Ethan the Ezrahite: Praise strongly "breaking forth!"

- <u>Who is like You, LORD God Almighty: Mi chamocha Adonai</u>
 <u>Elohei Tzva'ot</u>
- Stand up and Give Him the Praise
- Ethan the Ezrahite
 - Ethan: A Wise Man
- <u>The power of language</u>
- May praise break forth!

In leading worship this weekend, I thought about the text in <u>Psalm 89</u> because we were singing <u>"Stand up and Give Him the</u> <u>Praise,"</u> a song you may know! This song incorprates some of <u>Psalm 89</u>.

Did you know that a man named Ethan wrote Psalm 89?

Today, we will take a look at Ethan the Ezrahite.

Who is like You, LORD God Almighty: Mi chamocha Adonai Elohei Tzva'ot

Ethan the Ezrahite wrote:

<u>"O LORD God of hosts,</u> <u>Who is mighty like You, O LORD?</u> <u>Your faithfulness also surrounds You.</u> <u>You rule the raging of the sea;</u> <u>When its waves rise, You still them." Psalm 89:8-9</u>



Stand up and Give Him the Praise

Do you know this praise song?

Who is like the LORD?

There is no one!

Who is like the LORD, He is strong and mighty!

Who is like the LORD?

He is worthy!

Stand up and give Him the praise!

Praise the LORD, Praise the LORD, our God is worthy of glory! From the rising of the sun, to its going down, the Name of the LORD is to be praised!

Here is a recording of it by Paul Wilbur from his Shalom Jerusalem album:

"Stand up and Give Him the Praise" by Paul Wilbur

Ethan the Ezrahite

Many <u>Psalms</u> are attributed to King David, but this particular <u>Psalm</u> was written by a much lesser known Levite, a man named Ethan the Ezrahite.

Ever heard of him?

Ethan as an Ezrahite comes from a Hebrew root word "zerah" meaning "arising" or "breaking out." It has the connotation of strength: "strongly breaking forth." It is thought the Psalmist Ethan is of the lineage of Zerah, dating back to the second son of Judah and Tamar as recorded in *Parashat Vayeshev*: <u>Genesis (Bereshit) 38:27-30.</u> His name is also mentioned in the Chronicles:

<u>"The sons of Zerah were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol,</u> and Dara-five of them in all." 1 Chronicles 2:6, emphasis added

Ethan: A Wise Man

The Bible does not give us very many clues about Ethan's life, but there are just enough to give us a picture of a wise man. <u>King Solomon was granted wisdom</u>, but King Solomon was compared to **Ethan the Ezrahite** in wisdom. This paints the picture that Ethan was certainly ranked among the wisest in the land, just a little beneath Solomon.

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men-than **Ethan the Ezrahite**, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations." 1 Kings 4:29-31, emphasis added

Ethan had a reputation. He was known as a wise man, and as a

psalmist, he would have been poetic and quite possibly a musician. He was passionate about the God of Israel and his Psalm resounds with exalting praise for the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Ethan emphasizes YHVH's matchless strength and the enormity of His reign. Intriguingly, Ethan was inspired to write prophetically as Psalm 89 also has messianic tones. The psalmist is not afraid to addresses life's difficulties: Ethan is secure knowing that the LORD is Almighty and unrivaled, but he is not afraid to ask those questions:

<u>"How long, LORD?</u> <u>Will You hide Yourself forever?" Psalm 89:46</u>



The power of language

Ethan the Ezrahite used language to bring glory to God.

Do you write for His glory?

Do you use your speech and your language to find ways to exalt His name and testify of His goodness? Words are so incredibly powerful: so much so, that by the Word spoken, the world came into existence.

We must allow the Holy Spirit to influence our speech and writing and all levels of communication so that we, like Ethan, can bring enduring glory to our King.

May praise break forth!

Ethan called upon the Name of the LORD to praise Him for all He has done! The very meaning of Ethan's name invites us to allow praise to break forth from our lips! May we be inspired today to praise the Most High God, the King of all kings, the LORD God Almighty – *ADONAI ELOHEI TZVA'OT* without reservations, without anything coming between our worship.

Be set free from your apprehensions.

Don't worry about what others will say.

