

Ponderings in the Psalms

The following is a Messianic Study on

Psalm 30

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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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Pondering Psalm 30

1 A Psalm; a Song at the Dedication of the House. A Psalm of David. I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up, And have not let my enemies rejoice over me. **2** O Lord my God, I cried to You for help, and You healed me. **3** O Lord, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit.

4 Sing praise to the Lord, you His godly ones, And give thanks to His holy name. **5** For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.

6 Now as for me, I said in my prosperity, “I will never be moved.” **7** O Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong; You hid Your face, I was dismayed. **8** To You, O Lord, I called, And to the Lord I made supplication:

9 “What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your faithfulness? **10** “Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me; O Lord, be my helper.”

11 You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, **12** That my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

Psalm 30 introduction

The superscript to Psalm 30 reads: “*A Psalm; a Song at the Dedication of the House, Of David.*”

Over the years I have pointed out that many Christians frequently ignore the superscript in the book of Psalms. The superscript is the heading above or before the beginning of a psalm, it may identify the author (Psalm 25), it sometimes gives background information (Psalm 18), at times provides musical instructions (Psalm 8), or indicates the use or purpose of the psalm (Psalm 25). Superscripts are part of the Biblical text and they are the opening verse in Jewish Bibles but in Christian Bibles they are either absent from the text, modified or placed as superscript (above the text) and as such often ignored.

In Psalm 30 the superscript raises questions about the “*dedication of the house.*” As we read further we note clear, but ignored references, to the resurrection - “*brought up my soul from Sheol,*” and “*I would not go down to the pit.*” Finally, there is a third curiosity - what does David mean by “*my mountain*”? As such, I suspect there is more going on than a recovery from illness and I hope that you will allow me to muse and to ponder. If you disagree with me, that is ok, as long as we can still come to the same conclusion as David; that we may sing praise and give thanks to the Lord our God forever.

This psalm in Hebrew has 13 verses with the superscript being the first verse; as such it is the same as the 12 verses in Christian English Bibles with the superscript. We will follow the Christian order but include the superscript as part of verse 1.

Superscript and verses 1-3

A musical song מִזְמוֹר (mizmor) that was to be sung at the time when the House of God was dedicated חנוכה (chanukkah), by David.

From 2 Chronicles 7:6 we understand that King David prepared the musical instruments and the songs that were to be sung at the dedication of the first Temple. Although David made the preparations for that Temple, including writing songs for its dedication, the Temple that Solomon built was not built until after the death of David. David had earlier brought up the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:1-15) and built an altar to the LORD (2 Samuel 24:25) on the site of the future Temple.

David mentions the resurrection in verse 3 “for You have **lifted me up**”, “O Lord, You have **brought up my soul from Sheol**; You have **kept me alive**, that **I would not go down to the pit**”. In true Hebrew parallelism David describes the resurrection in no less than four ways. In light of that, I ponder whether he is really writing about the dedication of the Temple of Solomon? We know from Ezekiel 34:23-24 and 37:24-25 that the resurrected David will be serving in the Messianic / Millennial kingdom as a ruler under the King of Kings Yeshua (Ezekiel 44:1-3). The LORD made a promise to David, that he would reign over God’s people Israel. David will be the local king over Israel, and a prince under Yeshua, who is the only Sovereign, the King of Kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15).

David exalts the LORD, meaning ‘to raise **up**’ the LORD רוּם (room), and in the same way the LORD raises David up. “You have **lifted me up**” דָּלִית (dillit), implying from a deep well or a pit so that my “enemies have not rejoiced over me.” Together I think he is saying not only in this life, but even after this earthly life is over, the Lord will vindicate David and allow him to rejoice in the Lord.

David praises God for a restoration from sickness (*healed me*), many commentators have taken the remainder as embellishment, “O Lord, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit.” But David uses clear resurrection language; as such it is not exaggerated talk. God can heal and raise up the dead, as such like David we believe in the resurrection. He is raised up from Sheol, the place of the dead, where all people before Messiah went, the righteous (Genesis 37:35; Job 14:13; Psalm 6:5; 16:10; 88:3; Isaiah 38:10) and the wicked (Psalm 9:17; 31:17; 49:14; Isaiah 5:14), although they were in different areas (Luke 16:19-31).

Verse 4-5.

Not just David, but all the *godly ones* חַסִּידִים “*chasidi*” (Psalm 50:5), will sing to the Lord and give thanks to His holy memorial (*Name*), i.e. these are the faithful ones who were covenanted to the LORD, the saints who rejoiced in His goodness (2 Chronicles 6:41). Yes, all these saints will experience the resurrection into the Messianic Kingdom, through that same grace we receive. For when the Lord appears, His love prevails; and His anger, His wrath will be but a vanishing moment. Throughout the rest of life, and I read *the resurrected life*, we will experience His ongoing favour, so we too can and should shout for joy.

Verses 6-8

David knows his success lies in the Lord, for by His grace he will not be moved, by His favour רִצּוֹן (*r'tzon*) David says “You have made my mountain to stand strong”. The mountain is personalized, it is David’s kingdom. When mountain is used symbolically it signifies a

kingdom (Daniel 2:35, 44-45), and David will reign in the Messianic kingdom (Jeremiah 30:9), again under Yeshua who will be King of kings (Revelation 19:16).

The Lord hid (past tense) His face (presence) due to sin (Deuteronomy 31:17; Psalm 104:29; 143:7). The “*hiding of God’s face*” is a figure of speech used to indicate the withdrawal of His presence, His favour and providential care (Job 13:24). So David says “*When You did hide your face,*” then I in dismay, cried out to You in order to make supplication, that is to implore Divine favour to return (see verses 10-11).

Verses 9-10

From a human point of view, when I die can I give You praise? Can I declare Your faithfulness? The answer is no, though we all, Jew and Gentile alike, are created to sing to Him, sing praises to Him; and to tell of all His wondrous works (1 Chronicles 16:8-9).

The flip-side is the pleas we make; as such oh Lord hear (Psalm 4:1; 27:7) and be gracious to me, yes that is the eternal plea of all believers, the *chasidim*. “O Lord, be my helper” the Lord is designated here as a *help*, because He is our ever-present help in time of need (Psalm 46:1).

Verses 11-12

When God reveals His face again, after David and we express our mourning and repentance (wearing of sackcloth), then our mourning turns into dancing and we are clothed with gladness. Note that same language is used in Isaiah 61, a passage connected to the Messianic Kingdom.

In the final verse see another contrast “*That my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent.*” The command for David and us and all generations is to sing His praise. Yeshua said “*Out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks*” (Luke 6:45), Friends we need to let the Word dwell richly in our heart so that we can proclaim and sing God’s praise.

Conclusion

As I said at the beginning, there is more than meets the eye in this psalm, so let us ponder and meditate on the deep things of God.

Selah

Blessings in Messiah

Paul & Sue