

# *Ponderings in the Psalms*

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The following is a Messianic Study on

## *Psalm 1*

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**Brit Chadashah**  
ברית חדשה

The *Pondering* studies were published in the Brit Chadashah Newsletter. Brit Chadashah (*New Covenant*) is a Messianic Fellowship in Sydney. Led by Paul Cohen a Jewish believer in Messiah Yeshua (Jesus). We meet together fortnightly for Bible studies from a Messianic Jewish Perspective. We are a unique fellowship made up of Jewish and Gentile people who are believers in Yeshua as the promised Messiah of Israel.

If you don't know Yeshua as your Messiah, we encourage you to search out the Scriptures for yourself. God promised in the book of Jeremiah, "*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart*" (Jeremiah 29:13). And we hope you will make contact with us so that we can share more about the Messiah, His life and ministry.

Brit Chadashah is part of Celebrate Messiah (Australia). Celebrate Messiah's desire is to bring the Good News message of Messiah to the Original Messengers and to see God's Chosen People fully restored through faith in Yeshua the Messiah. Celebrate Messiah was founded in 1995 by Lawrence and Louise Hirsch. Lawrence is a Jewish believer in Yeshua. <http://www.CelebrateMessiah.com.au>.

Brit Chadashah is committed to building the Messianic Community of Jews and Gentiles who are a living testimony for Yeshua the Messiah. By donating to Brit Chadashah, you are partnering with us to do the work of "Reaching the Original Messengers". The funds will be used in outreach to Jewish people as well as in educating Christians in effective ways to reach out.

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# Pondering Psalm 1

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The Psalms give us a unique understanding of the ministry of the Messiah, we can see this as both Yeshua and the disciples used them extensively. Luke 24:44 tells us of Yeshua saying to his disciples after the resurrection: “This is what I told you when I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Yeshua knew what was in them about him and the ministry he did, is doing and will be doing, for within them we have the complete ministry of Messiah; Prophet, Priest and King.

Like many other cultures, Israel had a vibrant singing culture; in the Bible alone there are 185 songs, most of these are found in the five books of Psalms, though we must remember that the book of Psalms is more than a songbook. We might recall two other Biblical songbooks; *Song of Songs* (or Song of Solomon) the love song between Solomon and Shulamite and the almost directly opposite literature the *Book of Lamentations* with its five dirges (mournful / funeral songs), which we will read in August on Tisha B'av. Some of the songs scattered throughout the Bible are very short and some are very long, ranging from 5 to 7 words in Hebrew slightly longer in English, in (2 Chronicles 5:13 & 20:21). As compared to the very verbose 947 words in Hebrew (or some 2,400 words in English) in Psalm 119.

Like me, you may be surprised to learn how great a number of the Psalms are quoted and alluded to in the New Testament. It seems that over 100 separate passages from at least 60 different Psalms are referenced in the New Covenant. And in many of these the subject deals with the sufferings, resurrection, and the ascension of Messiah. Others are about the priesthood and future kingship of Messiah.

The Hebrew word for “psalms”, is תְּהִלִּים (*Tehillim*), at times translated as “hymns” (Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26) or “songs of praise” (Nehemiah 12:46; Psalm 40:3). However, the Psalms are much more than this, for they contain prayers and songs, prophecies and warnings. They form the basis of much of the liturgy and worship for 1000’s of years and we too should sing these more often, they are after all God’s inspired songbook.

According to Jewish tradition (Bavli Berachot 9b) Psalm 1 and 2 are one Psalm attributed to David, who is described as the Prophet and King. Indeed many of the psalms were written by David, who according to tradition wrote 73 in total, but others are by Asaph, Korah, Solomon, Moses and others.

This Psalm is one of the more well-known ones. It summarizes the two paths of life open to people, first the portrait of the righteous (Psalm 1:1-3), second the ruin of the wicked (Psalm 1:4-6).

## Psalm 1

- 1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,  
Nor stand in the path of sinners,  
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water,

- Which yields its fruit in its season  
 And its leaf does not wither;  
 And in whatever he does, he prospers.
- 4 The wicked are not so,  
 But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
 Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
 But the way of the wicked will perish.

The same warning is found in Jeremiah 17:5-7 “*Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. (6) He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. (7) “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.”* (cf. Deuteronomy 30:11-20).

Some commentators have seen all of history built around this concept of the ‘two ways’.

### **For the Two ways are the two destinies.**

1. We too must, therefore, make a choice, are we in the first Adam and in the Last Adam (Romans 5; 1 Corinthians 15:45)?
2. Are we walking in the way of Cain or Abel? (Genesis 4)
3. Do we follow ungodly or Godly advice like Ishmael or Isaac? (Genesis 16-28)
4. Do we despise our birthright and the covenant like Esau (Genesis 25:32; Hebrews 12:16) or pursue it like Jacob? (Genesis 25:32).
5. Do we build our own kingdom like Saul (1 Samuel 13:11-16) or are we men and women after God’s heart, building the Kingdom of the LORD? (1 Kings 8:17).
6. Do we walk like Orpah or Ruth, wanting to be part of the covenant people despite the hardship or do we turn back to comfortable surroundings?

More examples are in scripture, and so it makes me wonder what about us; do we walk in the Light of the Word of the Lord or sit with the scoffers?

Finally, there is an interesting phrase in verse two, his *meditation* this is curious as the Hebrew has יְהִי־גֵחַ (yeh’geh) which is something a bird does ‘coo’ or a lion ‘growl’, as such perhaps an alternative translation might read “*to murmur*” or to “*mumble*” as if to “*speak to oneself*” this is not a negative as in English but indicating that His word is on our lips continually, i.e. repeating the words softly to ourselves, so that we might think about the words and study and review them throughout the day and night as it is written in Psalm 4:4 “*ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah*”.

May we be murmuring what the Lord has said and what He has done in our lives day and

night.

*I hope this illuminates our understanding of this Psalm a little.*

*Blessings in Messiah Yeshua*

*Paul & Sue*

[All translations will be from the NASB95 unless otherwise indicated.]