

Letter To The Jews

1: The Three Veils

Greetings, and peace to you!

You are beloved for the sake of your ancestors, who received many blessings, and who were made into a nation of kings and priests, along with a covenant consisting of laws that made them distinct from all other nations of the earth, and a Temple for the worship of the Most High; and for many hundreds of years, the glory of YHWH dwelt with your ancestors.

But they provoked YHWH to anger with their idolatry and disregard for the Torah, until his patience with them finally ran out. And so the prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of the cherubs removing YHWH's cloud of glory from the Temple.

The cloud moved over the threshold of the House, and there was a brightness, and the sound of the wings of the cherubs. The glory cloud of YHWH then stood over the cherubs, and they lifted it to the eastern gate of the Temple. It was then lifted up from Jerusalem, and stopped over the Mount of Olives to the east of the city.¹

And YHWH said to Ezekiel: "Son of man, you are living in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but they do not see, and ears to hear, but they do not hear, for they are a house of rebellion."²

Your ancestors were cast out of the land given to them, and made to dwell in Babylon. But they were not abandoned there, for YHWH had already said in advance concerning Israel, "there will still be a tenth in it," and that it would be "like the terebinth and like the oak tree, which have a stump in them when cut down. The holy seed is its stump."³

And so, a remnant of your ancestors returned, and gradually rebuilt Jerusalem, along with a second Temple. But these also seemed to be destined for destruction, although this time, it was not because of idolatry.

For when Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed swine upon the altar, your people fought against him, and cleansed and rededicated the Temple.

And when Roman emperor Caligula decreed that his own image was to be brought into the Temple at Jerusalem, your ancestors said they would prefer death. Then the heavens opened with rain, even though there had been a great drought

before, and it was Caesar himself who died, before his decree could be enacted.⁴

Still, some of your ancestors said that God was to be their only ruler and lord, and incited the people to rebel against the Romans, who had become the rulers of Judea and a large part of the inhabited earth.

But it appears that YHWH had indeed appointed the Romans as rulers of the earth, for the rebellion brought about the destruction of both Jerusalem and the Temple. And three veils came upon your ancestors, which resulted in a form of blindness.

1 Ezekiel 10; Ezekiel 11:22,23. 2 Ezekiel 12:2. 3 Isaiah 6:13. 4 Josephus, *Antiquities Of The Jews*, Book 18, Chapter 8.

2: A Blind Nation Regathered

Now, is it fair to say that your ancestors were blind? Yes, for YHWH says this very thing. For example, through the prophet Isaiah, YHWH promised to call your people back from the nations with these words:

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bring your offspring from the east and gather you together from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!', and to the south, 'Do not detain them.' Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, and whom I created for my own glory. I formed him. Indeed, I made him.”

But then he immediately says: “Bring forth a people who are blind, though they have eyes, and who are deaf, though they have ears.”¹

While he speaks to those who worship idols as blind, he also says the same thing about his own people: “Hear, you deaf ones. Look, you blind ones, so you can see. Who is blind, except my servant, and as deaf as the messenger I send? Who is blind as the one at peace, and blind as the servant of YHWH? You see much, but you are not observant. You open your ears, but you are not listening.”²

Now, if YHWH says this about the beginning and restoration of the nation, and at a time when they are shown mercy again, how much more so would this be true at its destruction, when they are being punished?

Elsewhere, the prophet says, in reference to a siege: “Be stunned and amazed; reel about, and reel. They are drunk, but not with wine. They stagger, but not from alcohol. For YHWH has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep; and your eyes, the prophets, and your heads, the visionaries, he covers. And all the vision will become to you as the words of a scroll that is sealed.”³

YHWH explains why this comes about: “Because this people draw near me with their mouth, and they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, and their fear of me has become commandments of men they have been taught. Therefore, look! I will do wonderful things with this people, a marvel and wonder. And the wisdom of their wise ones will perish, and the understanding of their sages will be hidden.”⁴

Now, regardless of when this is fulfilled, we could also take it as a general

principle. While some of the words of prophecy might be sealed until an appointed time, its true meaning may also be hidden from us, if our hearts are far from YHWH, even if we do not realize it.

Let us, therefore, first of all desire to know the true purpose, thoughts and intentions of YHWH concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and then we will go on to examine greater things. As we do, we will find the words of prophecy unsealing themselves in a wonderful way.

¹ Isaiah 43:5-8. ² Isaiah 42:18-20. ³ Isaiah 29:9-11. ⁴ Isaiah 29:13,14.

3: Examining The House

The prophet Amos says: "If a shofar is blown in a city, will people not tremble? If there is disaster in a city, is it not YHWH who has acted? For my Lord YHWH will not do a thing unless he reveals the plan to his servants the prophets. A lion has roared. Who will not fear? My Lord YHWH has spoken. Who will not prophesy?" ¹

But where were the prophets who warned the people, and instructed them on how to avoid the impending destruction, in the days of the Romans?

YHWH also said, through the mouth of Malachi: "Look! I am sending you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and fearful day of YHWH; and he will turn the heart of fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to their fathers, or I will come and strike the land and devote it." ²

But where was Elijah, to turn back the hearts of your ancestors, before YHWH devoted the land to destruction at the hand of the Romans? If Elijah had come, would the Temple have been preserved and the land devoted to holiness instead?

And where were the rabbis who discerned the will of YHWH in those days? Even the wisest one among them was led to believe that a certain Simon would be the star to come out of Jacob, and lead your ancestors to victory as YHWH's anointed one.

Yet Simon was defeated, Judea was renamed Syria Palaestina, your ancestors were scattered, and forbidden to set foot in the holy land, except for the ninth day of the month Av, the same day on which the first and second Temples were overthrown. It was as if YHWH had caused the wisdom of the wise ones to perish.

Now, we will not dwell for too much longer on this aspect of history. But as a certain famous writer of plays said: "What's past is prologue." In other words, the past is always the beginning of the story to come. And so, a greater understanding of the earlier scenes can help to make better sense of the ones to come.

As humans, we first of all learn from those who came before us. In turn, those who instruct us learn from those who instructed them. But if a teacher has an error in his teaching, then the student will receive that error as truth, unless the student is more diligent than the teacher, and finds the error.

A good teacher will praise the student for correcting the mistake. But a bad teacher will be indignant! For what authority does the student have to correct the teacher?

Nevertheless, truth is its own authority. And this is how progress has been made in many fields of education; by correcting errors of the past, even if they have been taught for generations as truth.

Now, let us again speak plainly. Your ancestors lost their holy city and sanctuary, not once, but twice. YHWH himself said that he would cause the wisdom of their wise to perish, and even the greatest of their teachers was led along into a false belief. And for many hundreds of years, they were not able to dwell in Jerusalem as a nation, or rebuild their holy Temple.

Yet their teachings and interpretation of prophecy have been passed down and taught even to this day. For that reason, the truly wise person does well to carefully examine what has been taught, especially in relation to the words of prophecy.

When people consider buying a house, they first pay someone to inspect it. Now, perhaps the house is built on a shaky foundation and is near to collapsing. Or it may simply need one or two adjustments, to make it suitable for habitation; or it may be fine and in no need of anything. Either way, the wise buyer will make a thorough examination first.

But those who are born in the house, and who live in it and inherit it, do not make the same careful examination, for they have lived in it for a long time, and have become accustomed to it, even if it has imperfections.

Nevertheless, those living in the house would do well to have an outsider inspect it carefully from time to time, to make sure it is suitable as a dwelling for the one who desires to reside with you.

¹ Amos 3:6-8. ² Malachi 4:5,6 (3:23,24).

4: The First Veil Is Removed

The pagan oracles of Delphi uttered vague and ambiguous sayings. We know the spirit of divine prophecy is superior. Nevertheless, at times YHWH also uses ambiguity, as a veil.

This is one way by which he can cause the wisdom of the wise ones to perish. And so, a veil comes over the eyes of many, when they read the words of a prophecy and do not discern the ambiguity.

In vision, the prophet Daniel saw a two-horned ram being struck down by a goat with a prominent horn. The goat magnified itself, but then the great horn was broken, and in its place came up four horns toward the four winds of the heavens.

The angel told Daniel that the two-horned ram stood for the kings of Media and Persia, the goat stood for Greece, its great horn stood for the first king, and that four kingdoms would come from his nation.¹

This was fulfilled when Alexander the Great crossed the Hellespont and defeated the Persian empire.² After Alexander's death, his empire was divided between his generals.

The vision continues by saying, **“out of one of them came a little horn, which**

grew exceedingly great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land.”³

Now, most of the wise men who interpret this vision, Jew and Gentile alike, say this little horn comes out of one of the four horns, and is therefore Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of Syria who sacrificed swine in the holy sanctuary.

Yet many of these same wise men say that Daniel's words were written in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, so it is not really a prophecy at all. And thus YHWH snares them in their own wisdom, and conceals any further meaning from them by the use of ambiguity.

For if we carefully read the account, it says **“the great horn was broken, and up came four prominently in place of it, to the four winds of the heavens. And out of one of them came a little horn.”⁴**

According to this, what did the little horn come out of? Out of one of the four horns, or one of the four winds? The words are ambiguous, for it could have come from one of the horns, or one of the winds. But if it came from one of the four winds, then the “little horn” is a different kingdom altogether.

When we see the ambiguity, the first veil is removed. For if it came from one of the four winds, the description of the “little horn” fits the Roman empire far more accurately than Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of Syria.

Unlike Syria which came from the north, the Romans came from the west; but true to the prophecy, they **“grew exceedingly great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land.”**

Of this little horn, the prophecy says: **“It magnified itself to the prince of the host, and from him the regular sacrifice was taken away, and the site of his sanctuary was thrown down.”⁵**

The Romans acted against YHWH's people, and the Temple, in a far more dramatic and lasting way than Antiochus Epiphanes did. That king only defiled the Temple, but in the days of the Romans it was actually thrown down.

Daniel is told, **“the vision is for the time of the end.”⁶** There was not a significant end in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Although your ancestors suffered at that time, the Temple remained standing and was cleansed within a few short years.

But it is certainly fitting to call the destruction by the Romans a “time of the end.” In those days the Temple was burned to the ground, the sacrifices established in the Law of Moses ceased to be offered in that place, Jerusalem was desolated, and your ancestors were scattered.

Furthermore, Jerusalem was trampled on by a series of Gentile kingdoms; and if we count from the days of Alexander the Great, this trampling by Gentiles lasted for about 2,300 years, or exactly 2,300 years if we count from his crossing of the Hellespont to defeat the Persians.²

And so we see how YHWH uses ambiguity to catch out the wise, and hide a deeper meaning of prophecy from them. For even if they insist the prophecy was written in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, we can see that once the first veil, the veil

of ambiguity, is lifted, it is more accurately foretelling the rise of the Romans and what they would do to Jerusalem and the Temple, to say nothing of the length of the trampling by foreign nations; and by this we can know that YHWH is in control of times and seasons.

¹ Daniel 8:1-8, 20-22. ² 334BCE. ³ Daniel 8:9. ⁴ Daniel 8:8,9. ⁵ Daniel 8:11. ⁶ Daniel 8:17.

5: Signs And Portents

Now, the removal of this first veil is important, for we see that YHWH foretold in detail the rise of the Roman empire, and what would happen to your ancestors at their hands, although the Romans were not foretold by name, to allow for the ambiguity. Furthermore, a careful examination shows that God was the overseer of the events that took place.

The historian Josephus reports many supernatural signs and portents that were given to the inhabitants of Jerusalem shortly before its destruction. Let us briefly examine the more prominent ones.¹

There was a star resembling a sword that stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year. Another time, in the middle of the night, a light shone around the altar and Temple, making it appear to be bright daytime, which lasted for half an hour.

One night, the eastern gate of the Temple, that normally took twenty men to shut with difficulty, opened of its own accord. Another time, at the feast of Pentecost, the priests felt a great quaking, heard a great noise, and then they heard a sound as of a great crowd, saying, "Let us remove hence."

Four years before the war began, a man went around Jerusalem saying nothing else but, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" And, "woe, woe to Jerusalem!" He did this for seven years and five months, until he was killed by a stone from one of the Roman siege weapons.

Josephus also reports, and speaks of eyewitness testimony confirming it, that there was an evening while the city was still at peace with the Romans, in which before sunset, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding cities.

Now, it was obvious to Josephus, and should be obvious to us, that these were given to your ancestors, as portents of the dangers they were about to face. Some of the signs may also have been the direct fulfillment of prophecies, such as these words in Isaiah: "A sound of tumult from the city, a sound from the Temple, a sound of YHWH paying retribution to his enemies."²

And some of them may have had specific meanings. For example, the light around the altar, the sound heard by the priests, and the eastern gate opening of its own accord, may have been the departure of YHWH's glory cloud³ from the second

Temple, similar to how it left the first Temple; although some of your teachers say it was never in the second Temple to begin with, in which case, they were perhaps signs representing its departure symbolically.

And the sight of troops in the clouds resembled a vision given to the prophet Joel concerning a “day of YHWH,” a “day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick fog,” in which he saw horses and the sound of chariots, a mighty army scaling walls and rushing into a city.⁴

YHWH foretold such supernatural events through the mouth of Joel, when he said: “I will give wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and terrifying day of YHWH.”

But deliverance was also promised for those calling on YHWH. For Joel said: “And it will be, that everyone who will call on the name of YHWH will escape; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem will be deliverance, as YHWH has said, and in the survivors whom YHWH calls.”⁵

Now, Joel’s prophecy may really be referring to events beyond the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, because it says that deliverance would be “in Mount Zion,” “in Jerusalem” and “in the survivors.” But the signs and portents that were seen in the days of the Romans match up closely enough, as if to remind those paying attention that this was a “day of YHWH,” even if it was not a complete fulfillment of the prophecy.

In the days of the Romans, there was really only one way to escape the things to come upon Jerusalem, and that was to leave the city when it became clear that war was coming. But the people would have been trapped inside when Cestius, who was president of the Roman province of Syria,⁶ brought some of the Roman army into the city, and they were ready to set fire to the gate of the Temple.

At that time, Cestius could have taken Jerusalem easily; but then, according to Josephus, he retreated from the city “without any reason in the world.”⁷ The seditious among your ancestors ran after him and killed many of his soldiers.

Josephus says: “After this calamity had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink.”⁸

This was the only safe opportunity to leave Jerusalem before the calamities fell upon it, for soon after this, the seditious returned and made preparations for war against the Romans.

¹ Josephus, *The Wars Of The Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 5. ² Isaiah 66:6. ³ Called the “Shekinah” in rabbinic literature. ⁴ Joel 2:1-11. ⁵ Joel 2:30-32.

⁶ Josephus, *The Wars Of The Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 14, Section 3. ⁷ Josephus, *The Wars Of The Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 19, Section 6.

⁸ Josephus, *The Wars Of The Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 20, Section 1.

6: The Length Of The War Foretold

Now, just as YHWH is in control of the times and seasons concerning your people, he

was also in control of the length of the war.

For Josephus considers the “true beginning” of the war, as the time when the Jewish rebels captured the fortress of Masada from the Romans. At the same time, the son of the high priest persuaded the priesthood not to receive gifts or sacrifices from any foreigner.¹

As a result, Caesar was robbed of sacrifices to God on his behalf, which is perhaps what Daniel's prophecy means when it says that “from him the regular sacrifice was taken away, and the site of his sanctuary was thrown down.”²

About half way through the war, Titus broke through the walls of Jerusalem and was almost at the Temple. At that time, the “daily sacrifice” failed, and could no longer be offered to God, because there were not enough men to offer it.³

And so the prophecy perhaps has a double meaning, and therefore a double confirmation of its truth. For the regular sacrifice was earlier taken away from Caesar, and also it was taken away from YHWH himself, even before the Temple was destroyed.

The war ended with the capture of Masada⁴ by the Romans, the same fortress that had been taken earlier by the Jewish rebels, and that had indicated the beginning of the war. The war lasted for 7 years, which was also predicted by the angel who spoke with Daniel.

While Daniel was praying concerning the devastation of Jerusalem and the holy temple by the Babylonians, the angel appeared and told him that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, but would be destroyed again.

“And the city and sanctuary will be destroyed by the people of a prince to come, and end in flooding; and until the end, war and desolations have been decided. And he overpowers⁵ a covenant for the many for one seven; and at the half of the seven he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease. And on a wing of abominations is one making desolate; and until a conclusion that has been reached, it will be poured out upon the one being desolated.”⁶

In a fulfillment of this, the Romans came like a flood against your ancestors, and warred with them for 7 years. Half way through the war, general Titus caused sacrifice and offering to cease with the destruction of the Temple, and the Roman armies brought their idols to the holy place, their eagle standards which they worshiped as gods, and which were abominations in the eyes of YHWH.

¹ 66CE. Josephus, *The Wars Of The Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 17, Section 2. ² Daniel 8:11. ³ 70CE. Josephus, *The Wars Of The Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 2,

Section 1. ⁴ 73CE. ⁵ This word is related to the one used to describe the floodwaters overpowering or prevailing over the Earth, in Genesis 7:18,19.

⁶ Daniel 9:26,27.

7: The Treasured Possession

Now, when we search the words of the prophets, we can discern the purpose of YHWH in regard to the destruction by the Romans.

For through Isaiah, “this is what YHWH says: 'As when grape juice is found in the

cluster, and someone says, 'do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it,' so will I do on account of my servants, so as not to destroy them all. And I will bring forth an offspring out of Jacob, and out of Judah the one to inherit my mountains; and my chosen ones will inherit it, and my servants will dwell there.'" ¹

And again: "Look! My servants will eat, but you will be hungry. Look! My servants will drink, but you will be thirsty. Look! My servants will rejoice, but you will be ashamed." ²

By saying "my servants," he is rebuking the ones to whom he is speaking, and creating a promise that there would be a clear distinction between YHWH's servants and them.

And again, he says: "You will leave your name as a curse to my chosen ones. For my Lord YHWH will put you to death, and will call his servants by another name; so that he who blesses himself in the earth will bless himself by the God of truth, and the one swearing in the earth will swear by the God of truth; for the former troubles are forgotten, because they are concealed from my eyes." ³

And so the purpose of destruction is to clear out the bad, and to bring forth a remnant; a cleaned, refined people.

After your ancestors returned from Babylon and restored the Temple, YHWH again found fault with them, through the mouth of Malachi, whose name means "My Messenger."

YHWH said: "**Look! I am sending my messenger, and he prepares the way before me; and suddenly the Lord whom you are seeking will come to his Temple, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you take delight. Look! He is coming, says YHWH of hosts.**

But who will endure the day of his coming? And who will stand when he appears? For he is as the fire of a refiner, and as the soap of a cleaner." ⁴

Speaking of that time, YHWH says, "**I will come near to you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those who oppress the worker's wage, the widow, and the orphan, and those who turn aside from the foreigner, and do not fear me, says YHWH of hosts."** ⁵

Now, what is the means by which he would make a distinction, and call out his true servants? Malachi says, "**Then each man who feared YHWH spoke with his neighbor, and YHWH paid attention and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for those fearing YHWH and for the ones who esteemed his name. And they will be mine, says YHWH of hosts, in the day I make a treasured possession; and I will spare them, as when a man spares his own son who serves him. And you will return, and you will discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one serving God, and one not serving him.**

For look! The day is coming, burning as the stove, and all of the arrogant and everyone practicing wickedness will become stubble, and the day that is coming will burn them up, says YHWH of hosts, and will not leave them either root or branch." ⁶

By saying “treasured possession,” he is using the same language he used to describe Israel. For YHWH told Moses to speak to Israel and say: “If you will carefully listen to my voice, and keep my covenant, then you will be a treasured possession to me out of all the peoples. For all the earth is mine, but you will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to me.”⁷

But since YHWH is already speaking to Israel through Malachi, his later “treasured possession” must be a remnant of Israel. YHWH first makes them as his special people, and then spares them as sons in the day of his anger.

¹ Isaiah 65:8,9. ² Isaiah 65:13. ³ Isaiah 65:15,16. ⁴ Malachi 3:1,2. ⁵ Malachi 3:5. ⁶ Malachi 3:16-19 (3:16-18; 4:1). ⁷ Exodus 19:5,6.

8: An Ambiguous Oracle

Now, the ferocity of the Roman destruction would certainly appear to fit the description given by Malachi, yet it appears that your ancestors did not see the “messenger of the covenant” who was supposed to come to the Temple first.

Nevertheless, the people of those days were in expectation of some form of deliverance. They were led along by many false prophets, some of whom were in the pay of the rebels, and others were driven along by their own interpretation of prophecy.

Even Josephus says that what strengthened them in their war against the Romans “was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how 'about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.'”¹

Now, Josephus does not tell us exactly which prophecy this is, and neither is there a specific prophecy that says this, so he is perhaps giving a summary of their interpretation of the prophets. But by writing this, he indicates that they believed prophecy was pointing to their day.

And so, we should take a careful look at prophecies related to this, to see if we can discern more accurately the will and purpose of YHWH, and perhaps discover further veils that can be removed.

Certainly we cannot be too harsh on your ancestors for not having a perfect understanding of prophecy. In many ways, prophecy is like a jigsaw puzzle. The complete picture has been broken up into many pieces and spread throughout the words of the prophets.

And there have been many disputes about the individual pieces of the prophetic puzzle. Some say a prophecy is meant to be read literally, others take it to be symbolic. Some say it applies to one thing, some to another thing.

More than that, individual pieces of prophecy seem to paint altogether different pictures. For example, Zechariah says your king will come to Jerusalem humble and riding on a donkey, while Daniel says he will come with the clouds of the heavens.

To solve this riddle, some of your teachers say there are two anointed ones; one who would suffer, and one who would conquer. Others say, if the people of Israel

will be righteous, the Messiah will come in the clouds of heaven. If they will not be righteous, he will come as a poor man riding upon an ass.²

¹ Josephus, *The Wars Of The Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 5, Section 4. ² *Sanhedrin* 98a.

9: The Riddle Of The Prophets

There was an ancient riddle, given by the mythical sphinx of Egypt. The sphinx would devour anyone who could not solve its riddle, which was this: "What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening?"

It might seem that this must be three different creatures, for what creature loses a leg in such a short space of time, and then gains one just as quickly? There is no such creature on earth.

Yet there is an easy solution when we understand the nature of riddles. The answer to the riddle of the sphinx is, "a man." As a baby, he "walks" on all fours. When he becomes an adult, he walks on two legs, and in his old age, he uses a cane as his third leg.

Now, we could argue that a baby is not really a "man" at all, and when crawling he does not "walk." This would be true, but it destroys the spirit of a riddle, which allows for figures of speech to be used to conceal the solution, which becomes obvious once it is known.

Similar riddles are presented to us by the prophets of YHWH. For example, in a vision given to the king of Babylon, he sees a great image representing four empires that are to rule the earth; and then a stone cut out not by hands strikes the image, becomes a large mountain and fills the whole earth.¹

How the stone becomes a mountain is not explained to him. Nevertheless, the one is directly related to the other, just as a baby becomes an adult.

The prophet Isaiah presents another riddle when he says, **"A twig will come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and a sprout from his roots will bear fruit. And the spirit of YHWH will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and a fear of YHWH."**²

Your teachers say this is likely a description of the anointed one, and here he is described as a "twig" and a "sprout" which are both small by nature. Yet the same prophecy says: **"And in that day there will be the root of Jesse who will stand as a banner for the people. To him the Gentiles will inquire; and his resting place will be glory."**³

Again, how this happens is not explained, but there must be a process of growth and development, for the "twig" to become a banner for the people and for Gentiles to pay attention, and for his "resting place" to be glory.

¹ Daniel 2. ² Isaiah 11:1,2. ³ Isaiah 11:10.

10: The Child Born To Us

Now, Isaiah begins this series of prophecies by speaking to the king of Judah and the house of David. They were in fear of Rezin the king of Syria and the king of Israel, who had made an alliance to come against Jerusalem. YHWH used Isaiah's sons as signs of what would happen to his people.

