



From the cell of His Grace Bishop Youssef...

During my teenage years it seemed my love and understanding for the Psalms of David, a Holy Book of both prayer and praise, more fully developed, firmly took root and grew. I began to truly comprehend the Prophet and Psalmist David's self-fulfilling fullness he found in God and the discernment David discovered through life long learning, that the Lord would provide for his every need if he would only desire to walk with the Lord. While the Psalms were the hymnbook of ancient Israel of long ago, the Psalms were also the prayers of the Coptic Church.

The Psalms were beautifully written songs I could associate with daily prayers and feast celebrations so I readily learned to recite them. I not only loved but respected and admired the Psalms and all those who wrote its many themes the more I prayed them with greater understanding. This proved later to be extremely helpful in my monastic life as in the monastery Psalms are chanted in the course of a week. Did you know that the novice prays all the Agpeya's psalms but

for those monks who live in solitude they may pray all the 151 psalms besides other prayers (e.g. all the praises of the Apocalypse night). This is done with the guidance of the confessor father.

The main author and contributor to the Holy Book of Psalms, the Psalmist David was a man known and historically recorded for his goodness of heart, a prophet of inspirational wisdom used at will, a melodious psalmist of both song and harp, and an ordained king from his simple youth who was known for his writings of expressive and labile emotion. His psalms are often referred to as a miniature Bible within the Holy Bible.

The Prophet David's heart embedded collection of Psalms provide us with the prophecy of future events which were fulfilled, recant historical events, state the unchanging life rules which must be followed, outline the importance of obedience, speak to consequences of passion and pleasure that precede good judgment, and transformation of thought brought about by the power of expression rather than suppression.



I would like to share with you one of my many favorite Psalms written by King David:

*O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is Your Name in all the earth,
Who have set Your Glory above the Heavens!*

*Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies
That you may silence the enemy and the avenger.*

*When I consider Your Heavens
The work of Your fingers,
The moon and stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the Son of Man that You visit Him?
For You have made Him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned Him with glory and honor.*

*You have made Him to have dominion over the works of
Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and
oxen—
Even the birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of
the seas.*

*O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your Name in all the
earth! (Psalm 8)*

This Psalm speaks to the greatness of the Lord. It describes who God is and what He had done. It speaks to not only the strength of man, but man's weakness as well. Psalm eight addresses passionately the redeeming work of the Son of Man, His Incarnation, His humiliation being "a little lower than the angels" and that He experienced earthly death for the sake of each man and is now crowned with all glory and honor deserving of His Holy Name.

Tradition and many Biblical scholars believe this

Psalm to have been written during the evening hours while David was tending his sheep and served as a meditation. For me, this Psalm chanted on the Hosanna Sunday teaches us how to feel the Lord's presence among us, teaches us how to behold His Glory, and through the two we will find love, joy, and peace as did the young Psalmist David through his meditation. The Holy Book of Psalms, chapter eight gives us hope of the eternal Heavenly glory and assures us of the wonderfulness and worthiness of the Name of the Lord.

Psalm eight is such a distinguished Messianic Psalm that it is referred to in the New Testament three times (Mathew 21:16, I Corinthians 15:27, and Hebrews 2:5-9). Many scholars concur that it is a fulfilled prophecy which addresses the Lord Jesus Christ in His passion, His Glorious Resurrection, and His creation and dominance over all the earth. King David was truly prophetic in his Psalms.

It has been written that in the Hebrew version of the eighth Psalm the first word of the first and eighth verses is Jehovah. This is significant in that the number eight signifies "the world to come or to the end." If this is the case, then this Messianic Psalm speaks to Jehovah as The First and The Last Who embraces all believers to the eternal life to come.

Let us all pray this beautiful Psalm, and meditate upon the wonderful Name of the Lord,

Bishop Youssef

