

"THE BOOK OF PSALMS"

Psalm 8 - The Song of the Astronomer

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To consider a beautiful example of a hymn of praise
- 2) To observe the use and possible meaning of the word "Gittith"
- 3) To note man's dominion over the earth when created by God, but also that he lost it and has now been regained by Jesus Christ

SUMMARY

The heading attributes this psalm to David, with instructions to the Chief Musician to be sung "**upon Gittith.**" This may mean "after the tune of the treaders of the winepress" (Leupold) and refer to the joyful nature in which the workers sang. The psalm is certainly a hymn of delight, as are others with this word in the heading (**Psa 81, 84**). I second Spurgeon's suggestion that this psalm can be called "**The Song of The Astronomer**" as it seems to have been prompted while contemplating the night skies.

It begins praising God for His excellent name (i.e. character) and His glory in the earth and above the heavens. God's glory is illustrated in the way He is able to use "babes" and "infants" (i.e., the frailest and weakest of men, e.g., **Mt 11:25; 1 Co 1:27**) to silence the enemy and the avenger (**1-2**).

David's praise appears to have been sparked by comparing the work of God in the heavens with the seeming insignificance of man on the earth. Amazed that God would even be mindful of man, David noted that God created man a little lower than the angels, and even set man over the works of His hands, including the animals, birds, and fish (**3-8**). Of course, after the fall of man that dominion was lost, and has since been regained by Jesus Christ following His resurrection and ascension to heaven (cf. **He 2:5-9; Mt 28:19; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pe 3:22**).

The psalm ends the way it began, praising the excellence of God's name in all the earth, which is the proper response of His creation, especially man (**9**).

OUTLINE

I. God's Majesty In Creation (8:1-2)

A. His name and glory (1)

1. His name (character) exalted in all the earth
2. His glory set above the heavens

B. His power over enemies (2)

1. Able to ordain strength from the mouths of babes and infants
2. And thereby silence the enemy and the avenger

II. Man's Dignity Over Creation (8:3-9)

A. Man's insignificance (3-4)

1. In contrast to the heavens, the moon and stars
2. Amazed that God would consider man, even less care for him

B. Man's exaltation (5-8)

1. By virtue of his creation by God
 - a. Made a little lower than the angels
 - b. Crowned with glory and honor
2. By virtue of his place in creation
 - a. Given dominion over the works of God
 - b. All things placed under his feet
 - 1) Sheep, oxen, the beasts of the field
 - 2) The birds of the air
 - 3) The fish that pass through the paths of the sea

C. Man's response (9)

1. To praise God!
2. For His excellent Name in all the earth!

Review Questions for the Psalm

1) What are the main points of this psalm?

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2) Who is the author of this psalm?

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3) For what does the Psalmist praise God? (1)

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4) How has God chosen to silence the enemy and the avenger? (2)

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**5) What prompted the Psalmist's amazement over God's concern for man?
(3-4)**

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6) How was man exalted when God created him? (5-6)

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7) What things were placed under man's feet? (7-8)

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8) Has man maintained his dominion over the earth? (cf. He 2:5-8)

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9) Who now has all authority over heaven and earth? (cf. He 2:9; Mt 28:19; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pe 3:22)

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10) Contemplating God's majesty and man's dignity, how does David end his psalm? (9)