

<p>ה פֹּה-לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ עֵינַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יֵרְאוּ: ו אֲזַנַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֶף לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְיִחוּן: ז יְדִיעָהּ וְלֹא יִמְשֹׁן רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ לֹא-יִהְיוּ בְּגֵרוֹנָם: ח כְּמוֹתָם יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-בִּי ט יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בִּיהֵוָה עֲזָרָם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא: י בֵּית אֶהְרֹן בְּטַחוּ בִּיהֵוָה עֲזָרָם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא: יא יְרֵאִי יִהְיוּ בְּטַחוּ בִּיהֵוָה עֲזָרָם וּמְ גַנָּם הוּא: יב יִהְיוּ זְכָרֵנוּ יְבָרֶךְ יְבָרֶךְ אֶת-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יְבָרֶךְ אֶת- בֵּית אֶהְרֹן: יג יְבָרֶךְ יְרֵאִי יִהְיוּ הַקְּטָנִים עִם-הַגְּדֹלִים: יד יִסְף יִהְיוּ עֲלֵיכֶם עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל-בְּנֵיכֶם: טו בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לִיהוָה עֲשֵׂה שְׂמִים וְאַרְצָךְ: טז הַשְּׂמִים שְׂמִים לִיהֵוָה וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לְבְנֵי-אָדָם: יז לֹא-הִמְתִּים יִהְלְלוּ-יָהּ וְלֹא כָּל- יְרֵדֵי דוֹמָה: יח וְאַנְחָנוּ נְבָרֶךְ יָהּ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם הַלְלוּיָהּ:</p>	<p>ה פומא להון ולא ממללין עיינין להון ולא חמיין: ו אודנין להון ולא שמע עין נחירי להון ולא מריחין: ז ידהון ולא ממשמשין ריגלהון ולא מהלכין לא מרננין בעינקהון: ח דיכמתהון יהון עובדיהון כל די מתרחיץ עליהון: ט ישראל רחיץ במימרא דיהוה סעי דהון ותריסיהון הוא: י דבית אהרן רחיצו במימרא דיהוה סעידהון ותרי סיהון הוא: יא דחליא דיהוה רחיצו במימרא דיהוה סעידהון ותריסיהון הוא: יב מימרא דיהוה דכר יתנא לטב יברך ית בית ישראל יברך ית בית אהרן: יג יברך דחליא דיהוה זעיריא עם רברביא: יד יוסף מי מרא דיהוה עילויכון ועילוי בניכון: טו בריכין אתון מן קדם יהוה עבד שמיא וארעא: טז שמי שמיא לשכינת יקרא דיהוה וארעא יהב לבני נשא: יז לא מיתיא משבחין שמא דיהוה ולא כל נחותי בית קבורת אד מתא: יח ואנחנא נברך יה מן השתא ועד עלמא הללויה שבחו אלהא:</p>	<p>115:5 στόμα ἔχουσιν καὶ οὐ λαλήσουσιν ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχουσιν καὶ οὐκ ὄψονται 115:6 ὄτα ἔχουσιν καὶ οὐκ ἀκούσονται ῥίνας ἔχουσιν καὶ οὐκ ὀσφρανθήσονται 115:7 χεῖρας ἔχουσιν καὶ οὐ ψηλαφήσουσιν πόδας ἔχουσιν καὶ οὐ περιπατήσουσιν οὐ φωνήσουσιν ἐν τῷ λάρυγγι αὐτῶν 115:8 ὅμοιοι αὐτοῖς γένοιτο οἱ ποιοῦντες αὐτὰ καὶ πάντες οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς 115:9 οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ ἤλπισεν ἐπὶ κύριον βοηθὸς αὐτῶν καὶ ὑπερασπιστὴς αὐτῶν ἐστὶν 115:10 οἶκος Ααρων ἤλπισεν ἐπὶ κύριον βοηθὸς αὐτῶν καὶ ὑπερασπιστὴς αὐτῶν ἐστὶν 115:11 οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον ἤλπισαν ἐπὶ κύριον βοηθὸς αὐτῶν καὶ ὑπερασπιστὴς αὐτῶν ἐστὶν 115:12 κύριος ἐμνήσθη ἡμῶν καὶ εὐλόγησεν ἡμᾶς εὐλόγησεν τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ εὐλόγησεν τὸν οἶκον Ααρων 115:13 εὐλόγησεν τοὺς φοβουμένους τὸν κύριον τοὺς μικροὺς μετὰ τῶν μεγάλων 115:14 προσθεῖη κύριος ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς ὑμῶν 115:15 εὐλογημένοι ὑμεῖς τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν 115:16 ὁ οὐρανὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ τὴν δὲ γῆν ἔδωκεν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων 115:17 οὐχ οἱ νεκροὶ αἰνέσουσίν σε κύριε οὐδὲ πάντες οἱ καταβαίνοντες εἰς ᾄδου 115:18 ἀλλ’ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εὐλογήσομεν τὸν κύριον ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος</p>
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is a strong tower? The “*name of the Lord*” signifies the ways in which the Lord has made Himself known, descriptive of His attributes, as merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth. (*Shemot / Exodus 34:5, 34:7*); the righteous take refuge in these things, and finds himself to be in the Lord’s hands in safety, lifted above the troubles of life which at times seem to be all consuming. According to the proverbs, we read “*The righteous runs into it (the name of the Lord) and is safe.*” How do we run into the name? On the contrary, how does one run into this world, where a man makes this world his defense? This is accomplished by a couple examples, such as the way a man may trust in this world’s wealth or military defenses, etc. As everyone knows, this world’s wealth is fleeting, and one’s military power is not sufficient if the Lord God of Israel is not behind us. The lessons these things teach us is that the Lord is our fortress by the way that we trust in Him. The motivation of our hearts and actions are turned either upwards or downwards. If you direct your motivations downwards, your trust will be in the uncertainty of the riches of this world. If you turn your motivations upwards, the certainty of the riches in heaven are based upon our Lord being the fortress that He claims to be. The idea of running to the name of the Lord as a strong tower brings out the idea of hastily moving oneself to the shelter in order to escape an invading army where one takes his or her portable belongings, children, and cattle, up in their arms, putting them and your wives upon some form of transportation (mules) to make all haste to some fortified place of safety. This is the imagery that we are given in the strong fortress analogy.

