

This psalm, which commentators agree has Messianic elements, speaks of the glorious nature of the God Who has created glorious things such as the moon, stars and other heavenly bodies. David expresses his amazement that this glorious God has given His attention and favor to mankind by not only creating man in His own image but also giving him dominion over His earthly creation.

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

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

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**“To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of David”** – Although it does not give us the occasion for its writing, the title for this psalm tells us that it was written by David. Also we are given what is apparently a musical instruction intended for the chief musician (presumably the leader of worship). Most commentators believe that a “gittith” is an unknown musical instrument that David apparently intended to be played during the singing of this psalm.

**“O LORD [I AM; Yahweh; Jehovah] our Lord [master; king; sovereign]”** – The KJV translators render the name “LORD” in all capital letters to indicate that this is the name of God as revealed to Moses (Ex. 3:14; 6:3). The Jews believed the name of God to be too sacred to pronounce and so they would substitute the word “Lord” when reading God’s name aloud, which is why our Bible uses the name “LORD” in its place. David addresses God by His name and describes Him as being supremely sovereign over Israel as well as the rest of the earth.

**“how excellent [great; majestic] is thy name in all the earth!”** – The name of the LORD is a name that is greater and more majestic than any other name used in the earth. It carries more power and glory than the names of any false gods worshiped by the people of the earth. It is far above any king or great men that have ever lived. David is expressing how glorious the name of the LORD is, because it represents the one true God. Meaning “I AM,” the name speaks of God’s attributes of being the eternal, self-existing One. To show honor to His name means to show honor to God Himself. Likewise, to insult or show contempt for the name is to insult and show contempt for God Himself.

**“who hast set thy glory above the heavens”** – The “heavens” likely refers primarily to the sky and everything that David could see in the sky, including the sun, moon and stars, etc. These are likely the highest and most glorious things that David could think of and he describes the LORD as the One Who has shown His glory to be even greater and higher than these heavenly things, particularly since it was the LORD Who created them (v. 3). This also implies that the LORD is sovereign over the heavens and everything underneath them, including all men who live upon the earth.

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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.

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**“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies”** – Babes and sucklings are the weakest and most helpless of all human beings and yet all they have to do is call on the LORD for help and His intervention will make them strong in the face of their enemies. David is using the weakest among us to illustrate the strength we have when we depend on the LORD. It shows the greatness and strength of the LORD when He can use the weakest among us to defeat the strongest. It also speaks of the strength that comes through the faith of a child, for Jesus said that we must receive the kingdom of God with the same simplicity and faith as a little child (**Mark 10:15** “*Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein*”). Children may be weak in the natural sense, but they can tap into the power of God through faith. God is especially protective of children (**Mark 9:42** “*And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea*”). The Apostle Paul declared that God loves to use weak things to refute the supposed wisdom of the world (**1 Cor 1:27** “*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty*”). Jesus spoke of how children could grasp spiritual truths through faith that so-called “smart” adults seemed to miss (**Matt. 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*”). Jesus also quoted this verse when the chief priests and scribes were complaining to Him because children were praising Him in the temple to demonstrate that these children had more spiritual sense than the spiritual leaders of the Jews (**Matt. 21:16** “*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?*”).

**“that thou mightest still [to cause to cease; to destroy] the enemy and the avenger”** – The LORD uses the cry of babes and sucklings as a reason to defeat/destroy the enemies of His people and those who would seek vengeance upon them. The LORD does this so that He will get the glory instead of man and so that men will trust His strength instead of their own (**1 Cor 1:26-29** “*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence*”). The imagery can also support the idea that God uses weak human beings to destroy Satan, the enemy of our souls and the one who seeks vengeance on Christ and His people.

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3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

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**“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained [established]”** – David turns his attention to “thy heavens” (they belong to God and were created by Him), including the moon, stars, and other heavenly bodies. He describes them as God’s creation (“the work of thy fingers”) and that it was God Who “ordained” (established; put in place) them. Notice that David calls these things “the work of thy fingers,” implying the minimal effort it took on God’s part to create them. Using figurative language, David declares that God did not have to exert His whole “body” during creation but merely used His “fingers” to create everything from nothing.

**“What is man, that thou art mindful [to remember] of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest [to pay attention to] him?”** – The Hebrew word translated “man” in the phrase “what is man” is a generic word for man *’ēnōwsh*, which can refer to an individual or a group of men. The Hebrew word used in the phrase “son of man” is *ādām*, which is the name of Adam. David likely was emphasizing the idea of mankind who are descendants of Adam (sons shared the nature of their father), but many commentators connect this to Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Jesus frequently referred to Himself as the “Son of man” which emphasized His humanity as well as connecting Himself to one of Daniel’s Messianic prophecies: **Dan. 7:13-14** *“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”*

In context, David’s point here is: What is man compared to the grandeur of the heavens that God has created? Why would God pay attention to and show favor to mankind who constantly sin and rebel against Him? Men are mortal while the heavens (from David’s point of view) are eternal. The heavens bring God glory while men are guilty of blaspheming and bringing shame to their Creator. They are deserving of His judgment rather than His favor, and yet God has been good to them and has chosen to provide the means of their salvation through Jesus Christ.

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5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

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**“For thou hast made him a little lower [to be lacking] than the angels [’elohiym]”** – The first blessing that David mentions is the fact that God created man to be just below the angels in greatness. The Hebrew word he uses for “angels” is *elohiym*, which is the same word used for God in Gen. 1:1 and countless other places in the OT. However, the word *elohiym* can also refer to “divine ones” and even “rulers or judges.” When the writer of Hebrews quotes this verse (Heb. 2:6-8a) he uses a Greek word that specifically means “angels,” demonstrating that “angels” is apparently the proper translation here in Psa. 8:5. David’s point here is that God did not create man to be disposable creatures like the animals which are made to be taken and destroyed (2 Peter 2:12). Instead, God created man in His own image (**Gen. 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”*) and has placed him “a little lower than the angels” in His hierarchy of created things. The writer of Hebrews applies Psalm 8:5-6 to Christ, who was made a little lower than the angels for a time (the incarnation) in order to die for our sins (Heb. 2:9-10) but will not experience full dominion over all things (Heb. 2:8) until that future day when He will establish His millennial kingdom on earth.

**“and hast crowned him with glory and honour”** – Evolution says that man is only an animal that has evolved further than other animals on the earth, and is thus has no more value than any other earthly creature. However, scripture says that God has “crowned” man with glory and honor. The word “crowned” implies honor and authority. The glory and honor that God has given to man begins with the fact that man was created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26), which gives him an honor and dignity above animals and other created things on this earth. Then God gave man dominion over the earthly creation (Gen. 1:26). God has also honored man by the fact that He sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins in order to redeem us and make us His children. **1 John 3:1** *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”*

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6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: 7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; 8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

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The latter part of Gen. 1:26, God says *“...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.”* David summarizes this by saying that God “madest him [man] to have dominion over the works of thy hands.” God gave the stewardship of the earth to mankind and “hast put all things under his feet.” The writer of Hebrews quotes this verse and applies it to Christ Who will have dominion over the whole earth during His future kingdom (Heb. 2:8). David continues by naming specific animal groups (as does Gen. 1:26) to represent the various portions of God’s creation that has been placed under man’s supervision.

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9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

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David ends this psalm with the same statement that he used to begin it (v. 1). David is obviously so moved and amazed by the glory of God and the favor that this glorious God has shown to man that he is compelled to repeat the fact that the magnificence of God’s name surpasses anything that can be found on the earth.