Isaiah said to the king of Judah and the house of David: **“My Lord will give you a sign. Look! The maiden will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey he will eat, by the time he knows to reject the bad and choose the good. For before the boy knows to reject the bad and choose the good, the ground of the two kings whom you dread will be abandoned.”**¹

YHWH also told Isaiah to name another son, because God would raise the king of Assyria to defeat Syria, but that Assyria would also come into Judah like a flood.

Isaiah said: **“Because this people reject the waters of the Shiloah that flow gently, and they rejoice over Rezin and the son of Remaliah, therefore look! My Lord brings up upon them the waters of the river, strong and numerous, the king of Assyria and all his glory; and he comes up over all of his channels and goes over all of his banks. And he passes through Judah; he overflows and passes through until he reaches the neck; and his outstretched wings will fill the width of your land, Immanuel.”**²

Now, the name “Immanuel” means “God Is With Us,” and so we have a child who seems to symbolize God’s deliverance. And YHWH seems to suggest that deliverance, when Isaiah writes: **“Smash yourselves, people, and be broken. Listen, all you from the distant parts of the earth, gird yourselves for battle, and be broken. Gird yourselves, and be broken. Take counsel together, and it will come to nothing. Speak a word, but it will not stand, for God Is With Us.”**³

However, this seems to be spoken in the voice of the people of Judah, so it may have been said sarcastically, reflecting Judah’s arrogant pride in assuming they could not be touched; especially as it is YHWH himself who brings Assyria upon them!

For immediately after saying this, YHWH warned Isaiah not to follow the way of the people of Judah, and not to fear what they feared; but rather to fear YHWH. Speaking about himself, or about Immanuel, he says: **“For he will become a sanctuary; but a stone of striking and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel; a snare and a trap to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many among them will stumble and fall, and be broken, and be trapped, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, and seal up the law among my disciples.”**⁴

Now, this did not seem to happen in the days of the king of Assyria, so is likely foreshadowing what would come upon Jerusalem at a later time. And the children such as Immanuel were signs, as Isaiah says: **“Look! I and the boys whom YHWH has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from YHWH of hosts, the one dwelling in Mount Zion.”**⁵

And then Isaiah foretells an even greater sign and wonder. **“For a child is born**

to us, a son is given to us, and the rulership will be upon his shoulder.”

Now, a child when born has no power of its own, but is completely dependent upon its mother, and cannot do a single thing for itself. Even if this one is a ruler from birth, he cannot fully exercise his power until he has grown.

The prophet continues, **“and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”** ⁶

And here we must ask, what kind of person is this? For the names of Isaiah’s sons reflected YHWH’s purpose, and so do the names of this son. The rulers of the nation may have been called “gods” even in the Torah, but which of Israel’s kings were ever called anything close to “Mighty God”?

And a child cannot be called “father” until he becomes an adult and bears children, so what kind of development would be needed for his name to be called “Everlasting Father”?

Isaiah continues: **“Of the increase of his rulership and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and support it with judgment and justice, from now on and forever. The zeal of YHWH of hosts will do this.”** ⁷

Now, if his rule is to increase forever, it must of necessity start off smaller, just as a mighty tree begins as a small plant, and just as the stone that the king of Babylon saw becomes a large mountain and fills the earth.

1 Isaiah 7:14-16. 2 Isaiah 8:6-8. 3 Isaiah 8:9,10. 4 Isaiah 8:14-16. 5 Isaiah 8:18. 6 Isaiah 9:5 (9:6). 7 Isaiah 9:6 (9:7).

11: A Remnant Return To The Mighty God

Shortly after, Isaiah gives us another riddle about this “Mighty God.” Speaking on behalf of YHWH, he says: **“Woe! Assyria, club of my anger, and rod of my indignation in their hand.”** ¹

But then he says: **“And it will be, when my Lord completes all of his work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, 'I will punish the fruit of the proud heart of the king of Assyria, and over the beauty of his lofty eyes.'”** ²

And again: **“The Lord YHWH of hosts will send leanness upon his fat ones, and instead of glory, he will burn - burn like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel will be for a fire, and his holy one for a flame, and it will consume and devour his thorns and thistles in one day. And the glory of his forest and fertile land will be consumed, from soul to body, and will be as a banner-bearer wasting away. And the remnant of his forest will be numbered so a boy could write them.”** ³

During that time, YHWH would also bring about a conclusion: **“A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. For though your people Israel are as the sand of the sea, a remnant will return to him. A conclusion has been reached: flooding justice. For my Lord YHWH of hosts will bring about a conclusion that has been reached in the midst of the whole land.”** ⁴

And before a siege, Isaiah says: “And now, do not mock, so that your bonds are not tightened; because I have heard from my Lord YHWH that a conclusion has been reached on all the land.”⁵

Now, the prophecy may have had a partial fulfillment when the angel struck down 185,000 Assyrians. The king of Assyria returned to his land and was killed while bowing down to his god, and his son reigned in his place.

The prophecy of a remnant was also confirmed in the book of Kings: “And the remnant that has escaped of the house of Judah, will take root downward and produce fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and those that escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of YHWH of hosts will do this.”⁶

But this was not truly fulfilled in the days of the king of Assyria, for there was no destruction of Judah or Jerusalem in those days, and therefore no remnant who came out of Jerusalem. Later on, the exile to Babylon preserved a remnant, but by then the king of Assyria was already long dead.

Thus, the prophecy concerning the king of Assyria, must surely have an application beyond the events recorded in the book of Kings; and since Isaiah's sons were symbolic of events to come, it is not unreasonable to say that the “king of Assyria” is also symbolic of a king to come later.

The desolation of Jerusalem by the Romans fits the time of a “conclusion” that was brought about “in the midst of the whole land,” and the time when the Lord “completes all of his work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem.” In that case, Caesar Nero would fit the description of “the king of Assyria,” by his actions, his attitude, and his demise.

He is known to history as one who, in his later years, became proud and arrogant. In the ashes of the great fire of Rome, which he blamed on Christians and whom he burned alive in his own garden, he built a palace for himself, along with a great statue of himself.

It was he who came with fury against your ancestors, until the whole land was flooded by his armies bearing standards with eagle wings. But just as the tents of his army were near to Jerusalem, he came to an inglorious end, with nobody to help him. He was declared an enemy of the people by the Roman Senate, and he fled and killed himself.

Upon his death, the unbroken bloodline of Caesars from Julius came to an end. Five of those Caesars had fallen before him: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. Nero was the sixth, and the last in this line of Roman emperors. The remnant of his “forest” was limited to a number that even a boy could count.

And so it seems that Nero suffered, in some sense, the divine punishment foretold by YHWH upon “the king of Assyria,” while a “conclusion that has been reached” came upon the land of your ancestors.

¹ Isaiah 10:5. ² Isaiah 10:12. ³ Isaiah 10:16-19. ⁴ Isaiah 10:21-23. ⁵ Isaiah 28:22. ⁶ 2 Kings 19:30,31.

12: Seal Up Vision And Prophet

During this time when “YHWH of hosts will bring about a conclusion that has been reached in the midst of the whole land,” Isaiah said that “a remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God.”¹

This “Mighty God” is the one spoken of by Isaiah one chapter earlier. He is the child born to us, the son given to us, whose name would be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace,” and “the rulership will be upon his shoulder.”²

That they “return” to the Mighty God, in the time “when my Lord completes all of his work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,”³ suggests there was a prior relationship with him; but that only a “remnant” return to him, indicates perhaps that his rulership is not in the manner the majority expected, and is a possible reason for “flooding justice” to be brought about in the midst of the whole land.

But then, we have already seen how Malachi implies something similar: “Look! I am sending my messenger, and he prepares the way before me; and suddenly the Lord whom you are seeking will come to his Temple, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you take delight. Look! He is coming, says YHWH of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? And who will stand when he appears?”⁴

If this one’s coming is in the manner that people expect, then why does YHWH need to ask, “who will endure the day of his coming?” And if all the people truly take delight in YHWH’s “messenger of the covenant,” then what need would there be to ask, “who will stand when he appears?”

And so perhaps YHWH is being sarcastic when he says “in whom you take delight,” especially as he already found fault with the people for profaning the covenant. Or perhaps he is really speaking to the remnant here, his “treasured possession.” They are the ones who surely take delight in YHWH’s messenger, and who return “to the Mighty God” before the “conclusion” is brought about.

Now, it appears as if your ancestors did not see the Lord coming to his Temple in the time of the Romans, or a remnant returning to the Mighty God; so perhaps it could be said that these prophecies are talking about a conclusion yet to come.

But there is another witness who testifies to these things, so that at the mouth of two or three witnesses, every matter may be established. For the angel Gabriel also gave Daniel details concerning the timing and manner of a conclusion, and uses very similar language to Isaiah’s prophecy of a “conclusion that has been reached,” even using this exact same phrase.

So now, let us examine the prophecy given to Daniel in more detail. As we said earlier, Daniel was praying concerning Jerusalem and the Temple, which lay in ruins after their devastation by the Babylonians. Gabriel appeared to him, and assured him that the city and sanctuary would be restored, at least for a while, and then destroyed once again.

Gabriel says: **“Seventy sevens have been determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to restrain the transgression, and to get rid of sin, and to**

make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint a Holy of Holies.”⁵

Now, “seventy sevens” is ambiguous. It could mean 70 weeks, which would be 490 days, but this is usually considered too short a time frame for this prophecy. We could apply a “day for a year” rule to the 490 days, to get 490 years. This rule is used at times by YHWH for periods of judgment.⁶

There is also a 7 year land sabbath cycle, in which YHWH said to Israel that crops may be planted for 6 years, but the seventh year was to be a year of rest for the land.⁷ If one “seven” is really referring to 7 years, then “seventy sevens” would be 490 years.

Besides, Daniel was praying about the “seventy years,” the period that YHWH said the nations would have to serve the king of Babylon,⁸ and so 490 years would be seven times that length. And during the desolation of the land, the land was paying off its sabbaths, which was a 7 year cycle.⁹ For these reasons, most interpreters agree that “seventy sevens” refer to a period of 490 years.

Now, many of your teachers say this is a conditional prophecy. The good parts, such as the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, would have been fulfilled if the people of Israel had returned to YHWH with all their hearts.

But where does Gabriel say this? And were your ancestors meant to accomplish these things by themselves? For example, if they were meant to “make atonement for iniquity,” why does Gabriel not say which iniquity? And if it is iniquity in general, through animal sacrifices, then what happens to atonement after this period?

Besides, if your ancestors succeeded in getting rid of sin, what need would there be for animal sacrifices? Or if Gabriel had a specific sin in mind, why did he not declare what it was, so your ancestors could guard against it?

And how could they “bring in everlasting righteousness” by themselves? For even if the generations living within this period were altogether righteous, how could they ensure their offspring would be? But if something else was needed in order to bring this in within the “seventy sevens,” where is this to be found in the prophecy?

Gabriel continues: **“You should know and discern that from the going forth of a word to return and rebuild Jerusalem, until an anointed prince, is 7 sevens, and 62 sevens. It will return and be rebuilt, with public square and moat, but in troubled times. And after the 62 sevens an anointed one will be cut off, and nothing for him.”¹⁰**

The word for “an anointed one” is usually translated as “the Messiah,” where the word “Messiah” means “anointed one.” But there is no definite article in the original manuscripts, so your teachers correctly say this should really be translated as “an anointed one,” which means the word is ambiguous, and could refer to more than one “anointed one.”

Many of your teachers say there are two different anointed ones in these verses, and that the first one, “an anointed prince,” is a specific person, King Cyrus of Persia. It is certainly true that YHWH said Cyrus was his anointed one, to rebuild the Temple and restore Jerusalem, and that Cyrus issued a decree about the Temple.¹¹

They say the second anointed one, who is “cut off, and nothing for him,” could be the last king of Israel, or the last high priest, or perhaps the entire system of animal sacrifices that came to an end when the Romans destroyed the Temple; or all of these.

If he cannot be identified as one person, as in the case of Cyrus, then perhaps it is deliberately ambiguous, to allow for more than one meaning, to tell multiple stories, or even to conceal a particular meaning. For we have already seen how ambiguity has been used for this purpose in the earlier prophecy given to Daniel. Nevertheless, whoever he is, your teachers say he is “cut off” in the time of the Romans, before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Now, if the prophecy is conditional, then why does Gabriel say “an anointed one will be cut off” with the same degree of certainty that he says about Jerusalem, “it will return and be rebuilt”? And while “after the 62 sevens” allows some flexibility as to when this one gets “cut off,” there is no indication at all from Gabriel that it wouldn’t happen.

The prophecy continues: **“And the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by the people of a prince to come, and end in flooding; and until the end, war and desolations have been decided. And he overpowers a covenant for the many for one seven; and at the half of the seven he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease. And on a wing of abominations is one making desolate; and until a conclusion that has been reached, it will be poured out upon the one being desolated.”** ¹²

As we have shown earlier, these verses describe the 7 year war between Rome and the Jews, with the daily sacrifice ceasing half way through the war, “at the half of the seven,” which confirms that “one seven” is referring to 7 years.

However, there may also be an element of ambiguity here. In his prayer, Daniel said that YHWH was a God keeping “the covenant.” ¹³ But in Gabriel’s response to the prayer, the definite article for “covenant” is not used, and so the Roman prince is said to overpower ¹⁴ “a covenant for the many,” which, just as with “an anointed one,” allows for more than one covenant, especially if there is such a thing as a “covenant for the many.”

Gabriel uses language that is also found in Isaiah’s prophecy about the king of Assyria. The two words here translated as “a conclusion that has been reached,” also appear in Isaiah, where it says: **“A conclusion has been reached: flooding justice. For my Lord YHWH of hosts will bring about a conclusion that has been reached in the midst of the whole land.”** ¹⁵

And just as Gabriel uses the language of a flooding and a wing, so does the prophecy about the king of Assyria, which says that **“because this people reject the waters of the Shiloah that flow gently,”** YHWH would bring upon them **“the waters of the river, strong and numerous, the king of Assyria and all his glory.”** This one **“overflows and passes through until he reaches the neck; and his outstretched wings will fill the width of your land, Immanuel.”** ¹⁶

And so, this makes it all the more likely that Isaiah’s prophecy regarding the

king of Assyria, Immanuel and the “conclusion that has been reached” is really a cryptic reference to the destruction by the Romans; although if this is the case, it is not perhaps immediately clear what “waters” the people rejected in the days of the Romans.

Once again, if this “seventy sevens” prophecy is conditional, why does Gabriel say that the city and sanctuary “will be destroyed,” with the same degree of certainty that he uses when he says “it will return and be rebuilt”?

Why does it say “war and desolations have been decided,” if it was dependent on the behavior of your ancestors? Why does it talk about “a conclusion that has been reached,” as if the outcome had already been determined in advance? And why are these the same words used by Isaiah in the context of a remnant returning to the Mighty God? For neither does Isaiah use conditional language, but makes it clear that **“though your people Israel are as the sand of the sea, a remnant will return to him.”**

And we have already shown that the previous prophecy given to Daniel is not really about Antiochus Epiphanes, but is about the Romans. Of the “little horn,” it says: **“It magnified itself to the prince of the host, and from him the regular sacrifice was taken away, and the site of his sanctuary was thrown down.”**¹⁷ This is precisely what the Romans did, and there is no conditional language in these words. It is spoken as if the events would take place without fail.

Now, perhaps the “seventy sevens” are broken up into 7, 62 and 1 “sevens” to allow for a possible postponement of the conclusion; but really, the prophecy is written as if the outcome had already been decided, and a conclusion already reached, well before the events would occur.

In other words, YHWH had already determined in advance that all the things stated in this prophecy must take place within or by the end of the “seventy sevens,” even if they did not happen in the manner that your ancestors expected.

Indeed, many of them behaved almost like it was impossible for the city and sanctuary to be destroyed by the Romans, as if Gabriel’s words were not part of the divine record.

And even though there could have been disputes over precisely when **“a word to return and rebuild Jerusalem”** went forth, just as there is down to this day, it would surely not have been difficult for your ancestors to deduce that the 7 and 62 sevens expired in the time when the Romans were becoming the dominant world power, even without precise calculations as to the timing.

But then, part of the purpose of those “seventy sevens” was to **“seal up vision and prophet.”** Now, this could mean to confirm vision and prophet, to fulfill the promises made through the prophets. If that is the meaning, where is the “twig” from “the stem of Jesse,” and the “sprout from his roots” that Isaiah speaks about? Where would the child who would be called **“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”** come within these “seventy sevens”?

And since **“the rulership will be upon his shoulder,”** the throne of David, it is strange that he is not mentioned at all in this prophecy, according to your teachers, if “seal up vision and prophet” means to fulfill the promises made through the prophets;

especially as they say the last king and high priest are mentioned!

On the other hand, “seal up vision and prophet” could mean to conceal its true meaning. This is how it is used a little later, when Daniel is told to **“shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end.”**¹⁸ And we have already discussed how, during a vision of a siege against the holy city, YHWH said through Isaiah, **“all the vision will become to you as the words of a scroll that is sealed.”**¹⁹

If this is the real intention behind the words “seal up vision and prophet,” it seems to be saying that, by the end of the “seventy sevens,” the full meaning and purpose of this prophecy, and perhaps other prophecies, would be concealed to at least some of your ancestors.

Whatever the case, it is clear they were unable to get rid of sin and transgression for themselves, or bring in everlasting righteousness.

¹ Isaiah 10:21-23. ² Isaiah 9:6. ³ Isaiah 10:12. ⁴ Malachi 3:1,2. ⁵ Daniel 9:24. ⁶ See Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5,6. ⁷ Leviticus 25:1-7.

⁸ Jeremiah 25:11. ⁹ 2 Chronicles 36:21. ¹⁰ Daniel 9:25,26. ¹¹ See Isaiah 44:28;45:1 and Ezra 1:2,3. ¹² Daniel 9:26,27. ¹³ Daniel 9:4. ¹⁴ The word here translated “overpowers” is related to the word used to describe the floodwaters overpowering or prevailing over the Earth, in Genesis 7:18,19.

¹⁵ Isaiah 10:22,23. ¹⁶ Isaiah 8:6-8. ¹⁷ Daniel 8:11. ¹⁸ Daniel 12:4. ¹⁹ Isaiah 29:11.

13: Joseph Preserves Israel

Now, consider the pattern that YHWH set for the salvation of his people in previous times. Joseph was used by YHWH to preserve Israel and the remnant alive. While still a boy, he became like a prophet to his brothers, your forefathers, in that he was given a dream which he told them about, that indicated he would become ruler over them.

But your forefathers despised him, threw him into a pit, and sold him into slavery for 20 pieces of silver. By this, they convinced themselves that Joseph’s dream was of his own imagination.

But YHWH was with Joseph, and gradually raised him up. By the age of 30, Joseph had become lord over Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. All this was done while Israel his father assumed he was dead.

After a severe famine, people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, and even his brothers came down. But they did not recognize Joseph, even though he recognized them.

When he finally revealed himself to them, they were astonished, unable to speak. Here was their brother, whom they despised and sold into slavery, and whom Israel presumed to be dead, not only alive, but also lord over the most powerful nation on earth at the time!

Both Joseph and his brothers wept many tears, but Joseph said to them: **“Do not be upset, and do not be angry with yourselves because you sold me here; because for the preservation of life God sent me before you.”**¹

And he said to them again: **“God sent me before you to set for you a remnant in the earth, and to preserve you alive by a great deliverance. So now, it was not you that sent me here, but God; and he has placed me as a father to**

Pharaoh, and as lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”²

Even Pharaoh, when hearing the news about Joseph’s brothers, commanded that wagons be supplied for Israel and his family, and that the best of all the land should become theirs.

So we see that YHWH made careful preparation for the salvation of Israel, even though they first despised and rejected Joseph, his means of salvation.

But in doing this, they were really fulfilling the purpose of YHWH that was hidden to Israel, which was to first make Joseph lord to the Gentiles, before finally revealing himself in later days, and becoming YHWH’s means of salvation to Israel in their time of need.

Now, if YHWH laid such careful groundwork to prepare for Israel's move to Egypt, and again to bring them out of Egypt, how much more preparation would be needed to save his people in later times, when they are scattered throughout the earth?

¹ Genesis 45:5. ² Genesis 45:7,8.

14: Moses And The Messenger

Moses was chosen by YHWH, although he was brought up in the household of Pharaoh. He was 40 years old when he first tried to deliver his people Israel, but instead he had to flee to Midian. There he saved the Midianites and watered their flock, and became shepherd to those Gentiles for 40 years.

YHWH then appeared to Moses and told him to return to Egypt and deliver Israel. After Moses brought out Israel, with miracles and wonders, along with a great crowd of Egyptians, YHWH said to him while on the holy mountain: **“Look! I send a messenger before you, to keep you on the way, and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Watch yourself before him, and listen to his voice. Do not provoke him, for he will not put up with your transgressions, for my name is within him.”**¹

Thus, this messenger would be similar to Joseph, who was also sent before your forefathers, to preserve Israel as a remnant in the earth. But what angel spoke to this people, so they could listen to his voice? Yet even while YHWH was saying this to Moses, tradition overpowered your ancestors, and they built a golden calf to worship.

When Moses learned about this, he became incensed, and said to YHWH: **“Oh, this people have sinned a great sin. They have made a god of gold for themselves. And now, if you will bear their sin - but if not, please wipe me out from your book which you have written.”**

And so Moses was willing to sacrifice his own life on behalf of Israel, and to bear their sins, if YHWH would not. But YHWH said to Moses: **“Whoever has sinned against me, I will wipe out of my book. And now, go! Lead the people to where I told you. Look! My messenger will go before you. And in the day of my visitation,**

I will visit their sin upon them.”²

In speaking about those days, Isaiah said: **“In all of their affliction he was afflicted, and the messenger of his presence saved them. In his love and in his mercy he redeems them, and he bears them and carries them all the days of eternity.”³**

Yet most of that generation, the generation who heard Moses and saw YHWH's miracles and wonders, died in the wilderness.

And the people became afraid of YHWH and said, **“Do not let me hear the voice of YHWH God any more, or let me see this great fire any more, so that I do not die.”** YHWH said they spoke well, and he said to Moses:

“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I will instruct him. And whoever does not listen to my words, which he will speak in my name, I will call him to account.”⁴

This prophet like Moses would be similar to, or even the same as, the messenger YHWH would send before them, in that if the people did not listen to his voice, YHWH would hold them to account.

This was the reason YHWH punished your ancestors so severely in the wilderness. For Moses was no ordinary prophet but, says YHWH, **“he is faithful in all my house. Mouth to mouth I speak with him, and plainly, and not in riddles; and a likeness of YHWH he sees.”⁵**

Yet Moses was not allowed to lead your ancestors into the land promised to them; and so he anointed Hoshea, whose name means “Salvation,” and renamed him Joshua,⁶ meaning “YHWH Is Salvation.” And so YHWH's name was put into this one, and he became a type of messenger who would keep Israel on the way, although he himself was not an angel.

However, after they had entered the land, Joshua saw a man standing in front of him, with a drawn sword in his hand, and he identified himself as **“prince of the host of YHWH,”** at which Joshua bowed down, and the prince of YHWH's host told Joshua to remove his sandals, **“for the place on which you stand is holy.”⁷**

¹ Exodus 23:20,21. ² Exodus 32:31-34. ³ Isaiah 63:9. ⁴ Deuteronomy 18:16-19. ⁵ Numbers 12:7,8. ⁶ See Numbers 13:16. ⁷ Joshua 5:13-15.

15: A Second Covenant

Now, if Moses had delivered all that was necessary for life, what need would there be for a prophet like him? The prophets that came later, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, all spoke in the name of YHWH, but were not considered to be the prophet like Moses; so what message would distinguish this prophet from all the other prophets?

