

Isaiah's Messianic Picture by Rabbi Baruch

We have already seen in a previous article that the character of Messiah is expressed in the commandments of the Torah. In other words, Messiah will perfectly observe the Torah and be a living example of righteousness. We shall see (in the second section of this study) that this fact is inherently tied to His role as Redeemer. Although Messiah is from David's lineage, Isaiah records that there is a divine aspect to Messiah. This aspect relates not only to His behavior, but also to His Identity. Isaiah uses the name Emanuel (Isaiah 7:14) not only to show a connection with G-d, but to proclaim that Messiah is actually G-d in a physical body. How is it possible for Almighty G-d to dwell in a human body? Those who ask this question make the incorrect assumption that if G-d enters into a human body, He ceases to be omnipresent. Such is not the case. The Bible records that G-d resided in the Temple (within the Holy of Holies) but He did not cease to be in the heavens. No one even ponders this. Scholars have rightly pointed out that the Temple (the House of G-d) had a unique status, but did not infringe upon the omnipresence of G-d. In this same manner, Messiah, who is called not only Emanuel, but also the Mighty G-d, and Everlasting Father by Isaiah, has the status of being Divine. In no way does this concept attack the fact that G-d is One. No one has ever proposed a multiple aspect of G-d, because G-d dwelt in the Temple and in the heavens. Therefore, one should not attack the unity of G-d because Messiah is Divine.

Isaiah 7:14 speaks **not** of a miraculous birth, but a supernatural conception, i.e. the virgin birth. Why was it necessary for Messiah to enter into the world by means of a virgin conceiving a child by means of the Holy Spirit?

Jeremiah chapter 22 offers an interesting answer. In this chapter, Jeremiah is speaking about Jehoiachin, king of Judah. This man was an evil ruler whom Jeremiah prophesied would not produce an heir that would sit upon the throne of David (Jeremiah 22:28-30) Nebuchadnezzar brought Jehoiachin to Babylon, together with the precious articles of the Temple and made Jehoiachin's brother Zedekiah king (II Chronicles 36:10). Zedekiah was Judah's last king. So no descendent of Jehoiachin has reigned upon David's throne. But what about Israel's next king; King Messiah? According to Jewish law, not just any descendent of David can be Messiah, but one in the royal lineage. This poses a serious problem for a messianic candidate. How is it possible to be of royal lineage and not be a descendent of Jehoiachin? The solution is that Messiah is from the royal lineage by name only (his legal son), but not by blood—hence the need for the virgin birth. This means that the child's lineage (determined by the father) is royal, but was conceived without human seed, i.e. by means of the Holy Spirit. This is the sign that Isaiah's prophecy demands (see Isaiah 7:14). This would also explain how the child could be called the Mighty G-d and Everlasting Father.

Notice in Isaiah chapters 9 and 10 that the prophecy of Isaiah 9:5-6 confirms a great military victory over Israel's enemies as did the prophecies of Isaiah chapters 7 and 8.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful counselor, the Mighty G-d, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from now and forevermore. The zeal of the L-rd of Hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:5-6

Although Israel will go through a difficult time of hardship and sorrow by means of intense persecution, in the end Israel will return to G-d through repentance. The period of judgment upon Israel will leave the once glorious nation, likened to a grand flourishing tree, as no more than a stump. But when Israel repents, a shoot will sprout forward from the stump (see Isaiah 11). There is no debate in Judaism that Isaiah chapter 11 is speaking of the Messiah. Nor is there any argument that Jeremiah 23:5 is also speaking about Messiah. Isn't it interesting that after Jeremiah prophesies that none of Jehoiachin's descendents will ever rule on the Davidic throne that Jeremiah calls Messiah the L-rd of Righteousness.

Behold, the days are coming, says the L-rd, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE L-RD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

In the passage immediately thereafter, Jeremiah speaks of the final Exodus (Redemption).

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the L-rd, that they shall no more say, The L-rd lives, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the L-rd lives, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries where I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Jeremiah 23:7-8

Jeremiah reveals that it is the Messiah, whose work of redemption will bring about our (His people's) righteousness.

What are some of the character traits of Messiah? What are some of the outcomes of redemption? These issues will be delved into in the next article revealing the relationship between Isaiah chapters 11 and 12.

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