Your job, follower of Messiah, is to worship in Spirit and in Truth, with all you have in your being. As other psalmists once wrote:

"My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." Psalm 45:1

Maybe God has called you to be a sanctified songwriter.

May He wants you to engage in demonstrative praise — to help others also experience freedom in worship.

Whatever ministry is bubbling up inside of you, whatever the Holy Spirit (*Ruach haKodesh*) is bringing out to your attention, pursue God passionately!

Let praises ring!

Spirit-filled Songs of Praise in Luke's Gospel

(Luke 1-2) 5783 B"H, updated 2/20/23

Last week, I focused on <u>Dr.Luke, Gospel-writer</u>. His purpose in writing was so that the beloved ones would <u>"know for sure the Truth."</u> We will see today that Luke was also very interested in recording examples of <u>Spirit-filled praise</u>.

As we continue to look at <u>Luke</u>'s writings, I'd like to point out his early focus on praise hymns. Before the <u>first chapter</u> of the <u>Gospel of Luke</u> ends, he has already shared with us the song of praise (often called the <u>"Magnificat"</u>) of Mary (Miriam), the mother of Jesus (Yeshua).

This indicates to me that Luke was a worshipper. It seems to me that Dr.Luke had a heart filled with praise which inspired Him to write and share the Good News with us.

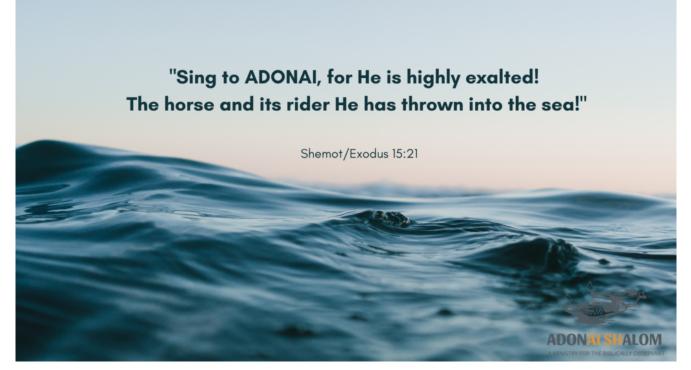
Miriam the Prophetess & Miriam, Mother of Messiah

When we hear the name "Miriam" related to Scripture, it is not uncommon to immediately think of Miriam the Prophetess, Moshe's (Moses') brave sister <u>(Shemot/Exodus 15:20)</u>.

Both <u>Moshe (Moses) and Miriam sang praises to ADONAI</u> for leading them to safety through the parted waters of the Red Sea <u>(Shemot/Exodus 15)</u>. With tambourine in hand, Miriam led dancing and singing:

"Sing to ADONAI, for He is highly exalted! The horse and its

rider He has thrown into the sea!" Exodus 15:21



The praises sang in the Sinai desert set a precedent for the way praise would be offered throughout the Scriptures. Even today, we ought use these patterns for our praise – unashamedly rejoicing before the LORD in song and celebration.

Every bit of the Bible is compelling, but I find it very fascinating that Miriam the Prophetess is not the only Miriam in Scripture.

The mother of Yeshua (Jesus) was also a Miriam. "Mary" is anglicized. Back in ancient Bethlehem, it wasn't "Mary and Joseph:" it was "Yosef and Miriam" blessed with their beautiful Son, Yeshua.

<u>Luke's Gospel account</u> records that when Miriam visited Elizabeth, the Holy Spirit (Ruach haKodesh) filled Elizabeth "completely" (<u>Luke 1:41</u>, TLV).

In response to that Spirit-driven experience, Prophetess Miriam praised the LORD using the types of phrasing typical of Hebrew poetry. It is likely that Miriam, mother of Jesus (Yeshua) was inspired by the praise song sung by the other Miriam, sister of Moses:

"Then Miriam said,

'My soul magnifies ADONAI, and my spirit greatly rejoices in God, my Savior. For He has looked with care upon the humble state of His maidservant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done a great thing for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation to generation to the ones who fear Him. He has displayed power with His arm He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down rulers from thrones and exalted humble ones. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty-handed. <u>He has helped His servant Israel,</u> remembering His mercy, just as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.'" Luke 1:46-55

Zechariah the Priest <u>(Kohen)</u>

Luke, being the very detail-oriented doctor that he was, made sure to record the song sung by Priest Zechariah because of its prophetic Truth.