And how would YHWH hold accountable those who do not listen to his words? For most of the generation who heard Moses, died in the wilderness, before even setting foot in the land promised to them.

And what would the prophet himself be like? For it was said of Moses, **“The man Moses was humble, far more than any man who was on the face of the earth.”¹**

Now, Moses delivered the Law covenant to Israel, but YHWH, through the mouth of Jeremiah, spoke also of a different covenant:

“Look! Days are coming, says YHWH, when I will make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant; not like the covenant that I made with their forefathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which covenant of mine they broke, although I was their master, says YHWH.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says YHWH. I will put my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

And they will no longer teach each one his neighbor or each one his brother, saying 'Know YHWH'; for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest one of them, says YHWH; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”²

Now, quite apart from when this is to occur, we can also ask how it would be brought about. For it is easy to understand how law can be written in the heart in a metaphorical sense. But a new covenant means a new contract entered into by the people. The first covenant was entered into in this manner:

“And he sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered up burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of bulls to YHWH. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in bowls, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

And he took the book of the covenant, and read it aloud in the ears of the people. And they said, 'All that YHWH has spoken, we will do, and be obedient.'

And Moses took the blood, and spattered it on the people, and said, 'Look! The blood of the covenant, which YHWH has made with you in accordance with all of this.'”³

And right then, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and 70 of the elders went up and saw the God of Israel, even as they were eating and drinking. Then Moses was invited up the mountain by himself, and he remained on the mountain with YHWH, while the cloud covered it.

And so, if Moses became the mediator of this first covenant between YHWH and his people Israel, and the people said, “All that YHWH has spoken, we will do, and be obedient,” and Moses spattered the people with blood that represented and sealed the covenant between them and YHWH, then what is the means by which this later covenant, spoken of by Jeremiah, would be made with the people? Would that be the ultimate purpose of the prophet like Moses?

¹ Numbers 12:3. ² Jeremiah 31:31-34. ³ Exodus 24:5-11.

16: David's Suffering

David, who was the forerunner of a greater anointed one, did not receive his kingdom right away. YHWH became angry with King Saul, and the prophet Samuel said to Saul:

“YHWH has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a fellow of yours, who is better than you.”¹

The prophet was then told to go to Bethlehem and anoint David, **“and the spirit of YHWH empowered David from that day forward.”²** David became mighty, and performed many mighty deeds, and Saul became jealous and sought to kill him many times, so that he had to hide from the face of Saul.

In those days, David felt his life was in danger, but he knew YHWH was able to raise him even from the dead, for he wrote: **“You will not abandon my soul in the grave, neither will you allow your faithful one to see corruption.”³**

At times, he even wrote like he was as good as dead: **“My strength is dried up like a piece of pottery, and my tongue sticks to my palate; and you lay me in the dust of death.”⁴** And again: **“I can count all of my bones, while they look and stare at me. They divide up my garments among them, and they cast lots over my clothing.”⁵**

And he felt despised: **“But I am a worm, and not a man; a reproach of men and despised by people. All those seeing me mock me. They sneer, they shake their heads: 'He trusted in YHWH, let him rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.'”⁶**

But he writes that he was despised for no reason: **“The mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me. They have spoken about me with a lying tongue, and they surround me with words of hatred, and attack me without cause. In return for my love, they become my accusers; but I pray. They have laid upon me evil for good, and hatred for my love.**

Appoint a wicked man over him, and let an accuser stand at his right hand. When he is judged, he will be condemned, and his prayer will be sin. His days will be few, and another will take his office.”⁷

And again: **“I have become a reproach to them. When they look upon me, they shake their heads.”** And yet this was the anointed of YHWH!

But he continues: **“Help me, YHWH my God, save me by your mercy, so they will know that this is your hand; you, YHWH, have done it. Let them curse, but you will bless. They rise up, but will be ashamed; and your servant will rejoice. My enemies will be clothed with confusion, and will be covered as with a robe of shame.”⁸**

He wrote many other words like these, which show that even though he was anointed as YHWH's servant, he was not recognized for who he was, but was first despised and mistreated. It was only many years later, when Saul died, that David was anointed king over Israel by the people.

Now, in these three examples – Joseph, Moses and David - we see a similar pattern; that YHWH prepares a form of salvation for Israel, but this salvation is first of all rejected and despised, and not treated with respect.

Nevertheless, by being humbled before being exalted, each of YHWH's means of salvation were able to become more compassionate leaders when their time came. And YHWH's salvation ultimately had success, even though it took time, and was not

recognized at first.

1 1 Samuel 15:28. 2 1 Samuel 16:13. 3 Psalm 16:10. 4 Psalm 22:16 (22:15). 5 Psalm 22:18,19 (22:17,18). 6 Psalm 22:7-9 (22:6-8).

7 Psalm 109:2-8. 8 Psalm 109:25-29.

17: The Perfect Priest

Zechariah was one of the prophets who ministered to the people after their return from Babylon. He encouraged governor Zerubbabel and high priest Joshua as they rebuilt the Temple.

Zechariah is shown Joshua, wearing filthy garments, standing before the angel of YHWH. Joshua's garments are removed, and he is given fresh garments and a clean turban, while the messenger of YHWH stands nearby.

The messenger then said to Joshua: **"This is what YHWH of hosts says: 'If you will walk in my ways, and if you will keep my commission, then you will also judge my house, and you will also have charge of my courtyards, and I will give you free access among these who are standing here.'"** ¹

Now, this is a remarkable promise, because one of those standing by Joshua is the angel, or messenger, of YHWH!

And YHWH declared future things to Joshua, whose name means "YHWH Is Salvation," when he said: **"Hear please, high priest Joshua, you and your companions who sit before you, for these men are a sign that look! I am bringing forth my servant Sprout. For look at the stone I have put before Joshua: on one stone, seven eyes.**

Look! I will engrave the engraving on it, says YHWH of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, says YHWH of hosts, you will call the man who is his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree." ²

Now, this is clearly a cryptic passage. YHWH does not here reveal exactly how he would "remove the iniquity of that land in one day," but it is surely related to YHWH's servant "Sprout" who is symbolized by the stone with seven eyes. High priest Joshua was not himself this "Sprout," but was a sign of the one to come. And Isaiah had earlier foretold a "sprout" from the root of Jesse.

A little later, the people are told to make a crown for high priest Joshua, and to put it on his head; and YHWH said: **"Look! The man whose name is Sprout. And from his place he will sprout and build the temple of YHWH; and it is he who will build the temple of YHWH, and he will bear the glory. And he sits and rules upon his throne, and he becomes a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace will be between them both."** ³

Joshua the high priest was not himself a king, but the crown was to serve as a reminder of YHWH's promise, in the Temple. Joshua was the forerunner of a man called "Sprout" who would "sprout" from his own place, build a further Temple, and be both ruler and priest.

Now, if "Sprout" is a priest, what type of offerings does he make? And how

exactly could this man “bear the glory”? For YHWH’s glory, his presence, was between the two cherubs, and over the cover of the ark in the first Temple, about which YHWH said to Moses, **“I will meet with you there, and speak with you from over the cover, from between the two cherubs which are over the ark of the testimony.”** ⁴

Thus, for this man to “bear the glory” in YHWH’s Temple would make him like the ark of the testimony, and one who is in the presence of cherubs!

Also, the prophecy continues, **“and ones from far away will come and build in the temple of YHWH.”** ⁵

Now, it is clear from Ezekiel’s vision of the Temple, given 2,520 years before the house of Israel came once again into the land,⁶ that YHWH made provision for Israel to build a Temple again once their hearts were ready for it, and once they were ready to acknowledge their sin, just as YHWH said through Ezekiel:

“You, son of man, declare to the house of Israel this House, so they will be ashamed of their iniquities. They will measure its design. And if they are ashamed of all they have done, the form of the House, and its arrangement, and its exits and entrances, and all of its form, and all of its regulations, and all of its form and all of its laws, make it known to them, and write it before their eyes, so they will observe it, all of its form and all of its regulations, and do them.” ⁷

This is why the design of the House is given in such detail, along with specific laws called “the law of the House,” for YHWH does not speak in vain.

At the same time, YHWH reminds us through Isaiah that he does not really need a Temple, in order to be present with those who worship him:

“The heavens are my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where, then, is this house that you could build for me? And where is this place for my rest? For my hand made all of these, and all of these came to be, says YHWH. But to this one I will look: to the humble one, and the broken in spirit, and the one who trembles at my word.” ⁸

And through Malachi, YHWH foretold a time when offerings to him would be made throughout the world: **“For from the rising of the sun to its setting, my name will be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a gift offering. For my name will be great among the Gentiles, says YHWH of hosts.”** ⁹

And then YHWH speaks a word of rebuke to the priests of Israel, by describing the perfect priest:

“My covenant with him became lives¹⁰ and peace, and I gave them to him, and fear; and he feared me and showed fearful reverence before the presence of my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and in uprightness, and he restored many from sin. For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and they should seek law from his mouth, because he is the messenger of YHWH of hosts.” ¹¹

But neither Aaron the first high priest, nor his offspring, two of whom were put to death by YHWH for offering unauthorized fire before him, lived up to this description; and so YHWH goes on to say to the priests of Israel: **“You have departed from the way. You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have ruined**

the covenant of Levi, says YHWH of hosts.”¹²

Therefore, this perfect priest described by YHWH through Malachi, must ultimately be a description of his servant “Sprout,” and the “messenger of the covenant” that YHWH would send,¹³ for it is he who cleanses the sons of Levi through fire. And so, he is a form of priest himself.

¹ Zechariah 3:7. ² Zechariah 3:8-10. ³ Zechariah 6:12,13 ⁴ Exodus 25:22. ⁵ Zechariah 6:15. ⁶ Ezekiel 40:1. The 14th year after the city of Jerusalem had fallen would be around 573BCE. ⁷ Ezekiel 43:10,11. ⁸ Isaiah 66:1,2. ⁹ Malachi 1:11. ¹⁰ The Hebrew here is plural. ¹¹ Malachi 2:5-7. ¹² Malachi 2:8. ¹³ Malachi 3:1.

18: The Two Servants

Now, in laying the groundwork for salvation, we have seen that YHWH uses servants appointed in advance. And the prophet Isaiah is the one to talk most frequently about YHWH's servant. But who is YHWH's servant to Isaiah?

For the prophets from Moses onwards, including Isaiah himself, were called God's servants. And Israel itself is also God's servant, as Isaiah says:

“But you, Israel, are my servant; Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham my friend. You whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called you from its most distant parts, I am saying to you, you are my servant. I have chosen you, and I have not rejected you.”¹

Now, each servant he calls has a purpose to YHWH. For Israel, YHWH says: **“Look! I have made you a spiked threshing sledge, new, with blades. You will thresh mountains and pulverize them, and make hills as chaff. You will winnow them, and a wind will carry them away, and a windstorm will scatter them. And you will rejoice in YHWH. In the holy one of Israel you will boast.”²**

And so Israel is spoken of as being like a threshing instrument. But then Isaiah speaks of one man as God's servant:

“Look! My servant, whom I uphold; my chosen one, in whom my soul has approved. I have put my spirit on him. He will bring forth judgment to the nations. He will not cry out or raise his voice, or cause it to be heard in the street. No bruised reed will he break, and no smoldering wick will he extinguish. He will bring forth judgment according to truth. He will not fail or be bruised, until he establishes judgment in the earth; and the islands will wait for his law.”³

Now, your great teacher Maimonides, in his commentary on the Mishnah and the world to come, says these words apply to the Messiah, and that Messiah will die, and that his son, and his son's son will rule after him, and that God has already described his death when the prophet writes, “He will not fail or be bruised, until he establishes judgment in the earth.”⁴

Whoever this servant is, he seems to be a very different servant from Israel, the “spiked threshing sledge.” Of this peaceful man, Isaiah continues:

“I, YHWH, have called you in righteousness, and I will take hold of your hand, and I will preserve you and give you for a covenant of the people, for a

light of Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out the prisoner from confinement, those dwelling in darkness from the prison.”⁵

But how could a man be given for a covenant of the people, and for a light of the nations? For Moses was your lawgiver, and gave you the Torah from the mouth of YHWH, but even Moses did not give himself for a covenant, but was simply a mediator of that covenant.

1 Isaiah 41:8,9. 2 Isaiah 41:15,16. 3 Isaiah 42:1-4. 4 Mishnah Commentary, *Tractate Sanhedrin, Pereḳ Heleḳ* (Chapter 10). 5 Isaiah 42:6,7.

19: The One Whom The Nation Abhorred

A little later in Isaiah, YHWH's servant speaks to the Gentiles about himself, and about what YHWH has told him:

“Listen to me, you coastlands, and pay attention, you people from far away. YHWH called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother he has recorded my name. And he has made my mouth like a sharp sword. In the shadow of his hand he has hidden me, and he has made me a polished arrow. In his quiver he concealed me.

And he said to me, 'You are my servant Israel, in whom I will show my splendor.' And I said, 'I have labored for nothing. I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain. Surely my judgment is with YHWH, and my wages with my God.'

And now, says YHWH - the one who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring back Jacob to him, and Israel will be gathered to him, and I will be glorified in the eyes of YHWH, and my God will be my strength - he said:

'It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the preserved of Israel. I will also give you for a light of Gentiles, for you to become my salvation to the end of the earth.'”¹

Now, even though this servant is addressed as “Israel,” he was born from the womb to bring back Jacob and Israel, implying that Israel already existed before this servant is born.

Since his role is to “bring back the preserved of Israel,” he could be a representative of Israel, just as a king represents his country and can be its salvation or downfall. He is perhaps like the saviors of old, whom YHWH used to raise up before the days of the kings, when Israel went astray. But in YHWH's eyes, this servant is also the embodiment of Israel.

That “he has made my mouth like a sharp sword” is similar to the description given to the “twig” out of the stem of Jesse, who will **“strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the spirit of his lips he will put to death the wicked.”**² Isaiah also said that YHWH would raise up **“the root of Jesse who will stand as a banner for the people. To him the Gentiles will inquire; and his resting place will be glory.”**³

Yet he appears to fail in his mission to raise up Jacob and bring back Israel, at least at first, for he says, “I have labored for nothing. I have spent my strength for

nothing and in vain.”

But YHWH comforts him, and says that he also has a greater mission, to be “a light of Gentiles” and to become YHWH’s “salvation to the end of the earth.” Now, if he has not brought Israel back at this point, then Israel as a nation cannot be the “light of Gentiles” and “salvation” spoken of here. Instead, it is the remnant, or one man who represents or becomes Israel to the nations.

And now YHWH speaks directly to this one: **“This is what YHWH, the redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, says to him who is despised in soul, to the one whom the nation abhorred, to the servant of rulers:**

'Kings will see and rise up, and princes will worship, because of YHWH who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.'

This is what YHWH says: 'In a time of favor I have answered you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you. And I will preserve you, and I will give you for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, and to reappportion the allotted inheritances of the desolated ones, that you may say to the prisoners, 'come out!' and to those in the darkness, 'show yourselves!'"⁴

Here, YHWH speaks more plainly to one person, and not the nation, calling this one “him who is despised in soul” and “one whom the nation abhorred.”

Indeed, this would explain why his mission to “bring back Jacob to him” appears to fail at first. It is because the nation of Israel despised him! Nevertheless, he would somehow be preserved, and be given for “a covenant of the people.”

¹ Isaiah 49:1-6. ² Isaiah 11:4. ³ Isaiah 11:10. ⁴ Isaiah 49:7-9.

20: Zion's Surprise

The “one whom the nation abhorred” began by saying: **“Listen to me, you coastlands, and pay attention, you people from far away.”** That is because his message is not only for Jews, but also for Gentiles. Part of his role is to be “for a light of Gentiles.”

Despite being abhorred by the nation of Israel, Isaiah's prophecy indicates that YHWH's servant, his means of salvation, would have success with others. He continues:

“On the roads they will graze, and in all the hills their pastures. They will not go hungry, and they will not thirst, and scorching wind and sun will not strike them. For the one showing compassion to them will lead them, and guide them to springs of water. And I will make all my mountains into a road, and my highways will be raised up.

Look! These will come from far away, and look! These from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim.

Sing joyfully, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth. Break forth into song, O mountains, for YHWH comforts his people, and he has compassion on his humble ones.”¹

Who are these, and where do they come from? These words follow immediately

after YHWH's description of his servant, the "the one whom the nation abhorred" who is given to "bring back the preserved of Israel" as well as to be YHWH's "salvation to the end of the earth."

Therefore, these are the ones who are led by YHWH's servant. YHWH has compassion on his humble ones, by appointing his servant over them to become their shepherd; and so it makes sense that he is one man, rather than the nation. He was abhorred by the nation of Israel, but accepted by the remnant who are preserved, along with a crowd of Gentiles from the ends of the earth.

But while this is happening, Zion feels abandoned. **"But Zion is saying, 'YHWH has abandoned me, and my lord has forgotten me.'"** ²

Now, is this a description of the world to come? No, because Zion will not feel abandoned in the world to come. But in the prior age she was abandoned for a long time, and trampled on by the Gentiles.

But even though she felt this way, YHWH had certainly not abandoned her. For with tender language, YHWH says: **"Can a woman forget her nursing baby, that she should not have compassion for the son of her womb? Even they may forget, but I will not forget you. Look! On my palms I have engraved you. Your walls are before me continually.**

Your sons will come quickly. Those demolishing you and making you a deserted place will depart from you. Lift up your eyes and look around! They are all gathering and coming to you." ³

And now Zion expresses surprise, and says in her heart: **"Who has fathered these for me, since I am bereaved of children and am barren, exiled and taken away? Who has raised these? Look! I was left all alone. Where did these come from?"** ⁴

And YHWH replies: **"Look! I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and raise my banner to the people; and they will bring your sons in their arms, and carry your daughters upon their shoulders. Kings will become your foster fathers, and their princesses will be your wet nurses.**

They will bow down before you with their face toward the earth, and lick the dust of your feet; and you will know that I am YHWH. Those who keep in expectation of me will not be ashamed." ⁵

Here we begin to see the greater purpose of YHWH. For all the time Zion felt abandoned, YHWH has spread light and salvation to the Gentiles by means of "the one whom the nation abhorred," and then he uses those Gentiles to bring Zion's sons back to her!

This also becomes the fulfillment of a prophecy written earlier by Isaiah: **"In that day it will be that my Lord will offer his hand a second time, to recover the remnant of his people, those who remain from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.**

And he will raise up a banner for the Gentiles, and will assemble the expelled ones of Israel, and will gather together the dispersed ones of Judah

from the four corners of the earth.”

And in harmony with Israel being YHWH's “spiked threshing sledge” servant, it says of them once they are gathered: **“They will swoop down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the sea, and together they will plunder the sons of the east.”**⁶

Now, in saying “a second time, to recover the remnant of his people,” we might assume the first time was the return from Babylon. But Isaiah has something else in mind, for he has already described what he considers the first time, not many verses before, when he says:

“A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. For though your people Israel are as the sand of the sea, a remnant will return to him.”⁷

In this prophecy, the first time the remnant were recovered, was through their return to the “Mighty God” during a time of a conclusion that would be brought about upon the land. And so, this “Mighty God” must have already made his appearance, and be someone that can be identified, before the hand of recovery is offered “a second time.”

1 Isaiah 49:9-13. 2 Isaiah 49:14. 3 Isaiah 49:15-18. 4 Isaiah 49:21. 5 Isaiah 49:22,23. 6 Isaiah 11:11,12,14. 7 Isaiah 10:21,22.

21: The Man

Continuing YHWH's conversation with Zion, Isaiah writes: **“This is what YHWH says: 'Where is the scroll of divorce of your mother, by which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Look! For your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away.**

Why did I come, but there was no man? I called, but nobody answered. Is my hand too short to redeem, or is there no strength in me to deliver?’”¹

And so YHWH makes it clear that Zion was not divorced, but was sent away for her own transgressions, and not to pay the debts of others. But now it seems that a different one, a man, speaks. **“My Lord YHWH has given me the tongue of disciples, to know how to speak a timely word to the weary one. He awakens morning by morning, he awakens my ear to hear like the disciples.**

My Lord YHWH has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious and did not turn away. I gave my back to the ones striking, and my cheeks to the ones plucking at my beard. I did not hide my face from humiliation and spit.”²

Who is speaking here? It cannot be Zion, unless she is now a bearded lady! Besides, this one “was not rebellious,” while YHWH has already said that Zion went away for her iniquities and transgressions.

It could perhaps be a description of the prophet Isaiah himself; but if YHWH's purpose is to bring salvation to Zion as well as the Gentiles, then it could be “the one whom the nation abhorred,” YHWH's servant who is given for “a covenant of the people.” If the nation abhorred him, it makes sense that he faced humiliation and spit. But he did not hide his cheeks from them.

Certainly he seems to follow Jeremiah's advice, or is perhaps the fulfillment of Jeremiah's words: **"It is good for the man for him to bear the yoke in his youth. He sits alone and is silent, for he has laid it upon him. He puts his mouth in the dust. Perhaps there is hope. He gives his cheek to the one striking him. He will have his fill of reproach."**³

He could also be the answer to YHWH's question: "Why did I come, but there was no man?" For here is a man, one man, who not only listened to YHWH's voice, but may also be YHWH's means to redeem and deliver! In that case, the question asked a few verses later by Isaiah takes on a vital meaning: **"Who among you fears YHWH? The one listening to the voice of his servant."**⁴

And now YHWH promises to reverse Zion's situation. **"Awake, awake, rise up Jerusalem, you who drank from the hand of YHWH the cup of his fury. You have drunk to the dregs, and drained out the cup of trembling."**

And also: **"Therefore hear this please, you afflicted and drunken one, but not from wine. This is what your Lord YHWH says, and the God who contends for his people: 'Look! I will take the cup of trembling from your hand, even the dregs of the cup of my fury.**

You will not drink from it again. But I will put it in the hand of the ones afflicting you, who have said to your soul, 'Bow down, that we may walk over,' and you placed your body as the ground, and as the street for them to walk over.'"⁵

And so Zion bears her own iniquities, but then those who mistreated her receive punishment for their sins against her.

¹ Isaiah 50:1,2. ² Isaiah 50:4-6. ³ Lamentations 3:27-30. ⁴ Isaiah 50:10. ⁵ Isaiah 51:17-23.

22: The Wise, Despised Servant

Now, a despised servant is spoken of again by Isaiah:

"Look! My servant will act wisely. He will be raised and be lifted up, and be highly exalted. Just as many were appalled at you, so disfigured was his appearance from any man, and his form from the sons of men, so he will spatter many nations. Kings will shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been related to them they will see, and that which they had not heard they will consider."¹

Who is this? Your rabbis teach that this is a description of the nation of Israel, which goes from a "disfigured" and "despised" state in the eyes of the nations, to a glorified one, in which kings are so shocked that they "shut their mouths" because of Israel.

Without a doubt, the context of this is the redemption and salvation of Zion; and while Zion is described as a woman, her description makes it clear that she is really a city. For example, apart from the fact that she is equated with Jerusalem "the holy city,"² she is also said to have a foundation, gates and boundaries.³

But this despised servant is not named, and his description appears in the middle of YHWH's conversation with Zion. So is he a metaphor for the nation of Israel as a whole, or is he a description of one man who would become another form of salvation for Zion, perhaps even her king?

We have seen how Isaiah previously talked about a servant of YHWH who would be "despised in soul," "one whom the nation abhorred," who would be "a light of Gentiles," and who would become YHWH's "salvation to the end of the earth."

So we must carefully examine this man's description, to see whether it best fits the nation of Israel, or one man. For previously, we asked how one man could be given "for a covenant of the people," and here we have a man spattering many nations, perhaps in the way blood was spattered by the priests, and in the way Moses spattered blood on the people to confirm their covenant with YHWH.

Isaiah continues: **"Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of YHWH revealed?"** ⁴

Now, who is speaking here? Many of your teachers say these are the "kings" who "shut their mouths" when they see Israel glorified. How these kings "shut their mouths" and yet make their report is unclear. However, if this servant is one man, it could be the report of those who saw him. The suggestion is that not everyone would believe the report of these eyewitnesses.

Either way, this is curious, for just a little earlier and in reference to Zion's repurchase from the nations, Isaiah says: **"YHWH has bared his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God."** ⁵

So if this is the same salvation performed "in the eyes of all the nations," why would anyone not believe the report from these kings, and why would the prophet write just a few verses later, "to whom is the arm of YHWH revealed?"

On the other hand, if this despised servant brings a different form of salvation to Zion, one that is hard to believe and is revealed only to certain eyewitnesses who make the report, but is not about Zion's repurchase from the nations, then Isaiah's words would make sense.

Isaiah continues: **"For he will grow up before him as the tender plant, and as the root out of dry land. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see him, we do not desire his appearance.**

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of pains and acquainted with illness; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we did not esteem him.

Surely he bore our illnesses, and carried our pains, but we esteemed him as stricken, struck by God and humbled." ⁶

Now, your teachers say this is a description of Israel's suffering before the change to its state of glory among the nations, and many of them say the foreign kings are speaking here.

Certainly, who can deny that the people of Israel have suffered greatly, and been despised and mistreated by Gentile kings in many shameful ways? This letter would grow many times longer if we recounted all the ways.

But curiously, this description of the suffering servant does not say the kings themselves do any direct violence to him. True, they turn their faces from him, and do not esteem or value him, which undoubtedly is a form of indirect violence to a human being.

But it does not say the kings do any direct violence to him; which is strange considering the violence done to the people of Israel by many Gentile kings.

On the other hand, your rabbis teach that the anointed one will be a “twig” from and a “root” of Jesse; and David himself was also YHWH's anointed one, yet he was despised and not esteemed before becoming king of Israel.

¹ Isaiah 52:13-15. ² Isaiah 52:1. ³ Isaiah 54:11,12. ⁴ Isaiah 53:1. ⁵ Isaiah 52:10. ⁶ Isaiah 53:2-4.

23: Lamb To The Slaughter

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities. The discipline for our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we were healed. All of us, like sheep, went astray; we went, each man, his own way, and YHWH has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”¹

Now, if this is Israel being described, and it was crushed for its own iniquities, then why was it not restored soon afterward? For “by his stripes we were healed.” But this is similar language to the man described a little earlier by Isaiah, who gave his back to the ones striking, and his cheeks to the ones plucking at his beard.

Many of your teachers say this is still the foreign kings speaking here, and that Israel is crushed for the iniquities of those kings. But the principle given elsewhere by the prophets is that foreign kings always pay for their own errors. For example, the prophet Joel says:

“For look! In those days and at that time, when I bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will be judge of them there over my people and my heritage Israel, whom they scattered among the nations, and divided up my land.”

And speaking to those nations, YHWH says in reference to his captive ones: **“Look! I will rouse them from the place where you sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head.”²**

There is no concept in either the Law or the words of Moses, of the nation of Israel being crushed for the iniquity of foreign kings. However, there is a full description given by Moses of what would happen to the nation for its own iniquity, in the blessings and the curses, which we need not relate here in detail.

For example, Moses said: **“YHWH will raise up against you a nation from afar, from the end of the earth, swooping like the eagle, a nation whose tongue you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, that will not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young.”³** And again: **“YHWH will scatter you among all the peoples, from one end of the earth to the other.”⁴**

This was partly fulfilled in the exiles to Assyria and Babylon, but it was

ultimately fulfilled by the Romans. This is confirmed by the prophet Daniel, who wrote, "and in the later time of their kingdom, when the transgressors come to their end, a king of fierce countenance will stand up, and understanding ambiguous sayings." ⁵

This ambiguous "little horn," as we have shown earlier, is the Romans, who became the "nation of fierce countenance" YHWH brought upon your ancestors, because of their transgression.

In reference to the curses, Moses says, "They will come upon you as a sign and wonder, and upon your offspring indefinitely." ⁶

But once they had returned to YHWH, he would bring them back from all the nations to which they were dispersed; and then, says Moses, "YHWH your God will put all these curses on your enemies, and on those hating you, who are persecuting you." ⁷

Now, there is also no concept in the law of Moses of one man being crushed for the iniquity of the nation, since human sacrifice is forbidden.

Nevertheless, there is a sacrifice that is crushed on behalf of the nation. Once a year on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, the high priest slaughtered a goat as a sin offering for the whole assembly of Israel, and then over another goat, all of the errors of the nation were confessed, and that goat carried all of their iniquities into the wilderness.

This despised servant's death is similar to those goat sacrifices made on the day of atonement. He is "crushed for our iniquities" like the first goat, and "the iniquity of us all" is laid on him like the second goat.

"He was oppressed, and was humbled, and he did not open his mouth. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, like a sheep that is silent before her shearers, and he did not open his mouth." ⁸

The phrase "he did not open his mouth" is said twice, and so this becomes the distinctive aspect of the despised servant during his oppression, and while he is being brought as a "lamb to the slaughter."

Now, there are certain similarities between this and the language David used in a psalm to describe his people: "But you have cast off, and humiliated us, and you do not go out with our armies. You make us turn back from our enemy, and those hating us take plunder for themselves. You have given us like sheep for food, and have scattered us among the nations.

You sell your people for next to nothing, and do not increase your wealth by their price. You make us a reproach to our neighbors, derision and scoffing to those round about us. You make us a proverb among the nations, a shaking of the head for people." ⁹

And again: "For your sake we are killed all day long. We are counted as sheep for slaughter." ¹⁰

Nevertheless, this is not the psalm of a man who is "silent" before his shearers, and who "did not open his mouth" because of oppression. Just before his complaint to God, David says: "You, God, are my king. Command salvations for Jacob. Through you we will push down our enemies, through your name we will trample those rising up

against us.”¹¹

In David's psalm, the people are counted as sheep for slaughter, but unwillingly. Indeed, we could say that this psalm is David lodging a letter of complaint on their behalf to YHWH! Certainly it is David's prayer for Israel to have the power to trample and defeat its enemies.

But the despised servant in Isaiah is not like this. He does not ask for retribution. Unlike David and his people Israel, he “did not open his mouth” in complaint, either to YHWH or to those oppressing him, because he knows the purpose of his death. For that reason he is said to “act wisely.”

¹ Isaiah 53:5,6. ² Joel 4:1,2 (or 3:1,2); 4:7 (or 3:7). ³ Deuteronomy 28:49,50. ⁴ Deuteronomy 28:64. ⁵ Daniel 8:23. ⁶ Deuteronomy 28:46.

⁷ Deuteronomy 30:7. ⁸ Isaiah 53:7. ⁹ Psalm 44:10-15 (or 44:9-14). ¹⁰ Psalm 44:23 (or 44:22). ¹¹ Psalm 44:5,6 (44:4,5).

24: Who Will Think About His Generation?

“From restraint and judgment he was taken, and who will think about his generation? For he was severed from the land of the living. For the transgression of my people they¹ were plagued. And he was given a tomb with the wicked and with the rich in his deaths¹, although he did no wrong and no deceit was in his mouth.”²

Who is speaking here? If it is the foreign kings, then why is it now “my people” and not “our people”? The implication is that one person is now speaking. If it is the prophet Isaiah, or perhaps even YHWH himself, then “my people” would be YHWH's people, and not the people of the foreign kings.

If one man is being described, it seems to reveal something about the generation in which he lived. For as well as this suffering servant being “severed from the land of the living,” his generation also seems to be plagued for their own transgression as well.

Earlier the question was posed, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of YHWH revealed?” And now another question is asked. Who will think about, or declare, this man's generation? If he is despised by the nation of Israel, the question would make sense. It would perhaps be taboo to think deeply or speak about this man, or about his personal life, or even about the generation in which he lived.

And if this is YHWH speaking, the despised servant cannot be Israel the nation, for in that case, YHWH's people are plagued for their transgression, and so cannot be described as having done no wrong.

Isaiah says that “no deceit was in his mouth.” Something similar is said of the perfect priest described in Malachi: “The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found on his lips.”³

Similar words are also spoken by the prophet Zephaniah to Israel: “In that day you will not be ashamed for all your deeds by which you transgressed against me; for then I will take away from among you those who rejoice in your pride, and you will no

longer be haughty in my holy mountain.

And I will leave in the midst of you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of YHWH. The remnant of Israel will not commit iniquity, nor speak a lie; neither will a tongue of deceit be found in their mouths; for they will graze and lie down, and no one will cause them to tremble.”⁴

And so only a remnant of Israel even qualify to be the “despised servant” spoken of by Isaiah, rather than the nation as a whole. And if only a remnant, a “humble and lowly people,” then their shepherd could be YHWH’s suffering servant who humbles himself and is humbled.

Now, why does Isaiah say, “in his deaths”? It could be an indication this is talking about multiple people or the nation, but in that case it could simply say “in their deaths.” Instead, it could suggest that there is something special about his death. After all, given this man dies and then lives again, which is certainly not the ordinary course of life in this present world, we should not be too surprised if his death is also special in some way, given the reason for it.

And if he is the fulfillment of the perfect priest described in Malachi, who “restored many from sin,” it could also be to correspond with the description of YHWH’s covenant with his perfect priest, which “became lives and peace.”

In that case, the suffering servant would die for many people, die their deaths as it were, to bring life and peace for many people.

“But it was YHWH's desire to crush him and cause him to be wounded. If he makes his soul a guilt offering, he will see his offspring. He will lengthen his days, and the desire of YHWH will prosper in his hand.”⁵

In the law of Moses it was written: “If a soul sins, and does any of the things that YHWH commands should not be done, even if he doesn't know it, he is guilty, and will bear his iniquity. And he will bring an unblemished ram from the flock, appraised by you, as a guilt offering to the priest; and the priest will make atonement for him over his error, when he erred and didn't know; and it will be forgiven him. It is a guilt offering. He is certainly guilty to YHWH.”⁶

Now, this specific requirement of the Law could not be fulfilled while the nation no longer had a Temple for animal sacrifices. However, it could be fulfilled, if this servant offered his own soul as a guilt offering for the transgression of others.

Of course, the law given through Moses does not allow for human sacrifice; but neither does it allow for the nation of Israel to be crushed for the iniquity of foreign kings, which would also be a form of human sacrifice, but on a mass scale!

Therefore it is clear this sacrifice is beyond the law of Moses, but described in terms that would be familiar to your ancestors.

As for his “offspring,” this is almost always about physical descendants. Yet it is also used by Isaiah to describe the remnant, the holy part of Israel. For elsewhere, Isaiah writes, “the holy seed is its stump”;⁷ and again, “I will bring forth an offspring out of Jacob, and out of Judah the one to inherit my mountains; and my chosen ones will inherit it, and my servants will dwell there.”⁸ So this despised servant could “see his offspring” or “seed” in the sense of being shepherd over the remnant.

25: My Righteous Servant

“Because of the trouble of his soul, he will see and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant will make the many righteous, and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will assign him a portion with the many, and he will portion out the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul even to death, and was counted with the transgressors, and carried the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”¹

The ancient scrolls found near the Dead Sea say “he will see the light” instead of “he will see.” Why the words “the light” are not in other scrolls is unclear. But the suggestion is that death is “darkness,” and by being raised up, he is brought out from darkness into “the light.”

It is plainly YHWH speaking in these verses, and the foreign kings do not seem to be in the picture at all. YHWH speaks of “the many” being made righteous, and his servant carrying the sins of “many,” which would make sense if this one is to be YHWH’s salvation to the end of the earth. Furthermore, he does not simply “bear their iniquities” upon death, but also after his death and resurrection.

Now, if this is speaking about Israel, how can the nation still bear the iniquities of people after it is raised up to glory? Is it to be perpetually destroyed and restored, to pay for the sins of foreigners? It is true that Israel has been appointed to be as a nation of priests, but it is the sacrificed animals that provide the blood of atonement, rather than the nation’s own blood.

But not only is this man’s sacrifice of himself like a guilt offering as well as the goat offerings made on Yom Kippur, he is also like the blood itself, since he “poured out his soul even to death.”

And he is even like the priest, because he “made intercession for the transgressors.” But if he is a priest, then he must surely fulfill the description given through Malachi of the perfect priest, of whom it is said, “iniquity was not found on his lips” and “he restored many from sin.” This despised, suffering servant is therefore the true “messenger of YHWH of hosts.”

He is described by YHWH as “my righteous servant.” But if it is Israel, to crush the nation when it is righteous would be a violation of the covenant mediated by Moses, and a blatant contradiction of the curses and blessings he wrote about, that said the nation would be blessed when it is righteous, and cursed and eventually crushed when it is unrighteous.

Now, Ezekiel talks about the restoration of Israel, and how it bears the shame of the nations. **“Look! In my jealousy and in my fury I speak, because you have borne the shame of the nations. Therefore this is what my Lord YHWH says: 'I raise my hand in an oath, that the surrounding nations will bear their own shame. But you, mountains**

of Israel, will produce branches and bear your fruit for my people Israel, for their return is at hand.”²

But bearing the shame of the nations is not the same as bearing the iniquity of the nations, carrying their sin and having them laid on him, like the goats on the day of atonement.

Furthermore, even after being crushed and restored, the nation itself cannot be YHWH's righteous but suffering servant described by Isaiah, for YHWH also says through Ezekiel: “I am not doing this on account of you, house of Israel, but rather for my holy name, which you profaned among the nations where you went.”³

And again: “Then you will remember your bad ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will be disgusted by yourselves for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not on your account am I doing this, says my Lord YHWH. Let it be known to you. Be ashamed and humiliated because of your ways, house of Israel.”⁴

And YHWH will also make sure the nations know the true reason for Israel's exile, for after an invasion upon the restored house of Israel by Gog of Magog, he says: “And the Gentiles will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity, because they were unfaithful to me. Therefore I concealed my face from them, and I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and all of them fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I did to them, and I concealed my face from them.”⁵

Therefore, the nation of Israel, both before and after its restoration, is disqualified from being YHWH's “righteous servant” who is crushed on behalf of others; for this despised servant is righteous both before he is crushed, as well as after.

Instead, Israel the nation is crushed for its own sins, just as Isaiah says as well: “‘Comfort, comfort my people,’ says your God. ‘Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and proclaim to her, that her time of service has been fulfilled, that her iniquity has been paid for. For from the hand of YHWH she has received double for all her sins.’”⁶

Now, in the case of the nation's exile to Babylon, this “double” was certainly Babylon making Israel's punishment worse than YHWH intended. But afterward, Babylon was judged and punished for its treatment of Israel. Israel was certainly not crushed for Babylon's sins, otherwise there would be no need for Babylon to be judged later.

The principle is always that the mistreatment of YHWH's people by foreigners comes back upon the heads of the ones doing the mistreating, and there is no basis in the Torah for crushing Israel for the transgression of foreign kings.

However, it would certainly be legal for one man to choose to die on behalf of others. For Moses, even though he presented the Law to the nation, and knew there was no provision in it for one man to die on behalf of Israel, was willing to offer himself as such before YHWH, when the nation sinned against YHWH.⁷

And so Moses set the pattern for all good men, who are willing to sacrifice their own life to save others; and in that respect, YHWH's suffering servant is like Moses, a man described as “humble, far more than any man who was on the face of the earth.”⁸

Therefore, quite apart from who or what this despised servant is, we could say that his name is omitted so it can also be a parable for good people to imitate and follow, while they live in the midst of bad people.

And if only a remnant of Israel “will not commit iniquity, nor speak a lie; neither will a tongue of deceit be found in their mouths,” then it is only the remnant who even qualify to fulfill this parable and prophecy.

But since the remnant are, by definition, preserved alive, then this parable and prophecy surely has its ultimate fulfillment in one man, who dies on behalf of others, and who becomes a model for the remnant of Israel to follow.

1 Isaiah 53:11,12. 2 Ezekiel 36:6-8. 3 Ezekiel 36:22. 4 Ezekiel 36:31,32. 5 Ezekiel 39:23,24. 6 Isaiah 40:1,2. 7 Exodus 32:32. 8 Numbers 12:3.

26: The Second Veil Is Removed

Now, when Israel’s teachers say that this despised servant is the nation of Israel, it serves as another veil, because then they overturn the promises of YHWH given through Moses. In effect, they are saying that the nation is crushed by YHWH when it is righteous. And not only that, but it is crushed for the iniquities of Gentile kings, not for its own iniquities!

As a result, they deprive themselves, and those they instruct, of YHWH’s means of making Israel and the remnant righteous, which is one of the purposes of this suffering servant. But when we see the despised servant as one man, the veil is removed, and he becomes the shepherd whom the remnant of Israel follow.

Just as he is humble, so are the remnant “a humble and lowly people.” Just as “no deceit was in his mouth,” “neither will a tongue of deceit be found in their mouths,” because they are his sheep. As Zephaniah says of the remnant: “They will graze and lie down, and no one will cause them to tremble.”

But the remnant cannot model themselves after the nation of Israel, because that is appointed as YHWH’s “spiked threshing sledge” servant, which is not the role of the remnant, the “humble and lowly people.”

Now, if this despised servant is really one man, why is there a need for his sacrifice? For the Torah already makes provision for iniquities.

We have already said how there is no allowance for human sacrifice under the Law covenant, or for a national crushing on behalf of foreign kings, especially if the nation is righteous; so clearly something beyond the Law covenant is here.

Besides, sacrifices are not exclusive to the law given through Moses. Adam’s children brought offerings to YHWH even though they were not under that law. When Noah came out of the Ark, he built an altar and offered some of the animals as burnt offerings. Abraham was asked to offer his son as a sacrifice, although he was stopped by the angel.

When Job’s companions sinned against YHWH, they were told to bring bulls and rams to Job, and to offer up burnt sacrifices for themselves, and for Job to pray for them. YHWH accepted his prayer, and so Job became like a priest to his companions,

and a mediator for sin between them and YHWH. These examples may have been a foreshadow of things to come.

Neither is sin always atoned for by means of provisions in the law of Moses. When Isaiah saw a vision of YHWH sitting on his throne, Isaiah expressed alarm and said he was as good as dead. But one of the seraphs brought a coal from the altar, placed it on Isaiah's lips, and said: "Look! This has touched your lips, and your iniquity is removed, and your sin is atoned for." ¹

Nevertheless, the covenant through Moses was given to Israel to make them a distinctive nation with distinctive laws. A person guilty under this law was to bring a guilt offering to the priest who would "make atonement for him over his error," and "it will be forgiven him." ² And so the priest became a mediator for sin between YHWH and the one sinning.

The priests were mediators for Israel's sin, and for the sins of Gentiles who chose to hold fast to YHWH's covenant³, but not for Gentiles who weren't under the covenant made between YHWH and Israel.

But the despised servant "made intercession for the transgressors," which makes him like a priest. And not just any priest, but he fulfills the description of the perfect priest described by Malachi, even if he is not from the tribe of Levi.

And since he "carried the sin of many," "makes his soul a guilt offering," and is "crushed for our iniquities," he can become the means by which atonement for sin is made also for the Gentiles. Thus he can truly become YHWH's salvation "to the end of the earth."

Now, not all sins under the Law could be atoned for by animal sacrifices. Certain transgressions such as murder required the death of the transgressor. And this was foreshadowed by YHWH's words to Noah: "Whoever sheds human blood, by a human will his own blood be shed, for in God's image he made the human." ⁴

Yet when David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and then he had her husband put to death in battle, David should have suffered the death penalty under the law of Moses. But he sincerely prayed to YHWH, and was forgiven, although his son died. Thus we see that YHWH can cause sins to be atoned for in whatever way he chooses.

Now, if we are honest, we could say that the death of the son of David seems unjust, for the boy did not commit the sin, but his father did. And yet, in truth, we are all in a similar situation.

For Adam was the human father of us all, and had access to the tree of life by which he could live forever. Yet by his sin, he and his offspring were barred from that tree, condemning his offspring to death. Now, if just one sin had the power to condemn us all to death, perhaps one righteous act could allow us all to live again.

In addition, YHWH said to Adam: "The ground is cursed because of you. In pain you will eat from it all the days of your lives." ⁵ But later on, the man Noah was born, at whose birth they said, "this one will comfort us concerning our work and the pain of our hands, because of the ground YHWH cursed." ⁶

The prophecy came true after the Flood, for then YHWH said to Noah: "Never

again will I curse the ground because of humanity, for the inclination of the heart of the human is bad from youth, and never again will I strike every living thing like I did.”⁷

Now, if one man can bring rest and comfort from the curse Adam's sin brought upon the ground, and whose life symbolized the beginning of a new creation, what of the greater curse of death, which Adam also brought upon his offspring? Certainly, if one man could relieve us of that curse, we would surely call him our “Everlasting Father.”

But what man would have the authority to do such a thing? Speaking to the serpent, who was the cause of death, YHWH said: “I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”⁸

Now, this is not merely about a like or dislike of snakes! This is a struggle between offspring, with YHWH foretelling the outcome in advance.

By saying, “he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel,” the focus is not on all of the woman's offspring, which would be everyone alive, but on one man. By striking the serpent in the head, only this man would have the authority to crush the cause of death.

This would explain why it says of the despised servant, “it was YHWH's desire to crush him and cause him to be wounded.” It is because he is YHWH's means of ending death itself! It would also explain why it says of YHWH's servant, “in his deaths.” He dies on behalf of many, and therefore dies their deaths, so they can live. His being raised from the grave becomes a kind of token and guarantee to humanity that the means to defeat death had become available.

Now, if we go back to the earlier words of Isaiah, when YHWH spoke to “the one whom the nation abhorred,” we see a new meaning in the following words:

“And I will preserve you, and I will give you for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, and to reappportion the allotted inheritances of the desolated ones, that you may say to the prisoners, ‘come out!’ and to those in the darkness, ‘show yourselves!’”⁹

While this is undoubtedly a reference to a restoration from exile, it is also a prophecy about resurrection to life. YHWH's despised servant, the one whom the nation of Israel abhorred, would be given for “a covenant of the people,” for Jews and Gentiles alike, so they could ultimately be raised up, and be released from the darkness of death.

As the first man to be raised permanently from the pit of death, and to see the light of life, he would see clearly the way to help others out of the pit.

¹ Isaiah 6:7. ² Leviticus 5:17-19. ³ Isaiah 56:6,7. ⁴ Genesis 9:6. ⁵ Genesis 3:17. The word “lives” is plural in Hebrew. ⁶ Genesis 5:29. ⁷ Genesis 8:21.

⁸ Genesis 3:15. ⁹ Isaiah 49:8,9.

27: A Great Wailing

Now, if such a man as this were to be killed, what would it be like? The prophet

Zechariah gives us a picture of an extraordinary mourning:

“And I will pour out upon the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplications; and they will look to me whom they pierced, and they will wail over him as the wailing for the only son, and grieve bitterly over him as the bitter grieving over the firstborn. In that day the wailing in Jerusalem will be great, like the wailing of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo.” ¹

This reminds us of the mourning by your ancestors over the last good king, Josiah, who cleansed the land and the Temple. He fought in the valley of Megiddo and was shot with an arrow, and died in Jerusalem; and the lamentations over him were made into a custom for the people. Not long after, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians.

In other words, here is a picture of the house of David wailing, perhaps over a righteous king who dies before another impending national calamity. But why would the spirit be poured out around that time? And besides, how is it that YHWH can be pierced? Surely the only way is for them to have pierced his servant, his anointed one, in the same way that YHWH says elsewhere, **“the one who touches you touches the apple of his eye.”** ²

After a description of this wailing, Zechariah says: **“In that day, there will be an opened fountain to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.”** ³

Now, why would a fountain need to be opened for sin and impurity, when they have the sacrifices under the law of Moses? And besides, how can water wash away sin? This must surely be related to the death of the one over whom the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem are wailing.

