

Psalm 89:6-15 (5-14)

Readings in **Psalm 89** are divided up into sections because of its length.

In comparison with the master-slave relationship described in Leviticus 25, God is here pictured as Master and incomparable to all other beings. The heavens, nature and all humanity are subject to Him.

Psalm 89:5 - "And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints."

The "congregation of the holy ones" here means the angelic assembly around the throne of God in heaven.

At Christ's birth the angels sang:

- **Luke 2:13-14** - "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

- **Hebrews 1:6** - "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

This passage in Hebrews is quoting from **Psalm 89:27** - "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth."

The "first begotten" was interpreted by the Jews as referring to Messiah (Shemot Rabba [a commentary on Exodus], sect. 19. fol.104.4) Philo also referred to the Logos or the Word of God as the first begotten of God.

"the heavens shall praise thy wonders" - The mention of the "first-begotten" points to Hanukkah when the angel spoke to Mary, and Christ was conceived. The greatest "wonder" was the incarnation of Christ.

Psalm 89:6 - "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?"

elim = "Sons of the Mighty" are the "sons of God" and is a phrase that refers to the angelic assembly.

Psalm 89:7- "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."

"reverence" = *yare* - fear, respect, dread, awe

Psalm 89:8 - "O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?"

faithfulness = *emuwnah* - faithfulness, especially in keeping promises

"round about" = *cabiyb* - a circuit, round about, from every side. i.e. seen from every possible angle

The "circuit" idea also may relate to His keeping the stars and planets in their courses.

Psalm 89:9 - "Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them."

- See **Psalm 65:8** - God "stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people."

- Jesus Calms the Storm - read **Mark 4:35-41**

Psalm 89:10 - "Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm."

Targum: "Rahab or the proud one, this is Pharaoh the wicked"

"scattered":

Numbers 10:35 - "And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee."

God's Sovereignty

Psalm 89:11-12 - "The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name."

Mt. Tabor is in west Galilee and Mt. Hermon is in the northeast. Tabor overlooks Megiddo in the Valley of Jezreel, where Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera (**Judges 4 & 5**).

Armageddon is pictured as taking place there (*har-megiddo* = mountain of Megiddo)

Revelation 16:16 - "And they assembled the kings in the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon."

Mt. Hermon is probably where Christ was transfigured - **Luke 9:28-36**

Psalm 89:13 - "Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand."

arm = *zěrowa`* - forearm, from a word meaning "to sow seed." Thus Christ - the one Seed - is the Lord's mighty arm

Targum: "strong is thy hand to redeem thy people, and high is thy right hand to build the house of thy sanctuary"

Tsedeq and Mishpat

Psalm 89:14 - "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face."

judgment = *mishpat* - to judge, but more related to governing - legislative, judicial and executive. To render justice and mercy in the correct balance.

God's sovereignty includes the authority to forgive. Power and mercy are not only compatible but congruent in God's nature and character. Love combines mercy and justice.

- **Galatians 5:14** - "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

- **Exodus 34:6-7** - "And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

How is this reconciled? Because of righteousness.

justice = *tsedeq* - righteousness, rightness, moral virtue and uprightness, equity. *tsedeq* is *mishpat* displayed and manifested or, in Christ, embodied.

Jesus said his baptism was to "fulfill all righteousness." (**Matthew 3:15**) It pictured his death and resurrection.

The sacrifice of the sinless Jesus on the cross, bearing the unrighteousness of the whole world, who was buried and then rose again, displayed God's loving kindness and justice together.

There was an innocent Adam who failed, sinning of his own free will. So God had to send a new Adam, the "last Adam," who would say "not my will but thine" and make the world right.

"mercy and truth go before thy face" - they are combined in the face of Jesus.

Justice and love are different from magic. Magical thinking would say, let's just go "poof" and make everything different. Jesus set his face to go up to Jerusalem, where his love was tested by sacrifice. Faith prevailed. Evil was judged, and love was released.

Again, this emphasis on righteousness and government is paired with passages in Leviticus 25 about masters, slaves and the treatment of the poor in Israel. The rule of masters over slaves was to reflect God's rule - *mishpat* - over the universe, and to display equity, justice, mercy and kindness.

For us today, *mishpat* and *tsedeq* are combined when we "love our neighbor as ourself."