Zechariah, too, was filled with the Holy Spirit (Ruach haKodesh) and Luke makes sure to point that out.

Notice the parallels between the songs of the Miriams and Zechariah. They begin by magnifying the LORD, blessing His Holy Name. The Bible says that Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore prophesied about his son Yochanan (John [the Baptist/Immerser]) as well as Messiah Yeshua our Savior Jesus:

"Blessed be ADONAI, God of Israel, for He has looked after His people and brought them redemption. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, just as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ages past, salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us! So He shows mercy to our fathers and remembers His holy covenant, the vow which He swore to Abraham <u>our father, to grant us-</u> rescued fearlessly from the hand of our enemies-to serve Him, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days. And you, child, will be called a prophet of *Elyon*. For you will go before ADONAI to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people through removal of their sins.

- Through our God's heart of mercy,
- the Sunrise from on high will come upon us,
- to give light to those who sit in darkness
- and in the shadow of death,
- to guide our feet in the way of shalom." Luke 1:67-79



The Army of Heaven

Are you familiar with Chris Tomlin's song, Whom Shall I Fear?
(The God of Angel Armies)?

I particularly love the line, <u>"The One who reigns forever, He</u> is a Friend of mine!"

Think about that! Let it sink in! The God of the Heavenly Armies, the All-Victorious, Almighty One, who reigns forever – is also your Friend. A Friend of mine!? Then yes, whom shall I fear? The Commander-In-Chief, the Eternal Protector, just so happens to be the One I can call upon at any moment and He will send heavenly host reinforcements. Immediately. He's that Powerful. He's that Loving. He's that good of a Friend. *ADONAI-Tzva'ot!*

<u>"A multitude of heavenly armies</u>" proclaimed the birth of our Messiah:

<u>"Glory to God in the highest,</u> and on earth shalom to men of good will." Luke 2:13-14 Luke recorded these songs of praise to inspire us to do the same.

Praise the LORD today!

Does your soul magnify ADONAI?

Do you sing praises to the LORD Most High?

Have you, like those who have gone before us, recognized the Sovereignty of God in your life?

Do you rejoice in God your Savior?

Have you been rescued and delivered by His Mighty hand of power?

Are you filled with the glorious Holy Spirit?

Praise the LORD for all He has done!

<u>"For the Mighty One has done a great thing for me, and holy is</u> <u>His Name." Luke 1:49</u>

Asbury Awakening

We appear to be witnessing a revival, or what is often more historically termed, an "awakening," at Asbury University. As I wrote on our <u>Adonai Shalom Facebook page</u>,

"Let's pray for the students of Asbury University. May this be a true revival/spiritual awakening that our nation and world so desperately needs. I have been cautiously optimistic that what is going on there may become the Azusa Street of our day. This generation has been raised on coffee and donuts in the church and is hungry for real spiritual nourishment. I pray this generation learns true worship and experiences the authentic power of the Eternal One! I also pray for the administration because the logistics of what is going on at the university must be quite a challenge to navigate. But may the LORD have His way and may hearts turn to Messiah Yeshua (Jesus)!"

This is such an exciting event to witness! We are in the last days, and there will again be Spirit-filled songs of praise lifted to our Most High God who is worthy of all honor and glory forever and ever. With all the modern technology, people have found out about the revival and are traveling from all over the world, hungry to experience the LORD. The Spirit of God is not limited to that place, but there will be people who, like the wise men, need to go there to see what it is the LORD has done and they will go and spread that news elsewhere. We should pray that this wonderful spirit of repentance and revival will continue and truly have a global impact.

Keep your eyes fixed on our Savior Yeshua (Jesus) – because He will come back for His own!



May you be most especially blessed today!

Gratitude & Giving Thanks: A Hebraic perspective

As we near Thanksgiving, I wanted to share with you a Hebraic perspective on the terms, "gratitude" and "giving thanks." In Hebrew, the expressions are "hoda'ah" and "hakarat hatov."

Hoda'ah ([[]]]]]): Thanksgiving & Praise

When the Bible beseeches us to "give thanks to our LORD, for He is good," the Hebrew term used is most commonly "hoda'ah." It varies in form due to grammar (commonly, "hodu"), but it comes from the same root "yadah".