The security of the name of the Lord is described in the following way according to the Scriptures:

Shemot / Exodus 3:15

God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. (NASB)

2 Samuel 22:2

He said, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; (NASB)

2 Samuel 22:3

My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence. (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalm 18:2

The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalm 61:3

For You have been a refuge for me, A tower of strength against the enemy. (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalm 91:2

I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!” (NASB)

In *Shemot / Exodus 3:15* we are told that the Lord sending Moshe to the people to deliver them is an action that is part of the name that is to be remembered for all generations. The Lord Himself is ascribed to the name, who is a strong rock and refuge for His people. Over and over again the Lord is declared to be a rock, a stronghold, a fortress, and our salvation. The Psalmist is ascribing greatness and glory to the Lord and directing the reader that it is not to us in his repetition of “lo lanu” (לֹא לָנוּ) Adonai, that we are not to receive glory, it is the Lord God of Israel who is to receive the glory.

The psalmist continues saying, וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ בְּשֵׁמִים כָּל אֲשֶׁר-הִפָּזַן ב לְמַה יֵאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵימָה-נָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם: ג

עֲשֵׂה: ד עֲצַבְיָהֶם כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם: ה פֶּה-לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ עֵינֵיהֶם לָהֶם וְלֹא יֵרְאוּ: ו אֲזֵנִים לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֶף לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְחֹוּ: ז יְדִיָּהֶם | וְלֹא יִמְיִשׁוּן רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ לֹא-יִהְגּוּ בַגְּרוֹנָם: 115:2 *Why should the nations say, 'Where, now, is their God?' 115:3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. 115:4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. 115:5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; 115:6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; 115:7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. (NASB)* The psalmist speaks of the gods of the nations which are made of silver and gold, and not having the ability to see, hear, speak, or walk because they are nothing more than wood, stone, and metal. The following verses also speak of the inabilities of idols and idolatry.

Tehillim / Psalm 135:16

They have mouths, but they do not speak; They have eyes, but they do not see; (NASB)

Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:28

"There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell." (NASB)

Daniel 5:23

but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified. (NASB)

Revelation 9:20

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; (NASB)

The Scriptures speak of idolatry as false gods, and inanimate objects man sets his heart upon for help, these are the things in whom he places his trust. Daniel speaks of the creator God who has our life and breath in His hands. He is the sustainer of our lives and it is to Him the nations should be giving praises.

