

# *Ponderings in the Psalms*

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The following is a Messianic Study on

## *Psalm 5*

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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 5

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1. For the choir director; upon the Nehiloth, a Psalm of David.  
Give ear to my words, O LORD; consider my meditation.
2. Listen to the sound of my cry, my King and God, for I pray to You.
3. LORD, hear my voice in the morning; in the morning I turn to<sup>1</sup> You, and wait.
4. For You are not a God who desires wickedness; evil cannot sojourn with You;
5. Boastful men cannot stand in Your sight. You hate all who do iniquity;
6. You destroy those who speak lies; LORD abhors a man of bloodshed and deceit.
7. But as for me, through Your abundant mercy, enter Your house; I bow towards Your holy temple in awe of You.
8. O LORD, lead me along Your righteousness because of my enemies; make Your way straight before me.
9. For there is no sincerity in their speech; their gut is destruction; their throat is an open grave; their tongue slippery.
10. Hold them guilty, O God; let them fall by their own devices; for their many crimes cast them out, for they are recalcitrant to You.
11. But let all who take refuge in You rejoice; may they ever sing in exultation as You shelter them; and let those who love Your name exult in You.
12. For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, encircle with favour as with a large shield.

## COMMENTARY

### **Introduction**

Within this Psalm, David plays with the Hebrew language, and even in translations we can see this playfulness. Note how he uses:

*Different Terms* for speech: words, meditation, sound of my cry, prayer and speaking.

*A Variety Descriptions* for evildoers and their acts: the wicked; boastful men; who do iniquity; who speak lies; a man of bloodshed and deceit.

*Many Diverse Expressions* for God's listening: give ear, consider, listen and hear.

*And some Sundry Descriptions* of the pious: those who take refuge; those who love Your Name and the righteous man.

And finally an *Assortment of Words* for gladness, rejoice; exultation and exult.

A main theme in this Psalm is the contrasts between the righteous and the evildoers; the enemies of God.

### Strophes (stanza)

One way to divide this Psalm up is in strophes:

1. Verses 1-3, David says: hear my prayer.
2. Verses 4-6, David says: keep me from the evildoers.
3. Verses 7-8, David says: guide me in Your Tzedakah, (righteousness) and by Your Chesed (lovingkindness / abundant mercy).
4. Verses 9-10, David says: God defend me from these evildoers.

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<sup>1</sup> lit., 'lay out (before You),' indicating prayer and/or sacrifice

5. Verses 11-12, David says: shelter me, so that I may rejoice.

### Verses 1-3, David says: hear my prayer.

It is ascribed to the leader of the band; specifically written for wind instruments (הַנְּחִילוֹת – ha'nechilot)<sup>2</sup>, a Psalm of David. The word nechilot<sup>3</sup> is only used once in scripture, it is often left untranslated for we do not know for certain what instruments these were. In Psalm 4 we read about the *stringed instruments* (Neginot), in Psalms 6 & 12 there is a reference to the *Sheminit* meaning an “*eight*” stringed lyre or harp and here in Psalm 5, it is thought that these might be wind instruments, we do know that they used various wind instruments in worship (Isaiah 30:29, 1 Samuel 10:5; 1 Kings 1:40).

Amongst the wind family were:

1. עֲוִיבָּ *ugav*, the long flute - possibly a pan-flute (Genesis 4:21; Job 21:12; 30:31, Psalm 150:4)
2. קֶרֶן *keren*, a natural horn (Joshua 6:5; 1 Chronicles 25:5).
3. שׁוֹפָר *shofar*, also a natural horn with a natural bright call, often mistranslated as a trumpet (Joshua 6:4; Exodus 19:13; Numbers 10:10).
4. הַצּוֹצְרָה *hatsotserah*, the silver straight trumpet (Psalm 98:6; Numbers 10:1-10).
5. חָלִיל *chalil*, literally “*bored through*” meaning a pipe, flute or even a horn with holes (1 Samuel 10:5; 1 Kings 1:40).

It makes you wonder about the sounds of worship during the Tabernacle and later in Temple times.

David prays *consider my meditation* and hear the sound of my cry, both are valid request before God, our silent prayers and our deep groans can be laid before Him, who is both LORD and King. David indicates he belongs as a subject to the Lord, and it is exclusively to and for Him, so that David turns morning by morning to Him in prayer.

