

# *Ponderings in the Psalms*

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The following is a Messianic Study on

## *Psalm 18*

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**Brit Chadashah**  
ברית חדשה

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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.

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# Pondering Psalm 18

## Praise the Lord who gives deliverance.

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### Intro

This song finishes strongly with thanksgiving; as such it is considered a Thanksgiving psalm. And indeed throughout you sense David's gratefulness to God for being his deliverance. This Psalm recalls the events of 2 Samuel 22, in a poetic way, describing how God stepped in and delivered him from death from the hands of domestic and foreign foes. Because God is faithful to the covenant promises made with David He gives him the victory on the battle and over nations as such this can also be seen as a Royal Psalm.

**As it is a long psalm, I will quote the text in full at the end,** and so I urge you to read both Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 first and note the extensive parallels, and note the variations, omissions, and changes. David the warrior-king was at peace is reflecting back on his life and now after the events have passed writes this song.

### Summary

With various descriptions David tells what the LORD had demonstrated to be to him (18:1-3); even through difficult times (18:4-6), David recalls that the Lord answered his prayer (18:7-15), and saved him from powerful enemies (18:16-19). David then describes his own integrity (18:20-23), and expresses a general aspect that God is faithful to those who are faithful to Him, and that it is God who save the humble (18:24-27).

David recalls that the Lord is his Light, Strength and Shield and David wants to walk in His way (18:28-30); it is God who has given him strength and skill for war and because he kept His way David's way was perfect (18:31-34); the Lord was his defence and enabled David to be victorious over his enemies (18:35-42); He delivered him from strife with his own people (Israel) and even set him as ruler over some of the neighbouring nations (18:43-45).

David closes in praise of who the LORD is and has done for him. In the hope that His praise shall go forth throughout the nations. It was God who had delivered him and the promise of His steadfast love goes to His Messiah, David and his children for evermore (18:46-50).

### Comments: Psalms 18:1-3; Hebrew text: 18:1-4 the *Lord the Rock*

The subtitle in most Christian Bibles is actually verse 1 for this is part of the Biblical inspired text and gives us the context of the Psalm. Because Jewish Bibles do have this as verse 1, it means that verse 2 equals verse 1 in the Christian Bibles etc.

David puts to poetry (song) the words of 2 Samuel 22 for the worship leader of the Tabernacle that it may be a reminder to all of us what the LORD has done. It gives a setting David was delivered from all his enemies; domestic from the previous king, Saul and from foreign enemies, the Philistines from Edom in the south to Zobah in the north, (this was an Aramean nation whose territory was between Damascus and the Euphrates River).

David own term for himself is עֶבֶד (*eved*) servant of the LORD, a seemingly insignificant term at times translated as *slave*, yet Biblically speaking this is the highest form of leadership we can aspire too, Moses himself was designated by this term (Deuteronomy 34:5), and is so designated many times in Joshua, only at the end of his life does Joshua get this honour also

(Joshua 24:29). And David is the Servant here and in Psalm 36. In the Brit Chadashah Miryam (Mary) the mother of Yeshua too calls herself by this phrase (Luke 1:38). But why would this be so such a significant phrase? Because from the book of Isaiah we read about the Servant songs; (Isaiah 42:1-4; Isaiah 49:1-6; Isaiah 50:4-7; and Isaiah 52:13-53:12), these are passages about Messiah Himself, who is the ultimate Servant of the LORD.

David lists a number of names for God: The Rock, the Fortress, the Deliverer, the Shield, the Horn of salvation, The High Tower.

In many translations twice the title *Rock* appears, the first time it comes from the root סֶלַע (*selah*) meaning cliff or rock face, it was the name of a stronghold in the wilderness of Judah near Ein-Geddi, (1 Samuel 23:29) and so God is a stronghold in the wilderness. The second time the title *Rock* is used of God it is the word צֹר (tzur), this would be more descriptive of the strength and faithfulness of the LORD (see Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18 & 30-31) for He is the Rock of our Salvation, indicating it is His strength and faithfulness that had kept David.

