

PSALMS 8

(For the director of music. According to gittith. A psalm of David.)

The reference to “gittith” is thought by some that this psalm was composed when the ark was brought to the house of Obadedom the Gittite; and that it was delivered to him and his sons. Other have supposed that it was written when David was in Gath. Still others contend that the word “gittith” literally means “a winepress,” hence this psalm was in celebration of the harvest and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Regardless of the origin, the implications of this eighth psalm is clearly Messianic as it was referenced several times in the New Testament in regard to the Christ.

{8:1} O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

The earthly creation shows how majestic the Creator is in that the Creator is greater than the creation. We could go on and on and list the wondrous things that we observe in God’s creation and we marvel at it. Whether it is majestic mountain ranges, the depths of the oceans, or the mysteries of the DNA and RNA molecule, we can only get a glimpse of the greatness of the One Who put it all together. Nothing in all of creation (physical or spiritual) can compare with the greatness of the Creator. His glory is truly above everything. It is as if the earth is not sufficient to display the glorious majesty of God and it even exceeds the heavens.

Since we realize this psalm is Messianic, we can relate the second part of this verse to the exaltation of Jesus as described by Paul in Eph 4:10 *“He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.”* In Christ Jesus, God’s glory is revealed as clearly as is possible and in His ascension that glory exceeds even the heavens.

PRAYER: Lord, we praise You because You are an awesome God: awesome beyond our imagination.

{2} From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

The simplest, most direct reading of this verse shows us that even the youngest Christians in their simple faith find that praising God in the midst of troubles puts to silence doubts the devil would cause us to entertain. When we are downcast and discouraged, we are advised to “hope in God and to praise Him.”

Christ used the idea of this verse in at least two applications related to His earthly ministry. The first instance was the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel. These were in their own eyes, and in the eyes of the world, as babes and sucklings,. They were not Biblical scholars or learned men, but were simple fishermen, tax collectors, and common people. (*Mt 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*) What did He reveal to them? The Gospel message, the plan of Salvation, the Person of the Messiah.

The other instance was related to events of Palm Sunday when the children cried out in the Temple: *And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? Mt 21:15-16*

The other possibility some commentators have used regarding “mouths of babes and sucklings” is to relate this to the coming of Christ into world as a helpless baby and from His lips we have heard the word of God that revealed Him most perfectly.

Let’s look now at the second part of this verse regarding what God does with the words that come from the lips of those who declare the Good News and praise His name. In Matthew 21, Jesus quoted the Septuagint and used the phrase “perfected praise.” The KJV translation of verse 2 used the phrase “ordained strength.” The Hebrew word used for “ordained” or “perfected” can literally mean to establish or lay a foundation. Seeing what Jesus did and what the further work of the Apostles did, then we could easily see that from the lips of Jesus and His disciples, a strong foundation was established that would defeat and silence the devil.

PRAYER: Father, we thank You for Your great salvation and for Christ who revealed Who You are to us. Thank You for providing a way of victory over the enemy of our souls.

{3} When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, {4} what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? {5} You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. {6} You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: {7} all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, {8} the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

The obvious (likely) intent of David, who had occasions to view the night sky and to contemplate the vastness of it, was to contrast the greatness of God with the lesser status of man. We do have reason to praise God when we consider His infinite greatness. One glance into the sky on a clear night is awe inspiring. With the knowledge we have of the vastness of the universe and the size of the stars in comparison to the earth we are even more overwhelmed with the immensity of the Infinite God Who is above and over and greater than it all. We should be humbled beyond comprehension to know that such a God would acknowledge us and care for us.

The Psalmist likely referred to mankind as having been honored by God and as having dominion over the earth. However, the ultimate fulfillment of the dominion described is in Christ Jesus Who in His earthly sojourn took a position lower than heavenly beings and yet He was Lord of all.

In asking what or who is “man,” David used the Hebrew word “Enosh” rather than “Adam” which is the more commonly used word for man. Enosh refers to a frail, weak, sickly mortal man. This is understood by most translators to be in reference to the man Christ Jesus, as it is interpreted in Heb 2:6-9. The name of Enosh well agrees with Him, who was described as a man of no note and was not esteemed among men, a worm and no man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, encompassed with infirmities, and was subject to death, and did die.

David then used a different title “son of man” to describe the person that God visits or cares for. In several places in the Old Testament (Ps 80:17, Dan 7:13) this title clearly means the Messiah that was to come. Jesus used this title in reference to Himself in many places in the New Testament. Also, the writer of letter to the Hebrews applies this passage from Psalms to Jesus.

The Hebrew word that is translated “angels” in some versions of the Bible is “elohim” which is translated as “God” 90% of the times it is used in the KJV of the Bible. Only once is it translated “angels” and that is in verse 5 of this chapter. That is why some of the newer translations renders the meaning as “heavenly beings” or as Young’s Literal Translation does as “Godhead.” It is interesting to see that the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) used the word “angel” and that version of the Scriptures was the commonly available translation in the first century and the writer of Hebrews also used the term “angel” rather than “God.”

Every translation I could find was in agreement with the idea that “man or the son of man” was made a **little** lower than the angels or God or heavenly beings. Let’s look at Psalms 37:10: The subject is different in that David is writing about the wicked. This verse starts as follows: “For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be . . .” The same Hebrew word (meahat) is used in 8:5 as in 37:10.

Therefore, if we applied the same translation to 8:5 as was used in 37:10, if we used the idea of Godhead rather than angels in verse 8:4 and if we applied the reason for it all found in Hebrews 2:9, then we could discover the following truth:

God, the Son, for a brief period of time, stepped down from His highly exalted position in Heaven and took on the form of frail, mortal man so that He could become the ultimate sacrifice for sin by dying for all mankind.

This is what Paul captured in Philippians 2:5-11.

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. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

With this passage in mind, then we see the second part of Psalms 8:5 through 8:8 in a spiritual light. The crowning with glory and honor in Psalms 8:5 is paralleled in Philippians 2:9 in that Christ Jesus is highly exalted and has a name above every name. David was focused on the things of this physical world being under the dominion of man but this is only a shadow and type of the dominion of God, the Son, in that He is highly exalted above everything (physical and spiritual) and all things are under His feet. He is Lord of ALL to the glory of God, the Father.

{9} O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

David ended this Psalm as he began it. The greatness of God cannot be repeated too often and words can never express the extent of His Person.

PRAYER: WOW!