As we noted in Psalm 1 (see previous email) this word *meditation*, is important, and so it bears repeating; David uses the Hebrew word הַגִּיגִי, ha'gi-gi denoting the almost unverballed, we could translate this as mumblings, or *sighings*, it is used again in Psalm 39:3. Biblical

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<sup>2</sup> A Chasidic insight was offered by rabbi Yosef: “The Targum the Aramaic translation of “on the Nechilot” is “l’shabcha al chignon.” This means to offer praises at the dance festival, or fair.” In Living Waters - The Mei HaShiloach: A Commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Mordechai Yosef of Ishitza (1800-1854) Translated by Betsalel Phillip Edwards, 2001 page 436.

<sup>3</sup> Other interpretations of Nechilot.

(a) Some translations primarily based on the LXX, “*heir*” and the Vulgate “*inheritance*” indicate Nechilot - נְחִילוֹת signifies “inheritances,” and indeed David does write about the two peoples (heirs) or their inheritance, the wicked and the righteous. Midrash Aggadah (Shocher Tov) which renders it as “*an estate, an eternal inheritance*”

(b) Or Nechilot according to its use in the Talmud “swarms” as if swarms of bees. Nechilot swarms (singular - nechila), (Bava Kamma 114a, 81b) David offers a prayer that is directed against the vast armies which come upon him like swarming bees. Further to this the sound bees make was *like* a swarm of buzzing bees. This would then reflect according to the Midrash, the murmurings against David by Avshalom (Absalom), Doeg and Ahithophel (Achitofel). This is seen in 2 Samuel 22:5, “*bands* (נְחִילֵי) of scoundrels would affright me”. Targum Yonatan sees this connection with the “bands of sinners”.

(c) Finally some link nechilot with the meaning “nachla” as grievous; as it says, “My wound is grievous” נַחְלָה מִכְתִּי “*nachla Makati*” (Jeremiah 10:19). The Scripture conveys that David accepted his afflictions (2 Samuel 24:17).

meditation is thinking or speaking, mulling over, pondering the Word of God. *Meditation* is never trying to empty the mind; rather it is about the renewal of the mind. The apostle Paul in Romans 12:2 writes “Do not be conformed to this world, but continually be transformed by the **renewing of your minds** so that you may be able to determine what God’s will is - what is proper, pleasing, and perfect.”

We can determine what God’s will is by knowing the scriptures, that is His revealed will. So that we transform our *stinking thinking* by meditating, pondering the Word of God (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2).

David mentioned the LORD as King. Over the years I have noticed that some believers in Yeshua seem to have lost sight of His kingship, Yeshua is the prophet and the Priest from Hebrews, but His kingship is spiritualised away. Yet even the Gospel message that Yeshua preached was the *Gospel of the Kingdom* (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14 and Mark 1:14-15 ), it was the message of the *kingdom of God* (mentioned some 70 times in the New Covenant alone). And the promise of His reign was mentioned when the angel spoke to His mother Miryam (Mary) with the promise “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of his father David.” (Luke 1:32)

Many Jewish prayers talk about the LORD being king and about His kingdom כִּי הַמְּלִכּוֹת שֶׁלֶךָ אֱתָהּ, “for yours is the kingdom”, and “You shall reign in glory forever and ever.” In this Psalm, we see glimpses of these kinds of prayers already.

One day Yeshua shall indeed reign over all the earth and David shall be one of the kings of the earth, David just over Israel (Ezekiel 34:24; 37:25), and Yeshua over all. “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the LORD be One, and His Name One.” (Zechariah 14:9)

### **Verses 4-6, David says: keep me from the evildoers.**

God does not delight in wrongful behaviour, for within Him and with Him no evildoer can reside. David then describes one of his enemies it is possible that he is thinking of Shimei who cursed and even throw stones at him, Shimei said to David you are a **man of blood** and a **worthless man** (2 Samuel 16:5-14) words that are echoed here. These words describe David’s main antagonist; men like Shimei, Doeg the Edomite (1 Samuel 22:9:23) and Ahitophel (2 Samuel 15:12) aptly, David reminds himself and us not to be like them.