And if YHWH’s anointed one is to die in the manner of the suffering servant foretold by Isaiah, this verse takes on a new meaning; for it can also be interpreted to read: **“In that day, he will become an opened fountain.”**

That a person can become like an object can be seen elsewhere, such as when Isaiah writes about the days of Immanuel: **“For he will become a sanctuary, and a stone of striking and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel; a snare and a trap to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”** ⁴

If this is the real meaning, then the purpose of the pierced one's death is to become like a “fountain” that cleanses them of sin and impurity. But the prophet Zechariah further signifies the death of an important one, when he goes on to say:

“Awake, sword, against my shepherd, and against the man who is my companion, says YHWH of hosts. Strike the shepherd, and the flock will be scattered; and I will restore my hand upon the little ones.” ⁵

If YHWH’s shepherd is his anointed servant, the flock scatter at the time of him being struck, so that nobody would be left with him at that time; which is also what the prophecy given to Daniel suggests of an anointed one who is “cut off, and nothing for him.” ⁶

What happens next affects the whole land: **“And it becomes that in all the**

land, says YHWH, two parts in it will be cut off and expire, and the third part will remain in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is my people,' and they will say, 'YHWH is my God.'"⁷

Now, this could be a prophecy of future testing to come upon Israel. However, we have already seen how the Roman desolation fits many of the prophecies, and would fit this one as well, if we could find a shepherd of YHWH who was struck in that period.

¹ Zechariah 12:10,11. ² Zechariah 2:12 (2:8). ³ Zechariah 13:1. ⁴ Isaiah 8:14. ⁵ Zechariah 13:7. ⁶ Daniel 9:26. ⁷ Zechariah 13:8,9.

28: Micah And The King Of Israel

Now, other prophets also indicate the timing of YHWH's anointed one. In Micah, YHWH speaks of the last days, and how the mountain of YHWH's house would be firmly established, and how law would go forth from Zion.

The prophet then speaks to Zion as if a woman in distress, and seized with pain like a woman in labor. He explains the things she is to go through, starting with the loss of her king and her exile to Babylon, before she truly gives birth:

"Now why are you crying out? Is there no king in you? Has your counselor perished? For birth pangs have seized you like a woman giving birth. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor. For now you will go forth out of the city and reside in the field, and go to Babylon. There you will be rescued. There YHWH will redeem you from the hand of your enemies."¹

Then the prophet describes what would happen to Zion after her return from Babylon. **"Now many nations are gathered against you, saying: 'She will be defiled, and our eyes will look upon Zion.'" But YHWH would raise up Zion herself to defeat them. "Arise, and thresh, daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and make your hooves copper, and you will pulverize many people."**²

This would fit the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, who defiled the Temple; and then the time of the Maccabees, who defeated the Greeks and created a separate Jewish kingdom. It would also fit YHWH's description of his servant Israel as a "spiked threshing sledge."

But this success would not last, for the prophet continues: **"Now you will cut yourself,"³ daughter of troops. A siege is laid against us. They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek."**⁴

This would fit the description of the siege of Jerusalem by Roman general Pompey. Israel lost its independence, and Judea became a province under Roman rule.

A bundle of rods symbolized the Roman magistrate's power and jurisdiction, sometimes with an ax, indicating that the magistrate's judicial powers included capital punishment. That the judge of Israel is struck with a rod upon the cheek perhaps

symbolizes its loss of power in this regard.

This would also relate to an earlier prophecy, given by Jacob: **“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the lawmaker’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and for him is the hope of peoples.”** ⁵

That Zion would cut herself at this time, could be an allusion to her defeat partly at her own hands. The groups who resisted Roman rule, including the Zealots and the Sicarii, used increasingly violent methods to achieve their aims. The Sicarii would even conceal daggers in their cloaks, and attack Roman sympathizers.

The prophet Micah next focuses on the birth of the king of Israel: **“And you Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you will come out for me the one to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from everlasting, from the days of eternity.”** ⁶

This is the same language used by the prophet Habakkuk, when he says: **“Are you not from everlasting, YHWH my God, my Holy One?”** ⁷ And we recall that Isaiah spoke of a son who would be called **“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”** ⁸

Regarding this king, Micah continues: **“Therefore he will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has given birth; and the rest of his brothers will return to the sons of Israel.”** ⁹

And so Micah indicates that this king would be born in the time when the Romans were rulers of the land, but that the king would somehow give up the people of Israel for a time.

This would fit with what Isaiah said about YHWH’s despised servant, who would be abhorred by the nation to the point where he would be crushed, and who would feel that his mission had failed, but who would then become a “light of Gentiles” while Zion felt abandoned.

Their king does not abandon Zion forever, but only “until the time when she who is to give birth has given birth.” After that, the king’s “brothers” will “return to the sons of Israel.”

Now, in the form of a riddle, YHWH asks through Isaiah: **“Before she went into labor, she gave birth. Before birth pains came upon her, she delivered a son. Who has heard a thing like this? Who has seen such things? Will a land be brought to birth in one day, or a nation be born in one moment of time? For as soon as Zion went into labor, she gave birth to her sons.”** ¹⁰

Nations are rarely brought into existence in one day, yet here YHWH says this is what happens to a land and nation related to Zion; and he causes it to happen, for he continues: **“Will I bring it to the moment of birth and then not bring the birth, says YHWH? Would I bring to birth and then shut up the womb, says your God? Rejoice with Jerusalem, and exult in her, all who love her. Rejoice greatly with her, all of the ones mourning over her.”** ¹¹

This is the time the king no longer gives them up; and only then do we see powerful shepherding on behalf of Israel. Micah continues: **“And he stands and shepherds in the strength of YHWH, and in the majesty of the name of YHWH his**

God, and they will dwell because now he will be great to the ends of the earth.”¹²

And so we see that this king of Israel must have been born before Zion gives birth, and only shepherds on their behalf once his greatness reaches “to the ends of the earth.”

This sounds very similar to the story of Joseph, who was rejected by his brothers and so gave them up, in a sense, until his greatness reached to the Gentiles, and then he became YHWH’s means of salvation for Israel in later days.

¹ Micah 4:9,10. ² Micah 4:11,13. ³ Compare Deuteronomy 14:1 in Hebrew. ⁴ Micah 4:14 (5:1). ⁵ Genesis 49:10. ⁶ Micah 5:1 (5:2).

⁷ Habakkuk 1:12. ⁸ Isaiah 9:6. ⁹ Micah 5:2 (5:3). ¹⁰ Isaiah 66:7,8. ¹¹ Isaiah 66:9,10. ¹² Micah 5:3 (5:4).

29: North Versus South

The final prophecy given to Daniel also indicates the timing of YHWH’s activity, in perhaps greater detail than any other prophecy. But it uses ambiguous language, so as to cause the wisdom of the wise to perish.

For many so-called wise ones teach that Daniel’s final prophecy is also about Antiochus Epiphanes, as if YHWH cannot see beyond that event. But now that we understand how YHWH uses ambiguity, we will see how the final prophecy given to Daniel foretells many of the things that would come before and after the appearance of YHWH’s messenger of the covenant.

The prophecy begins with the kings of Persia, and how Persia is defeated by a mighty king, which is Alexander the Great, whose kingdom is broken to the four winds.

It then outlines the rivalry between a “king of the north,” which is the Syrian line of kings to the north of Israel, with the title Antiochus, and a “king of the Negev” or “south,” which is the Egyptian line of kings, with the title Ptolemy.

Their rivalry is eventually interrupted by another king: **“And the one coming against him will do as he pleases, and none will stand before him; and he will stand in the Land of Beauty, and the end will be by his hand. And he will set his face to come with the strength of all his kingdom, and equitable terms with him, which he makes.”¹**

This is the ambiguous “little horn” spoken of in the earlier prophecy given to Daniel. It is the Roman power, in whose hand the holy land ends up, and through whom it is eventually desolated. Rome first became the mediator between the Jews and Syria, and later, Roman general Pompey took Jerusalem.

The prophecy continues: **“And he will give a daughter of the women to him, to bring him to ruin, but she will not stand, and she will not be for him. And he will set his face to the coastlands, and take many. And a commander will eradicate his reproach for him, so as not to face reproach; but he will turn back to him.”²**

The prophecy does not go into great detail about the complex power struggles that took place within the Roman empire, but simply focuses on the final outcome of

a few of the principle characters, to help us see that this is indeed really about the Romans.

First is Cleopatra, the “daughter of the women” and last of the line of the Egyptian “king of the south” independent from Rome. She became involved with Caesar, but neither she nor her kingdom eventually stood, for she committed suicide, and her kingdom became part of the Roman empire.

Second is Pompey, the Roman general who captured many coastlands for the Roman empire, and who later became a rival of Caesar. Pompey was assassinated by a commander from Ptolemy of the “south” so as not to face Caesar’s reproach, but Caesar was appalled at this, and turned away with disgust from the man who brought him Pompey’s head.

Third is Julius Caesar himself, who was assassinated not long after he returned to Rome from his own military campaigns, and whose death is described next by the prophecy.

“And he will turn his face back to the fortresses of his land, but he will stumble, and fall, and not be found. And in his place will stand one who causes an exactor for the honor of the kingdom to pass through; and after some days he will be broken, but not in anger and not in battle.”³

Here the prophecy is careful to be specific about positions, for it says “in his place.” The surname of Julius was Caesar, and that became a title for the emperors to follow; and while there was a fight between Antony and Octavian for who would rule Rome, it was Octavian, who became known as Augustus and hence “Caesar,” who stood in the place of Julius.

Augustus was awarded the honorary title “Pater Patriae” by the Roman Senate, as Augustus himself writes: “While I was administering my thirteenth consulship the senate and the equestrian order and the entire Roman people gave me the title Father of my Country.”⁴

How did “the entire Roman people” give him this honor? They were required to enroll and take an oath of loyalty to the emperor, although over 6,000 Pharisees from the Jews refused to swear this oath, and King Herod slaughtered many.⁵ Augustus died in peace, leaving the Roman empire in relative peace.

“And in his place will stand one who is despised, and they will not give him the glory of the kingdom, but he will come in peacefully and secure the kingdom by slick dealings. And the arms of the flood will be flooded before him, and will be broken, and even the prince of the covenant.”⁶

The one who stood in place of Augustus was Tiberius, the only Caesar in the Julio-Claudian line of emperors who did not receive the honor “Pater Patriae.” He had to act craftily to secure the kingdom, since he faced several dangers at first.

In later years, Tiberius withdrew from political life, and Sejanus was left in control of the empire. Sejanus was commander of the Roman imperial bodyguard, known as the Praetorian Guard. But when the power of Sejanus became great, he was arrested and killed. The Roman soldiers, the “arms of the flood,” burned and plundered, angry because they had been suspected of being disloyal to the emperor.⁷

Tiberius died not many years later. The historian Suetonius says that the people were so glad of his death, that at the first news of it some ran about shouting, 'Tiberius to the Tiber.'" ⁸

The phrase "in his place" is not used in the prophecy after this, as if it is no longer as concerned about identifying individual rulers. Perhaps this is because the "prince of the covenant" is also "broken" under the rule of Tiberius; and once this "prince" has been identified, the identity of specific Roman rulers who come later is not as important.

If this "prince of the covenant" is also YHWH's despised servant, it is ironic that he is "broken" under the rulership of "one who is despised." But the two are despised for very different reasons. Tiberius was one who slaughtered people cruelly in his later years, while YHWH's despised one would be like a lamb to the slaughter.

¹ Daniel 11:16,17. ² Daniel 11:17,18. ³ Daniel 11:19,20. ⁴ *Res Gestae*, VI.35. ⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities Of The Jews*, Book 17, Chapter 2, Section 4.

⁶ Daniel 11:21,22. ⁷ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LVIII.12. ⁸ Suetonius, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars, Tiberius*, Chapter 75.

30: A Time Of Distress

The prophecy continues: **"And because of their alliance with him, he will practice deceit, coming up and becoming strong by a little nation."** ¹

The next emperor was Caius, who became emperor by means of the Praetorian Guard. They nicknamed him Caligula, meaning "little boot." During his short reign, he plundered the provinces while lavishing riches on his own projects, and believed himself to be a living god.

By this time, Egypt, which was the "king of the Negev" or "south," had become part of the Roman empire; but since "Negev" is also the name of the southern part of the holy land, the phrase "king of the Negev" is ambiguous, and could also refer to the Jews, when ruling themselves or in rebellion from Roman rule.

Caligula ordered the governor of Syria, Petronius, and therefore "king of the north," to put Caesar's image into the Temple in Jerusalem, and to use two of his four legions to do so. The Jews very nearly went to war over this, but before it could happen, Caligula was swept away by a conspiracy. After this, Herod Agrippa returned to his land and ruled as king in the days of the next emperor, Claudius.

The final part of this prophecy describes the war between the Jews and Rome, with the "king of the north" being Caesar Nero and his generals, and the "king of the Negev" being the Jews in rebellion to Rome.

Daniel says, in reference to the king of the north: **"And armed forces from him will stand and will desecrate the sanctuary, the fortress, and take away the daily sacrifice; and they put in place the abomination making desolate."** ²

This is similar to earlier prophecies given to Daniel, which indicated the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans. It would be a time of severe testing, **"and the ones with discernment from the people will explain to the many, but they will stumble by sword and by fire and by captivity and by**

plunder for days.”³

In the “time of the end,” Nero’s forces would sweep through the land like a flood, but then he would be disturbed by reports from the east and from the north; and indeed, both Judea in the east and Gaul in the north were in rebellion to him; and the army under general Vespasian was near to Jerusalem when Nero came to his end, with nobody to help him.

And then, as the prophecy foretold, **“there will be a time of distress, such as has not occurred since becoming a nation until that time; and at that time your people will escape, everyone found written in the book.”⁴** This “time of distress” has been described in great and thunderous detail by the Jewish historian Josephus, in his 7 volume work “The Wars Of The Jews.”

Daniel’s words here are also similar to those of Malachi, where he explains more about who is in YHWH’s book. **“Then each man who feared YHWH spoke with his neighbor, and YHWH paid attention and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for those fearing YHWH and for the ones who esteemed his name. And they will be mine, says YHWH of hosts, in the day I make a treasured possession; and I will spare them, as when a man spares his own son who serves him.”⁵**

Now, Daniel’s final prophecy may contain their own points of ambiguity, which, like a fork in the road, could also allow for a further timeline, beyond the time of the Romans. For Daniel is told, **“And you Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many will roam about, and the knowledge will increase.”⁶**

The desolation by the Romans was certainly a “time of the end,” and so the timeline for this was unsealed once the war between Rome and the Jews began, although an understanding of this timeline is sealed to those whose eyes are still focused on the days of Antiochus Epiphanes.

However, if there is a further “time of the end,” beyond the one that occurred in the days of the Romans, then this second timeline requires a “king” who introduces a new god different from the god of his forefathers, magnifies himself above everyone, speaks blasphemies against YHWH, disregards the desire of women, and honors the god of strong ones with gold, silver, precious stones and treasures.

In this second “time of the end,” he floods into many lands including the holy land, until he comes to his end; and as this happens, the identity of the king becomes obvious and the prophecy unseals itself again.

Furthermore, the prophet mentions 1,290 days and 1,335 days in relation to desecrating the sanctuary, the holy place, which may initially fit within the 7 years of the Jewish war with the Romans, especially as these time periods are close to three and a half years each.

On the other hand, just as Daniel’s previous prophecy concerning “seventy sevens” can be viewed as 490 days, but are really referring to a much longer period of 490 years, we can also consider a greater meaning for these time periods in relation to the setting up and removal of the “abomination making desolate” in the holy place.

The prophecy says: **“Happy is the one who waits in expectation, and arrives**

at 1,335 days.”⁷ In saying this, it assumes the reader is able to count a certain number of days or years from a known starting point, and to be “in expectation.” By saying “happy is the one who waits in expectation,” it implies the removal of that which is causing desolation to the sanctuary; so the ambiguity may be to allow for a secondary timeline, one that takes into account a further “time of the end.”

Nevertheless, the principle timeline is the one which leads to the initial trampling and throwing down of the holy place, the one which outlines the Roman empire in the time of its first Caesars. In this timeline, the “prince of the covenant” would be “broken” during the reign of Tiberius Caesar.

¹ Daniel 11:23. ² Daniel 11:31. ³ Daniel 11:33. ⁴ Daniel 12:1. ⁵ Malachi 3:16,17. ⁶ Daniel 12:4. ⁷ Daniel 12:12.

31: The Arm Of YHWH

Now let us turn our attention to a mystery that unfolds throughout the words of YHWH’s prophets.

In the writings of Moses, YHWH’s arm represents his power, usually to redeem, as he said to Moses: **“I am YHWH, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of Egypt, and I will rescue you from laboring for them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be God to you.”**¹

However, if we follow the way the prophet Isaiah develops the theme of YHWH’s “arm,” we will find that an intriguing transformation takes place. At first, the prophet uses the symbol in the same way it is used elsewhere, as when he describes YHWH’s arm coming against Assyria:

“YHWH will make his glorious voice heard, and will show the descending of his arm in the heat of anger, and a blaze of devouring fire, shattering and storm and hailstones.”²

A little later, Isaiah links YHWH’s arm to salvation: **“YHWH, be gracious to us. We wait for you. Be their arm every morning; yes, our salvation in a time of distress.”**³

Now, in the second half of his book, the prophet Isaiah focuses on the redemption and salvation of Zion and YHWH’s people. Here he describes YHWH’s arm with more ambiguous language that seems to suggest it is also a person.

For example, in reference to the salvation of Zion, Isaiah says: **“Look! My Lord YHWH will come with power, and his arm will rule for him. Look! His reward is with him, and the wage he pays is before him. Like a shepherd, he will feed his flock. With his arm, he will gather the lambs, and carry them in his bosom, conducting the ones being nursed.”**⁴

Since YHWH’s arm “will rule for him,” this could be speaking of YHWH’s anointed one who would be king. This ruler would be like a shepherd, which agrees with YHWH’s words through Ezekiel: **“I will set up one shepherd over them, and he will feed them. My servant David, he is the one who will feed them, and he will be their**

shepherd. And I, YHWH, I will be God to them, and my servant David a prince among them.”⁵

In other words, YHWH’s arm now comes in the form of a person, a shepherd, who rules. Isaiah also speaks of Cyrus as YHWH’s anointed one⁶, his shepherd⁷, and one who would be like YHWH’s arm, in bringing down Babylon and returning Israel to its soil:

“Assemble, all of you, and listen. Who among them has told of these things? YHWH loves him, and he will carry out his desire against Babylon, and his arm on the Chaldeans. I myself have spoken. Indeed, I have called him. I have brought him, and his way will succeed.”⁸

A little later, Isaiah speaks of people being in expectation of YHWH’s arm. **“Pay attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation. For law will go forth from me, and in just a moment, my judgment for a light of peoples. My righteousness is near. My salvation will come forth, and my arms will judge peoples. The coastlands will keep in expectation of me, and for my arm they will wait.”**⁹

Here, YHWH’s “arm” sounds similar to the servant Isaiah spoke of earlier, the one who **“will bring forth judgment to the nations,”** and who **“will not fail or be bruised, until he establishes judgment in the earth; and the islands will wait for his law.”**¹⁰

And now YHWH speaks to “the people with my law in their hearts,” which in Jeremiah would become the people under a new covenant. **“Listen to me, the ones knowing righteousness, the people with my law in their hearts. Do not fear the reproach of mortals, and do not be appalled at their taunts. For the moth will eat them up like the cloak, and the worm will eat them like the wool; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation will be from generation to generations.**

Awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength, arm of YHWH. Awake, as in the days before, the generations of long ago.”¹¹

Curiously, YHWH then seems to speak to his own “arm” as if it is a person, when he says: **“I will put my words in your mouth, and I will cover you in the shadow of my hand, in order to plant a heavens and lay the foundation of an earth, and to say to Zion, ‘You are my people.’”**¹²

Elsewhere, YHWH said he would put his words into the mouth of the prophet like Moses, so is YHWH speaking to this one here? And YHWH says, “I will cover you in the shadow of my hand.” But this is also what the “one who is despised by the nation” says about himself. **“In the shadow of his hand he has hidden me, and he has made me a polished arrow.”**¹³ The implication is that this despised one is the arm of YHWH!

But why would this one need to “plant a heavens” and “lay the foundation of an earth,” when heaven and earth are already in existence? Unless this is a reference to a new heavens and new earth, which YHWH’s servant, his “arm,” would establish. Indeed, we could say that sending his arm in the form of the despised servant, was laying the foundation for that new earth.

YHWH also uses the same awakening language for Zion: **“Awake, awake, put on your strength, Zion. Put on your clothes of splendor, Jerusalem, the holy city.”** ¹⁴

But neither Zion nor Israel is YHWH’s arm, for Israel did not redeem itself, but rather, YHWH bears his holy arm to bring about salvation. **“Break out into joy and sing together, you deserted places of Jerusalem; for YHWH has comforted his people. He has redeemed Jerusalem. YHWH has bared his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.”** ¹⁵

The redemption of Jerusalem from Babylon was done in the eyes of all the nations, and the same was true of her redemption from the Gentiles in later days.

However, there is a different type of redemption, both for Zion and the Gentiles, through the death of the despised servant. This redemption is not so obvious, which is why the question is then asked: **“Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of YHWH revealed?”** ¹⁶

The despised servant brings salvation from iniquity and transgression. But Israel would not expect or feel the need for a suffering servant who dies on behalf of others, which is why they would despise him. Indeed, some would find the reports about him hard to believe, even though he is the arm of YHWH!

A little later in Isaiah, YHWH describes a people separated from him because of their own errors. It is a people where nobody is righteous, and nobody goes to court truthfully. Their feet run to do bad, they are in a hurry to shed innocent blood, and their thoughts are harmful.

This is not a description of a people in exile, but is a poetic description of a people weighed down with sin and injustice. It is a people in need, not of repurchase from the nations, but of redemption from sin. But YHWH does not point them to the law of Moses, as might be expected. Instead, he does something remarkable:

“YHWH saw, and it was bad in his eyes. For there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and was appalled that there was no one interceding; so his arm brought salvation for him, and his righteousness supported him.” ¹⁷

The description of sin sounds very much like the condition before the Flood in Noah’s day; and so does YHWH’s response to it: “It was bad in his eyes.” But instead of bringing a flood, this time YHWH provides salvation by his arm.

That there was “no man,” “no judgment” and “no one interceding” is astonishing, given that Israel was meant to be a holy nation, a nation of kings and priests. But perhaps it is because this is really a metaphor for a higher level of righteousness and salvation, which no man was able to provide or achieve; and so YHWH’s arm brings salvation for him.

But from what does YHWH need saving? He is in no need of anything; and so he must really be saving the people who are weighed down with sin and injustice. And since the previous reference to “the arm of YHWH” by Isaiah was of the despised servant, this could be a poetic description of YHWH sending his arm in the form of his despised servant, who “made intercession for the transgressors.”

Isaiah also spoke earlier of how there was “no man” when YHWH came, but then he described a man who gave his cheeks to humiliation and spit.

The prophet continues: **“And he will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; and he will put on garments of vengeance as clothing, and wrap himself with the robe of zeal.**

He will repay according to their deeds. Fury to his foes, repayment to his enemies. To the coastlands he will repay their due. And from the sunset they will fear the name of YHWH, and from the rising of the sun his glory.

For the enemy will come like the river. The spirit of YHWH will make him flee. And the redeemer will come to Zion, and to those turning back from transgression in Jacob, says YHWH.” ¹⁸

Here YHWH’s “arm” puts on a breastplate, helmet and a robe, as if preparing for war. Where before there was “no man,” now there is one! And the name of YHWH becomes known from east to west, which would correspond with the despised servant’s mission to be YHWH’s “salvation to the end of the earth.”

