



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Holy Book of Psalms

## Psalm 8

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# Introduction

- In this psalm David speaks of the glory of God
- It is a song of praise (Hymn), glorifying God the Creator
- Its theme is the greatness and the glory of God which is perceived through the greatness and honor of man
- This Psalm gives an answer to the question, "What is man?", by underlining the redeeming work of the Son of Man who was incarnated and appeared in humiliation, a little lower than the angels, to taste death on behalf of every man, but is now crowned with glory and honor, so that we might be glorified in Him and with Him

# Introduction



- In other words, God's glory is manifested in the dignity of human nature as it was in its origin, and as it is to be restored in Jesus Christ who became the "Son of Man"
- The melody of the whole psalm is inspired by two feelings of the psalmist 'fear of God and joy in His glory
- The title of this psalm reads, *To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gittith. A Psalm of David*
- It indicates the audience of the psalm (*the Chief Musician*), the author of the psalm (of *David*) and the sound of the psalm (*the instrument of Gittith*)
- The scholars were not sure of the meaning of the word Gittith





# Introduction

- Some think it refers to the Palestinian city of Gath, and may refer to a tune commonly sung there
- Or, an instrument of music that was invented in Gath
- Or, a song of Obededom the Gittite, in whose house the ark rested
- Or, a song sung over Goliath of Gath
- Others, tracing the Hebrew to its root, perceive it to mean a song for the winepress, a joyful hymn for those who tread the grapes
- It may be a reference to the wine press where the precious blood was poured on Calvary's cross (Isaiah 63:1-4)



# Introduction

- Therefore, some say that the Psalm may refer to our Lord and the time of the Gospel
- Which is evident from the reference made to Psalm 8:2, in Matthew 11:25, the express quotation of it in Matthew 21:16, and another reference to it in 1 Corinthians 1:27
- The fourth and sixth verses are quoted Hebrews 2:6-9 and also 1 Corinthians 15:27, and Ephesians 1:22
- It relates simply to Christ and redemption
- The term Gittith is applied to two other Psalms, (81 and 84) both of which, being of a joyous character, it may be concluded, that where we find that word in the title, we may look for a hymn of joy and gladness



# Introduction

## Psalm Outline

- The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2
- The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8
- The Excellence of God 8:9



# The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2



- For the first time in the Holy Book of Psalms the personal feeling is willfully disregarded
- The focus on a larger and a general human feeling
- The psalmist recognizes God's relation to all mankind as to the whole material creation
- Unable to express the glory of God, the psalmist express a note of exclamation
- *O Lord our Lord*, No heart can measure, no tongue can put in words, the half of the greatness of God
- If we believe that God is the Lord, we must acknowledge Him to be ours

# The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2



- O Lord in Hebrew, Yahweh
- It is an address to God by His chosen and special title, Exodus 3:14
- Our Lord - The word used here *adônay* - means master, lord, ruler, or owner
- *Your name* That expression of Yourself in the works of Creation by which Your character may be recognized
- *How excellent is Your name in all the earth*, The works of creation reveal and proclaim to all the world that there is an infinite Being, the source of all being, the supreme Ruler, and powerful Protector



# The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2



- The name of God refers to the revealed Person of God, including all of His attributes and may here very properly refer to our Lord Jesus Christ
- His goodness and His wisdom are manifested in everything
- The heavens are glorious, the most glorious of all the works of God which the eye of man can reach; but the glory of God is infinitely above even these
- The heavens cannot contain His glory
- The psalmist, however, seems to look forward to the to the gospel of Christ

# The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2



- The time when the name of God, which was before great in Israel only, should be made known by divine revelation to all the earth, the very ends of which are to see His great salvation Mark 16:15
- It expresses the wish or prayer of David that the name or praise of God, so manifest in the earth, might be exalted in the highest possible degree - be more elevated than the moon and the stars - exalted and adored in all world
- In the first verse, David considered the greatness of God by His evident power and glory in creation, both across the earth and in the heavens

# The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2



- In verse 2, he considers that the power and glory of God can be seen in small children – *babes and nursing infants* – as God's *strength* is evident in them
- This opening about infants sets the stage for a contrast between the dependent and the foolishly self-sufficient
- It is hard to think of anything more weak and helpless than a baby; yet the same God who can ordain strength *out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants* can give strength and support to me in the midst of my weakness
- It may also allude to how God uses the weak things to display His glory and strength



# The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2



- *“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.” 1 Corinthians 1:27*
- The words may be applied to the apostles and meek preachers of the Gospel; to the simple and comparatively uneducated followers of Christ, who, through His teaching, were able to defeat the wise among the Jews, and the mighty among the heathens: and in this sense our Lord uses the term babes, Matthew 11:25, *“I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.”*