### **Psalm 18:4-6; Hebrew text 18:5-7 seeking deliverance**

David expresses all of the dangers which happened when he was persecuted by Saul, his prayer-life, and his deliverance. In verse 4 (Hebrew 5) “*and the floods of Belial assailed me*” (or *foolish men*), the Hebrew בְּלִיָּאל (b’li-al) lit. worthlessness, may mean destruction, in 2 Corinthians 6:15 it is personified by the apostle as a synonym for Satan. David says these ungodly men cause “*floods*” that is a military destruction to come against me.

### **Psalms 18:7-15; Hebrew text 18:8-16 God in the storm**

David’s prayer is answered by the coming of the LORD to afflict his enemies, He displays Himself in earthquake and storm to the point that the “*foundations of the world*” are shaken.

Just like when Israel come out of Egypt, (Psalm 68 & 77), and at the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19), and as the second coming of Messiah (Habakkuk 3; 2 Thessalonians 1:7 & Revelation 19:15-16), so David describes the Lord coming to his aid in similar terms, God used heaven and earth to assist David.

Cherubim (plural of Cherub) are a class of winged supernatural beings / angels, which serve God in various capacities, the Hebrew כְּרֻב (cheruv) comes from the word “*to draw near*” these were guardians of holiness are described in Ezekiel chapters 1, 9-11. As you read these verses you note that they are not the cute winged babies, as often depicted in paintings; they do have a human body and hands (Ezekiel 1:5; 10:7) feet that go straight down like a calf, four wings, (elsewhere in scripture two or six wings), and two or four faces: that of a man, lion, ox and eagle. They carried the throne of God (Psalm 18:10 and Psalm 80:2; 2 Samuel 22:11). They are different and yet similar to both the שֶׁרָפִיִּים Seraphim (fiery or burning ones) from Isaiah 6 and the angelic beings mentioned in Revelation 4:6-8.

### **Psalms 18:16-19; Hebrew text 18:17-20 the Lord my deliverer**

Yes not only nature, but God Himself stepped in and aided David, “*because He delighted in me*”. This now becomes the leading thought of the Psalm.

The storm description reminds us of the Exodus period, and in that context David here seems to be portrait as a second Moses, “*He drew me out of many waters.*”

### **Psalms 18:20-23; Hebrew text 18:21-24 *the way of the Lord***

David with great steadfastness of childlike faith knows he is forgiven and restored based on the works of God (see verse 32), and when God forgives He chooses not to remember the sins (Isaiah 43:25). As such he is not boasting but acknowledging the the faithfulness of LORD to protect him. Based on this claim some commentators think that the Psalm was written before his affair with Bath-Sheba (2 Samuel 11:3).

Twice with confidence: according to my righteousness כִּי צַדִּיקָא (ki-tzidki) from tzedek an expression what is right, just and according to the cleanness: כִּי בָרָא (ki-bor) an expression of cleanness. David knows that God will not give him his just reward, but that He removes sins from us “*as far as the east is from the west*” (Psalm 103:12) in other words a distance that is immeasurable.

### **Psalms 18:24-27; Hebrew text 18:25-28 *God shows Himself***

Verse 25&26 see also 2 Samuel 22:27, we see a repeat as people behave so God behaves to them:

With the merciful You show Yourself merciful;  
With the blameless You show Yourself blameless;  
With the purified You show Yourself pure,  
And with the crooked You show Yourself astute.

Merciful from the word חֶסֶד (chesed) gracious, merciful, faithful

Blameless תָּמִים תָּמִים (tam / tamim) upright; integrity

Pure בָּרָא (bar) clean

Not so with the crooked שִׁקְשָׁא (ikesh) for God is absolute righteous as such there is no wickedness in Him, but He is תִּיתְפַּתֵּל (tit'pattal) here a great number of translations differ over the meaning from subtle to tortuous, from cunning to wrestling, twisting is perhaps a good translation, God will twist their wickedness back on them.

### **Psalms 18:28-30; Hebrew text 18:29-31 *my light and my strenght***

David relates from his life how God has dealt with him, God was his light and his strength. Because God is perfect; and will stay true to His Word and those that trust (take refuge) in it will find God to be a shield. David here recalls the words of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:4) later Solomon will quote this too (Proverbs 30:5).

### **Psalms 18:31-40; Hebrew text 18:32-41 *the Rock who gives strength***

Again David makes a reference to Deuteronomy (32:15) where the Lord is described as the Rock, meaning strength, as such He gave David his strength, his agility (*my feet like of a deer*) He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. He is quipped by God for service of a warrior king. It is God who made David blameless (tamim). In verse 35 the shield of salvation portrays God as the physical rescuer.

### **Psalms 18:41-42; Hebrew text 18:42-43 *they cried***

The enemy's prayer to their gods was in vain, when realised they even prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel and He too did not save them. David crushes them as if to dust (an expression used also in Isaiah 41:2) and like dust in the wind they were scattered. A second

motive “I emptied them out like the dirt of the streets” shows utter contempt (Isaiah 10:6; Zechariah 10:5).

### **Psalms 18:43-45; Hebrew text 18:44-46 *the kingdom***

This section talks about two dominions, the start of David’s rule over the foreign nations and the internal conflict, (civil war) during the latter half of Saul’s kingdom and the early years of David’s reign, when the decline of the house of Saul was happening. (2 Samuel 3:1-ff) David had been protected by the Lord and because of the Covenant (2 Samuel 7:1-17) David became king over Israel and also over the neighbouring nations (2 Samuel 8:1-14).

### **Psalms 18:46-50; Hebrew text 18:47-51**

David now concludes the Psalm with praise and thanksgiving for all that the Lord has done, these two verses are like a summary of the whole Psalm. The Lord Lives חַי־הַשֵּׁם (chai-haShem) He is the fountain and author of life and in and through Him all things have live. He is the Rock, He is the strength of the life He gave and God is also the author of salvation, both physical and spiritual. Because God is the author and keeper of the Covenant with David He will execute it till finds ultimate fulfilment. In light of that we ought to praise Him.

### **Messianic linkage in the rabbinic writings**

There are at least 5 places where the rabbinic writings connect this Psalm with the Messiah, see Tom Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah*, (Philadelphia, PA: Hananeel House, 1998), Ps 18. The two clearest of those are:

#### **Psalm 18:50. Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations I, 16-17.**

“... R. Judah b. R. Simon said in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac: King Messiah, whether he be of those still living or of those who are dead, bears the name of David. R. Tanhuma said: I will give his reason, viz, Great salvation He gives to His king; and shows mercy to His Messiah (Ps. 18:50 [Hebrew 51]), and the text continues, not ‘and to David’ but to David and to his seed, for evermore.”

#### **Psalm 18:51, Midrash on Proverbs, Chapter 19, 21.**

“... R. Huna said: The Messiah has been given seven names, and these are: Yinnon (Psalm 72:17), Our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6), Shoot (Isaiah 11:1), Comforter (Lamentations 1:16), David (Psalm 18:50), Shiloh (Genesis 49:10), Elijah... Where [in Scripture] is David? In the verse, He accords great victories to His king, [keeps faith with his Anointed, with David.] (Psalm 18:50 [Hebrew text 51]).”

[Language modernised and verses supplied by PC]

### **Brit Chadashah / New Covenant Connection**

Verse 49 is applied in the Brit Chadashah (Romans 15:9) to Yeshua “*and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written: Therefore will I give praise unto You among the Gentiles, and sing unto Your Name.*” This is describing Yeshua Himself giving praise to God among the Gentiles.