Furthermore, the redeemer comes “to those turning back from transgression in Jacob,” so these must be the remnant. Yet just a few verses before, there was “no man,” that is, nobody doing good, which is why YHWH’s “arm” puts on armor in the first place. So YHWH’s “arm” must have manifested itself first, for the redeemer to be able to come to those in Jacob who are “turning back from transgression.”

YHWH goes on to say: **“As for me, this is my covenant with them, says YHWH. My spirit that is on you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, will not be removed from your mouth, or from the mouth of your offspring, or from the mouth of the offspring of your offspring, says YHWH, from now on and forever.”** ¹⁹

Who is YHWH speaking about here? He must first of all be speaking about the redeemer himself, the one whom YHWH spoke of earlier as **“my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen one, in whom my soul has approved. I have put my spirit on him. He will bring forth judgment to the nations.”** ²⁰ But he is also speaking of the remnant, “those turning back from transgression in Jacob.”

They also have YHWH’s spirit. They listen to and repeat the words of the redeemer, and their offspring continue forever, because of an everlasting covenant made with them.

¹ Exodus 6:6,7. ² Isaiah 30:30. ³ Isaiah 33:2. ⁴ Isa 40:10,11. ⁵ Ezekiel 34:23,24. ⁶ Isaiah 45:1. ⁷ Isaiah 44:28. ⁸ Isaiah 48:14,15. ⁹ Isaiah 51:4,5.

¹⁰ Isaiah 42:1,4. ¹¹ Isaiah 51:7-9. ¹² Isaiah 51:16. ¹³ Isaiah 49:2 ¹⁴ Isaiah 52:1. ¹⁵ Isaiah 52:9,10. ¹⁶ Isaiah 53:1. ¹⁷ Isaiah 59:15,16. ¹⁸ Isaiah 59:17-20.

¹⁹ Isaiah 59:21. ²⁰ Isaiah 42:1.

32: The Marriage Of Zion

Just a little later in Isaiah, it seems to be the redeemer himself speaking:

“The spirit of my Lord YHWH is upon me, because YHWH anointed me to declare good news to the meek. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to the ones bound; to proclaim the year of YHWH's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all those who mourn, to provide for those mourning Zion, to give them beauty instead of ash, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a despondent spirit." ¹

Who is speaking here? It is surely the same "one whom the nation abhorred" spoken of earlier by Isaiah, to whom YHWH said: **"In a time of favor I have answered you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you,"** the one who was given **"for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, and to reappportion the allotted inheritances of the desolated ones."** ²

This anointed one has a message with many purposes, but it is focused on "the year of YHWH's favor" and "the day of vengeance of our God." And now Isaiah describes the ones who listen to this servant's message:

"And they will be called rams of righteousness, the planting of YHWH, so he can show his beauty. And they will build the deserted places of old, and they will raise up the formerly desolated places, and they will repair the deserted cities, those that lay desolate for generation after generation.

And foreigners will stand and feed your flock, and sons of a foreigner will be your farmers and vinedressers. And you will be called priests of YHWH. They will call you ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their glory you will boast." ³

These are the remnant of Israel, those who listen to YHWH's anointed one. Here is an indication that the nature of the priesthood has changed, for all of them are called "priests of YHWH" and "ministers of our God." Either the priesthood is no longer through Levi, or these ones are priests in a different manner, just as YHWH's despised servant becomes a priest, but in a manner that is beyond the Law covenant. They are a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" led by YHWH's anointed one.

Isaiah continues: **"Instead of your shame, a double portion; and for dishonor they will rejoice in their portion. Therefore, in their land, they will possess a double portion. Everlasting joy will be theirs. For I, YHWH, love judgment and hate robbery as a burnt offering.**

And I will give their wages in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their offspring will be known among the nations, and their children in the midst of the peoples. Everyone seeing them will recognize them, that they are the offspring blessed by YHWH." ⁴

What is this "everlasting covenant" YHWH makes with them? For the law covenant has already been made with their ancestors. It must be the same covenant that YHWH spoke of a little earlier, that YHWH's spirit and words would not be removed from them or their offspring, "from now on and forever."

They are the remnant, the people made up of YHWH's chosen ones, and their offspring, led by the redeemer, YHWH's anointed servant.

And now it seems as if one of the remnant speaks: **"I will greatly rejoice in YHWH. My soul will be joyful in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of**

salvation. He covers me with a robe of righteousness, like the bridegroom making himself priestly in his beauty, and like the bride adorning herself with her adornments.”⁵

These ones do not dress in garments of violence, but in a symbolic sense they wear clothing like a priest and also like a bride. And now Zion herself is glorified, and becomes “married” to her children:

“No more will it be said that you are forsaken, and no more will it be said that your land is a desolation. For you will be called ‘My Delight Is In Her,’ and your land ‘Married.’ For YHWH will take delight in you, and your land will be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, YHWH will rejoice over you.”⁶

And now YHWH swears “by his right hand,” and “by the arm of his strength” that no more will Zion’s enemies take her food or foreigners her wine.⁷ But what is missing from this beautiful picture? Zion is still missing her king!

But YHWH says to her: **“Look! YHWH has proclaimed to the ends of the earth: ‘Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Look! Your salvation is coming. Look! His reward is with him, and the wage he pays is before him.’”⁸**

By this point, YHWH’s message regarding Zion’s salvation has been proclaimed “to the ends of the earth,” so that even Gentiles can marvel when her salvation arrives. And here, even Gentiles are commanded by YHWH to say to the daughter of Zion, “Look! Your salvation is coming.”

As for the one coming, YHWH says: “Look! His reward is with him, and the wage he pays is before him.” This exact phrase is used just twice in the book of Isaiah. The first time, it was used to describe YHWH’s arm that would rule for him.⁹ It was said to come “like a shepherd” who “will feed his flock.” But now, the second time the phrase is used, YHWH’s arm is about to come with vengeance for Zion!

¹ Isaiah 61:1-3. ² Isaiah 49:8. ³ Isaiah 61:3-6. ⁴ Isaiah 61:7-9. ⁵ Isaiah 61:10. ⁶ Isaiah 62:4,5. ⁷ Isaiah 62:8. ⁸ Isaiah 62:11. ⁹ Isaiah 40:10,11.

33: The Day Of Vengeance

And now, Isaiah sees something even more remarkable. He does not recognize what he sees, and so has to ask, “Who is this?”

“Who is this coming from Edom, with fermented garments from Bozrah; this one in his glorious clothing, marching with great power?”

‘It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty in saving.’

‘Why is your clothing red, and your garments like one treading in the winepress?’

‘I have trodden the winepress alone, and there was no man with me from the peoples. I tread them in my anger, and trample them in my fury, and their strength is spattering on my garments, and I have stained all my clothing.’”¹

This must be YHWH’s means of salvation, his anointed servant. He is the one who has YHWH’s words in his mouth, and so speaks in righteousness. It is he who

would be “mighty in saving,” even a “Mighty God.”

This redeemer continues by saying: **“For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed ones has come. And I looked, but there was no one helping, and I was appalled that there was no one offering support. So my own arm brought salvation for me, and my own fury, it supported me. And I trampled the peoples in my anger, and made them drunk in my fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.”** ²

Once again, just when salvation is needed the most, there is “no one offering support.” This is unusual, considering Israel is awaiting her king, unless the language is meant to convey that Zion cannot save herself here.

Perhaps there is also something cryptic being suggested. For this theme of “no man” seems to have been developed by YHWH through Isaiah. There was “no man” when YHWH came to Zion, but then a man spoke, a man who gave his back to the ones striking, and his cheeks to the ones plucking at his beard.

There was also “no man” when the people were full of sin and injustice, and so YHWH’s “arm” put on armor and became YHWH’s salvation, even in the form of a man, the despised servant, the “man of pains.”

And now, in a final scene of Zion’s salvation by YHWH’s arm, there is “no man with me from the peoples.” And yet, in the grand finale to Daniel’s vision of the four beasts, he sees a “son of man” who comes on the clouds, and all nations serve him. If this is the same one who comes from Edom, then it is no wonder that no man is with him; for men cannot naturally reach up into the clouds unless they have been brought there by YHWH!

We can recall that YHWH’s despised servant was said to “spatter many nations.” While this may be a reference to his own blood being used to validate the “covenant of the people,” this one from Edom is also spattering peoples by trampling them down! He is “coming from Edom,” because he has just finished trampling it.

In this particular prophecy, “Edom” and “Bozrah” are probably symbols for the whole people who are trampled, because “Edom” means “red,” the same color as this one’s clothing, and “Bozrah” has been variously interpreted to mean “sheepfold,” “fortress” or even “unapproachable place.” Certainly, if he were trampling them from heaven, it would be an unapproachable place for other humans.

A parallel vision seen earlier by Isaiah, to confirm the truth and certainty of this later vision, also suggests that “Edom” in the “day of vengeance” is something more than just the ancient nation of Edom:

“For the anger of YHWH is upon all the Gentiles, and his fury is against all their army. He will devote them to destruction and give them to the slaughter.”

And again: **“All the army of the heavens will rot away, and the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll, and all their army will fall, like the leaf falls from the vine, and as the falling from a fig tree. For in the heavens my sword will be drenched. Look! It will descend upon Edom, and on the people devoted by me to judgment.”**

And again: **“For it is the day of vengeance of YHWH, and the year of**

repayments for the cause of Zion.”³

Since YHWH’s anger “is upon all the Gentiles” in this vision, it seems likely that “Edom” here is a symbol for all the people who come against Zion, and Edom was chosen as the symbol because it bordered Israel, and it means “red.” The word is also similar to “Adam,” and so perhaps Edom represents all the sons of Adam who fight against YHWH and his people in the “day of vengeance.”

That YHWH’s sword is drenched in the heavens, and descends upon Edom, would again fit with why there is “no man” with him from the people. This is action from heaven, perhaps by the “son of man” who is YHWH’s arm.

After talking about the one from Edom, Isaiah gives a further clue as to the identity of this one who is “mighty in saving.”

“In all of their affliction he was afflicted, and the messenger of his presence saved them. In his love and in his mercy he redeems them, and he bears them and carries them all the days of eternity.”⁴

Isaiah seems to be suggesting that the one from Edom may also be the same “messenger of his presence” who redeems YHWH’s people.

Now, let us compare all of this with Jacob’s prophecy, given while he was on his deathbed, in reference to Judah:

“As for you Judah, your brothers will praise you. Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies. The sons of your father will bow down before you. Judah is a lion’s cub. From the prey, my son, you go up. He crouches and sits like a lion, and like a lioness, who will rouse him?

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the lawmaker’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and for him is the hope of peoples. Tying his foal to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, he will wash his garments in wine, and his robe in the blood of grapes. Dark red are his eyes from wine, and white are his teeth from milk.”⁵

While this is a prophecy about the whole tribe of Judah, its focus is on the Messiah, the king, cryptically called “Shiloh.” Like Joseph, who had a dream that implied his brothers would bow down to him, the sons of Jacob would bow down to this one.

It indicates the timing of his appearance when it says the lawmaker’s staff will not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes, which staff departed at the nation’s destruction by the Romans.

The prophecy also focuses on two key aspects of the Messiah. He ties his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, which is fulfilled when the king comes on a donkey; and he washes his garments in wine, fulfilled when he tramples the winepress of Edom on YHWH’s behalf. The prophecy suggests it is the same person who does both.

¹ Isaiah 63:1-3. ² Isaiah 63:4-6. ³ Isaiah 34:2,4,5,8. ⁴ Isaiah 63:9. ⁵ Genesis 49:8-12.

34: The King On A Donkey

Now, let us look in detail at the prophecy of Zechariah, where the king comes on a donkey.

“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. Look! Your king will come to you, righteous and being saved. He is humble, and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the son of a donkey.” ¹

Why he rides on two animals is not explained, but it confirms that this is indeed the one spoken about by Jacob. His description sounds somewhat like the despised servant in Isaiah, YHWH’s “righteous servant” who is humbled, and saved from death.

The prophecy continues: **“And I will cut off chariot from Ephraim, and horse from Jerusalem, and battle bow will be cut off. He will speak peace to the Gentiles, and his rulership will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”** ²

This is almost quoting from David’s psalm about his son. Of his son, King David says: **“All the kings will bow to him, and all the nations will serve him.”** ³ And this is also said of the “son of man” once he receives the kingdoms of the world.

Of this one, David says: **“In his days the righteous will flourish, and abundance of peace until there is no more moon.”** ⁴ And again: **“He will rescue the needy one crying out, and the humble one, and the one who has no helper. He will be a refuge for the poor and needy one, and he will save the souls of the needy ones. He will redeem their soul from deceit and from violence, and their blood will be precious in his eyes.”** ⁵

If this one is also YHWH’s despised servant, we can see how he is able to help the poor and needy. It is because he also suffered and was humbled, and so can help the humble who are suffering, a concept with which David would have been familiar.

Now, here is a riddle. Just a few verses later in Zechariah’s prophecy, Judah and Ephraim are used by YHWH to fight, with Judah being bent like the bow. So why are the weapons of war being cut off in these earlier verses? The riddle is solved if the king first of all rules in the hearts of men and women. In that way, he could “speak peace to the Gentiles,” and such a rulership could indeed reach “to the ends of the earth” without the need for war.

Thus, his rule would first of all be spiritual, like a shepherd who cares for his sheep; and then afterwards it would be physical, with the physical blessings to come upon the land.

Zechariah goes on to say: **“As for you, by the blood of your covenant, I will release your prisoners from the pit with no waters in it. Return to the fortress, you prisoners of the hope. For this day I am telling you, I will restore double to you.”** ⁶

Who is YHWH speaking to here? These words are ambiguous. It could be Jerusalem, for it sounds like it is talking about restoring Zion from captivity, and the “everlasting covenant” YHWH makes with her, especially as “double” is restored to her after she paid “double” for her sins. In that case, the implication is that her king came

before her captivity.

At the same time, YHWH also seems to be speaking directly to the king himself. The “blood of your covenant” could be a reference to YHWH’s despised servant who is given for a “covenant of the people,” and “the pit with no waters in it” could be a metaphor for death itself. This covenant is for Jews and Gentiles, just as YHWH said through Isaiah:

“I will preserve you and give you for a covenant of the people, for a light of Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out the prisoner from confinement, those dwelling in darkness from the prison.”⁷

Zechariah continues: **“For I will bend Judah as my bow. I will fill Ephraim, and I will brandish your sons, Zion, over your sons, Greece, and I will make you like the sword of a warrior.”⁸**

And so Israel once again fulfills its role as the “spiked threshing sledge” servant, suggesting that the “king,” in speaking peace to the Gentiles, was first of all creating a people that are different from the ones being described now, who are being used by YHWH as physical weapons.

“And YHWH will appear over them, and his arrow will go forth like the lightning, and my Lord YHWH will blow the shofar, and go out with the windstorms of the south.”⁹

Earlier we saw how Isaiah described YHWH’s despised servant as an arrow. **“In the shadow of his hand he has hidden me, and he has made me a polished arrow. In his quiver he concealed me.”¹⁰**

Although he is called “Israel,” he is tasked with bringing back Israel, and so he is the representative of Israel - its king. Thus, YHWH’s arrow that goes forth “like the lightning” is the king himself. But since YHWH “will appear over them” and that their king, YHWH’s arrow, goes forth “like the lightning,” this would suggest that perhaps the king is not in the form people would expect. After all, lightning is associated with the clouds of heaven!

“YHWH of hosts will defend them, and they will devour and subdue the stones of a slinger, and they will drink and make a noise as if from wine, and will be filled like the spattering bowl, like corners of an altar. And YHWH their God will save them in that day, as the flock of his people, for stones of a crown lifted up as a banner over his ground.”¹¹

This is similar to the vision of the one coming from Edom. There is a mention of wine, and the “spattering bowl” is the bowl that held the blood used for anointing the altar of the Temple.

But the Edom prophecy in Isaiah is the culmination of a series of prophecies that show how YHWH produces a “man” or “son of man” to save. Zechariah’s prophecy focuses on Israel and its king.

When their king comes on a donkey, he produces a peaceful people who, in heart and mind, have cut off their weapons of warfare. But as for the nation of Israel, after an exile and return, they become like a weapon in YHWH’s hand. YHWH defends them, and their king is an arrow that goes forth like the lightning.

1 Zechariah 9:9. 2 Zechariah 9:10. 3 Psalm 72:11. 4 Psalm 72:7. 5 Psalm 72:12-14. 6 Zechariah 9:11,12. 7 Isaiah 42:6,7. 8 Zechariah 9:13.
9 Zechariah 9:14. 10 Isaiah 49:2. 11 Zechariah 9:15,16.

35: Coming On The Clouds

And now, let us return to the riddle of how the king of Israel can come humbly on a donkey, and gloriously on the clouds of heaven.

It is not dependent on whether Israel is righteous or unrighteous. It is not the case that one will be fulfilled and the other will not. YHWH does not speak in vain. Israel's king comes on a donkey, and also on the clouds.

Neither does it require two Messiahs, but only one, if we accept that he must first of all be humbled and suffer, which is the pattern of YHWH's means of salvation in times past, and which foreshadowed how he would bring salvation in later days.

For Joseph was YHWH's means of preserving Israel, and the one to whom his brothers would bow down; and yet he was first thrown into a pit by them, and sold into slavery. And David was YHWH's anointed one, out of whom would spring the one you are seeking, and yet David was despised and suffered, even after being anointed.

YHWH's ultimate means of salvation, the one whom the nation of Israel abhorred, would also have to die the death of the suffering servant, in order to bear the iniquities of many, both of Jews, and of Gentiles who cannot benefit from sacrifices under the law of Moses.

But unlike the nation of Israel, this man would be crushed willingly, for he would "act wisely" and make many righteous "by his knowledge," which could also mean that many become righteous because of their knowledge of him.

As when a serpent strikes a man in the heel, in a symbolic sense this man would be wounded "in the heel," to become the means by which the curse of death could be lifted. As a result, he would have the authority to crush the serpent, the cause of death, "in the head," which neither Israel nor the Law could do.

And he would have to be raised up from the dead, in order to fulfill the last part of the prophecy about the suffering, despised servant, and to take on death for us all. His resurrection would be a token and guarantee that humans could be raised from death to life.

Now, let us look at Daniel's vision of the king coming on the clouds: **"I was watching in the visions of the night, and look! one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of the heavens; and to the Ancient of Days he approached, and they brought him before him. And to him were given dominion, glory and kingdom; and all the peoples, nations and language groups will serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be destroyed."** ¹

In saying "one like a son of man," or a son of mortals, it suggests this man is from the earth. So then, how does he get to come on the clouds and be brought before YHWH himself? Only if YHWH first takes him from the earth!

And YHWH has already provided two witnesses, to testify that he can lift men from the earth. For Enoch did not die a natural death, but was taken by God; and Elijah was taken up in a whirlwind, and YHWH promised to send him to you again.

Furthermore, the first time Elijah was here, the rulers of Israel wanted to kill him, and he considered his mission to be a failure; but YHWH revealed to him that a remnant had been preserved. This, as well as the taking up and promised return of Elijah, is also a pattern for the “son of man,” who must first be taken from the earth, in order to come on the clouds.

Elsewhere, speaking about a series of kingdoms that would rule the earth until they get destroyed by a “stone,” Daniel says: **“In the days of these kings, the God of the heavens will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed; and the kingdom will not be left to other people. It will smash and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it will stand forever, just as you saw that out of the mountain a stone was cut out not by hands.”** ²

Now, as to when this eternal kingdom is founded, the account is ambiguous, as if it is being developed all through the days of those kings. It also does not say where it is located; but since both a court and the “son of man” himself seem to be in heaven, it might be that this kingdom is founded in heaven; or at least, is not bound by geography, as are kingdoms that can be destroyed.

And when the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, was divinely punished to live as an animal for “seven times,” that is, 7 years, the purpose was **“that those living will know that the Most High is ruler in the kingdom of men, and that he gives it to whomever he wants, setting up over it even a lowly one of men.”** ³

While it is true that Nebuchadnezzar was greatly humbled by this experience, he was hardly a lowly man. But the “son of man,” if he is the same despised one Isaiah writes about, the one who “did not open his mouth” while being led “as a lamb to the slaughter,” would fit this description perfectly.

And “seven times” would cryptically be the length of time to pass before he would be given the kingdom over all peoples, nations and language groups. This would need to be much longer than just 7 years, and is therefore the reason for the ambiguous term “seven times” instead of “seven years,” just as “seventy sevens” was used to cryptically mean 490 years; because the “son of man” would first need to become a “light of Gentiles” and YHWH's “salvation to the end of the earth,” to prepare the earth for his own rulership.

Now, what type of salvation could this be? Surely the greatest form of salvation would be rescue from death itself, by which we are all ultimately held as prisoners. But this would not happen immediately, for people would rest in death first, just as Daniel was told: **“But you, go to the end; for you will rest, and will stand up for your lot at the end of the days.”** ⁴ That death is described as “rest” is YHWH's assurance of an awakening from that state, at an appointed time.

But as for Zion and the holy place, they would be trampled on by the Gentiles for a long time, and the people of Israel would be without their king, as Hosea says:

“For many days the sons of Israel will dwell without a king, and without a

prince, and without a sacrifice, and without a monument, and without a sacred vest and household idols. Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek YHWH their God, and David their king, and they will be in awe of YHWH and his goodness in the last days.”⁵

A little later, YHWH explains through Hosea why this would be the case. **“I will go, and return to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt, and seek my face. In their distress, they will seek me eagerly.”**⁶

And so, one of the conditions of YHWH coming back is that they “acknowledge their guilt,” which is in contrast to the teaching that the nation of Israel itself is the suffering servant who did no wrong.

Then the people of Israel speak to one another: **“Come, and let us return to YHWH, for he has torn to pieces, but he will heal us. He struck us, but he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us. On the third day he will raise us up, and we will live before him.”**⁷

Now, this must be speaking cryptically, for elsewhere, it is said of YHWH that **“a thousand years in your eyes are as yesterday when it is past, and a watch in the night.”**⁸ Certainly your people were without the things necessary to be a nation before him for “two days.”

While that was a long time from a human perspective, it was just a few days to YHWH. And so we see how YHWH has an appointed time for all things. For the raising up and living before him is appointed for “the third day.”

¹ Daniel 7:13,14. ² Daniel 2:44,45. ³ Daniel 4:14 (4:17). ⁴ Daniel 12:13. ⁵ Hosea 3:4,5. ⁶ Hosea 5:15. ⁷ Hosea 6:1,2. ⁸ Psalm 90:4.

36: The Messiah

Now, the only person qualified to be both the despised servant described by Isaiah, and the “son of man” who comes on the clouds in Daniel, is the Jewish man called Yeshua, whose name means “YHWH Is Salvation,” whom the Gentiles call Jesus Christ, whose place of origin is related to the word “sprout,” who was born in the days of Caesar Augustus and who died during the reign of Tiberius.

He was born in Bethlehem Ephrathah, into the house of David, and presented himself to your ancestors as the king on a donkey. He suffered and died, but was said by eyewitness reports to have been raised from the dead. He commissioned his disciples to be witnesses of him to the ends of the earth, and then some days later he was said to have been lifted up in clouds.

He taught that the kingdom of God would, for a time, be one with no physical location, and be made up of both Jews and Gentiles. He called it the “kingdom of the heavens,” because it would rule from heaven.

However, he was despised by his generation, just as your ancestors despised Joseph. They did not want a suffering servant who would give his cheeks to the one plucking the beard, despite Isaiah foretelling such one. And they certainly did not want a kingdom that could not be seen, that was ruled by such a remote a place as heaven.

Instead, they wanted a warrior king who would help them throw off the Roman shackles. And besides, did not the prophecies foretell such a thing?

But their expectations proved to be misguided, and they lost the Temple, Jerusalem, and the nation itself, as if YHWH was taking away their physical kingdom anyway, at least for a time.

Now, what of the claim that Yeshua is the foretold Messiah? The main objection raised against him is that he did not fulfill what was expected of the Messiah, with the assumption that YHWH must conform to human expectations, rather than humans to YHWH's purpose.

