verse 3).

“Verses 1-9: The theme of Psalm 8 (“how excellent”), blazes across this Psalm from start to finish (8:1, 9). The psalmist wants to understand that their meaning starts and ends with the glory of God and who He is.

The beginning and ending of the psalm suggest that it is essentially a hymn of praise. Yet, a major portion qualifies it as a so-called nature psalm, i.e., a psalm of creation. Furthermore, there is a significant focus on the created dignity of man. Through this vehicle, the important subject of Adamic theology comes to the forefront, making this psalm ultimately suitable to the important association of the “One”, the Last Adam, i.e., Christ and the “many” (compare Heb. 2:6-8). Structurally, Psalm 8’s beginning and concluding bursts of praise are driven by David’s contemplation of two pairs of radical contrasts.

- (1) Introductory Praise (8:1);
- (2) Two Pairs of Radical Contrasts (8:2-8);
 - A. Between the Nature of “infants” and infidels (8:2);
 - B. Between Unaided General Revelation and Unveiled Special Revelation (8:3-8);
- (3) Concluding Praise (8:9).

Psalm 8: Another instrument is referenced in this title, most probably a guitar-like harp associated with Gath in Philistia.

Psalm 8:1 "O LORD our Lord, how excellent [is] thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens."

“Lord ... Lord”: Of these twin nouns of direct address to God, the first is His specially revealed name Yahweh (Exodus 3:14), and the second puts an emphasis on His sovereignty.

“Thy name”: The name of God refers to the revealed Person of God, encompassing all of His attributes.

Is it not wonderful to be able to say my God? Sometimes I feel a warmth that is unexplainable in the human realm when I say, my God. It is as if He is ours alone. And He is to each individual, that He is our personal God. Christianity is personal. The fact that I am a Christian is personal between Jesus and myself. My Christianity does not depend on what others think or expect of me. Jesus Christ did not take a vote to see if I was good enough to become a Christian or not. He just said, if you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth, you shall be saved. It does not matter what I was before, He will save me. It really does not matter what my mother and daddy before me believed. He cares that I believe He is my Savior and that He rose from the grave, and that He is coming back for me. Jesus wants to be Lord of everyone, and is in fact, the Lord of all. He is the Savior of those who believe.

The name of Jesus is above all names in the earth. Jesus' name is in all the world. It matters not whether you are Asiatic, Caucasian or Negroid. All have heard his name. The name in verse one above, is Jehovah. The name (in Philippians 2:9-10), is Jesus. They are one and the same. He is called Mighty God, Prince of Peace, The Branch, The Bread, The Life, The Light, and many more. He was the Word of God in heaven, before He came to the earth as our Savior. He was called Emmanuel (God with us). All of these names refer to the One, the I Am that you and I refer to as Jesus Christ. All things that you could think of that are beautiful and good on this earth are a description of Him. There is no other name that stirs your soul.

A few years ago, while traveling through the Canadian Rockies with my family, I stopped at an exceptionally beautiful spot. We all got out of our vehicles and began to view the overwhelming beauty around us. I began to cry. There was such an awareness of God and His majesty that all of us were touched. We stood on the side of the road and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to God who was so far above anyone or anything on this earth. My brother commented that only a fool could look at this magnificent beauty surrounding us and say, there is no God. We were all deeply moved by what we had seen. The interesting thing is; the glory we had seen, paled by comparison to what we will see in heaven.

Psalm 8:2 "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."

The introductory irony about infants sets the stage for a contrast between the dependent and the foolishly self-sufficient.

The one thing that really stands out to me in this, is who stills the enemy.

Zechariah 4:6 "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

It is not how strong we are, or how many there are of us, that wins the war. It is how strong Jesus is in me. In the 11th chapter of Isaiah we read that a little child shall lead them.

Matthew 19:14 "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

This could even be speaking of little children in understanding also. Christians are called little children. Whichever it means, it is not in our power that we do anything but rather that we are ordained of God to do the job. In the following Scripture we can easily see that, it is in His power, and not ours, that we do the will of God.

1 John 4:4 "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Psalm 8:3 "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;"

"Thy heavens, the work of thy fingers": The heavens are created by God (Psalms 33:6, 9; 102:25; 136:5). The anthropomorphism "thy fingers" miniaturizes the magnitude of the universe in the presence of the Creator.