The rabbinic commentary Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 15:11 Part 1 has the following to say concerning idolatry.

Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 15:11 Part 1

(Exodus 15:11) "Who is like You among the mighty": Once Israel saw that Pharaoh and his hosts were lost in the Red Sea, and the rule of Egypt had been abolished and idolatry had been castigated, they all opened their mouths and said "Who is like You among the mighty." And not only did Israel alone break out in song. But all the peoples — When they heard that Pharaoh and his hosts had been lost in the sea and their rule had been abolished, and their idolatry had been castigated — all of them rejected their idolatry and opened their mouths and said "Who is like you among the mighty, etc." And thus do you find to be the lot of idolatry — that the peoples of the world are destined to reject it, viz. (Jeremiah 16:19) "The Lord is my strength and my stronghold and my refuge on the day of affliction ... (20) Can a man make gods for himself, etc.", (Isaiah 2:20) "On that day a man will throw away his false gods ... (21) to enter the clefts of rocks (in fear of retribution), etc.", (Ibid. 18) "and the false gods will perish completely." Variantly: "Who is like You among the mighty, O Lord": Who is like You in the miracles and wonders that You wrought for us upon the sea, viz. (Psalms 106:22) "... awesome deeds upon the Red Sea" — (Ibid. 9) "He roared at the Red Sea and it dried

up.” Variantly: “Who is like You *bailmim*” (“among the mute”). You hear the defamation of Your children and You remain silent, viz. (Isaiah 42:14) “I have ever been silent; I have been still; I have restrained Myself. (But now) I will scream as a woman giving birth. I will throb and lust (to destroy all My foes) together.” In the past I was silent and restrained. From now on I will scream. (Ibid. 15-16) “I will lay waste the mountains and the hills, and I will dry up all their grass, and I will render the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. And I shall lead the blind in a way they did not know. In roads they did not know shall I lead them. I shall make the darkness into light before them, and the crooked paths into straight paths.” Variantly: “Who is like You among the mighty”: Who is like You among those who minister before You on high, viz. (Psalms 89:7) “Who in the heavens can be likened to the L rd?” (Ibid. 8) “a G d who is dreaded in the great council of the holy ones (the angels) ... (9) O L rd, G d of hosts, who is like You? Mighty is the L rd.” Variantly: Who is like You (“*ba’eilim*”) among those who call themselves gods? Pharaoh called himself a god, viz. (Ezekiel 29:3) “Mine is my river (the Nile), and I have made it.” And thus, Sancherev, viz. (II Kings 18:35) “Who among all the gods of the lands (saved their land from my hand, etc.)? And thus Nevuchadnezzar, viz. (Isaiah 14:14) “I shall mount the heights of a cloud; I shall liken myself to the Most High!” And thus, Negid Tzor, viz. (Ezekiel 28:2-3) “Say to Negid Tzor: Because your heart has grown proud and you have said: I am a god, etc.” Variantly: Who is like You among those whom others call “gods” and who are without substance, those of whom it is written (Psalms 115:5) “hey have a mouth but cannot speak, etc.” But the Holy One Blessed be He says two things in one pronouncement, something that a man cannot do, viz. (Ibid. 62:12) “One (pronouncement) has G d spoken; these two (things) have I heard.” (Jeremiah 23:29) “Is My word not like fire, says the L rd, and like a hammer shattering rock?” And it is written (Iyyov 37:2) “And a word shall come forth from His mouth, etc.”

The rabbis speak of the mighty works of God’s hands to deliver Israel from the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. The death of the Egyptian army is paralleled to “*the rule of Egypt had been abolished and idolatry had been castigated.*” When a man dies his idolatry ends. The commentary speaks of the power of God over all of creation (mountains, hills, grass, rivers, etc) and how the Lord will lead the blind in a way they have not known. The commentary states, “*And I shall lead the blind in a way they did not know. In roads they did not know shall I lead them. I shall make the darkness into light before them, and the crooked paths into straight paths.*” Note how the Lord God of Israel is interested in prospering us in the sense of what we are given in the Torah in relation to the blessings and the curses. The Lord declares that He will lead His people, He will lead the blind in paths of righteousness indicated by the darkness becoming light and the crooked path becoming straight. The Lord is involved in our lives to draw us unto Him, if we are willing.