Nevertheless, let us consider what is to be expected of the Messiah, as taught by your teachers. This would include the return of Israel to its homeland, the defeat of its enemies, the knowledge of God filling the world, the resurrection and the abolition of death, and the elimination of hunger, illness and war.

First of all, some of these could have been fulfilled by Israel itself, as blessings for obedience to the Law covenant! For example, the return of Israel to its land, the defeat of your enemies, and abundance of food is already promised to the nation when it is obedient to YHWH.

Second, why would Messiah need to be physically present to fulfill many or even all of these things? YHWH already ruled as king over your ancestors before they demanded to be like the other nations; and was God there in physical form when he defeated the Assyrian army on their behalf?

And while Cyrus the Persian was YHWH's anointed one to restore the remnant of Israel from Babylon, Cyrus did not physically accompany your ancestors on their journey, but issued edicts from his ruling palace far away.

Besides, in these last days, we have already seen Israel being gathered from the nations, as an indication that Messiah does not need to be physically present to accomplish this on your behalf.

Also, some of the prophecies cannot be fulfilled in an ordinary physical sense. For example, Jeremiah wrote: **"This is what YHWH says: There will not be cut off for David a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. And for the priests, the Levites, there will not be cut off a man before me to offer up burnt offerings and burnt grain offerings and to perform sacrifice continually."** ¹

And yet sacrifice was physically cut off at the destruction of the Temple, so your teachers changed the nature of the sacrifices to those of lips, as YHWH permits when he says through Hosea:

"Return, Israel, to YHWH your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take words with you, and return to YHWH. Say to him, 'Remove all iniquity, and take what is good, and we will offer the young bulls of our lips.'" ²

And so the fruit of lips is a valid sacrifice to YHWH for the nation, when it accepts its iniquity. But if your teachers can change the entire nature of the sacrifices, based on the authority of a few scriptures, then surely YHWH also has the authority to change the nature of the sacrifices, so they are fulfilled in one man, who can stand perpetually before YHWH as both king and priest, just as the servant "Sprout" foretold

by Zechariah is to be both king and priest.

Now, if the “anointed one” who is “cut off” in Daniel’s prophecy of the “seventy sevens” is either the king or the priest, as your rabbis teach, then this violates YHWH’s own promise given through Jeremiah.

But if it is Yeshua, and if he was resurrected, as claimed by the eyewitnesses who saw him, and if he is the one who makes intercession for the transgressors and bears the iniquities of many, then he can be both king and priest perpetually, and thus fulfill both of the prophecies of Daniel and Jeremiah.

As for the other things to be done by Messiah: **“For everything there is a time and a season, for every event under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die. A time to plant, and a time to uproot what was planted.”** ³

YHWH has already provided the means to abolish death, and lift the curse that Adam brought upon us. Yeshua has already done this. It is simply waiting for its appointed time to be applied, as we have spoken about earlier.

World peace cannot truly happen until the “son of man” comes on the clouds, and then all nations will serve him. Again, this comes about in its appointed time. But the “son of man” must first have been a man, and have been lifted up in clouds, before he can come on the clouds.

As for knowledge of God filling the world, this is already being fulfilled, and it is how YHWH is bringing his salvation to the ends of the earth. For YHWH already promises to make a personal covenant with anybody who comes to him, and opens his ears to listen to him, as he says through Isaiah:

“Hey, all you thirsty ones. Come to the waters! He who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come and buy wine and milk, without money and without cost. Why are you spending money for what is not bread, and your labor for what brings no satisfaction?

Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will find great delight in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to me. Listen, and your soul will live, and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the faithful kindnesses of David.” ⁴

This is an offer that is made to all people. YHWH made an everlasting covenant with David, and now he speaks about and to his greater anointed one, the prince of the covenant, when he goes on to say:

“Look! I have given him as a witness to the peoples, a prince and instructor of peoples. Look! You will call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that has not known you will run to you, on account of YHWH your God, and the holy one of Israel, because he glorifies you.” ⁵

And Yeshua is already doing this calling, for his name has already gone out to the ends of the earth, as a witness to all the nations.

¹ Jeremiah 33:17,18. ² Hosea 14:2,3 (14:1,2). ³ Ecclesiastes 3:1,2. ⁴ Isaiah 55:1-3. ⁵ Isaiah 55:4,5.

37: The Third Veil Is Removed

Nevertheless, not all who call themselves “Christian” have reflected the teachings of Yeshua, just as the behavior of your ancestors has not always reflected Moses, described as the meekest of all men, and the one who gave YHWH’s law to you.

And worse, some even placed stumbling blocks in front of your ancestors, such as those who said that Jews must perpetually pay for the blood of Christ, quoting the crowd who said before Yeshua’s death, “his blood come upon us and upon our children.”¹

Now, quite apart from how the words of a frenzied mob could have the power to bind a whole people for all eternity, or to dictate the will of YHWH, we have seen how prophecy in several places says only that the generation of the anointed one would suffer.

If Yeshua was the despised servant described by Isaiah, it says that his generation would be plagued. If he was the son born who would be called “Mighty God,” then a remnant of Jacob would return to him, while a “conclusion that has been reached” would take place in the midst of all the land. If he was the prophet like Moses, then those who heard him and did not listen would be held to account. If he was the messenger of the covenant described by Malachi, then Malachi also asked, who would endure the day of his coming? For the arrogant and wicked at his coming would be burned like stubble.

All these things came upon Yeshua’s generation. And Yeshua himself said that his generation would be divinely charged with all the righteous blood spilled from Abel to Zechariah. His generation did indeed pay the divine charge, as demonstrated by the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple and the nation itself, so it cannot also be charged to a later generation.

But most important of all, since Yeshua was indeed the despised servant foretold by Isaiah, the prophet says that “it was YHWH's desire to crush him and cause him to be wounded.”²

Yes, it was God’s purpose to have Yeshua put to death, so that he could be raised from the dead, and become the first man born from a woman to have immortality. In this way, he could no longer be destroyed, just as the kingdom seen in vision by Daniel is one that cannot be destroyed, and is therefore immortal. His resurrection is a token and guarantee of what is to come for YHWH’s chosen ones.

And now, if we look again at the prophecy of Daniel about the “seventy sevens,” we see something remarkable. Its purpose was “to restrain the transgression, and to get rid of sin, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint a Holy of Holies.”³

As we have said, “seal up vision and prophet” is ambiguous. It could mean to fulfill the promises made through the prophets, but it could also mean to put a veil over them, to obscure them.

Your teachers say the “anointed one” who is “cut off” in this prophecy is the last high priest, or the last king, or the entire sacrificial system. When they say this, and

teach that the despised servant was the nation itself, they “seal up vision and prophet” for themselves, just as Gabriel foretold.

In this way, the words of YHWH through Isaiah come upon them, where he says: “The wisdom of their wise ones will perish, and the understanding of their sages will be hidden.”⁴ YHWH does not speak here of the sages of the Gentiles, but those of his own nation! But when there is a recognition of the true identity of YHWH’s anointed one, the third and greatest veil is removed.

For it is the role of the despised servant to “get rid of sin” and “make atonement for iniquity,” and it is also he that brings in “everlasting righteousness,” because he is YHWH’s “righteous servant.”

So he is really the anointed one being spoken of in Daniel’s prophecy; but as in Isaiah’s prophecy about the “son,” his kingdom takes time to grow and bear fruit, just as it says: “Of the increase of his rulership and of peace there will be no end.”⁵

As foretold by Micah, he would “give them up,” that is, the people of Israel, for a time. Not that he abandoned them altogether, but his mission was first to the Jews, and then it was to be for a “light of Gentiles,” to be YHWH’s “salvation to the end of the earth.”

For up until that time, all men and women, Jew and Gentile alike, had become prisoners to death, from which even the law of Moses could not release them. For Adam, our human father, acted selfishly and without insight, and brought death upon all his offspring. But Yeshua acted selflessly and with wisdom, and so YHWH made him a token and guarantee to all people, Jew and Gentile alike, of how he would bring life again to all who desire it. In this way, he would become their “Everlasting Father,” while also being a pattern for the remnant of Israel to model themselves after.

And YHWH could use his blood to initiate a “covenant of the people,” a covenant for everlasting life, not like the one written on tablets of stone, but this time on hearts, and entered into by each person individually, Jew and Gentile alike.

And all of this is no mere human invention; but as we have seen, it was promised to your ancestors and to you through the mouth of YHWH’s prophets.

¹ Matthew 27:25. ² Isaiah 53:10. ³ Daniel 9:24. ⁴ Isaiah 29:14. ⁵ Isaiah 9:7.

38: Look! The Man

Now, let us consider the many things that were fulfilled in him, if you can accept it. For Isaiah foretold in advance that not all would believe, when he said, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of YHWH revealed?”¹

He was a prophet, for he spoke on behalf of YHWH. And while it is not necessary for a prophet to perform powerful miracles and wonders, he was granted this ability so that his works could bear witness about him.

And just as YHWH’s servant spoken of by Isaiah was appointed “to open the eyes of the blind” and “to say to the prisoners, ‘come out!’” so Yeshua did, both in a symbolic sense and also physically, even calling the dead out of their graves with

those same words, as a token of what was to come. He was “acquainted with illness,” “bore our illnesses, and carried our pains” to the extent that whole crowds brought him their sick.

As a prophet, he also foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, which is probably another reason why he was despised. He explained how the chosen ones could escape the tribulation, and what would happen at his coming on the clouds as the “son of man,” and the sign that would precede it.

But more than a prophet, he was the prophet like Moses. Moses brought your ancestors out of Egypt, along with a vast mixed multitude, and became their shepherd through the wilderness. Yeshua brought a remnant of your ancestors through the tribulation, and became not only their shepherd, but also shepherd of a great multitude of Gentiles, all the time the soil of Zion lay abandoned.

Yeshua said that he spoke only what his Father taught him to speak, fulfilling YHWH’s words to Moses: “I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I will instruct him.” Furthermore, YHWH said: “And whoever does not listen to my words, which he will speak in my name, I will call him to account.”² And again: “Look! My messenger will go before you. And in the day of my visitation, I will visit their sin upon them.”³

Yeshua confirmed this, by saying that his generation would be held accountable for all the righteous blood spilled from Abel onwards. Indeed, the wrath of Rome fell upon that generation, which was obviously brought about by divine decree.

And like Moses, he became mediator of a covenant between YHWH and the people. He said that his shed blood was to be poured out on behalf of many, for forgiveness of sins; and this in fulfillment of the prophecy given through Isaiah, of a despised servant who “poured out his soul even to death.” This was the “covenant of the people” foretold through Isaiah, and both Jews and Gentiles could enter into it freely if they chose to accept it.

He also made a covenant with his apostles, for a kingdom, that they would eat and drink at his table in his kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the 12 tribes of Israel. But even though he said they would be rulers and judges, Yeshua washed their feet, fulfilling the words about the despised servant, that he would be “the servant of rulers.”⁴

He thus became the “prince of the covenant” who was “broken” in the reign of Tiberius as foretold through Daniel, and the anointed one who was “cut off, and nothing for him” before the destruction of the Temple.

Similarly, he was the “messenger of the covenant” as spoken of by Malachi. He came to the Temple in Jerusalem, and he taught the people how to put the Law into their hearts.

He fulfilled the description of the perfect priest as given through Malachi, and in a spiritual sense he cleansed and clarified the people so that the remnant of Israel could be called “priests of YHWH” and “ministers of our God.” Those who listened to his voice became YHWH’s “treasured possession,” and were preserved through the tribulation, while the land of Israel was devoted to destruction at the hand of the

Romans.

Now, when YHWH exiled his people in ancient times, he said through Ezekiel: **“Although I have removed them far away among the nations, and although I have scattered them in the lands, I will be a little sanctuary to them in the lands to which they have gone.”**⁵

The remnant that came out of the tribulation in the days of the Romans, could not become ministers and priests in a physical Temple, since that had been thrown down by the Romans, or rather, by YHWH himself. And so they became priests in a spiritual Temple, a “little sanctuary,” a kind of tabernacle in the wilderness.

And in this way, YHWH’s anointed one became **“a sanctuary”** to the remnant, just as foretold through Isaiah. But to the rest of your ancestors, he became **“a stone of striking and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel; a snare and a trap to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many among them will stumble and fall, and be broken, and be trapped, and be taken.”**

And this is why YHWH added, through Isaiah: **“Bind up the testimony, and seal up the law among my disciples.”**⁶ For that prophecy was not really about Isaiah’s day, but was talking about the days of Yeshua, YHWH’s anointed one, who also fulfilled the role of Immanuel, meaning “With Us Is God.”

Yeshua also fulfilled the prophecy given through Zechariah in regard to “Sprout,” not simply because he lived in Nazareth, this name being related to the word “sprout,” and not only because he was a “twig” who came forth “out of the stem of Jesse, and a sprout from his roots,” but also because, by his blood, he took away the sin of the land in one day.

Zechariah said of this one, **“he sits and rules upon his throne, and he becomes a priest on his throne.”**⁷ When Yeshua was born, the angel Gabriel said to his mother that he would be called son of the Most High, that YHWH would give him David’s throne, and that he would rule as king over the house of Jacob forever.

Now, Yeshua was born into the house of David through his mother Mary, and Luke’s account of his birth focuses on her story and her ancestry, although to begin Yeshua’s chronology he gives Joseph, her husband’s name.

On the other hand, Matthew’s account of Yeshua’s birth focuses on Joseph. Matthew does not include all of Joseph’s ancestry, but makes the point that he is “son of David,” and “son of Abraham.”

Joseph was also the offspring of Jeconiah, whose descendants were divinely forbidden from sitting on David’s throne.⁸ Matthew does not ignore this. Indeed, he brings attention to it by dividing his chronology at Jeconiah and the deportation to Babylon.

He then draws attention to the divine solution, which is that Mary does not become pregnant by Joseph, but by holy spirit! This is why Matthew does not give a full ancestry of Joseph, who is only Yeshua’s adopted father. Yeshua’s real father is YHWH himself. This is how he can be called “son of God.”

But so that nobody is stumbled over this - it is not as though YHWH needed to have intercourse with Mary. For the angels are also called “sons of God” even though

they are not flesh and blood.⁹

Adam is also called a son of God, even though YHWH created him from the dust, and Eve from a rib of Adam; and so YHWH can just as easily create in the womb, without the aid of a man.

And YHWH also speaks to the prophet Jeremiah as if he formed him directly in the womb: **"Before I formed you in the belly I knew you, and before you came out of the womb I sanctified you. I made you a prophet to the nations."**¹⁰

Indeed, this is perhaps the ultimate reason why YHWH, through Isaiah, several times talks about there being "no man" before he brings about his salvation. That is because the birth of his ultimate means of salvation would come about literally by no man!

Yeshua did not receive his kingdom right away, but like David, he was first anointed and then despised. Indeed, even the Roman soldiers put a crown of thorns on Yeshua's head, and clothed him in a purple robe, in mockery of the charge against him that he was the king of the Jews. Even so, the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate presented Yeshua to the people in this manner and said, "Look! The man!"¹¹

For where before there had been "no man" to bring salvation, here was a man who, despite being despised and abhorred by many of his own people, and despite being spat upon and struck on the back as foretold by Isaiah, gave his life willingly, in order to become YHWH's salvation from death, for both Jews and Gentiles alike.

And while David in poetic form alluded to death and being raised from the dead, his words were ultimately fulfilled in Yeshua. By being raised, Yeshua could fulfill YHWH's promise that "there will not be cut off for David a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." For this one was preserved alive to sit on David's throne forever.

And as foretold by Zechariah, many members of the house of David mourned over his death, and looked to this pierced one for their salvation; and shortly after there was a large outpouring of holy spirit in Jerusalem.

And while he does not need to be pierced a second time, it is quite possible that if such an outpouring of spirit were to happen again, and a sudden recognition of this Messiah through divine revelation, there would indeed be widespread mourning again, along with wonderful blessings.

And although being born human, and thus a "son of man," by being raised up to immortality he could fulfill the prophecy spoken of by Isaiah, of the child born to us who would be called **"Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**¹²

As for all the deeds of Yeshua, how his birth was announced by the angel Gabriel, how he came to be born in Bethlehem, how he spoke as a prophet, proclaimed the kingdom of God and good news to the meek, how he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and his generation, how he was raised up before death and again after his death, they can be found written in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

1 Isaiah 53:1. 2 Deuteronomy 18:18,19. 3 Exodus 32:34. 4 Isaiah 49:7. 5 Ezekiel 11:16. 6 Isaiah 8:14-16. 7 Zechariah 6:13. 8 Jeremiah 22:24-30.
9 Job 38:7. 10 Jeremiah 1:5. 11 John 19:1-5. 12 Isaiah 9:6.

39: The Bride Prepares

Now, what would acceptance of Yeshua mean, both for an individual and for Israel? For there are many who fear that their religious identity would be all but abolished, and that it would mean the abandonment of Judaism.

First of all, Yeshua himself was Jewish, as were all of his first disciples. He was described by one who saw him as a child, as “a light of unveiling for the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”¹

But it was necessary that his people rejected him at first, as they did with David who wrote: “I have become a stranger to my brothers, and a foreigner to the sons of my mother. For the zeal for your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those reproaching you have fallen on me.”²

He also had to become like Joseph, who was sold by his own brothers for 20 pieces of silver, but who, by divine grace, became Lord over Egypt before delivering Israel in later days.

For Yeshua was and is the king of Israel, but he had to become a light for the Gentiles, while he was despised by his own nation. And we have seen how it was YHWH's purpose to have Zion trampled on by the Gentiles until an appointed time.

In this way, YHWH was drawing attention away from the physical, and to the spiritual. And even your ancestors would have to do this to a certain extent, for when they could no longer offer animal sacrifices, they replaced them with the fruit of lips.

That YHWH did not see fit to restore his own physical Temple during that time, is an indication that he was satisfied with a spiritual one - although he really does not need a Temple at all - and a spiritual Zion as a temporary residence for his people, just as the tabernacle in the wilderness was of no fixed location, and as he said through Ezekiel, “I will be a little sanctuary to them in the lands to which they have gone.”

Now, some Christians have interpreted these things to mean that they themselves have replaced Israel altogether. For in those days, it appeared that Israel and Zion in the physical sense had been abandoned and deserted forever; and some still teach this.

That was even Zion's own cry, for “Zion is saying, 'YHWH has abandoned me, and my Lord has forgotten me.’”³ These words could not apply to the body of Christian believers, but they could certainly apply to the city of Jerusalem, which for a long time did indeed appear to be abandoned by YHWH.

But just as YHWH veiled the purpose and identity of his anointed one to many of your ancestors and their teachers, and this to fulfill the purpose of YHWH that his anointed one would become a light of Gentiles, so he also veiled the purpose of Israel to many Christians, so that no man can boast about his own wisdom.

And even Yeshua's own disciples, after he was raised from the dead, asked him, “Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?” But his answer was that it

was not for them to know the times and the seasons that were placed in YHWH's jurisdiction. Instead, they were to be witnesses of Yeshua (whose name means "YHWH Is Salvation") to the ends of the earth, to fulfill YHWH's word that his anointed one become "my salvation to the end of the earth." ⁴

But with tender language, YHWH said through Isaiah that he had not forgotten Zion. And in the last days, YHWH's appointed time arrived to restore the nation of Israel, and to bring Zion's children back to her in a physical sense, so that YHWH could show his glory again, and so the nations would come to know that he is YHWH, and to fulfill his promise through Hosea, that "the sons of Israel will return and seek YHWH their God, and David their king, and they will be in awe of YHWH and his goodness in the last days." ⁵

Therefore, given that you have these and so many other good promises from YHWH your God, how is it possible for you to lose your identity, by accepting the one YHWH sent to you in advance, to prepare for your salvation in later days?

For it was the same Joseph, beloved by his father but despised by his own flesh and blood, who returned to his brothers for their salvation at the end. Or rather, we could say that it was his brothers who finally returned to Joseph.

It was the same Israel who wept over the loss of his son Joseph, who was later astonished, and rejoiced over the return of his son at the end.

It is the same one YHWH sent to you on a donkey, who will also return to you on the clouds at his appointed time; and it is the same One who deals with Israel again in the last days. For he says, "who has acted and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, YHWH, The First, and with the last ones I am he." ⁶ And again: "Listen to me, Jacob, and Israel whom I have called. I am he. I am the First, and also I am the Last." ⁷

Israel was first to inherit YHWH's promises, but by rejecting his means of salvation, they became last in reference to salvation; just as, after being rejected by his brothers, Joseph became the salvation of Egypt first, and Israel last. And so the first became last, and the last became first. Nevertheless, YHWH is with "the last ones" just as he was with the first ones.

Now, one of Yeshua's apostles taught that there is no Jew or Gentile, or male or female in Christ, which word means "anointed one." And this is true in reference to salvation through Yeshua, for he is the same savior for all.

Nevertheless, Yeshua did not abolish male and female. When a man and a woman marry, they become "one flesh," but they still retain their unique body parts, and the things that make them "man" and "woman."

Jews and Gentiles become one in Yeshua, and one flock under their shepherd, but may still retain what makes them distinctive, as if in two sheepfolds.

And the same is true of the nation of Israel itself. It is also one of YHWH's servants, uniquely created to be a "spiked threshing sledge" in his hand when necessary. For each of his servants perform their roles as appointed by YHWH.

And Yeshua did not abolish the law of Moses, in the way that people think of abolition, but rather, he both fulfilled it and showed Israel how to fulfill it. Gentiles

were never under that covenant to begin with. It was a covenant made between YHWH and Israel.

But Yeshua showed both Jews and Gentiles how to write YHWH's law within their hearts. For example, he showed how to fulfill the command, "You must love your neighbor as yourself." He did good to others, and taught them truth, regardless of whether they loved or hated him; and ultimately, he even sacrificed himself for others.

He fulfilled the description of the servant spoken of by Isaiah, who said about himself: "My Lord YHWH has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious and did not turn away. I gave my back to the ones striking, and my cheeks to the ones plucking at my beard. I did not hide my face from humiliation and spit." ⁸

As another example, the law says: "You must not commit adultery." But Yeshua said that when one looks with passion at a married woman, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart!

Now, Yeshua is not really laying down an even stricter command here, but is simply showing how to write the law into one's heart. When a genuine love of God and love of fellow humans is in our heart, we do not need a command to do what is right. For love does not do injury to others, and does not seek its own selfish interest.

Joseph had no law covenant to obey when he fled from the advances of Potiphar's wife, but his actions showed that he already had the law written in his heart. But David, who could probably recite much of the law word for word, saw Bathsheba and committed adultery with her; and when he could not cover up his sin, he even had her husband killed.

But what of the sabbath? Now, YHWH himself was the first to keep the sabbath, even before the creation of Israel, for he worked on six days and rested on the seventh. And thus, in the law given through Moses to Israel, the sabbath was given as a command, and became a day on which to rest from work and to honor YHWH.

But your ancestors broke the first covenant, and so YHWH promised a new one, "not like the covenant that I made with their forefathers." In this one, "I will put my law within them, and write it upon their hearts," says YHWH.⁹

By bringing in this new covenant through Yeshua, attention was shifted away from the law written upon tablets of stone, so that both Jews and Gentiles could become part of a greater "Israel" with YHWH's law in their hearts. In this way, the focus came to be upon the inner person and the individual, rather than on special days and festivals for the whole nation, and even the "fruit of lips" rather than physical sacrifices.

