

Psalm 8

Title: Jehovah's Glory and Man's Honor

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 8:3-4

Outline

- A. Doxology (verse 1).
- B. Jehovah's glory expressed by his children and creation (verses 1-4).
- C. Man's honor expressed by his position and dominion (verses 5-8).
- D. Doxology (verse 9).

Notes

Title: "For the Chief Musician; set to the Gittith. A Psalm of David." See the notes on previous psalms. The "Gittith" is thought to be an instrument of music from Gath, or a music tune that was used in the city of Gath (see also Psalm 81 and 84). David had spent some time in Gath (see 1 Sam. 21:10-15; 27:1-4).

Verse 1: The psalmist used two words for God; a name, "Jehovah" (Heb. *Yahweh*, eternal one), and a title, "our Lord" (Heb. *adonai*, master). See the notes on Psalm 2:2. In Psalm 110:1, these two words are used for God the Father ("Jehovah") and Jesus ("Lord"). The "name" of God stands for the whole nature, character, and person of God; all he is. God is Lord "in all the earth", not just in one location (Acts 17:24-29).

Verse 2: We use the words, "Out of the mouth of babes", to speak of a child who says something profoundly true and wise. Often the Lord's enemies are silenced by the truthful words of innocent children (the NIV reads: "to silence the foe and the avenger"). A portion of this verse is quoted by Jesus and applied to the praise he received from the children when he entered Jerusalem (Mt. 21:15-16).

Verse 3: David as a shepherd boy would have looked up into the night sky while tending sheep and beheld the glory of the heavens, the moon, and the stars.

Verse 4: The psalmist uses two terms for humans: "man" (Heb. *'enosh*, weakness, frail, mortal) and "son of man" (Heb. *ben-adam*, humankind; not animal, plant, rock, etc).

Verses 4-6: These words are quoted by the author of Hebrews to show that Jesus has a better name than the angels (Heb. 2:6-8). Psalm 8:6 is quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:27 and applied to Jesus having dominion over all things (compare with Eph. 1:22).

Verse 5: Some versions have “a little lower than God” (ASV, NASV, NLT, etc) and some versions have “a little lower than the angles” (KJV, NKJV, NIV, etc). The Heb. is *elohim* meaning “mighty ones”. This word is applied to angels (see Deut. 32:43; Job 1:6; 2:1; Psa. 29:1; 89:6; 97:7; and 138:1). “Angels” is probably the better translation because of how this verse is translated in Hebrews 2:7 and the contrast there between Jesus and angels.

Verse 6: Dominion was a privileged responsibility granted by God to mankind at the creation (Gen. 1:26-31).

Verse 9: This verse repeats the refrain of the first verse: “How excellent is thy name...” Verse 1 and verse 9 act like brackets of praise. Psalm 8 is considered the first of the “praise” psalms.

Questions

1. What does the psalmist praise about the Lord (verse 1)?
2. Who gives the Lord praise and what does this result in (verse 2)?
3. What did the psalmist stop to consider and meditate upon (verse 3)?
4. Who is the Lord mindful of and who does he care for (verse 4)?
5. What is man’s position in creation and what does he possess (verse 5)?
6. What does mankind have dominion over (verse 6-8)?
7. How does the psalmist open and close this psalm (verse 1 and 9)?

Applications for Today

1. The Lord's "name" is excellent (verse 1). What did Paul write about the "name" of Jesus (Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 3:17)?
2. Both the expansive heavens and the small child express the majesty of God (verses 1-2). We need to express child-like praise to God (verse 2). According to Jesus, Paul, and Peter, who do we need to become like and why (Mt. 18:3-4; 1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Pet. 2:2)?
3. God's creation is awesome and glorious (verse 3). What can we learn about the Creator from looking at his physical creation (Psa. 19:1-6; Acts 14:15-17; Rom. 1:20-21)?
4. Even though God's created universe is vast and glorious, mankind still has a significant place in it. God cares about you. You have a valuable self-image and self-worth. You are important to God (verse 4). What is said about mankind at the beginning of creation? What is man (Gen. 1:26-28)? What does the Lord look at in man (1 Sam. 16:6-7)? What does the Lord do for his people (Gen. 21:1; Ruth 1:6; Lk. 1:68)?
5. Mankind is the pinnacle of God's creation and he is different from other creatures. The evolutionist says that man is a little higher than the animals, but the psalmist says that man is a little lower than the angels (verse 5). Mankind is over the animals, he is not one of the animals (verses 6-8). What does mankind have that other parts of creation do not have and that is so valuable (Mt. 16:26; Lk. 12:20)?
6. It is good to praise the name of the Lord: "How excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (verse 1 and verse 9). How is the Lord praised (Rom. 15:11; Eph. 1:12; Phil. 1:11; Heb. 13:15; Jas. 5:13; Rev. 19:5)?