These idols are carved with mouths, but they are dead and unable to make no use of them. The nations cry to them for they cannot answer them, nor save them from their troubles. Baal’s priests cried to their god and there was no voice heard, neither was there an answer; they even cut themselves to draw blood and there was no answer, the idols are rightly called dumb. (*Habakkuk 2:18, I Kings 18:26*) Our God however, the Creator of heaven and earth, when his people cry to him, he answers them, and sends them relief; and shows them his mercy for such a deliverance as what we read in the Scriptures, the power and might of God to bring salvation to the people. The Lord’s Word is described in this way, “*Is My word not like fire, says the L rd, and like a hammer shattering rock?*” And it is written (Iyyov 37:2) “*And a word shall come forth from His mouth, etc.*” What the Lord declares something it will come true.

The Aramaic Targum states, *דיכמתהון יהון עובדיהון כל די מתרהיץ עליהון*: 115:8 *May their makers become like them, everyone who relies upon them.* (EMC) The Masoretic Text however states, *ה כְּמוֹתָם יִהְיוּ*: 115:8 *Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them.* (NASB) saying that those who trust in them “*Will become like them!*” There is a great deception that enters into one’s life due to idolatry. The point is that such people who look to idols, the work of men’s hands,

will have mouths but speak not, eyes but see not, hands and handle not, feet but not walk, and ears but not hear because their hearts are uncircumcised. The deception goes very deep within a man, where based upon Scripture, idols do not necessarily have to be those of wood, stone, and metal. The Lord speaks to Ezekiel in the following way concerning the idols that men place in their hearts due to sin.

Ezekiel 14:2-8

14:2 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 14:3 ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all? 14:4 ‘Therefore speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, ‘Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols, 14:5 in order to lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols.’ 14:6 ‘Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God, ‘Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations. 14:7 ‘For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the Lord will be brought to answer him in My own person. 14:8 ‘I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among My people. So you will know that I am the Lord. (NASB)

Ever notice how sin causes one to become more and more unrighteous with time? Ezekiel speaks of men who set up in their hearts an idol. The Lord God of Israel speaks to Ezekiel saying that these idols are the placing of the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. (*Ezekiel 14:3*) This is reiterated in Ezekiel 14:3 saying that the one who does this thing and then comes to inquire of the Lord, the Lord will bring an answer to him in the multitude of his idols. This suggests there are more than one idol that he has placed in this heart in regard to sin. The Lord calls us to repent and turn from the idols of the heart. Ezekiel says that the one who separates himself from the Lord setting an idol for himself in his heart, the Lord will set His face against him and cut him off from his people. The psalmist describes the idols as not having the ability to do anything. In fact, those who make them will become like them (*Tehillim / Psalms 115:8*). The point is that if we establish something in our hearts, we will become like that thing. Establishing our hearts for the Lord takes a process of time. It involves a conscious effort on our part to set up our hearts to be rooted and grounded in the things of God. A person who has invested time with the Lord, in the Word, and in prayer, and in serving others, receives a strength from within that is given by the Spirit of God that increases our faith, neither time nor circumstances can weaken. It actually takes the establishment of heart for a person to fulfill the purpose of God for his life. For example, Noah was preparing for rain (*Bereshit / Genesis 6 and 7*) knowing the Lord would bring a flood, something of which Noah did not know about. Noah however proclaimed the coming flood (*2 Peter 2:5*) and the people would not listen. Noah was preparing for a flood that he knew nothing about, but his faith in the Lord kept him going because he had established his heart to serve the Lord and to call men to repentance.

Note also what Paul says to the Ephesians in regards to these things:

Ephesians 3:14-20

3:14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 3:15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you

may be filled up to all the fullness of God. 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, (NASB)

¹⁴Τούτου χάριν κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, ¹⁵ἐξ οὗ πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται, ¹⁶ἵνα δῶ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, ¹⁷κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἐν ἀγάπῃ **ἐρριζωμένοι** καὶ **τεθεμελιωμένοι**, ¹⁸ἵνα ἐξισχύσητε καταλαβέσθαι σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις τί τὸ πλάτος καὶ μήκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος, ¹⁹γνῶναί τε τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ. ²⁰Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν

Paul speaks of “*having been rooted and grounded,*” in love. The terms ἐρριζωμένοι, τεθεμελιωμένοι, are used in context of the Greek root ριζοῦν, meaning simply to establish something firmly. Here these two words express the simple idea of being securely settled and deeply founded upon something. Paul’s conclusion is that we are to be thoroughly established in love, having it not as an uncertain feeling changing with every change of experience through the day, but as the stable and principle of life that is lived out in the life of the believer.

