

Messiah and the Spirit of God

by Rabbi Baruch

The story of the Exodus from Egypt makes it clear that man is unable to redeem himself; only G-d can be the redeemer. This is why the children of Israel cried out to HaShem (Ex. 2:23-24) during their oppression. G-d heard their cries and raised up Moses to bring about the physical redemption of the Hebrews. The Exodus from Egypt serves as an example for the final redemption. That is, one can learn many of the foundational principles of redemption by studying what took place in Egypt and how G-d brought these changes about. However, whereas the first redemption had a spiritual dimension to it, it did not bring about a change to the world itself. Hence, the first redemption was primarily physical in nature, while the final redemption will be vastly spiritual in nature. This later redemption of Messiah will bring about a total change to the world in which man resides.

In Isaiah chapter 11 the reader is given a description of Messiah and what He will accomplish. First, one is reminded that the Messiah must be from the house of Judah and a descendant of Jesse, according to the lineage that was previously discussed and recorded in the book of Ruth. The wording of this prophecy is exact as it says, "*A twig will emerge from the stump of Jesse...*" (Isa. 11:1). The house of Jesse, i.e. Davidic Kingdom is called a stump because there has not been a King in Israel from the time of the Babylonian Exile more than 2,500 years ago. This prophecy tells of Israel's next King, King Messiah. In the latter half, instead of being called a twig, a different word is used which in Hebrew reveals a connection with the Galilean village of Nazareth.

Next Isaiah tells that the Spirit of HaShem will rest upon

Messiah. This Spirit reveals many attributes: wisdom and understanding, counsel and strength, and knowledge and fear of HaShem. By means of these attributes Messiah will bring divine justice into the world and solve the problem of evil. Beginning in verse six the prophet says,

"The wolf will dwell with the sheep and the tiger with the kid will lie down and the calf and the young lion and the fatling will be together, a youth will lead them. And a cow and a bear will graze together and their offspring will lie down, a lion like cattle will eat hay. A nursing child will play by the viper's hole, and over an adder's lair a newly weaned child will place his hand. They will not do any harm or destruction in all my Holy Mountain because the earth will be full of the knowledge of the L-rd as water covers the sea." Isa. 11:6-9

Rambam sees this passage as metaphorical and understands it as relating to Israel and the nations. He says that finally during the days of Messiah that gentiles will recognize Israel's leadership during the days of Messiah and no longer rebel and persecute Israel, but will submit to Torah law and even assist the Jewish people in their calling. Others take the passage more literally. Although what Rambam describes is something that will take place, this passage from Isaiah does not relate to this. This section accurately describes a change from the world in which man presently resides to a new reality similar to the Garden of Eden where both man and beast were herbivores. Also in the Garden of Eden animals were in perfect subjection to man, not harming human beings nor fighting among themselves. In essence Messiah rule will bring about righteousness, justice and peace. What is it about Messiah's reign that brings these wonderful characteristics? The end of verse nine answers this question, *"... the earth will be full of the knowledge of the L-rd as water covers the sea."*

Many have rightly said the knowledge of G-d is based in

truth. It is the truth of the Word of G-d that is going to fill the world that will cause righteousness, justice and peace to prevail. One needs to understand that it is not only Messiah teaching and enforcing truth that will influence the condition of the world, but He Himself will possess ALL truth. As has been shown in previous articles, Messiah, although a man, is also divine. Verse ten gives support for this point.

*"And it shall be on that day, the root of Jesse who stands for a '**banner**' to the peoples, unto Him gentiles (nations) shall seek and it shall be that His resting place is glory."*

This verse reveals many important facts. First, notice the word translated "banner". Normally this word is translated as miracle. An interesting occurrence of this word is Numbers 21:8, *"And the L-rd said to Moses you make fiery (serpent) and put it upon a pole (same word translated 'banner') and it shall be all who are bitten and will look upon it shall live"*.

Language experts reveal two important aspects of this word. They say that the word contains an element of a miraculous victory or deliverance. Hence it is Messiah Who will stand before the people as the One Who gave to not just Israel, but the Gentiles also (*who stands for a 'banner' to the **peoples**, unto Him nations shall seek*) a miraculous victory—the final redemption. Israel displayed a lack of faith in G-d in the wilderness and a lack of faith leads to sin, which in turns leads to death (the reason why HaShem sent the serpents into the camp). The only solution was for the people to demonstrate faith. Many have asked why Moses was commanded to make the fiery serpent as the solution to the serpents who were attacking the people rather than G-d simply removing the serpents altogether? The reason is that the fiery serpent that Moses made provided a choice for the people. Once bit they had to decide to trust HaShem and respond by faith to His provision of deliverance or remain

in faithlessness and die. So too in the days of Messiah, each person must decide whether to accept Messiah and His miraculous work of redemption for sin or reject Him and perish from the coming kingdom.

Please note where verse ten of Isaiah chapter eleven says that Messiah's resting place is glory. What does this mean? Messiah will descend from the heavens as Daniel instructs,

*"I was watching in a night vision and behold with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days and they brought Him before Him and to Him shall be given rule and honor and kingship and all the peoples and nations and languages shall serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall never pass and His kingdom shall never be destroyed."*Dan. 7:13-14

He will then land on the Mt. of Olives as the prophet Zechariah teaches,

"And HaShem will go out and He will make war against those nations (all nations who attack Jerusalem), as He waged war on the day of battle. And His feet shall stand on that day on the Mt. of Olives which faces Jerusalem on the east..."
Zech. 14:3-4a

After Messiah lands on the Mt. of Olives, He will enter the Temple area and as Isaiah prophesies, *"...the descendant of Jesse who stands as a banner for the peoples, nations will seek Him and His resting place will be glorious."* To what place is this verse referring? The Holy of Holies, for His throne will be the mercy seat that was placed on the Ark of the Covenant (see Ex. 25:8-22). It is when Messiah takes His seat on the very place from which Moses heard the voice of HaShem speaking (see Num. 7:89) that G-d's Kingdom will be established on earth. It is concerning this day that Isaiah in his twelfth chapter writes.

The chapter opens with thanksgiving that the anger of G-d

subsided through the work of Messiah. There is a bold statement that G-d Himself is salvation. It is important to note that these opening verses are recited in the Havdalah service that concludes the Shabbat. Judaism sees a connection between Shabbat and the Kingdom of G-d. The chapter continues with a description of the Kingdom. It says that faith and not fear will characterize the rule of Messiah. Peace will be experienced by the Kingdom's inhabitants. When righteousness and justice and peace are established then people will have no obstacles to worship the L-rd. At the end of this chapter music and praise are mentioned as a natural response of the knowledge of HaShem is throughout the world. Jerusalem is called Zion, a Kingdom term for Jerusalem in her redemptive state. Finally the inhabitants are admonished to Exult and shout for joy for the Holy One, i.e. G-d (Messiah) is in the midst of the peoples.

In the next article a study of how G-d will dwell with His people personally will be discussed.

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