*Selah*

*Shalom in Messiah*

*Paul & Sue*

# Psalm 18

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1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said,

“I love You, O Lord, my strength.”

2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,

My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;

My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,

And I am saved from my enemies.

4 The cords of death encompassed me, And the torrents of ungodliness terrified me.

5 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me.

6 In my distress I called upon the Lord, And cried to my God for help;

He heard my voice out of His temple, And my cry for help before Him came into His ears.

7 Then the earth shook and quaked; And the foundations of the mountains were trembling

And were shaken, because He was angry.

8 Smoke went up out of His nostrils, And fire from His mouth devoured; Coals were kindled by it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down

With thick darkness under His feet.

10 He rode upon a cherub and flew; And He sped upon the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.

12 From the brightness before Him passed His thick clouds,

Hailstones and coals of fire.

13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens,

And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire.

14 He sent out His arrows, and scattered them,

And lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them.

15 Then the channels of water appeared, And the foundations of the world were laid bare

At Your rebuke, O Lord,

At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

16 He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters.

17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,

And from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me.

18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity,

But the Lord was my stay.

19 He brought me forth also into a broad place;

He rescued me, because He delighted in me.

20 The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness;

According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.

21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord, And have not wickedly departed from my God.

22 For all His ordinances were before me,

And I did not put away His statutes from me.

23 I was also blameless with Him,  
And I kept myself from my iniquity.  
24 Therefore the Lord has recompensed  
me according to my righteousness,  
According to the cleanness of my hands  
in His eyes.  
25 With the kind You show Yourself  
kind;  
With the blameless You show Yourself  
blameless;  
26 With the pure You show Yourself  
pure,  
And with the crooked You show  
Yourself astute.  
27 For You save an afflicted people,  
But haughty eyes You abase.  
28 For You light my lamp;  
The Lord my God illumines my  
darkness.  
29 For by You I can run upon a troop;  
And by my God I can leap over a wall.  
30 As for God, His way is blameless;  
The word of the Lord is tried;  
He is a shield to all who take refuge in  
Him.  
31 For who is God, but the Lord?  
And who is a rock, except our God,  
32 The God who girds me with strength  
And makes my way blameless?  
33 He makes my feet like hinds' feet,  
And sets me upon my high places.  
34 He trains my hands for battle,  
So that my arms can bend a bow of  
bronze.  
35 You have also given me the shield of  
Your salvation,  
And Your right hand upholds me;  
And Your gentleness makes me great.  
36 You enlarge my steps under me,  
And my feet have not slipped.  
37 I pursued my enemies and overtook  
them,  
And I did not turn back until they were  
consumed.  
38 I shattered them, so that they were  
not able to rise;  
They fell under my feet.

39 For You have girded me with  
strength for battle;  
You have subdued under me those who  
rose up against me.  
40 You have also made my enemies turn  
their backs to me,  
And I destroyed those who hated me.  
41 They cried for help, but there was  
none to save,  
Even to the Lord, but He did not answer  
them.  
42 Then I beat them fine as the dust  
before the wind;  
I emptied them out as the mire of the  
streets.  
43 You have delivered me from the  
contentions of the people;  
You have placed me as head of the  
nations;  
A people whom I have not known serve  
me.  
44 As soon as they hear, they obey me;  
Foreigners submit to me.  
45 Foreigners fade away,  
And come trembling out of their  
fortresses.  
46 The Lord lives, and blessed be my  
rock;  
And exalted be the God of my salvation,  
47 The God who executes vengeance for  
me,  
And subdues peoples under me.  
48 He delivers me from my enemies;  
Surely You lift me above those who rise  
up against me;  
You rescue me from the violent man.  
49 Therefore I will give thanks to You  
among the nations, O Lord,  
And I will sing praises to Your name.  
50 He gives great deliverance to His  
king,  
And shows lovingkindness to His  
anointed,  
To David and his descendants forever.