

## **Psalm 20**

This psalm is a petition on behalf of “the Lord’s anointed” - King David, and the Messiah, whom the king represents.

**Psalm 20:1** - “The LORD hear you in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend you”

The link with Jacob and the Torah readings is shown immediately: The God of Jacob, or the God of Israel, would be synonymous terms - reflecting God’s protection of Jacob despite his trickery and including the critical change that left Jacob behind and released Israel as his new identity.

In the same way, God has looked after us, before we knew him, and still continues.

Jacob’s new name of Israel is one of the names of Messiah:

**Isaiah 49:3** - “He said to Me, ‘You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory.’”

The “day of trouble” from Christ’s point of view, was his agony in the Garden and then the Cross.

**Psalm 20:4** - “Grant you according to your own heart, and fulfill all your counsel.”

i.e. May God grant the king that his plans be fulfilled. But compare with Jesus in the Garden - “Yet not my will, but thine be done.” (**Luke 22:42**)

To fulfill Christ’s will means to fulfill the Father’s will.

**Psalm 20:6** - “Now know I that the LORD saves his anointed...”

God saved and resurrected Jesus, The Messiah; anointed by Yahweh king over his holy hill of Zion, with the oil of gladness, or the Holy Spirit.

**Psalm 20:7** - “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.”

The contrast between faith and “cause and effect.”

Compare **Psalm 33:16-18** - “The king is not saved by a mighty army; A warrior is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a false hope for victory; Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness”

**Isaiah 31:1** - “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help And rely on horses, And trust in chariots because they are many And in horsemen because they are very strong,

But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!"

**Psalm 20:8** - "...we are risen, and stand upright"

This speaks ultimately of the hope of the resurrection.

**Psalm 20:9** - "Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call."

The Syriac version renders it, "the Lord will deliver us"; and the Targum is, "O Lord", "redeem us", or "save us"; that is, with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation.

"let the king hear us" -

"The King Messiah hears and receives the prayers of his people; and, as Mediator, presents them to his Father perfumed with much incense; for he is a Priest as well as a King." - Gill's Exposition

### **More on Jacob's Name Change**

Psalm 20:1- "... the name of the God of Jacob defend you"

"No more shall you be called Jacob, but Israel, " declared the angel (**Genesis 32:29**).

Jacob's name was changed to Israel, but the name Jacob was retained as a secondary or alternate description of him and the people of Israel. The Scriptures refer to him later using either name.

In fact, many times "Israel" was used specifically to point to Messiah (**Isaiah 49:3** - "You are my Servant, Israel...").

(On Isaiah's Suffering Servant, see 'The Gospel According to Isaiah 53' - [http://www.wtsbooks.com/common/pdf\\_links/9780825425936.pdf](http://www.wtsbooks.com/common/pdf_links/9780825425936.pdf))

Bar Kappara taught: Whoever calls Abraham Abram transgresses a positive precept, since it says, Thy name shall be Abraham.<sup>6</sup> R. Eliezer says: He transgresses a negative command,<sup>7</sup> since it says, Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram.<sup>8</sup> But if that is so, then the same should apply to one who calls Sarah Sarai? — In her case the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.<sup>9</sup> But if that is so, the same should apply to one who calls Jacob Jacob? — There is a difference in his case, because Scripture restored it [the name Jacob] to him, as it is written: And God spoke unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. - Babylonian Talmud, Berakoth<sup>13</sup>

**Genesis 46:2** - "And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I."

Compare Balaam's blessing:

**Numbers 23:21** - "He hath not beheld iniquity (aven - self exertion) in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness (labor, toil) in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."

or "[God] sees no guilt in Jacob, nor toil in Israel." i.e. "aven" can mean guilt/vanity/emptiness usually associated with idolatry.

According to the Rabbis, this implies that Jacob *does* experience toil, though his struggles and difficulties do not result in guilt in the eyes of God, nor are they counted as "aven" - self-exertion. Israel, on the other hand, enjoys a tranquil existence, devoid not only of guilt but also of toil. Israel is at rest.