God's "fingers" set the stars in place. There is far less power in the hand than the arm and far less power in the finger than the hand. To create stars, planets, and galaxies, God needed only His fingers.

Not only mankind is the creation of God, but all the heavenlies as well. Look into the heavens at night and see the works of God. Astronomers are even now, still finding moons and stars they never knew existed. How could mere man ever try to compare himself with so great a God?

Verses 4-5: The greatness of God extends beyond a hundred million universes that are tossed into space as mere handfuls of stardust; it extends to each member of the human race. God thinks of His people and cares for them, small though they are in a vast universe (Heb. 2:6-8).

Psalm 8:4 "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"What is man": If the whole universe is diminutive in the sight of the Divine Creator, how much less is the significance of mankind! Even the word for "man" used in verse 4 alludes to his weakness (compare Psalms 9:19-20; 90:3a; 103:15).

"And the son of man": This phrase also looks upon man as insignificant and transitory (e.g. Psalm 90:3b). Yet, the Aramaic counterpart of this phrase is found in (Dan. 7:13), which has profound messianic overtones (compare also Jesus' favorite self-designation in the New Testament, Son of Man).

If you have ever flown in an airplane and looked down to the earth, you have seen just how insignificant one person looks. The idea that God would look to this earth and love us as an individual is almost beyond our comprehension. Why does God love us so much that He sent His Son to save us? We could give a thousand answers, such as we are His creation, we are made in His image, or any other reason, but it does not seem to be enough reason. One of my favorite songs is (Who Am I). I would like to share a few statements from that song here. Who am I that a King would bleed and die for? Who am I that He would say, not my will thine for? The answer I may never know; why He ever loved me so; that to an old rugged cross He'd go for who am I? This is a very big question isn't it? I can truthfully say I do not know. The love that God had for man will always be a mystery.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

There is no way to understand it, just accept His love.

Verses 5-8: These verses consistently emphasize the significance of man, who was created in the image and likeness of God to exercise dominion over the rest of creation (Gen. 1:26-28).

Psalm 8:5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Than Elohim, "than God", as this word usually signifies. And could it be interpreted of man, as made by God. It might be thought to refer to the creation of him in the image and likeness of God. But as it must be understood of the human nature of Christ, it may regard the wonderful union of it to the Son of God, on account of which it is called by the same name (Luke 1:35). And so made but a little lower than God, being next unto him, and in so near a union with a divine Person. And which union is hypostatical or personal, the human nature being taken into a personal union with the Son of God. And so, these words give an instance of God's marvelous regard to it. And contain a reason, proving that he has been mindful of it, and visited it.

"And hast crowned him with glory and honor": By raising him from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand, committing all judgment to him. And requiring all creatures, angels and men, to give worship and adoration to him. And this being in consequence of his sufferings, after he had run the race, and endured a fight of afflictions. And because of the greatness of his glory and honor, with which he was, as it were, on all sides surrounded. He is said to be "crowned" with it. Who a little before was crowned with thorns, and encompassed with the terrors of death and hell. This respects his mediatorial glory.

My own opinion of this is that man is lower than the angels, while he is housed in flesh. We do know that the Scripture says that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for suffering on the cross.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. You see, Jesus was far above the angels, but took on the form of flesh to suffer for your sins and my sins. God thought so much of man, that He created the earth and the heavens, and everything in it for the use of man. God had everything prepared for man before He created man. The spirit of man was breathed into him by God, and man became a living soul. It was the flesh of man that was made from the dirt of the earth. This Scripture above is twofold. Mankind was the climax of God's creation. Man was given dominion over the earth and everything in it. The part of man that was less than the angels was the flesh of man. It was the flesh of man that caused him to fall and be driven from the Garden of Eden. Man was to rule over the animals. God even let Adam name all the animals, showing his authority over them.

The fall of man was brought about by man following his flesh, instead of his spirit. We see that Jesus was above the angels in heaven, being the very Son of God. Jesus took on the flesh of man and its weakness (flesh of Jesus became less than the angels), to restore mankind to his original state with God. In fact, the blood of Jesus was shed to pay the price for our sin. Jesus took our sin on His body, and we took on His righteousness. We are now sons of God. Adopted into the family of God. Jesus bought us for the Father with His precious blood. We are no longer lower than the angels, but in fact, we are brothers of Jesus. We will reign with Him when He returns to the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. When we are raised in our spiritual body, we shall reign with Jesus as His subordinates. I will repeat Hebrews;

Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Psalm 8:6 "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all [things] under his feet:"

All power in heaven and in earth being given to him. When he was raised from the dead, and when he ascended on high, and was set down at the right hand of God, he was made or declared Lord and Christ. Lord of the hosts of heaven, of all the angels there. King of saints, King of kings, and Lord of lords. All things in heaven and earth, which God has made, are put into his hands, to promote his cause and glory, and for the good of his people. For he is head over all things to the church. The Ethiopic version reads, "All the works of thy hands"; among whom are angels. This is a greater dominion than was given to the first man, Adam (Gen. 1:25).

"Thou hast put all things under his feet": Or put them in subjection to him, as the phrase signifies, and as it is interpreted (Heb. 2:8). Good angels are subject to him, as appears by their ministration to him, their dependence on him, and adoration of him (1 Peter 3:22). Devils are subject to him, whether they will or not. And so are wicked men, whose power and wrath he is able to restrain, and does. And the church is subject to Christ, as her head. And so all good men, willingly and heartily, and from a principle of love, obey his commands. Yea, all creatures in the earth, air, and sea, are in subjection to him; an enumeration of which is given in the following verses.

Psalm 8:7 "All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;"

The tame creatures, which are useful for food and clothing.

"Yea, and the beasts of the field": The wild beasts, which he can make use of to destroy and devour his enemies. And whom he can restrain from harming his own people (Jer. 15:8).

Psalm 8:8 "The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, [and whatsoever] passeth through the paths of the seas."

These he rained about the tents of the Israelites for their relief (Psalm 78:27). And can command them to feed his people, as the ravens did Elijah (1 Kings 17:4). Or to destroy his enemies (Jer. 15:3; see Psalm 50:10).

"And the fish of the sea": Instances of Christ's power over them, and of their being at his command, and for his service, may be seen in (Matt. 17:27).

We will see from the following Scripture that, God has always wanted man to have dominion over all the things in the earth.

Genesis 1:26 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

It was the lust of the flesh of mankind that caused him to fall. Jesus paid in full the account of all mankind on the cross. Jesus restored man to his original state with God on the cross of Calvary. God has always wanted man to live in the Garden of Eden. Heaven is actually a restoration of the Garden of Eden to mankind. Since the Garden of Eden was just a shadow of the garden in heaven, it was not as beautiful, or as great. It has not entered the heart of man the wonderful things in store for the Christians in heaven.

1 Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Psalm 8:9 "O LORD our Lord, how excellent [is] thy name in all the earth!"

Repeating the sentiment with which the psalm opens, as now fully illustrated, or as its propriety is now seen. The intermediate thoughts are simply an illustration of this. And now we see what occupied the attention of the psalmist when (in Psalm 8:1), he gave utterance to what seems there to be a somewhat abrupt sentiment. We now, at the close of the psalm, see clearly its beauty and truthfulness.

Here again, we see David expressing our own feelings about God. Not only is the name of Jesus Christ above all others, but we Christians are allowed to share in part of that name. How can we live as to glorify the name of the Lord in all we do? With everything that is within me, I glorify His name.

Psalm 8 Questions

1. What are we saying, when we say, my God?
2. Does my Christianity depend on what others think?
3. What must we believe to be saved?
4. Who is Jesus Lord of?
5. Who can call Jesus Savior and it be true?
6. In verse 1, what is the word LORD?
7. What name, in Philippians 2:10, is the same person as in verse 1 here?
8. Give at least 5 names for this same person as in verse 1.
9. What does Emmanuel mean?
10. Out of the mouths of _____ and _____ hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies.
11. It is not how strong I am that wins the war, but by what?
12. In 1 John 4:4, the Christians are called what?
13. Why do so many astronomers believe in God?
14. What is man that thou art mindful ____ _____.
15. Why does God love us so much?
16. What are some of the unbelievable things that God has done for us?
17. Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with _____ and _____
18. In what is man a little lower than the angels?
19. Why was Jesus made a little lower than the angels?
20. Who did God create the earth for?
21. How did man become a living soul?
22. What brought the fall of man?

23. Why did Jesus take on the flesh of man?
24. What paid the price in full for our sin?
25. What is the elevated state of the Christian now?
26. What were some of the things man was made to have dominion over?
27. What is heaven really?
28. How can we glorify the name of the LORD?