Here is an example of one of many instances where this term is used in the Bible:

<u>"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!</u> For His mercy endures forever." Psalm 136:1, NKJV, emphasis added



Here, *hoda'ah* is in command form and is pronounced "*hodu*."

Hodu, L'ADONAI Ki Tov. Give thanks to the LORD for He is good.

Here, it is to be understood that we must give thanks! It is a *command*! Give thanks!

Hodu is intertwined with the idea of "praise."

The *Tree of Live Version*, which is very true to the original Hebraic intent of the Scriptures, chose *not* to translate "*hodu*" as "give thanks," and instead translated it as "praise." This illumines the broad meaning of the word and teaches us this truth: our giving of thanks should always include the element of praise!

"Praise ADONAI, for He is good,

<u>for His lovingkindness endures forever." Psalm 136, TLV,</u> <u>emphasis added</u>

A Hebraic understanding of this verse is very holistic: we give the LORD our God thanks and praise as we confess our love for Him and acknowledge Him. **Our thanks cannot possibly exist apart from our praise.**

What's more, the root term "yadah" literally refers to having "outstretched arms," a demonstrative act of worship, of "throwing one's hands" out in thankfulness and in thanksgiving. Biblically, praise includes the outstretching of our arms and the lifting of our hands as a true expression of thanks. "Hodu" is the imperative form: telling us, we must give thanks! We must praise!

Want to learn a bit of Hebrew to impress your friends and families at the Thanksgiving table? []

Listen to these two songs based on <u>Psalm 136:1</u> and you will quickly learn how to say, "Give thanks to the LORD for He is good."

It is easy to pronounce. *Hodu l'Adonai ki tov.*



The song by Barry & Batya Segal is so filled with shalom! I first heard this song on the <u>ADONAI</u>cd when I was very young, and those songs ministered to me in such a way that truly helped lead me to my Messiah Yeshua (Savior Lord Jesus

Christ). I hope it blesses you today, too, as you prepare your heart and home for Thanksgiving!

Hodu L'Adonai Ki Tov (Give Thanks to the LORD for He is good) [Psalm 136:1] []_____ []____ []____ Here is another beautiful song that includes the phrase, *"Hodu L'Adonai Ki Tov."* It is called "Give Thanks (Hodu)" by Joshua Aaron:

"Hodu" Live at the Tower of David: Joshua Aaron

"HaKarat HaTov" is a Hebrew expression that is often translated as "gratitude," but more literally means "recognizing the good."

Though somewhat cliché, having an "attitude of gratitude" is an integral part of the life of faith.

Are you able to list what you are grateful for?

Do you dwell on the negatives in life or do you focus on the things you are thankful for?

"Recognizing the good" is a spiritual practice, if you really think about it.

Rather than focusing on what we don't have, or what isn't going right, we are commissioned to be disciples of Messiah Yeshua (our Lord Jesus Christ): followers of the One who is our All in All. We don't need the world's goods or gains. We just need Him.

"Recognizing the good" means just that: recognize the good that is already yours.

If you are a child of God, recognize the goodness of this

truth!

If you know today that you are saved, recognize the goodness of salvation!

Of course, sometimes things don't go quite as we would like.

When your car has a flat tire, be grateful you have a car to begin with. Recognize the good. Recognize that you are blessed.

When your family is loud and boisterous when you are just wanting to take a nap, be grateful you have a family. *HaKarat haTov:* recognize the good. Recognize that you are indeed blessed!

Choosing to live your life in a way in which you are recognizing the good will change your perspective on everything. The spirit of bitterness will have to flee. The spirit of comparison will lose its power. The spirits of envy and all types of negativity will no longer have a place in your life.

So this Thanksgiving, choose true, godly gratitude. Recognize the good and be thankful for it.

HaTov The Good One, Infinite Compassion. This video is subtitled in Spanish, but there is an English translation available at this YouTube link:

<u>HaTov The Good One, Infinite in Compassion</u> subtitled in English. I tried to paste the video here, but it wouldn't allow it (only the Spanish one if you happen to understand Spanish), so please follow this hyperlink and you will find it in English.

Hodu: Turkey?!

