

Ponderings in the Psalms

The following is a Messianic Study on

Psalm 8

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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.

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>.

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Pondering Psalm 8

Ponding God's majesty, Introductory and verses 1-2

¹ *For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of David.*

O Lord, our Lord,

How majestic (excellent) is Your Name in all the earth,

Who have displayed Your splendour (glory) above the heavens!

David gives instructions to the choir director in the tabernacle and instructs him that this is to be played on the Gittith (Psalms 8, 81, and 84). We are not sure what a gittith was. It could be a tune they played while they were pressing the גַּת (*gath*) the winepress, or perhaps this was a special harp from Gath, one of the five cities of the Philistines (Joshua 13:3). We know that David did spend time with the Philistines at Gath (1 Samuel 27). We also know that there were many types of harps¹.

This psalm begins and ends with the same phrase which addresses God as the sovereign of the universe, the Lord of all creation.

The phrase “how excellent is Your Name” is a reference to the Name – “YHWH” (Exodus 6:3). This Name indicates that God is the Eternal One (as the Name is based on the verb הָיָה (*hayah*) meaning ‘to be’), and with this Name He reflects that He is the Covenant Making and Covenant Keeping God (Exodus 6:3). It is this Name which Yeshua proclaimed (John 17:6). As the Covenant keeping God, He brings good news and will keep His promises.

In the opening and closing verse of this Psalm we have the word *majestic* or *excellent* אָדִיר (*adir*). This word relates to the *revealed glorious splendour* of the LORD. The second word splendour (glory) is הֹדֶד (*hod*) and it describes God's glory as *imposing majesty*.

² *From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength
Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.*

There will be universal praise on earth and in the heavens. Even babies will give praise to the Lord. Yeshua quotes this after the children gave Him praise for some marvellous works He had done in the temple (Matthew 21:15). It stood in sharp contrast to the leaders of Israel who were indignant of Him (Matthew 21:12-17). The apostle Paul reflects differently and says that God has chosen the weak vessels of this world to correct the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27).

And so out of their mouths comes strength (Matthew 18:2-4), not physical but spiritual, to still the enemy and the avenger for what do they have; a “childlike” faith and what do those with this faith do? They *give praise*.

David is pondering God's creation, verses 3-4a

³ *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,*

The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

^{4a} *What is man that You take thought of him.*

¹ (<http://www.moshefrumin.com/eng/music.htm>)

In childlike faith David thinks about the vastness of the universe that God made, and ponders ‘God is thinking about us’! The creator of the universe, someone who that is beyond our comprehension, has thought of you and me. How Awesome! The Hebrew word translated “man” is אנוש (*enosh*) and is a different word than found in the next reference to the ‘son of man.’ Perhaps it would have been better to describe the first reference to man as *the mortal being*, in contrast to the creator.

Reflecting on the Son of Man, verses 4b-5

David now shifts attention to One specific man, namely the Son of Man.

4b And the Son of Man that You care for him?

5 Yet You have made him a little lower than the angels²,

And You crown Him with glory and majesty!

The Hebrew for Son of Man here is בן־אדם (*ben-adam*) which reflects a distinction from the previous word ‘man,’ which is אנוש *enosh* meaning mortal. Throughout the Bible we see this dichotomy. The phrase Son of Man is found commonly in Ezekiel. Ezekiel describes himself as a common man, meaning *ben-adam*, but there are also other references, such as in the book of Daniel (7:13). This Son of Man (yes this should be capitalised) is coming on the glory clouds of Heaven. It is my reading that this is what is in David’s mind, not a ‘*enosh*’ - mortal, but a ‘*ben adam*’ who is distinct from the common man for He comes from Heaven. And with this connection I read Hebrews 2:5-7:

*⁵ For He did not subject to **angels** the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. ⁶ But one has testified somewhere, saying, “What is man, that You remember him? Or the Son of Man, that You are concerned about him? ⁷ “You have made him for a little while lower than the **angels**; You have crowned Him with glory and honour, And have appointed Him over the works of Your hands”*

The author of Hebrews had argued strongly in Chapter 1 that Yeshua is “*superior to angels*” and now in Hebrews 2:7 he quotes Psalm 8 indicating that He was lower than angels! Yeshua was always superior to angels, but when He came to earth and took on flesh, He submitted Himself to be lower than the angels. When His glory was restored at the ascension He once again was far superior, for then God restored the “*crown to Him with glory and majesty!*”

Note that translations differ with each other. Some indicate that David was saying “angels” (JPS, KJV and many others), while some have “heavenly beings” (ESV), and others believe David is addressing “God” (ASV-2015/YLT). We need to interpret scripture with scripture so is the Hebrew word *elohim* אלהים – the standard word meaning God, in view here as God? Or is David seeing these as “heavenly beings,” the “angels”. The author of Hebrews clarified this and we ought to note even the Jewish translation (JPS) has angels.

And note the repetition. First we have “*hod*” “splendour” - “glory” which was used for God now being used for this Son of Man, and we see added כבוד (*kavod*), the “glory” of the Lord and הדר (*hadar*) “honour” for this Man. These terms are near synonyms in the Bible that are used to describe the Glory of God.

² Rashi: "Yet You have made him slightly less than the angels, etc.": Heb. מאלהים, which is an expression of angels".

What the first Adam lost, the authority over creation, was gained by the *last Adam* (1 Corinthians 15:27-28; 45). When Messiah returns we will fulfil our destiny and rule over creation (Genesis 1:26), but under Him.

Describing the reign of the Son of Man, verses 6-8

⁶ You make Him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet, ⁷ All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, ⁸ The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

We will rule (2 Timothy 2:12) but under King Messiah (Revelation 19:16). God did not withdraw this privilege of reigning from us because of the fall, nor because of the wickedness of man (Genesis 6:6) but continued His promise to us (Genesis 9:1-3, 7). But we will only reign under King Messiah, the true king of heaven and earth (Psalm 2), for all of creation is to be placed under His feet.

From our previous study in Psalm 2 we noted that God's Son will reign from Zion. Together with this Psalm and Psalm 110, we see a significant part of the picture. The Son of God (Psalm 2), the Son of Man (Psalm 8) will be King (Psalm 110) over creation. During His first coming He was lower than the angels that He had made, so that He might redeem mankind to Himself (Titus 2:14). May we merit seeing His return to Zion.

David's final reflection on God's majesty, verse 9

⁹ O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your Name in all the earth!

David now closes with a repeat of the opening line and expresses again his amazement at God's awesome Name. He is the Creator, the King who was willing to step down from heaven into flesh to ensure the promise He made was kept.

This psalm extols the majesty of God, the insignificance of man and the exultation of Messiah; the Son of Man, to whom all creation will be entrusted.

*Selah
Shalom in Messiah
Paul & Sue*