

Ponderings in the Psalms

The following is a Messianic Study on

Psalm 24

By Paul Cohen, Messianic Bible Teacher.
Brit Chadashah (Sydney)
www.BCSydney.com



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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.

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Brit Chadashah; P.O. Box 304; Caulfield South, VIC 3162, Australia
Email: bc@celebratemessiah.com.au
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BritChadashah.Sydney>
YouTube <https://tinyurl.com/BC-Video>

Psalm 24

The Lord shall be King over all the earth

A Psalm¹ of David.

*The earth is the LORD's
and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,
for He has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.
Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.
He will receive blessing from the LORD
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face (of the God²) of Jacob.*

Selah.

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates!
And be ye lifted up, O ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty,
The LORD, mighty in battle!
Lift up your heads, O ye gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
He is the King of glory!*

Selah.

¹ מִזְמוֹר a Mitzmor, a song set to melody

² Based on the Septuagint, Hebrew Text does not have *of the God*.

Intro

Jewish Background

- This Psalm is read on the First Day of the Week (Sunday) this was according to tradition the reading in the Temple and it is still today a reading in the Synagogue³.
- This Psalm is read when Orthodox Jewish men Completing a book of Talmud.
- A prominent theory of the rabbis was that his hymn was composed for “Solomon’s bringing of the Ark of the Covenant into his new Temple (1 Kings 8)⁴”.
- Verses 3-4 are recited at Passover the Seder “Who may...

Trilogy:

Concluding the Messianic trilogy of Psalms:

1. **The Psalm of the Crucifixion, the Shepherd King Psalm 22, (John 10:11** the good shepherd who laid down His life for us His sheep);
2. **The Psalm of the Shepherd, Psalm 23, (Hebrews 13:20** the great Shepherd of the sheep who brought in through his blood the new eternal covenant);
3. **The Psalm of Messiah the Shepherd King Psalm 24, (1 Peter 5:4** And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Titles for God

1. The **God of his salvation**, v. 5 (see also Psalm. 18:46; 25:5; 27:9; 51:14; 79:9; 88:1, Micah 7:7; Habakkuk 3:18)⁵
2. The **King of glory**, vv. 7,8,10 (four times, twice in v.10)
3. **The LORD strong and mighty**, v. 8
4. **The LORD mighty in battle**, v. 8
5. **The LORD of hosts**, v. 10

The last three 3-5, portray the LORD as “the Man of War” (from Exodus 15:3-10

Exodus 15:3 “*The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is His Name.*”, when Yeshua returns He will come as the *man of war*, who is the “KING of kings, and LORD of lords.” (מֶלֶךְ הַמְּלָכִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים) Revelation 19:11-19 Cf. Daniel 2:47, 7:14;)

³ Other Psalms according to Jewish tradition (Siddur / Mishnah-SOURCE?) are said on these days.

Sunday “The land and all it contains are God’s” (Psalm 24).

Monday “God is great and very much praised in the city of our God, His holy mountain” (Psalm 48)

Tuesday “God stands in the congregation of God” (Psalm 82).

Wednesday “O god of vengeance, O God; appear O god of vengeance” (Psalm 94).

Thursday “Sing praises to God who is our might, sound the *shofar* to the God of Jacob” (Psalm 81).

Friday “God has reigned; He has attired Himself with majesty” (Psalm 93).

Shabbat “A song with musical accompaniment for the Shabbat day” (Psalms 92).

Psalm 24 is also recited after the Rosh Hashanah Amida.

Psalm 27, “L’David Hashem Ori”, which is recited from Rosh Chodesh Elul through to Yom Kippur.

⁴ Nahum Sarna *On the Book of Psalms*; Psalm 24

⁵ The connection with The LORD and Salvation is made, ASV: God * Salvation (55x), **The LORD (Yahweh)*** Salvation (54x), Lord (Adonai)* salvation (2)

Outlines

Even a superficial reading of Psalm 24 will indicate that there are two poems⁶ with three vastly different sections⁷ (Poem 1 section 1) 1–2, Poem 1 section 2) 3–6, Poem 2 - section 3) 7–10).

Poem one: Verses 1&2: **The Lord of Creation**

Verses 3-6 **The Moral behaviour needed to obtain a blessing**

Poem two: Verses 7-10 **The Coming of the King**

Intro to the Opening Song Psalm 24:1-6

Based on

- Genesis 1:9-10 “*And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together He called seas. And God saw that it was good.*”
- **Similar verses**
- Psalms 104:5-6 “*He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.*”
- Psalms 136:6 “*to Him who spread out the earth above the waters, for His steadfast love endures forever.*”

1. The Lord of Creation 24:1-6

24:1-2

David affirmed that the Lord will be King / Sovereign over all things. He is over all because He created all. The Apostle Paul appealed to this verse to support the doctrine that Christians may eat anything sold in the markets, provided doing so does not cause someone else to stumble (1 Corinthians 10:26).