Fun fact: In Hebrew, Hodu is used for both "giving thanks" as well as the word for "turkey!" The accent is changed, so *Hodú*

is "give thanks", but *Hódu* is "turkey!" Even more attentiongrabbing: *Hodu* is also the term used to describe the nation of India!

Israelis refer to a "turkey" as an "Indian chicken!" And we know Christopher Columbus thought he had landed in India! The Pilgrims knew better . . . but you decide: Is this all just a coincidence, that the Hebrew word for "thanksgiving" just so happens to be the word for "turkey," too!?



There are also some interesting parallels between the traditional Thanksgiving feast and the traditions around <u>Sukkot</u>, namely sharing an abundance of food and the command to be thankful and joyous.

Finally, the Jewish people are known as "Yehudi" in Hebrew (also translated in English as Judah): Yehudi is related also to "hodu/hodaya" (thanksgiving), so the very name of the people of God and tribe of Judah is rooted in Gratitude! The Grateful People, the People of Gratitude!

So be filled with thankfulness and gratitude today! The Scriptures are filled with so many linguistic treasures, but we must be diligent in our study and prayerful – that Ruach

haKodesh (the Holy Spirit) would reveal more of these wonderful revelations to us to help strengthen our faith and refresh our spirit!

Chag Ha'hodaya! Happy Thanksgiving!

How you can be blessed in your daily routine

Updated 5/25/22 B"H

Do you want to be blessed in your daily routine? Here are some practical ways you can receive God's blessing in your life:

1. Approach God directly through prayer

Some world religions teach that God is far-off, distant, and unconcerned with the daily activities of human beings.

Some people believe that they *cannot* personally talk with Him: that they need an intermediary or someone "holier-than-thou" to speak to the Almighty on their behalf.

Countless times have people asked me to pray for them, but it becomes clear **they have no intention of doing so themselves**.

Prayer on the behalf of another is never wasted, but it would be more effective if the requester would join in with true faith of their own.

You can pray any time! Start your day off right, by

approaching the throne of the LORD with a humble prayer of thanksgiving and praise.

Why not listen to this song, <u>"Awake, O Israel, put off thy</u> <u>slumber</u>" and start giving Him praise right now!?

2. Reject American Christianity's dangerous flirtation with yoga and kundalini in your exercise routine

If you have a morning exercise routine, keep at it! Incorporate praise and worship music when you're on your elliptical or treadmill. Thank the LORD for the ability to move the body that He gave you. If you've ever had to recover from an injury or medical intervention, you know not to take exercise for granted.

Pray today for strength. That He would strengthen your every limb and muscle and tendon, that His strength would be made perfect in your weaknesses.

Do NOT follow the New Age movement's suggestions to "look inward," attempting to empty the mind in order to find enlightenment, self-actualization, or nirvana.

More and more Americans turn toward Eastern religion, incorporating yoga and kundalini worship practices into their lives and joining the pop culture fascination with anything decidedly **non**Christian.

My advice to aspiring yogis: yes, stay healthy, eat some yogurt, but skip the yoga.

Let me explain why:

My friends (natives of northern India) who happen to be evangelical missionaries to that same region attest that yoga is indeed rooted in Hindu religion and they are saddened (appalled, really, but they are shy to show it) by the Western embrace of these dark influences. They risk their lives preaching the Good News of Messiah and rejoicing when bondages are broken as people reject idolatry and come back stateside only to be bombarded by American Christians who get all defensive about their exercise routines.

[Missionaries in India] risk their lives preaching the Good News of Messiah and rejoicing when bondages are broken as people reject idolatry and come back stateside only to be bombarded by American Christians who get all defensive about their exercise routines.

The Scriptures used by thousands of believers around the world instruct plainly what ought be done.

Rabbi She'll (Paul, the Apostle) wrote to the Romans that believers should "renew their mind," (Romans 12:2) and assured the Corinthian believers that by the power of the Holy Spirit (*Ruach haKodesh*) and faith in His Name, they now had the "mind of Messiah"(<u>1 Corinthians 2:16</u>).

Followers of Jesus (Yeshua) are to set their minds on things above (Colossians 3:2). We must choose to live differently. Rather than empty our minds, we must fill our mind with the Truth of God's Word.

There are plenty of ways to demonstrate our faith without compromise. After all, there are plenty of stretching exercises that we as believers can do that are not rooted in yoga's practices. Let us honor our LORD and not invite Hindu spirits into our lives.

