

Ponderings in the Psalms

The following is a Messianic Study on

Psalm 33

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



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.

To Support the Ministry of Brit Chadashah or Paul please go to <https://www.celebratemessiah.com.au/donate/>

All "Scripture quotations taken from the (NASB®) New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. www.lockman.org" unless otherwise indicated.

For more information on Brit Chadashah, the Sydney Messianic Fellowship: Please visit us on the Web www.BCSydney.com

© 2021 Brit Chadashah / Paul Cohen
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>

Pondering Psalm 33

1 Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright. **2** Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. **3** Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

4 For the word of the Lord is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness. **5** He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord.

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. **7** He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. **9** For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. **10** The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples.

11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation. **12** Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.

13 The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; **14** From His dwelling place He looks out On all the inhabitants of the earth, **15** He who fashions the hearts of them all, He who understands all their works. **16** The king is not saved by a mighty army; A warrior is not delivered by great strength. **17** A horse is a false hope for victory; Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness, **19** To deliver their soul from death And to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. **21** For our heart rejoices in Him, Because we trust in His holy name. **22** Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, According as we have hoped in You.

Introduction

The ‘superscript’ of this Psalm has been lost in Hebrew; however, in the Dead Sea Scrolls¹ and the Greek Septuagint translation this has been retained as “*A Psalm of David.*” This gives us the author, King David, and an approximate date of about 1000 BCE.

We cannot be sure about the setting, but it is possible that there is a clue in verse 19 where David talks about times of famine. This could refer to the three-year famine mentioned in 2 Samuel 21:1. The LORD told David that there was a famine because Saul and his household had murdered the Gibeonites. The massacre is not recorded in scripture.

Music sets the tone for emotions. Who can forget the tunes of “The Imperial March” (*Darth Vader’s Theme*) which was created to instil angst, or a “Wonderful World” by Sam Cooke?

¹ 4Q98 “A Psalm by David. A Song”
<http://dssenglishbible.com/psalms%2033.htm>

Now he may not have known much about history ... but he certainly knew how to pull the strings of our hearts with his romantic notes. Musical directions, instruments and the words of the lyrics are part of the Biblical text, but we have no idea how it sounded in the Tabernacle and Temple times? Harps and lyres, shofars and trumpets, drums and cymbals and flute made some sort of an orchestra. Some congregations have limited the worship to acapella or only an organ, but that is missing the point. Praise Him, with voice and skilful playing of the instruments, sing softly and out-loud, for He has created and redeemed us and now watches over us carefully to see if we respond in trust and rejoicing praise to Him.

An outline

The word *selah* is not mentioned, so we do not have a partition by David, but there seems to be a three-fold division:

Introduction: A call to the righteous to praise the Lord (33:1-3)

Why the Lord is to be praised (33:4-19)

- a. *Praise* for His Holy attributes (33:4-5)
- b. *Praise* for His creative powers (33:6-7)
- c. A call for all the earth *to fear the LORD* (33:8-9)
- d. The counsel of the LORD stands forever (33:10-12)
- e. The Lord watches all mankind (33:13-17)
- f. The Lord watches for those that fear Him (33:18-19)

Conclusion: Rejoice and trust in the LORD (33:20-22)

Pondering

Introduction: A call to the righteous to praise the Lord (33:1-3)

This Psalm is directed at us, those who have been made righteous, the upright. We are to have that spiritual joy (Philippians 4:4) and sing with rejoicing. It is a commandment, our duty, to praise the Lord. This command is repeated in seven ways: “Sing for joy,” “praise,” “give thanks,” “Sing praises,” “Sing,” “play skilfully,” and “shout for joy.” Seven calls to worship.

Two musical instruments are mentioned: כִּנּוֹר (*kinor*) the lyre and נָבֶל (*nevel*) a harp of ten strings. Michael Levey clarifies the difference between these two instruments: “The fundamental difference between a lyre and a harp, is that in a harp, the strings enter directly into the hollow body of the instrument, whereas on a lyre, the strings pass over a bridge, which transmits the vibrations of the strings to the body of the instrument – just as on a modern guitar.”²

Verse 3 has the phrase שִׁיר הַדָּשׁ a “*new song*.” There are seven *new songs* in the Tanach (Older Testament) - Psalms 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1 and Isaiah 42:10; and twice in the Brit Chadashah, both in Revelation 5:9 & 14:3. These new songs were created because God stirred the heart of saints then, and today we need to create new songs to show our faith and declare the praise that is due to Him.