Nevertheless, we should be careful not to judge one another in relation to such matters in this present age. For through Isaiah, YHWH promised to bless those who do good to others, and also those who chose to make the sabbath a delight:

"If you turn back your foot on the sabbath, from carrying out your own desires on my holy day, and you call the sabbath a delight, a holy one to YHWH, a glorious day, and you glorify it rather than doing your own thing, seeking your own desire and spoken word - then you will take delight in YHWH, and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and I will feed you the heritage of Jacob your father; for

the mouth of YHWH has spoken.”¹⁰

Furthermore, in the vision of the Temple given to Ezekiel for the house of Israel to build in later days, there are several references to the sabbath. For example, it says: “This is what my Lord YHWH says: The inner gate of the court that faces east shall be kept locked on the six working days, but on the sabbath day it will be opened, and on the day of the new moon it will be opened.”¹¹ And again: “The people of the land will worship at the door of the gate before YHWH on the sabbaths and on the new moons.”¹²

And YHWH, speaking through Isaiah of a new heavens and new earth, says: “And it will be that, from new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, all flesh will come before me to worship, says YHWH.”¹³

As for the festivals, were they not given to make Israel a distinctive nation? But after he plagues the nations who come against Jerusalem in the last days, YHWH says: “And it will be that everyone left from all the nations that came against Jerusalem, they will go up from year to year to worship the king, YHWH of hosts, and to celebrate the festival of booths. And from the families of the earth, whoever will not go up to Jerusalem to worship the king, YHWH of hosts, there will be no rain.”¹⁴

And so, if even Gentiles will go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of tabernacles, then surely Israel will also be celebrating them!

But what about those who say that acceptance of Yeshua would mean the abandonment of Judaism? We have already seen how YHWH’s wrath came upon Israel, not for abandoning Judaism, but because Judaism had abandoned YHWH, either literally or in their hearts.

This is why, through Malachi, YHWH rebuked your ancestors with these words: “From the days of your forefathers, you have gone away from my statutes, and have not kept them.” But then he says: “Return to me, and I will return to you, says YHWH of hosts.”¹⁵

The first time YHWH’s wrath was fully expressed, through the exiles to Assyria and Babylon, it was because they were misled by idols; and the second time, at the hands of the Romans, it was because, as Isaiah said, “they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, and their fear of me has become commandments of men they have been taught.”¹⁶ For even the “fruit of lips” do not mean anything if the love of God is not in one’s heart.

But YHWH also says through Isaiah: “To this one I will look: to the humble one, and the broken in spirit, and the one who trembles at my word.”¹⁷ And again: “Hear the word of YHWH, you who tremble at his word. They say, your brothers who hate you and cast you out because of my name, ‘May YHWH be glorified!’ But we will see your rejoicing, and as for them, they will be ashamed. A sound of tumult from the city, a sound from the Temple, a sound of YHWH paying retribution to his enemies.”¹⁸

While those who heard and listened to Yeshua were excluded from the Jewish community in the days of the Romans, YHWH also came with vengeance against those who were doing the excluding.

And so, it is not about abandoning Judaism. But rather, both in the past and

even down to the present day, what is called "Judaism" has rejected its true messiah and king, and is in need of returning fully to YHWH!

And while YHWH says in regard to Israel, that they will "return and seek YHWH their God, and David their king" in the last days, both can already be found, because they are already present, as YHWH says: "Seek YHWH while he may be found. Call to him while he is near." ¹⁹ And again: "Who among you fears YHWH? The one listening to the voice of his servant" ²⁰ - that is, the same servant who gave his back to the one striking, and his cheeks to the one plucking the beard.

By accepting YHWH's servant Yeshua, you are embracing the true essence of Judaism, which is to allow YHWH to write his law upon your heart, while you wait for your brothers and sisters in the flesh to catch up with you, and fully return to YHWH and his anointed one.

But after reading about him in the accounts of his life, if you are still in doubt as to who Yeshua really was and is, and you are sincere in your desire to resolve this in your heart with truth and honesty, then inquire sincerely and repeatedly of YHWH himself through prayer, and he will reveal it to you in his own way.

For your king is coming on the clouds, regardless of whether you believe or disbelieve, and the response to him will be either mourning or rejoicing. It will mean wailing and bitter grieving for those who did not know him in advance, but rejoicing for the remnant of Israel, those who have already put on the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness, and who have adorned themselves, in a symbolic sense, as a bride waiting for the bridegroom.

They can do this because YHWH's anointed one has already been revealed, the one who was anointed "to declare good news to the meek," "to proclaim the year of YHWH's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God."

And indeed, we wrote earlier that even Gentiles are commanded by YHWH to "say to the daughter of Zion, 'Look! Your salvation is coming. Look! His reward is with him, and the wage he pays is before him.'" ²¹

This we now say to you again! But how can Gentiles do this, unless they have already become acquainted with YHWH's means of salvation in advance? And thus, YHWH has already revealed him to the Gentiles, so they can proclaim his identity to you again, and so you can prepare for his return.

And if "his reward is with him," then what sort of greeting will he receive? For by listening to the voice of YHWH's servant, you become part of the remnant of Israel, the bride, YHWH's treasured possession; and YHWH will make with you an everlasting covenant, one that means life and peace.

¹ Luke 2:32. ² Psalm 69:9,10 (69:8,9). ³ Isaiah 49:14. ⁴ Acts Of Apostles 1:6-8. ⁵ Hosea 3:5. ⁶ Isaiah 41:4. ⁷ Isaiah 48:12. ⁸ Isaiah 50:5,6.

⁹ Jeremiah 31:31-33. ¹⁰ Isaiah 58:13,14. ¹¹ Ezekiel 46:1. ¹² Ezekiel 46:3. See also 44:24 and 45:17. ¹³ Isaiah 66:23. ¹⁴ Zechariah 14:16,17.

¹⁵ Malachi 3:7. ¹⁶ Isaiah 29:13. ¹⁷ Isaiah 66:2. ¹⁸ Isaiah 66:5,6. ¹⁹ Isaiah 55:6. ²⁰ Isaiah 50:10. ²¹ Isaiah 62:11.

40: The Things To Come

Now that we have explored the past in so much detail, let us consider what is to come upon Israel and the world.

We have already seen the nation of Israel born in one day, as foretold by Isaiah, and an end to the trampling of Jerusalem by the Gentiles at its divinely appointed time. We have also seen heaven and earth shaken, at least in a metaphorical sense, foretold 2,520 years earlier by the prophet Haggai.¹ And we have seen Gentile shepherds raised, to shepherd the land of Nimrod, as foretold by Micah.²

Isaiah writes: **“You are my God, YHWH. I will exalt you, I will praise your name, for you perform marvels! Counsels of old are faithfulness, truth. For you turn a city into a mound, a fortress town into a ruin, the tower of foreigners a city that will never be rebuilt. Therefore a strong people will glorify you, the city of terrifying nations will fear you.”**³

Earlier we spoke of Daniel who wrote, in the final prophecy given to him, **“Happy is the one who waits in expectation, and arrives at 1,335 days.”**⁴ But now, Isaiah speaks as if those waiting have been rewarded for their patience, and says to trust in YHWH, the Eternal Rock:

“The person being supported, you will preserve in perfect peace, for that one trusts in you. Trust in YHWH forever, for in Yah YHWH is the Eternal Rock. For he brings down those dwelling on high, the impregnable city. He will certainly bring her down to the earth. He will cast her to the dust.

The foot will trample her, the feet of the humble one, the footsteps of the downtrodden. The path of the righteous one is level. The Level One, you will weigh the course of the righteous one. Indeed, the path of your judgments, YHWH, we have waited in expectation of you, for your name and your remembrance is the yearning of our soul.”⁵

Now, Zechariah, at the start of the building of the second Temple, saw many things in vision that may also be related to the last days. He saw a vision of a golden lampstand or menorah, with a bowl or globe on top of it, and two olive trees next to it.

This vision may have influenced the design of the seal or emblem of the state of Israel. It shows a menorah, based on the depiction of a menorah on the Arch of Titus constructed by the Romans, surrounded by an olive branch on either side. However, the bowl or globe that sits on top is missing.

The angel said, **“Not by might, and not by power, but instead, by my spirit, says YHWH of hosts. Who are you, the great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, to a level plain. And he will bring forth the headstone with tumults, ‘Grace, grace to it!’”**⁶

And again: **“For who has despised the day of small things? For they will rejoice, and will see the stone, the plumb line, in the hand of Zerubbabel,”**⁷ whose name means “seed of Babel.”

This is similar to the king of Babylon’s dream, where he saw a stone cut out not by hands, one that strikes the image and becomes a mountain. However, in

Zechariah's vision, a mountain is leveled and the headstone is brought forth, which as well as alluding to the Temple, may also be a reference to the coming of YHWH's anointed one, the ultimate "headstone," who becomes YHWH's "grace."

It is also similar to language spoken against Babylon by Jeremiah. **"Look at you, the destroying mountain, says YHWH, the one destroying all the earth. And I will stretch out my hand upon you, and I will roll you from the crags, and I will make you a burnt waste of a mountain. And they will not take from you a stone for a corner, or a stone for foundations. But you will be desolate forever, says YHWH."** ⁸

YHWH has also spoken of turning his hand against the rivers, especially the Nile and Euphrates. **"And YHWH will destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt, and he will wave his hand over the River in the anger of his spirit, and he will strike it into seven streams, for treading in sandals. And there will be a highway for the remnant of his people who are left from Assyria, just as there was for Israel in the day he came up out of the land of Egypt."** ⁹

And again: **"In that day, YHWH will beat out from the flowing River to the waters of Egypt, and you, you will be gathered one by one, sons of Israel. And in that day it will be that a great trumpet will be blown, and they will come, the ones perishing in the land of Assyria, and the ones expelled in the land of Egypt, and they will worship YHWH in the holy mountain in Jerusalem."** ¹⁰

And Zechariah confirms this: **"And he will pass through the sea with distress, and he will strike the waves of the sea, and all the depths of the river will dry up. And the pride of Assyria will be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt will depart. And I will give power to them by YHWH, and they will walk in his name, says YHWH."** ¹¹

YHWH has also spoken of the fall of a great city with hail. **"Look! My Lord has a mighty and strong one. As a storm of hail and a destroying horror, as a storm of abundant flooding waters, he casts to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride of the drunken ones of Ephraim will be trampled underfoot. And it becomes a fading flower, the stately beauty of that which is on the head of the fertile valley, like the first fruit before summer, which he sees and discerns her, while she is in his palm he eats her up."** ¹² And again: **"It will hail, and descend on the forest, and the city will be brought down to the low place."** ¹³

Elsewhere, the city is cryptically called "Babylon The Great," whose fine fruit departs. She is judged "in one hour," and her plagues come "in one day," of which city YHWH says, "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and so that you do not receive of her plagues. For her sins have piled up even to heaven, and God has remembered her injustices." ¹⁴

Her description is similar to ancient Tyre, a wealthy trading and maritime city, whose downfall was sudden and terrible, and caused kings to shudder and merchants to whistle. She is similar to ancient Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, described as a prostitute who sold nations through her prostitution, and families by her sorceries.

And most of all, she is like ancient Babylon for her proud and arrogant heart. She resided on many waters, and made all the nations drink the wine from her cup.

Just as ancient Babylon was charged with the blood of the slain of all the earth, so is Babylon The Great. Her waters are dried up, and like ancient Babylon, she is desolated forever.

Her identity is veiled, a mystery, and her description is somewhat ambiguous. For that reason she has been interpreted in many ways through the ages, which has even had an impact on those times; and this may have been in line with the will of YHWH, to allow for the refinement of those who worship him.

For example, Babylon The Great is described as sitting on seven mountains; and for that reason, early readers would have connected it with Rome, known from ancient times as “the city of the seven hills.” Later on, in what is called the Middle Ages, many interpreted it not just as that city, but also as the religious authority that resided there. As a result, they launched a reformation that still echoes down to this day.

But it may be that her true identity was veiled until the time of the end. For while Rome was the most prominent city in the time when the vision was given, it is not the case in these later days, although it is still the seat of the religious authority that rules over a large body of Christians.

It could be that the prophet Zechariah gives us further insights into these matters. In vision, he sees a flying scroll, an ephah basket, and a disk of lead. Now, the flying scroll is about 30 feet by 15 feet in size, so it is clearly not an ordinary scroll. If rolled up it would resemble a missile, in that it flies, and it destroys the house of the one it enters.

At the same time, it is a curse that YHWH sends out, and it enters into the house of the thief and the one swearing falsely in his name. Whether this is talking about houses in general, or one particular House, the account does not say. The scroll has the same dimensions as the porch of the first Temple, the true House of God, perhaps indicating the nature of the curse, or its target.¹⁵

Zechariah then sees an even more unusual vision. He sees an ephah, which was a container used to hold and measure out dry food such as flour, going forth:

“And I said, ‘what is it?’ And he said, ‘This is the ephah going forth.’ And he said, ‘This is their eye in all the earth.’ And look! A disk of lead was lifted up, and this one woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And he said, ‘This one is The Wickedness.’ And he thrust her into the midst of the ephah, and he thrust a stone of the lead over its mouth.

And I lifted up my eyes, and I saw, and look! Two women going forth, and wind was in their wings, and they had wings like the wings of the stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens.

And I said to the messenger, the one speaking with me, ‘Where are they taking the ephah?’ And he said to me, ‘To build for her a house in the land of Shinar; and it will be established and set there upon her base.’”¹⁶

Now, prophecy can be very efficient, and convey multiple meanings and ideas in a few verses. We have already said that the flying scroll resembles a missile, so we could also say that this ephah resembles a satellite, or a vehicle for carrying into

space. It is their “eye in all the earth” perhaps in the sense of being used to watch over the earth, just as the seven lamps in Zechariah’s earlier vision were identified as the eyes of YHWH.

As a flying disk, we could also say it is an “unidentified flying object,” but here it is identified for us by the angel as “The Wickedness,” so we can avoid being deceived.

The ephah is taken to Shinar, “to build for her a house” there, and is “set there upon her base.” This is the second mention of a “house,” which may be related to, or even the same as, the “house” that the flying scroll enters.

Shinar is the ancient land of Babylon. But through the prophets that came before Zechariah, YHWH had already condemned Babylon to destruction, never to be rebuilt, so this vision is perhaps about the greater Babylon and her founding.

The disk of lead seals the ephah, and may also itself be describing a seal, like that used by countries, states and cities. For example, the Great Seal of the United States is known throughout the earth as having an eye, lifted up over a base, namely a pyramid.

Individual cities and states have their own unique seals as well, with their own distinctive symbols. For example, the seal of the state of New York has two caped women, representing Liberty and Justice. The foot of “Liberty” tramples upon a crown, and “Justice” holds a pair of scales for weighing, and a sword. Underneath them is the Latin motto, “Excelsior,” meaning “Ever Upward.” They stand between a shield, which contains a mountain, a river and ships, and with what looks like a lid being lifted up. Around the seal is a rope.

But the seal for the city of New York is altogether different. It has two men, one a colonist with a plumb line in his right hand, a device used to create a vertical or level line, similar to what Zerubbabel would have in his hand; and a Jacob’s staff over his right shoulder, used for measuring heights and angles. The other is a man native to Manhattan, with a bow. They both hold up a shield containing the sails of a windmill, along with beavers and flour barrels, representing the importance of flour to the early city.

Now, while Isaiah appears to have been writing about ancient Babylon when he says, “the treacherous one is being treacherous, and the one devastating is devastating,”¹⁷ YHWH may have had a greater “Babylon” in mind, for her outcome is the same:

“Woe to the one destroying, but you have not been destroyed, and the one being treacherous, but have not had treachery done to you. When you come to the end of your destruction, you will be destroyed. At the culmination of your treachery, they will be treacherous to you.”¹⁸

YHWH has also foretold that the nations will be deceived into gathering against Jerusalem. It will be a time of anger and fear among the nations, and also a time of great deception and confusion, just as it was in the “time of the end” by the hand of the Romans. But YHWH has forewarned you of this through his prophets of old, and also through the words of his anointed one; for YHWH’s anointed one, his arrow, would be “like the lightning” before he comes on the clouds.

It would be **“a day of trouble and trampling and perplexity by my Lord YHWH of hosts in the valley of vision. A breaking of the wall, and a crying to the mountain.”** ¹⁹ The vision does not specify which wall would be broken, to cause people to cry to the mountain. And again: **“Woe, the uproar of many peoples, like the roaring of seas they are in uproar; and the tumult of nations, like the tumult of mighty waters they are in tumult.”** ²⁰

YHWH has said that he would turn his sword against the **“dragon, the fugitive serpent.”** ²¹ This one would contend with YHWH’s vineyard, Jacob, and cause it to be sent away. **“By measure, by sending her away, you contend with her. He removes her by his stiff wind, in the day of the east wind.”** ²²

But YHWH uses this to remove Jacob’s sin. **“So in this way the iniquity of Jacob will be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit to take away his sin in its place: all the stones of the altar will be as stones of chalk that have been shattered, and the sacred poles and pagan incense altars will arise no more.”** ²³

Zechariah has also confirmed this, by foretelling that Jerusalem would be captured one more time, and that half of Jerusalem will go into exile, and half will remain in the city, so that one in every two men would be taken. ²⁴ But then, **“a great trumpet will be blown, and they will come, the ones perishing in the land of Assyria, and the ones expelled in the land of Egypt, and they will worship YHWH in the holy mountain in Jerusalem.”** ²⁵

Then YHWH will go out to war against the nations that come against Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, creating a valley between the two sides of the mountain. Then the remaining ones in the city will flee into it, and YHWH and his holy ones will come, and this will become known as the day of YHWH. ²⁶

Now, many of the prophets have described the final outcome of the ones who come against Jerusalem in those days. Zechariah says that their flesh will rot away while they are still standing. Ezekiel calls it the war of Gog of the land of Magog, with YHWH bringing hail, fire and sulfur on him and his troops.

Joel calls it the judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and says that the winepress is full. Isaiah calls it the day of vengeance of YHWH, and the year of repayments for the cause of Zion, and calls the whole Gentile army “Edom.”

YHWH does this so he can glorify his name: **“And I will magnify myself and sanctify myself and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. And they will know that I am YHWH.”** ²⁷

But YHWH also speaks words of comfort to those of his people who may be afraid during those days. **“Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the knees that are faltering. Say to the ones fearful of heart, ‘Be strong, and do not fear. Look! Your God will come with vengeance. God will come with retribution. He will come, and he will save you.’**

Then the eyes of the blind will be unclosed, and the ears of the deaf will be opened. Then the lame one will leap like the deer, and the tongue of the mute one will sing for joy. For in the wilderness, waters will break forth, and streams

in the Arabah. And the burning sand will become a pond, and the thirsty ground springs of water.” ²⁸

YHWH will punish the lofty ones, including the rebel serpent. **“And it will be that, in that day, YHWH will give attention to the host of the height in the height, and the kings of the ground upon the ground. And they will be gathered, as prisoners are gathered in a pit, and they will be shut up in a prison; and after many days they will be given attention.”** ²⁹

And then, says Zechariah, waters will go forth. **“And it will be in that day, that living waters will go forth from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern Sea,”** that is, the Dead Sea, **“and half of them toward the western Sea,”** that is, the Mediterranean Sea. ³⁰

Ezekiel confirms this, describing healing waters that flow out from the Temple. **“These waters go forth toward the eastern region, and they go down into the Arabah, and they enter into the Sea,”** that is, the Dead Sea. **“When it enters the Sea, the waters are healed.”** ³¹

And again: **“On the bank of the river will grow, on this side and the other side, all kinds of trees for food. Their leaf will not decay, and their fruit will not fail. It will produce fruit each month, because its waters are going forth from the sanctuary. And their fruit will be for food and their leaf for healing.”** ³²

Now, this is a physical description of things that are described elsewhere in more symbolic terms. For YHWH will fulfill this in a physical sense at its appointed time, but YHWH and his anointed one are already providing living waters metaphorically, just as it is written: **“Hey, all you thirsty ones. Come to the waters!”** ³³

And again: **“They will not go hungry, and they will not thirst, and scorching wind and sun will not strike them. For the one showing compassion to them will lead them, and guide them to springs of water.”** ³⁴ These waters are already available right now, in a spiritual sense, for any who wish to drink from them.

Then YHWH will abolish death itself. **“And in this mountain he will swallow up the faces of the covering, the one covering over all the peoples, and the veil that is spreading over all of the nations. He will swallow up death forever, and my Lord YHWH will wipe away the tear from all faces; and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for YHWH has spoken it.”** ³⁵

And there will also be a raising up of the dead. **“Your dead will live. A corpse of mine will rise. Awake, and sing for joy, you residents of the dust. For your dew is like the morning dew, and the land will cast out the dead.”** ³⁶

Now, these words were spoken through men who were YHWH’s prophets, so they are really the promises of YHWH your God, who says to you: **“Remember the former things of old. For I am God, and there is no other God, and none like me, telling the end from the beginning; and from times before, the things that have not yet happened.”** ³⁷ And again: **“I am the First, and I am the Last; and apart from me there is no God.”** ³⁸

YHWH, the “First,” asks who else has foretold all these things? **“Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know, and from beforehand, that we can**

say, 'Right!' Indeed, there is no one telling. Indeed, there is no one announcing. Indeed, there is no one hearing your sayings."

But it is almost as if YHWH is writing you a letter, and telling you to pay attention, when he goes on to say:

"The First, to Zion: Look! Look at these things! And to Jerusalem I will give a bearer of good news. But I know, there is no man from among them, and there is no counselor, such that when I ask them, they could give a word of reply." ³⁹

Elsewhere, he says: "Look! The former things have come to pass, and I am declaring new things. Before they sprout, I announce them to you. Sing to YHWH a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea and all that fills it; the coastlands, and those dwelling in them." ⁴⁰

And again: "Pay attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation. For law will go forth from me, and in just a moment, my judgment for a light of peoples. My righteousness is near. My salvation will come forth, and my arms will judge peoples. The coastlands will keep in expectation of me, and for my arm they will wait."⁴¹

The coastlands wait for YHWH's arm, and the ends of the earth sing a new song, because YHWH's salvation has already been announced to them. He is already speaking with them as well, as it is written:

"Turn to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by myself - the word has gone forth from my mouth in righteousness, and it will not turn back - that to me every knee will bow; every tongue will swear, yes, by YHWH, to me, saying 'righteousness and strength to him.'

He will come, and they will be ashamed, all those enraged against him. By YHWH, all the offspring of Israel will be justified, and will praise." ⁴²

¹ Haggai 2:1-7, 520BCE. ² Micah 5:5,6. ³ Isaiah 25:1-3. ⁴ Daniel 12:12. ⁵ Isaiah 26:3-8. ⁶ Zechariah 4:6,7. ⁷ Zechariah 4:10. ⁸ Jeremiah 51:25,26. ⁹ Isaiah 11:15,16. ¹⁰ Isaiah 27:12,13. ¹¹ Zechariah 10:11,12. ¹² Isaiah 28:2-4. ¹³ Isaiah 32:19. ¹⁴ Rev 18:4,5. ¹⁵ 1 Kings 6:3. ¹⁶ Zechariah 5:6-11. ¹⁷ Isaiah 21:2. ¹⁸ Isaiah 33:1. ¹⁹ Isaiah 22:5. ²⁰ Isaiah 17:12. ²¹ Isaiah 27:1. ²² Isaiah 27:8. ²³ Isaiah 27:9. ²⁴ Zechariah 14:1,2. ²⁵ Isaiah 27:13. ²⁶ Zechariah 14:3-5. ²⁷ Ezekiel 38:23. ²⁸ Isaiah 35:3-7. ²⁹ Isaiah 24:21,22. ³⁰ Zechariah 14:8. ³¹ Ezekiel 47:8. ³² Ezekiel 47:12. ³³ Isaiah 55:1. ³⁴ Isaiah 49:10. ³⁵ Isaiah 25:7,8. ³⁶ Isaiah 26:19. ³⁷ Isaiah 46:9,10. ³⁸ Isaiah 44:6. ³⁹ Isaiah 41:26-28. ⁴⁰ Isaiah 42:9,10. ⁴¹ Isaiah 51:4,5. ⁴² Isaiah 45:22-25.

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