3. Meditate on the Psalms

"Meditation" isn't anti-Biblical.

The Bible *exhorts* us to meditate! Meditate as a child of God, on the things of God. Do not meditate as the world does.

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things." Philippians 4:8, emphasis added

I always recommend that people meditate on the Word of God as a whole but also specifically on the <u>Psalms</u>. This is timely because I very recently reviewed an excellent devotional resource on the <u>Psalms</u> that uses some of the famous minister Charles Spurgeon's writings called <u>"Spurgeon and the Psalms."</u> You can read that review <u>here</u>.

It is a sad reality that so many people do not realize that their Maker, their Creator, will hear them (and answer them!) if they would call upon His Name. Too many think that spiritual meditation is reserved for Buddhists and Hindus. Too many people appear to feel ashamed by the knowledge that they are sinners that they are afraid to speak to the God of Heaven. **Many choose not to overcome this barrier**, embarrassed that their peers or family will judge them for choosing to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (*Yeshua haMashiach*).

Many echo David's wonderings that we find in Psalm 24:

<u>"Who may stand in His Holy Place? (Psalm 24:3b)</u>

How can I receive a blessing from the Almighty One?

How can I know He will touch my life?

How can I know He will heal a loved one?

"Who may go up on the mountain of ADONAI?" (Psalm 24:3a)

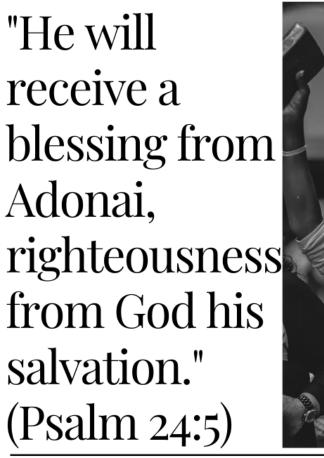
It is easier than you may think.

David was inspired to give the answer:

"One with clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully." (Psalm 24:4)

The next verse assures us of this:

<u>"He will receive a blessing from ADONAI, righteousness from</u> <u>God his salvation." (Psalm 24:5)</u>





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If you sincerely come before Him, bearing no agenda, lifting your soul not to the idols of this world but to the Prince of Peace, **He will bless you**.

May it be said of you, like of Nathanael in John 1:47, "in him

there is no deceit."

But if you have failed and your hands are unclean due to dishonest dealings and impurities in your heart, let this be a message of hope for your life.

You **can** be clothed in righteousness if you choose to be wrapped in the garments of His salvation (<u>Isaiah 61:10</u>), the greatest blessing available to anyone on this earth. May nothing impede you from the blessing that is yours if you will receive it.

Here is a song by worship leader <u>Robin Mark</u> that may truly encourage you today called <u>"Garments of Praise."</u> I love the lyrics:

"Put on the garments of praise, for the spirit of heaviness; Let the oil of gladness flow down from your throne! Put on the garments of praise, for the spirit of heaviness; Your joy is my strength alone, my strength alone!

Make these broken weary bones rise to dance again, Wet this dry and thirsty land with a river! LORD our eyes are fixed on you and we are waiting, For your garland of grace as we praise your Name!

Hallelujah, sing hallelujah! We give all honor and praise to your Name! Hallelujah, sing hallelujah! We trade our sorrows for garments of praise!"

If you begin your day focusing on the LORD and His goodness, the rest of your day will be full of blessing, too. And when there are hard times, you will be spiritually prepared to endure the battle and win. Receive the blessing that He has for you — it is yours, just for the asking. He is willing to give you unmerited favor: what we call, "grace." And His grace is more than sufficient for you, today. Also, remember this: we may have our daily routines, but with God, life becomes much more than routine! It becomes full of meaning and joy!

4. Make the decision RIGHT NOW to follow the Savior of mankind and you will certainly receive the blessing and favor of God Most High.

And when you do, let me be the first to say, welcome to the family!!

If you have questions about Messiah Yeshua (Jesus the Christ), please send a message or leave a comment. We would be overjoyed to help you in your spiritual walk. Shalom!

I'll leave you today with another song that will minister to your heart based on <u>Psalm 24</u>, <u>"Who will Ascend to the Mountain</u> of the LORD?"