# The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2



- Our Lord applied this passage also to the Jewish children, who cried out in the temple, "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" Matthew 21:16
- As the Psalm wholly relates to Jesus Christ, it is most probable that in this act of the Jewish children the prophecy had its primary fulfillment; and was left to the Jews as a witness and a sign of the Messiah, which they should have acknowledged when our Lord directed their attention to it
- The reason *why* God displays His strength in unlikely vessels is because it works to *silence the enemy*; Satan has nothing to say when God works so mightily in a weak person

# The Visibly Seen Glory of Creation 8:1-2



- The general sense is that God has intended that even the weakest representatives of humanity should be His champions to silence those who oppose His kingdom and deny His goodness and providential authority
- Man, even in the weakness of childhood, is a witness of the existence and character of God
- *the enemy and avenger*, must not be limited to the enemies of the nation; these no doubt are among the enemies of God
- The *avenger* in particular is one who assumes, in his own selfish interests, a judicial function which belongs to God alone (Deuteronomy 32:35; Nahum 1:2)



# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- It is probably of the sky at night that the Psalmist is thinking, for he does not mention the sun, but only *the moon and the stars*
- David knew the value of simply *considering* the glory of God's creation
- He knew what it was like to contemplate and look up into the shining sky and *consider* what a great God had made this vast, wonderful universe
- *Your fingers*, The scale of the universe diminishes in the presence of the Creator
- To create stars, planets, and galaxies, God needed only His fingers

# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- Considering the greatness of the heavens made David consider the relative insignificance of man
- In comparison with *Your heavens* man seems to the psalmist wholly unworthy of God's attention
- *What is man*, A man who is in his fallen state, full of infirmity, ignorance, and sin
- *the son of man*, is the name of the Messiah and used by Him of Himself in the Gospels
- *You visit him*, With the attention and care which He bestow upon man; not forgetting him; and not leaving him
- For him the Son of God became man

# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- *You visit him,* It is also to be understood about Christ
- St. John Chrysostom contemplates and says, *“To be thought worthy of such wonderful privileges, what must human being be? I mean, if you consider what was done and is being done for their sake, and what they will enjoy afterwards, you will be stricken with awe, and then you will see clearly how this being is an object of such attention on God’s part.”*



# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- Man is lower than the angels, while he is in the flesh
- However, St. Paul in Hebrews used this passage from Psalm 8 to show that Jesus really did add a genuinely *human* nature to His divine nature and thus also became *a little lower than the angels*
- 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
- *You have 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

# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- And requiring all creatures, angels and men, to give worship and adoration to Him
- 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
- God thought so much of man, that He created the earth and the heavens, and everything in it for the use of man

# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- Verse 6 present how all power in heaven and in earth was 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 kings, and Lord of lords
- All things in heaven and earth, which God has made, are put into His hands
- For He is head over all things to the church
- *under his feet*, Made them subject to Him



# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- Jesus Christ, who is equal with God, for a time emptied Himself, and made Himself of no reputation; was afterwards highly exalted, and had a name above every name, Philippians 2:6-9
- Though the whole creation was made subject to Adam in his state of innocence; yet it could never be literally said of him, that God had put all things under his feet, or that he had dominion over the work of God's hands; but all this is most literally true of our Lord Jesus; and to Him the apostle, Hebrews 2:6, applies all these passages

# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- The living creatures are only mentioned by way of example and illustration of *all things*
- *sheep and oxen*, The tame animals, which are useful for food and clothing
- In the Psalmist's day the dominion of man over nature was most remarkably exercised in his mastery over the animals, which he tamed or caught and turned to his own use
- *The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea*, All these were given to man in the beginning; and he has still a general dominion over them

# The Surprising Glory of Mankind 8:3-8



- God has always wanted man to have dominion over all the things in the earth
- God has always wanted man to live in the Garden of Eden
- And Jesus restored man to his original state with God on the cross
- *And the fish of the sea*, We can see instances of Christ's power over them, and of their being at His command, and for His service in (Matthew 17:27; Luke 5:6)





# The Excellence of God 8:9

- The best way the Psalmist can close is with the same exclamation of awe and wonder with which he began
- He repeated it with greater significance
- And after he thought about how vast a dominion God had given to man, he praised God all over again
- David understood that the position of man in creation says far more about the glory of God than saying anything about the glory of man and understanding it all should make us praise God
- The glory of God is the theme from the beginning and the end of the psalm



# Discussion

- How does this psalm begin and end?
- What is significant about God's name that reminds us that He is worthy of our praise and worship?
- How does God's creation reveal His greatness?
- Why was Jesus made a little lower than the angels?
- How can we glorify the name of the Lord?