### **Verses 7-8, David says: guide me in Your Tzedakah, (righteousness) and by Your Chesed (lovingkindness).**

David like all Godly Jewish men turns towards Jerusalem in prayer and worship and expects to go up to the House of the Lord for service and bows down towards the Temple. Many translations write *Temple*, but this would be difficult as the temple had not yet been built. The word for Temple in Hebrew is הֵיכָל *hecal* literally meaning *palace*, and God who was described in this Psalm as King, and a king would indeed reside in a palace. According to Psalms 80 and 99 God is enthroned above the Cherubim inside the Holy of Holies was the throne-room. As such, He sits in the Tabernacle (the Tent of Meeting) this is His residence,

(for other references regarding the Tabernacle being the *hecal* see 1 Samuel 1:9; 3:3; 2 Samuel 22:7).

**And two key Hebrew words are used: Chesed חֶסֶד and Tzedakah צְדָקָה**

Chesed חֶסֶד volumes have been written on the meaning of this word and the translations vary widely here: Lovingkindness, Steadfast Love, Mercy, Goodness, Covenantal Love, it appears almost 250 times in the Hebrew scriptures, God shows His Chesed, He gives it above and beyond that which we deserve because He is Love (1 John 4:8).

The second word is Tzedakah צְדָקָה righteousness or justice, when applied to our lives it becomes also the *giving of charity*. David wrote “*lead me in Your righteousness*” contrary to the enemies, make my life upright and in right relationship with You O Lord. It is well worth contemplating these words.

For those well acquainted with Hebrew liturgy verse 7 (8 in the Hebrew text) it is the second line from the beautiful prayer *Ma Tovu*.

**Ma Tovu - מָה טוֹבוּ**

How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!  
As for me, in the abundance of your lovingkindness will I come into Your house.  
I will worship toward Your holy Temple in the fear of You.

....

Modern translation from the Siddur (Jewish Prayer book).

This prayer is a quotation from many scriptures: Numbers 24:5; Psalms 5:7; 26:8; 95:6; and 69:14. A simple but nice rendering can be found here

<http://zemirotdatabase.org/audio/recording253.mp3>

**Verse 8**

The words that David prays here: guide me / lead me Lord in your righteousness, are echoed in both the Tanach (Older Testament) and in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament) one example is in the disciples’ prayer, “*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*” Matthew 6:13 & Luke 11:4. We like David need to remind ourselves God will guide us (Psalm 48:14) and we too need to ask the Lord to guide us by the Good Shepherd Yeshua (John 10:11-14) and in the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17 etc).

**Verses 9-10, David says: God defend me from these evildoers.**

We like David must recognise when the enemy comes to steal and destroy using blatant false statements or by flattering lips. Either way we should avoid such people and where possible not listen nor regurgitate those statements. The graphic picture painted for us by David the “*throat being an open grave*” is reflected in Proverbs 18:21a “*Death and life are in the power of the tongue*”. We in opposition ought to be people who through Yeshua continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His Name (Hebrews 13:15).

**Verses 11-12, David says: shelter me, so that I may rejoice.**

May those who take refuge in You, those who love Your Name:

1. Rejoice; שִׂמְחָה be joyful and glad

2. Be Joyful; שִׂמְחָה to sing joyful, in jubilation

3. Exult; שִׂמְחָה rejoice and exult

Why this three-fold emphasis on rejoicing, how could David encourage the righteous to rejoice? First because they take refuge in the LORD and second God protects them by spreading His large shield over them. These three different words all trying to bring the same response from them and also from us, David like the apostle Paul had his fair share of troubles and Paul sums it up “*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice*” (Philippians 4:4).

### **Lesson / Final thought**

Let us meditate and cry out to the Lord, and pray He leads us away from evil, that He will guide us in His righteousness and Mercy, so that we can stand strong in the grace of King Yeshua and be joyful despite the circumstance, in our lives. May we be like David the king or the apostle Paul who both rejoiced despite their sufferings for His sake, for we too can expect our share of troubles and tribulations and still know that He is the large protective shield around us shielding us from much evil.

*Selah*

*Shalom in Messiah*

*Paul & Sue*