The psalmist continues saying, ט יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בְּיְהוָה עֲזָרָם וּמִגְּנָם הוּא: י בֵּית אַהֲרֹן בְּטַחוּ בַּיהוָה עֲזָרָם: ט Tehillim / Psalms 115:9 O Israel, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. 115:10 O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states, ט ישראל רחיץ במימרא דיהוה סעידהון ותריסיהון הוא: י דבית אהרן רחיצו במימרא דיהוה סעידהון ותריסיהון הוא: 115:9 O Israel, trust in the word of the Lord; he is their helper and their shield. 115:10 Those of the house of Aaron, trust in the word of the Lord; he is their helper and their shield. (EMC) The psalmist calls to the priesthood to trust in the Lord (115:10). Why do you think that is? Could it be by reason of their not receiving an inheritance in the Land? This idea of being rooted and grounded is a principle that runs deep with Torah context, i.e. in the imagery of the Tabernacle. The Tanach describes God’s people as firm and established trees (*Tehillim / Psalm 1:3, Psalm 92:12-13, and Jeremiah 17:8*), and also as solid stones of the great Temple which rest ultimately upon the mercy and compassion of God. We are built and being built upon and in the foundation stone, Yeshua, which was done in love on our behalf. (*Romans 8:39*). This is the point of the psalmist who speaks of placing our trust in the Lord because he is our help and shield. The Targum states that our trust is “*in the Word of the Lord*” (במימרא דיהוה) illustrating the importance of remaining in the Word, in the Scriptures, daily.

2 Chronicles 12:14 states, “*And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD*” (NASB) This passage speaks of Rehoboam, the king of Israel, following the death of his father Solomon. In the beginning of his reign his heart was sensitive to the Lord. He did not establish his heart upon the Lord which resulted in war and division of his kingdom. The power of memory, which is connected to the Name of God, is a vital part of preparing our hearts before the Lord. According to the Torah, the Lord warned the children of Israel not to forget the mighty works He had performed for them lest they turn away from following Him (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:9, 4:23, 6:12, 8:11-14, and 8:19*). The Lord linked memory to staying true to His covenant, remembering the Lord, and not turning towards the gods of the nations.

The psalmist states, יב יהוה זכרנו יברך יברך את-בית ישראל יברך את-בית אהרן: יג יברך יראי יהוה: יב הקטנים עם-הגדלים: 115:12 The Lord has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. 115:13 He will bless those who fear the Lord, The small together with the great. (NASB) It may be that the house of Aaron had doubts on the Lord’s provision when the people became less faithful. When the people became less faithful they would not have brought the sacrifices in the appointed times and the Cohenim may have had trouble receiving provision to survive (food, etc). Doubts are a part of life’s uncertain future. The unmistakable sign of a true believer is the existence of a love that desires to help others, that seeks to minister to others at a cost to self. If that love is present, even to some

small degree, we have observable evidence that we truly are God's children. Even with this assurance, it is possible to be a child of God and still be troubled with doubts, fears, anxieties, and uncertainties about our lives and our relationship with the Lord. The psalmist speaks of being faithful by fearing the Lord, and the Lord being mindful of us bringing His blessing into our lives. Rambam states the following concerning the blessing of God:

Ramban on Exodus 20:21:1

An earth alter you will do to me. Rabbi Avraham explained that he said לא תעשון אתי אלהי זהב ובכסף ואלהי זהב to receive the power from above in their image to be intermediators between me and you all. Because בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי אבא אליך (in all the places that you remember my name I will come to you) I with my presence וברכתיך (and I will bless you) You do not need a mediator...and in everyplace that they will remember his name he will come with his presence upon them to make his presence amongst them and bless them.