The pagans viewed their gods as limited to certain regions or functions, but the Lord-God is sovereign over all. Verse 2 looks back to the creation of the world. The “rivers” (ESV) or “floods” (KJV) is a poetic synonym for “seas”⁸. It probably describes the watery chaos out of which Moses described the world emerging in the Genesis account of creation (Genesis 1:10).

Rabbinic Comments

RASHI⁹: The Earth in Hebrew is אֶרֶץ (הָאָרֶץ - ha’aretz) also mean dry land (אֶרֶץ), and specifically the Land of Israel (אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל), in rabbinic thought “Seven seas surrounded Eretz Israel and four rivers: the Jordan, Yarmuk, Karmion, and Pigah.”¹⁰

⁶ Robert Alter, Book of Psalms, “Scholarly consensus [is that verses 7-10 are]... an originally separate poem.”

⁷ Rabbi Benjamin J. Segal; A New Psalm: The Psalms As Literature (pub: Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies): Psalm 24.

⁸ River or flood is the Hebrew word נְהָרוֹת - (from נָהַר) which literally means flowing – river.

⁹ Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, generally known by the acronym Rashi, French medieval rabbi and author of a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud and commentary on the Tanach. His commentary on the Torah is always included in the Chumash. Born:1040 - Died: 1105.

¹⁰ Rashi on Psalm 24:

RADAK¹¹: **The earth . . . the world.** “the term *aretz / eretz* (translated here as **the earth**) means “all the world,” while its parallel in the second verse, *tevel*¹² (תֵּבֵל **world**), means the inhabited world or dry land.¹³”

2. Poem 1: section 2; The Moral behaviour needed to obtain a blessing

24:3-4

David now turns his attention to who could go into the Tabernacle of such a great God on Mount Zion (Psalm 23:6). Who would have the courage to do so? He who has done the **Right actions** (clean hands) and has kept the **Right attitudes** (a pure heart) for these necessary if one want to commune with God and stand in His presence. The opposite being idolatry and bearing false witness, it is not just a prayer of forgiveness, but making restitution, all sins are either towards God, or towards man, or both, and this behaviour and thinking would disqualify any potential worshipper. King David in Psalm 15 expresses the same thought in the five verses.

James the brother of the Lord expresses the same thought in James 2:17-18 “*So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (18) But someone will say, “You have **faith** and I have **works**.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*”

Rashi takes this thought “**who has not taken My Name in vain:** Who has not sworn with My Name and My soul in vain. We find an expression of an oath used with the soul (נַפְשִׁי), as it is stated (in Amos 6:8): “The Lord God swore by Himself” Himself is the Hebrew **בּוֹנֵפוֹשׁוֹ** His own Soul.¹⁴

24:5-6

God will bless those individuals & generations who seek God’s fellowship by pursuing the ways of righteousness - by granting their desire.

The “generations” of those who seek Him probably refers to the generations of faithful from Moses to David who seek God's face (i.e., seek God). But this applied to them and to us, we too should make intercession for our generations, parents, children, grand-children.

So far we see in the text

1. God is the creator
2. Bestowed righteousness
3. Bestowed Salvation
4. His and Our responsibility

¹¹ **Rabbi David Kimchi** known by the Hebrew acronym as the RaDaK, a French medieval rabbi. A biblical commentator on the Prophets, Psalms, and Chronicles, and also on the Torah, although only his Genesis commentary has survived. Born: 1160 - Died: 1235.

¹² תֵּבֵל *tevel* appears just 36 times in the Bible, all of them in poetic sections

¹³ JPS Bible Commentary Psalms (Benjamin D. Sommer, Jewish Theological Seminary (Psalms 1-30) Forthcoming

¹⁴ Rashi on Psalm 24:4

Hebrew text verse 6

*“This is the generation of those who seek Him,
who seek your presence Jacob,*

[“פְּנֵיהֶּ יַעֲקֹב סְלָה” *your presence / face Jacob*]

Selah.”.

But the Hebrew text reads “*your face Jacob*” This could be understood in more than one way.

1. By inserting ‘the God of ‘Jacob (as the Septuagint and Peshitta¹⁵ manuscripts do; The Masoretic text only has *Jacob, who seek your face*)

Some Christian translations (ESV/NIV) follow the Septuagint reading and have *the God of Jacob* here.

2. Make it interpretive i.e. to seek God as Jacob sought Him when he wrestled with the Angel of the Lord in Genesis 32:24-32 and he would not let go until he received a blessing from Him.

3. From the story about Jacob’s dream about a ladder to heaven Genesis 28, the Hebrew Scriptures occasionally referred to a “gate” of or to heaven. In Jewish understanding conceived the Temple served as a kind of model of creation, with the entrance as a sign of towards the heavenly gate (read the Targum verse 7-9).

4. However note that in context of Hebrew poetry, Jacob is an another name for the covenant people in a similar vein we see the term “generations” which are the generations of Israel meaning Jacob.

As there are two different words to **seek**; to seek God is דָּרַשׁ *drash* (to resort to, seek with care, to declare) in contrast to seek Jacob is בָּקַשׁ *baqash* (to seek, or require). I offer the following: *“This is a generation of them that search Him out, seeking Your face, O Jacob. Selah.”*

3. Poem 2: Psalm 24:7-10 The Coming of the King

This passage describes the coming King and the establishment of the Kingdom in righteousness that will characterize man who will be rightly related to God at that time. A people characterized as righteous because it has been bestowed upon them and by doing righteous deeds and keeping right thoughts are those that enter the place where the King of Glory & Creator, of the Universe dwells.

[A messianic Kingdom reference of the reign Isaiah 2:2-4]

Scholars believe that the occasion that inspired the composition of this psalm is unknown. However, in view of its content, many believer see that David may have penned this when he brought the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6)¹⁶.

¹⁵ On the discrepancy “God of Jacob” / “Jacob” Pulpit Commentary writes: “some suppose אֱלֹהֵי to have fallen out of the Hebrew text. This, no doubt, is possible, and removes all difficulty”, but I would object in that Hebrew Scribes were meticulous and to drop אֱלֹהֵי would bring more difficulty to the reliability of the text, I suspect it is more likely that the text might have read *‘That seek your face, like Jacob’, for this would only drop one letter “כ”*.

¹⁶ A prominent theory of the rabbis was that his hymn was composed for Solomon’s bringing of the Ark of the Covenant into his new Temple (1 Kings 8). But this cannot be, since it was composed by

For us it is of interest to note that Jewish people of the Second Temple period perceived this text as authoritative, for even though The Ark disappeared before the 2nd Temple, they did not remove this song.

Scholars also see this Psalm as the beginning of the reign of Yeshua, which will be marked by a procession of the King into the millennial Jerusalem described in verses 7-10, as such this is they call this a **Coronation Psalm**.

The Frenchmen; Napoléon Bonaparte¹⁷ said “*A leader is a dealer in hope.*” Napoléon possessed the ability to inspire others, French and Foreigners alike to do what was needed to win the battle. This next part of the Psalm reads a little like that, as if we are being encouraged by the commander in chief.

24:7

While David had conquered the future capital of Israel, he recognised it was not in his own strength, nor was the city captured for his own glory, for this City of David was and is “*the city of the Lord of Hosts.*”

David used the image of the gates of Jerusalem as though they were heads, bowed low. David tells these personified gates to rise up, ‘lift up your heads’ so **The** Great King could enter. This is contrary to the norm, then as well as now, people bowed when the king or queen would pass before them. If these gates were real gates David tells them to higher, so that as Lifting up gates, the Great King, can come in.

Glory – Kavod קָבוֹד - קָבוֹד properly *weight*; but only figuratively in a good sense, Glory - Glorious, *splendour*, Majestic Beauty, Honour. Total occurrences: 200.

GLORY The unique splendour of God. Hebrew word Kavod – from heavy
As an inherent characteristic not an accidental quality the Glory of God refers to His Glorious Splendour; it is the expression of God’s character (Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”).

The Scriptures record praise to His glorious Name (Nehemiah 9:5-6 “Then the Levites,, said, “Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be Your Glorious Name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. “You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and You preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you”), describe Him as the glorious Father (Ephesians 1:17) and the King of glory (Psalm 24); “He is exalted above the heavens, and His glory is over all the earth” (Psalms 57:5, 11; 108:5; 113:4). “The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham...” (Acts 7:2). He is zealous / jealous to maintain His glory and unwilling that it be given to another (Isaiah 42:8 “I am the LORD; that is my Name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.”); He will acts in a way to bring glory to Himself (Isaiah 48:11 “or my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my Name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.”).

David. They take the Hebrew phrase ‘of David / L’David’ to mean like David, i.e. in the style of David.

¹⁷ Born 15 August 1769 died 5 May 1821, Height: 1.68 m

Summarise

The glory of God is proclaimed by the Creation (Psalms 19:1; 97:6; Romans 1:20). It is revealed by His mighty acts of salvation and deliverance (1 Chronicles 16:24; Psalms 72:18–19; 96:3; 145:10–12; John 11:4, 40).

His glory is the theme of the praise (1 Chronicles 16:24–29; Psalms 29:1–2, 9; 66:1–2; 96:7–8; 115:1; Isaiah 42:12; Romans 4:20; Philippians 2:9–11).¹⁸

With Asaph we cry out Psalms 79:9 “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your Name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for Your Name's sake!”

24:8

David explained that this glorious King was Jehovah in response to the question of the personified gates, and perhaps the people. The Lord is glorious because He is the Omnipotent, the All Mighty, as seen in His victory over His enemies and His provision of salvation. Israel's divine King was fully glorious because He was unconquerable. The “hosts” is pictured here as the heavenly armies that accompany and support Him.

Lord of hosts “צְבָאוֹת”¹⁹

Who is the שַׂר צְבָאוֹת *captain of the host of Armies Joshua 5*¹³ *When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?”*¹⁴ *And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my Lord say to his servant?”*¹⁵ *And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.*

Note the title, worship Holy, this is none other than a Messianic Theophany, Messiah appearing in the Older Testament.

Heavenly Armies²⁰

“as in Isaiah 6 we read that the prophet heard seraphim call out to each other: “*Holy, Holy, Holy is Jehovah Ts’vaot*” (קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת)”

Revelation 4:8 “*And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”*” (Genesis 2:1)

Some other references **2Kings 6:8-23** (v.17 “*Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all*

¹⁸ Based on: Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (p. 534). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹⁹ The word “ts’ava” (צָבָא) means “army” and together with the plural feminine ending “ot” (וֹת) we get “of the Armies.” More literal translations read the “*Lord of the Armies*”.

²⁰ Additional references צְבָאוֹת Ts’vaot - to the angels and the stars, which are called צְבָאוֹת in Psalm 103:21; Psalm 148:2: Jehovah’s hosts consisting of celestial heroes, Joel 2:11, and of stars standing on the plain of the havens as it were in battle array, Isaiah 40:26 - a reference for which experiences and utterances like those recorded in Genesis 32:2., Deuteronomy 33:2; Judges 5:20, have prepared the way. He is, therefore, the Ruler commanding innumerable and invincible superterrestrial powers, who desires admission.

around Elisha.”). **2Kings 2:11** (Elijah chariot of fire). **Psalm 68:17** “*The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them*”

Israel’s Armies (Past & future)

Exodus 6:26; 7:4 “*Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring **my hosts, my people, the children of Israel**, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment.*”; Exodus 12:40-41 “*The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.*”. Etc...

The Body of Messiah

In Philippians 2:25 The apostle Paul writes, “*I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and **fellow soldier**, and your messenger and minister to my need*”.

In Philemon 1:1-3 The Apostle Paul writes, “*Paul, a prisoner for Messiah Yeshua, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our **fellow soldier**, and the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Messiah Yeshua.*”.

For the apostle Paul to consider these fellow workers to be his “**fellow-soldier**”, he had to considered himself to be a **soldier** as well.

What about us? While I generally do not talk in military terms, we are fellow-soldier of the Lord. As such the commandments we have are to be considered as having been issued by the Lord of Host, and we are His soldiers.

24:9-10

To underline the glory of Yahweh as the great King, David repeated the exhortation and the explanation contained in verses 7 and 8 respectively. These verses restate, in synonymous parallelism, the same thought, and all four verses serve as a victory shout. “Long live the King!” “Long live the King!”

God’s people should honour and glorify the Lord because He is the strongest of all Kings. We should realize that communion with such a One requires purity in thought, word, and deed. This will be an appropriate psalm to recite when the Lord Yeshua returns to earth to set up His kingdom for 1,000 years, and it will be an appropriate psalm to recite when the Lord Yeshua sets up the Eternal Kingdom.

Concluding remark

We started with the Trilogy of Psalms

In Psalm 22:6 Messiah self- description is that He is “a worm, and no man”

In Psalm 23:1 He is the Shepherd who will guide and lead us.

In Psalm 24 He is the coming Glorious King

At the beginning of the Psalm (and of the world), God is creator, and at the end God is king, the range is from creation to the Messianic Kingdom and beyond. From Joshua we know that this is a description of Messiah.

And from Daniel we know Messiah is coming Daniel 7:13-14 “*I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man, and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. (14) And to Him was given dominion and **glory**²¹ and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*”

Psalm 24 asked Who is Coming and Daniel 7 described how He is coming.

Will you recite these words with me Psalm 24:10

*“Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory!
Selah”*

**Yeshua is coming He is the Lord of hosts,
Yeshua the King of glory!**

*Selah
Blessings in Messiah
Paul & Sue*

²¹ This section in Daniel is written in Aramaic, the word for Glory is יָקָר ‘Yekar’ from value and wealth meaning – glory & honour. **Root word** יָקָר ‘yakar’ to *be heavy*. This is the Aramaic equivalent to Kavod. The Targum on Daniel also in Aramaic uses יְקִירָא ‘yekira’ from the same root