Why the Lord is to be praised (33:4-19)

a. Praise for His Holy attributes (33:4-5)

Those who walk with the LORD, know that they can trust in His Word, for it is proven true and right. His Work likewise is done in truth and faithfulness אֱמוּנָה (*e'munah*) and it is observable. In the same way that the Lord loves, so we ought to love צְדָקָה (*tz'dakah*). That is

² <https://ancientlyre.com/historical-research>

righteousness as conduct; and מִשְׁפָּט (*mish'pat*) the rule of honest judgment, so that the whole earth will come to know and be full of the חֶסֶד (*chesed*) the mercy, the lovingkindness of the LORD (see also Psalm 119:64).

b. Praise for His creative powers (33:6-7)

Just as in the creation account of Genesis, we read here the phrase “Let there be,” spoken by God. Here it is clarified that the spoken Word made the heavens, just as in John 1:1-3. It is that Word which is now revealed to us as Yeshua, the creator. He made the heavens and their entire host, which might indicate the sun, moon and stars (Genesis 2:1), or His armies. These would be the heavenly armies, the angelic host (Psalm 148:2).

It is the LORD who gathered the waters and made the dry land come forth (Genesis 1:9-10). At that time he stored vast quantities of water away in the stores below (Genesis 7:11; Psalm 78:15) and above where He stores the wind (Psalm 135:7; Jeremiah 10:13) and the snow and hail (Job 38:22).

c. A call for all the earth to fear the LORD (33:8-9)

In light of his revealed Word, and in light of creation, let all the earth respond to the Holiness of God. Respond to the creator who spoke the universe into being, and commanded it to stop where he wanted it to stop. He caused the water to come and go, He spoke and it happened, He commanded it and it happened. In light of that, let us ALL stand in reverent fear and awe.

d. The counsel of the LORD stands forever (33:10-12)

In contrast to the Word of the Lord, the council of the nations (Psalm 2) comes to naught. What is the counsel of the LORD? His will is revealed especially in the Covenants, but also in the promises He has made, for both Israel and the Church. Sadly since day one, humanity has stood in deviant opposition to the LORD, and noted in Psalm 2 against the Messiah. And sadly many in our governments want to remove the Laws and the Commandments of God (*by breaking their bonds and casting away their cords*). And some even want to *cut off Israel from being a nation* (Psalm 83). The LORD, who created the heavens and earth, will not allow His council to be thwarted.

As this is a prophetic psalm, we need to pray for our nation, that many will choose the LORD, for *the plans of His heart will stand from generation to generation*. His own inheritance (Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 33:29 & Psalm 28:9) is the nation of Israel; a nation blessed עִשְׂרֵי (*esh'rei*), happy for the Lord is with them. He has chosen them, He is their shield and help.

e. The Lord watches all mankind (33:13-17)

The Lord is the maker of the heavens and the earth, as such He looks down on all of mankind from His holy dwelling (Isaiah 63:15) and sees how we respond to His blessings and His laws and commandments. He is our Father and He knows us intimately. Elsewhere we see two other designations for God: “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Numbers 16:22), and “the Father of spirits” (Zechariah 12:1; Hebrews 12:9). The point David makes is that He who created us and understands us, asks if we will submit to Him?

False hope in military strength is now addressed. This is a lesson that David knew all too well. When he was neither a king nor a great warrior, God gave him the ability to overcome

Goliath, with all his great strength. Simply put, the strong should not boast or glory in their own might.

f. The Lord watches for those that fear Him (33:18-19)

God is watching believers, those that fear Him, not in angst, or with the dread of His wrath, but with a reverential, godly fear. We should be careful to obey the commandments, yet trust in His lovingkindness חסד (*chesed*). This same word carries the meaning of steadfast love, grace and mercy. Those who fear Him, put their hope in His *chesed*.

To preserve their lives from violent death and famine (verse 19): these are joined here, and as indicated above, this may refer to the bloodguilt that was upon the nation due to the murder of the Gibeonites by Saul. As such the believers had to rely upon God to deliver their souls.

Conclusion: Rejoice and trust in the LORD (33:20-22)

David brings the Psalm to a conclusion, by stating that those who fear the LORD and find their hope in Him, not in their own strength, goodness or righteousness; will rejoice and be glad because we wholly trust in His Name, that is His character. He will save us and care for us, because of His *chesed*. Like David, we also plead, let Your *chesed* be upon us for we have placed our hope in You.

Selah

Blessings in Messiah

Paul & Sue