Rambam reiterates the idea in the place the name of the Lord is remembered, He will come and bless us. The Aramaic Targum states, יב מימרא דיהוה דכר יתנא לטב יברך יברך ית בית ישראל יברך ית בית אהרן; 115:12 The word of the Lord has remembered us for good, he will bless; he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron. 115:13 He will bless those who fear the Lord, the small with the great. (EMC) The Targum translates the Word (Memra, מימרא) of God will go forth and remember us and bless us. We can be assured the Lord is with us and will bless us because “The Lord God speaks to each man through the life He has given him and in the way in which the Lord upholds him.” In addition, the way in which man responds to Him is with his whole life “in the way he lives it.” The Jewish teaching of the unity and oneness of God corresponds to this teaching of the oneness and the all-inclusiveness of life in our relationship with the Lord. The Lord gives man not merely spirit but success and blessing in all its parts, from the lowest to the highest. If we look back upon our lives, it is possible to see these things. If it is not possible to observe these things in your life, then it may be time for an evaluation of what you truly believe about the Lord our Father in heaven and His Messiah Yeshua.

The psalm concludes saying, יד יסוף יהוה עליכם ועל-בניכם: טו בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה עֲשֵׂה שְׂמִים, וְאַרְצֵי: טז הַשָּׁמַיִם שְׂמִים לַיהוָה וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לְבְנֵי-אָדָם: יז לֹא-הַמַּתִּים יְהַלְלוּ-יָהּ וְלֹא כָל-יְרֵדֵי דוּמָה: יח וְאֲנַחְנוּ: 115:14 May the Lord give you increase, You and your children. 115:15 May you be blessed of the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth. 115:16 The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, But the earth He has given to the sons of men. 115:17 The dead do not praise the Lord, Nor do any who go down into silence; 115:18 But as for us, we will bless the Lord From this time forth and forever. Praise the Lord! (NASB) It is interesting how the psalmist connects praising the Lord to the living and the physical body. The meaning of this is, those who are dead cannot praise the Lord, or cannot worship Him, because this is only done while we are in the land of the living. The Lord is the God of the living and not the dead; rightly so does the psalmist state that the dead do not praise the Lord. The opportunity to praise the Lord will be cut off in the grave, therefore, we should be faithful to praise the Lord while this life lasts. As we have discussed in the past, our worship and service to the Lord is coupled to our bodies. Those who go down to the grave cannot unite in the Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with which God's people delight in singing to the Lord. These verses have been used in the past as a proof text for something called Christian mortalism, also known as soul sleep. Christian mortalism incorporates the belief that the human soul is not naturally immortal; and may include the belief that the soul is uncomprehending during the time between bodily death and the resurrection, known as the intermediate state. In the Book of Genesis Jacob mentions he would descend into the Sheol where he thought his son Joseph already was. In addition, other source texts from the Tanach, such as in the story of when the Witch of Endor summons the ghost of the deceased prophet Samuel at the behest of King Saul, is a proof text for the immortal soul. Modern scholars believe the concept of an immortal soul going to bliss or torment after death entered mainstream Judaism after the exile

from Babylon and existed throughout the Second Temple era, though both “soul sleep” and “soul death” were also held. (Gillman (2000). “Death and Afterlife, Judaic Doctrines of”. In Neusner, Jacob; Green, William Scott; Avery-Peck, Alan J. *The Encyclopedia of Judaism. 1. Leiden: Brill. ISBN 9004110046. OCLC 313496275*) Traditional rabbinic Judaism, however, has always been of the opinion in the immortality of the soul which includes punishment and reward after death. The rabbis feel this is consistent back to the time of the giving of the Torah at the mountain of Sinai. The punishment of kareth (excision) is understood to mean that soul is cut off from God in the Afterlife. (*Sanhedrin, 64b, 90b on Numbers 15:31, Maimonides, Hilkhoth Teshuvah, 8*) The concept of soul sleep is not something to be concerned with, since we will all be alive during the resurrection, and at that point it will not matter one way or the other in regards who is right and who is wrong. One thing to consider, Yeshua used the concept of the immortality of the soul in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus. When each died, one opened his eyes in torment, and the other in b’gan eden (in the Garden of Eden). The basic conclusion is that when we die we go to be with the Lord, for those who are His people. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your great love. We believe You are able to overcome all things, from saving us from our enemies, to the deliverance from sin, and even to work in our hearts to deeply, truly, and honestly seek you all the days of our lives. We recognize the weaknesses in our strength and resolve to serve You and to do what is expected, to be humble and to pray and to remain in Your word. Lord help us to have the strength to stand for truth and life, to have the desire to seek You in prayer and in Your Word, to have faith in Yeshua Your Messiah, and to love our neighbor each day. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes