

**THE MESSIANIC HOPE  
OF ISRAEL**

Studies in Messianic Prophecy

by

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**5. THE HOPE INTERPRETED**

It is in the ministry of "the writing prophets" that we find the fullest interpretation of the Messianic Hope. They drew upon the original promise of the seed of the Woman, mankind's champion and deliverer from the mischief wrought by the serpent and the unconditional and everlasting covenant made with Abraham and David. These are the hidden springs of that mighty stream of Messianic prophecy in the writings of the anointed men who were Israel's watchmen during the closing centuries of her national independence. And it is the prophet Isaiah who occupies the place of pre-eminence as the proclaimer and unfold of the glories of the One to come.

**(1) The Witness of Hosea**

Following the order in which the writing prophets are placed in the canon, we begin with the prophet who accompanied the northern Kingdom of Israel to its grave, and who was permitted to see the resurrection of the nation in the latter days.

What must have lain as a heavy burden on his heart was the fact that the covenant nation was divided into two rival kingdoms. He dated his prophecy therefore both in the days of the Kings of the house of David, as well as in that of Jeroboam II, under which the northern Kingdom enjoyed its brightest and most prosperous period, just on the eve of its tragic downfall: "**The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel**" (Hosea 1:1). His prophecy is divided into four parts, running parallel with each other, covering the same period, and ending with a glory vision of the Messianic age.

- Chapter 1 forms a complete prophecy, from the downfall of Israel to the final re-gathering.
- Chapter 2, from the divorce of Israel as an unfaithful wife, to the re-marriage.
- Chapter 3, the "many days" of Israel's being nationally set aside, till their conversion to the Messiah, whom they will seek in the latter days.

Then the fourth section, the largest, from Chapters 5 and 14, Israel's backsliding in detail, till the final recovery, when the divine discipline has accomplished its end.

The first vision of the future in the Book of Hosea was that of the re-union of the divided nation,

when they shall "**appoint themselves one Head,**" and will under His leadership come out of the land of their exile. That is to say, they will choose the One whom the LORD has already chosen for them. They will at last ratify the divine selection. The other prophets were also concerned along this line. Thus Ezekiel: "**And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things; nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their GOD. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them**" (Ezekiel 37:22-24). GOD is still waiting for Israel to fall into line with Him respecting the One in and under whom alone unity and harmony is possible, whether for that nation or for His new-covenant people.

Chapter 3 presents a new feature. The tribulated nation will be finally betrothed to Him whom it has sinned against. The LORD speaks of Himself as Israel's true husband. He has never ceased to love her, and that in her deepest shame. Surely it is the heart of the heavenly Bridegroom of souls who speaks in this chapter!

Chapter 3, brief as it is, composed of only five sentences, covers the entire period of Israel's long exile till the kingdom of the Messiah. He is the true David. Till they turn to Him, they will be without King, prince and religious status in a state of suspense. The false gods may have been abandoned, but the true is not yet known. But there is a blessed "afterward." In the latter days the people will seek the LORD their GOD and David their King. In the loss of the Messiah, they lost the GOD of their fathers also. In recovering Him, they will find GOD also.

Chapter 6 is very suggestive. It begins with the spiritual as well as national revival of Israel. Then we see how this revival will be brought about. The Messiah will be apprehended, both in His outward appearing, as bringing in a new day, and by His inward and spiritual appearing, like the rain from Heaven, by the coming of His SPIRIT to indwell the heart that loves Him.

It is a wonderful Messianic picture! The Coming One is spoken of as One whose coming had been *long prepared for as a new morning for humanity* as well as for Israel. And that He would also come to man as the rain comes from Heaven to refresh and fertilize the parched garden unto GOD.

Thus we see the two stages of the Lord's appearing: His personal and outward coming, which introduced a new day for the world in history; and His spiritual and inward coming, which changes men. In the first He came to be with men, Immanuel, "**God with us.**" In the second He comes to be in men. In the first He did a mighty work for man. In the second He came to apply the benefits of that work to men.

**These two comings are DIFFERENT and yet SIMILAR:**

a. They have the same heavenly origin. The light comes from above, and the rain descends from the sky also. It is not by man's contrivance. The morning and the rain are entirely by the gift of grace of GOD.

b. Both are expressions of *the universality and impartiality* of the divine goodness. The sun shines on evil and good alike. The rain descends on the fields of the thankful and unthankful. **"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"** (Matthew 5:45).

c. Both sun and rain are gentle and silent in their operations. The thunder and lightning may precede the rain, but the rain itself is a gentle touch. So CHRIST came outwardly, *all Heaven was moved*, but on earth, it was a *lone star that guided seekers to CHRIST*. So also the SPIRIT comes. We must find CHRIST within.

d. Both come without money and without price. And no day has less, because millions of others share the same. "A whole sun for me!" So CHRIST is abundantly able to save and satisfy. He went to Heaven in a cloud, and then that cloud broke in a shower of blessings on the disciples ten days after. CHRIST thus came back in the clouds of Heaven, only in this sense, spiritually.

e. Both have the same end in view, the transformation of death into life; of winter into summer. The morning sun makes a tremendous change, and the rain transforms nature into loveliness. Light and Life are the results of sunshine and rain.

a. The sun comes with a wonderful breadth. The rain comes in drops. So CHRIST has reconciled the world by His first coming, but He must quicken the individual soul by His personal approach in the SPIRIT. *He comes to each individual in an individual way.* As on the day of the SPIRIT's coming every man heard the message told out in his own language, so the SPIRIT speaks to every man in a way he can understand.

b. Then again, the morning is sure, but the rain has its own seasons. So with the visitations of the SPIRIT. Woe to him who neglects them when they come!

The fourth section of Hosea makes sad reading; it is a detailed recital, like a succession of sobs, of the moral and religious decadence of Israel, though sovereign mercy will triumph in the end. But in the midst of it we have one more illuminating Messianic reference: **"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt"** (Hosea 11:1). That the Messiah is seen in this statement, the New Testament tells in Matthew 2:15. He is seen as One who had identified Himself with the nation in grace, and who loves their history over again in His own person.

Before passing from this, we note that Scripture, like man, is tripartite. It has an *outer*, or letter-meaning. This is the *historical sense*. "Modernists" seldom get beyond this. There is an *inner*, or prophetic sense; this is the *soul* of Scripture. There is also an inmost or *spiritual* sense.

In Hosea 11:1, the letter meaning refers to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.

The prophetic, as given in Matthew 2:15, refers to the Messiah.

The spiritual, or mystical sense, refers to an "Egypt" in which many are in spiritual bondage, and

out of which the LORD would redeem them: "**And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our LORD was crucified**" (Rev. 11:8).

So, of old, the LORD brought them out (Exodus 12:51). Israel went out (Exodus 12:41); and Egypt thrust them out (Exodus 12:33). Through the death and resurrection of CHRIST, we are brought out. Through reckoning ourselves as having died unto sin, baptized into His death, we go out. But in the divine dealings with us, all kinds of difficulties frequently arise, by which we are thrust out.

### **The Witness of Joel**

By many scholars Joel is regarded as the oldest of the writing prophets, and thus the first to use the term "**the day of the LORD**," so often taken up in the prophetic literature.

The Messiah is not introduced in person, but in a wonderfully tender way His SPIRIT speaks in this prophecy. Thus who but the Messiah could speak in Chapter 1:6-7, "**For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree; he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.**" Speaking of "my land," "my vine," "my fig-tree", do we not hear His intercession in verse 19?: "**O LORD, to thee will I cry!**" Is this not the sympathetic identification of Messiah with the woes of His people?

Again in Chapter 2, we read: "**And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit**" (2:28-29). In John 1, the One who is there spoken of as the sin-bearing LAMB of GOD, is also the baptizer in the SPIRIT, by virtue of His being "Son of GOD."

Beautiful is the way in which Joel refers to *Mount Zion* as the resource of GOD's tribulated people. Zion speaks of the resources of grace established in a risen CHRIST. Christians, according to Hebrews 12, have come to Mount Zion. They are in the good of the Kingdom of GOD. Seven times does Joel bring in Zion as GOD's resource, when the utter failure of man is made evident, as historically Zion does not appear in Scripture till everything established by GOD and committed to human responsibility had broken down; Priesthood in the house of Eli; the prophet in the evil sons of Samuel; the monarchy in the hands of Saul; the ark in captivity, and then hidden away in Kirjath-jearim, neglected and forgotten, etc. Then Zion became the center of the national and religious life of Israel. So CHRIST, risen from the dead, is the guarantee that all that GOD has purposed for His own glory and man's good, will be eternally established. Joel says: "**And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call**" (2:32). The passage is applied to our LORD in Romans 10:13.

**"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given**

**you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."** (Joel 2:23).

### **The Witness of Amos**

Though Amos ministered during the prosperous days of Uzziah in Judah and the second Jeroboam in Israel, he clearly perceived the rottenness underneath the outward magnificence which would sooner or later break out and bring about the ruin of the two houses of Israel. GOD would shake them as with an earthquake.

However, he saw that a remnant would be preserved: "**Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch**" (Amos 3:12) (5:3-14). Israel's *Shepherd* would "deliver" them. And who can this Shepherd be but the One who says: "**I am the good Shepherd?**"

Again there is a distinct personal type of the Messiah as the *Intercessor* in Chapter 7:2-9. The Prophets of Israel were no mere lookers on from a distance. The SPIRIT of CHRIST was in them, and formed in them Christ-like feelings about the situations revealed to them prophetically. But there is more. Amos saw that beyond the judgments there would be a glorious revival to the fallen tabernacle of David (9:9-15). Surely that revival could only be fulfilled in the risen CHRIST!

In Him the destinies of the house of David find their goal. Here again the spirit of prophecy harks back to the original charter made with David in II Samuel: "**And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever**" (7:16). Even though the tree were hewn down and only a stump remained, yet out of it shall yet spring the lowly rod on which the seven-fold Spirit could rest: "**And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD**" (Isaiah 11:1-2). Hence the ancient synagogue called the Messiah *Bar-Naphlim*, that is: He who springs from the fallen family of David.

### **The Witness of Jonah**

Passing over the brief prophecy of Obadiah, with its veiled reference to the Messiah in *Saviours* who will "go up on Mount Zion," under the leadership of the *Jehovah-Saviour*, for "**the kingdom shall be the Lord's**" (v. 21), we come to the book of the prophet Jonah. Perhaps no book in the Old Testament has been the target of the attacks of the enemies of revealed truth more than this. Yet its testimony to the Messiah is clear. We know how our LORD made use of Jonah's "**three days and three nights**" in the deep as typical of His own experience "**in the heart of the earth**" before resurrection. As Jonah was typically resurrection on "the third day," so our LORD in actuality. No doubt Jonah's three days in the belly of the whale are intended to remind us of the fact that Israel, the runaway prophet-nation, has been swallowed up in the sea of the Gentiles, though miraculously preserved. Israel will yet learn that the Messiah has entered into their sorrows, which they have brought on themselves, for He shared them with them in

sympathetic grace.

Thus like they, He also was delivered to the Gentiles, beaten, spat upon, scourged and crucified by them, though He sank down into deeper sorrows, when He who knew no sin, was made sin for us. But He was heard from the horns of the unicorns and brought up out of the depths, where the waterfloods overflowed Him. And in His resurrection He, who in His cross was a sign spoken against: "**And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against**" (Luke 2:34), is now GOD's great sign of salvation to penitents, as Jonah was to the Ninevites, and a sign to the Jews, because the grace they spurned, now goes out into the Gentile world: "**But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here**" (Matthew 12:39-41).

#### (5) The Witness of Micah

##### SECTION I. Chapters 1-2

In these chapters where GOD is seen coming out of His place to deal in judgment with the sins of His people, One is spoken of as the Breaker of their bonds, the remover of obstacles, the One who will make a way for them through all opposing forces, who is their anointed king and yet also the LORD at the head of them, in His twofold glory, human and divine: "**The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them**" (Micah 2:13), the Leader of a regenerated and reunited Israel.

##### SECTION II. Chapters 3-5

Here Micah becomes typical of CHRIST, for who else could use such language as is found in chapter 3: "**But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin**" (3:8)? He is seen in contrast to the hireling priests and prophets, and the judges who accept bribes. For their sake Zion will become a heap of ruins.

But the prophet looks beyond the desolations of Zion to her latter day glory: "**But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them**

**afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it**" (Micah 4:1-4). It is a glorious vision of the Messianic age, that divine event toward which the whole creation moves, though it still seems so far off in this our day of disturbance and distress.

Then abruptly the prophet brings in the Person who will usher in that latter day blessing both for Israel and the nations. The JUDGE of Israel, the One who fills Heaven with delight, smitten on the cheek! And yet "**This man shall be the peace**" and "**great unto the ends of the earth.**"

In between, in the second verse, comes a parenthetical prophecy of the birth of this majestic being. In His divine glory "**from everlasting,**" born into conditions of poverty in Bethlehem, the ancestral village of the family from which David sprung. Zion is desolate. It has no palace for her King, and so GOD reverts to Bethlehem, "**little among the thousands of Judah,**" to make a new start for the house of David.

And yet, saith the LORD, He shall come forth unto Me! Not yet will Israel say: "**Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.**" Heaven alone recognizes the significance of this advent in His lowly birth. In the meantime Israel is given up till the pangs of travail seize upon her (verse 3). "**The time of Jacob's trouble,**" Israel's "Peniel" of midnight distress, issuing in millennial day, which they will enter, broken and beaten into the dust, but divinely blessed. Then will Israel's saved remnant be a heavenly dew among the nations and as a lion in kingly majesty: "**And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off**" (Micah 5:7-9).

### SECTION III. Chapters 6-7

Again the spirit of CHRIST is expressed in the prophet taking the burden of the people's condition upon himself. In fact in chapter 7:6 we get the very words our LORD used with reference to Himself, as the One whose presence in Israel separates His loves and those who reject Him: "**For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.**" But the end is full of comfort. The Abrahamic covenant, culminating in his Messianic Seed, will never be cancelled. The Messianic salvation is sure.

#### (6) The Witness of Habakkuk

The prophecy of three chapters is in the first two chapters a dialogue between the prophet and the LORD. He voices his perplexities, as he finds himself in a world where the powers of darkness and of brute force seem to triumph over righteousness and truth. Babylon was the expression of the kingdom of evil hostile to the Kingdom of GOD, but the principle goes beyond the local background and coloring out of which the prophecy sprung. It is for our day also. It is clear that Habakkuk has an apocalyptic and eschatological outlook. And as the name of the prophet means "*one embraced,*" he reminds us of "**the disciple whom Jesus loved**" and who "**leaned on his breast,**" and from thence reviewed the procession of events in the last hour.

- Chapter 1 speaks of the apparent triumph of the kingdoms of "**this present evil world.**"
- Chapter 2 of the *Parousia* of the Messiah, a vision sure to be fulfilled, though long delayed.

Hebrews 10:37 shows that the early church saw CHRIST in that passage in Habakkuk: "**For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.**" The end is that "**the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.**" This passage is found in beautiful connections in II Corinthians 4: "**The knowledge of the glory of God**" is found "**in the face of Jesus Christ**" (4:6), and illuminates our hearts.

No wonder that the third chapter, which celebrates in a psalm the *Parousia* of JESUS in the end-time, to vindicate His holiness and establish His rights, ends with one of the most sublime expressions of confidence in GOD in a dark day, illustrating the doctrine learned by Habakkuk when on the watchtower, that "**the just shall live by his faith**" "**Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places**" (3:17-19). He obtains "hinds' feet" which enable him to leap beyond the confusion and distress of the present into the blessedness of the age to come.

### (7) The Witness of Isaiah

It is in the sixty-six chapters of the book of the prophet Isaiah that we find the richest and sublimest unfoldings of the Messianic hope. As we are told in John 12:41, Isaiah "**saw his glory,**" both in humiliation and exaltation, "**and spake of him.**"

We may divide the book into seven parts, the first chapter being introductory.

#### (a) Isaiah's Early Ministry -?Chapters 2-4.

The Messiah is not directly introduced, but there is a veiled reference to Him in chapters 4: "**In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel**" (4:2). Speaking of the desolating judgments which would come upon Jerusalem, the prophet sees a time when a spared remnant would see and appreciate the beauty and glory of the Branch of the LORD and the excellency and comeliness of the fruit of the earth.

Thus in the language of symbolism is the Messiah presented in His twofold glories, human and divine. "**The branch of the LORD**" speaks of His being the Son of GOD. "**The fruit of the earth**" as Israel's and Mankind's representative. As it has been said: "He is GOD presented to man; and He is Man presented to GOD." In this passage Isaiah anticipates the conversion of Israel, for first, as is still the case, "**when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.**"

"**He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness**" (Isaiah 53). But the veil of unbelief and prejudice will drop from the

Jewish heart and the glory of the Messiah will then be apprehended.

(b) Isaiah's Apologia pro Vita Sua - Chapter 6.

This chapter clearly antedates the preceding messages, as it gives us the story of how Isaiah became a prophet. He had kept it a secret until forced to explain why he pronounced the six woes which are found in chapters 2-5. Before he ever uttered a single "woe" on others he had to pronounce "woe" on himself and then experience the cleansing by altar fire.

What he "saw" was a vision of the Messiah in His pre-incarnate glory - "**in the form of God**" - a glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and which He has now re-entered as Man (John 17). He learned from the vision and the adoration of the seraphim that it is the deep and settled purpose of GOD to exalt the CHRIST high over all; to fill the earth with His glory; and, that which led to his personal dedication for service, to accomplish the end with the help of sanctified men who have offered themselves for this work.

(c) The Messiah, the Sanctuary and Support of the Remnant - ?Chapters 5-8.

The account of Isaiah's conversion, sanctification and commission comes in parenthetically in a larger section of great beauty and significance. They set forth man's ruin and GOD's reserve. The Virgin-born of the house of David is GOD's reserve in a day of utter ruin, which has been graphically shown in chapters 5 and 6. In chapter 5 man is seen thoroughly bankrupt in the light of privilege and responsibility. GOD has done everything possible for him and he has brought forth nothing but wild grapes.

Chapter 6 is a deeper test. Man is seen altogether unfit for the divine presence. He cannot stand in the light of His glory.

Chapter 7 brings in GOD's reserve in grace. "**Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel**" (7:14). It is the primeval promise concerning the Seed of the Woman connected with the house of David.

Chapter 8. But GOD's man is rejected: "**Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem**" (8:13-14).

Nevertheless He becomes a Sanctuary to those who sanctify Him as LORD in their hearts: "**But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.**" (I Peter 3:15) and see Revelation 5. The "testimony" will be committed unto such (Isaiah 8:16) as they patiently wait for the day when the rejected CHRIST will have His rights: "**And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him**" (v. 17). They will have divine light in the midst of darkness: "**And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them**"

(8:19-20).

They share His rejection: **"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again. Behold I and the children which God hath given me"** (Hebrews 2:10-13), and are being conducted as sons into the glory where the rejected Messiah is now.

(d) The Messianic Quest -? Chapters 9-31.

These chapters cover the greater part of the first section in the book of Isaiah. Their background is the Assyrian invasion in the eighth century and the disturbed condition of the land resulting therefrom. But again and again the prophet turns aside to feast his eyes on the picture of One revealed to him, who would, as far as he then knew, arise after the troubles of his times. His faith leaped over the intervening centuries and living in the light of His advent.

In chapter 9:1-2, we have the Galilean ministry of the LORD. We read of "**Galilee of the nations**" (v. 1), a remarkable statement! It did not become this till our Lord's time, many Greek mercenaries and Roman colonists having settled there. In verse 3 Israel is a rejoicing nation once more because the rejected Messiah is seen by faith and appropriated. It is the Millennial Israel, greatly enlarged, celebrating the feast of Tabernacles. But that day will be ushered in by judgments: **"For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire"** (9:4-5). In verse 6 we have patient Israel keeping Christmas, celebrating the birth of the Christ-Child.

Five names belong to this blessed Babe: (1) "*Wonderful*" (see Judges 13:18 *Note: same word in Hebrew as "secret" - it means a miracle*); (2) "*Counsellor*" - He never needs to ask advice; (3) "*Mighty GOD*"; (4) "*Everlasting FATHER*," or Father of a new age - He will make all things new! (5) "*Prince of Peace*," whose kingdom will grow until, not only the uttermost parts of the earth (Psalm 2), but Heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18) and the entire universe, including those "**under the earth**" (that is, in the infernal regions) will own His supremacy (Phil. 2:10-11).

Chapter 11 is a ravishingly beautiful vision of the Messiah and His spiritual kingdom, the effects of which will reach as far as the renovation of nature and the restoration of Eden.

It begins with the house of David reduced to the smallness and poverty of its beginnings. But it shall renew its youth in the Messianic rod out of the roots of the tree which had been ruthlessly felled. On this unsightly branch the sevenfold SPIRIT of the LORD rests. The word "*Netzer*," translated "Branch," is the root from which we get "Nazareth" and "Nazarene." This passage is quoted in Romans 15:10, and is there stamped as having its fulfillment in our LORD. While there is a distinct reference to **"the rod of his mouth, and... the breath of his lips"** of Isaiah 11:4 in II Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 1:16 and 19:15, the sevenfold anointing on His head

being alluded to in Revelation 1:4; 4:5, and 5:6.

Chapters 28-31. After the apocalyptic imagery of chapters 24 to 27 we find ourselves again in the midst of the historical events of the 8th century B.C. And imbedded in them is the re-assuring prophecy concerning *the Precious Corner Stone* (28:16) and the delightful description of ideal Man who is "**a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land**" (32:2). The conditions prevailing in the land made the prophet long for such a corner stone, steadfast in the midst of disturbances and for such a Rock in the shadow of which men might find security and shelter. Messianic Prophecy was ever the divine answer to the desires He Himself had created in the human heart.

The sure foundation on which faith can build safely amidst all uncertainties, is the echo of the earlier Immanuel prophecy. "**God with us**" became the slogan of the believing remnant, and it was with this assurance the proud Assyrian was defied. See Psalm 46, written with those exercises as occasion, "The Immanuel Psalm," as we gather from verses 7 to 11, a psalm which will obtain a new and deeper meaning when the hard-pressed remnant of Israel of the end-time will learn to shout "Immanuel" in the midst of their tribulations. Then will they discover the precious corner stone, divinely laid in Zion long ago, for such a time as that.

(e) The New Order - Chapters 32-35.

Then will they learn the mystery of Godliness. GOD manifest in the flesh, the Man who has divine attributes and prerogatives. "**God is our refuge and strength**" - a Man shall be all this to His defenseless people, as it was a Man who wrestled with their ancestor till the break of day, yet declared by the patriarch to have been GOD, whom he had seen face to face.

They will then behold "**The King in his beauty**" (Isaiah 33:17), the same King whom Micah saw smitten on the cheek (Micah 5:1); not some failing representative in past history of the royal line of David, not even good King Hezekiah, but the super human "King" of Psalm 45, who is "**fairer than the children of men,**" to whom the words of adoration are addressed: "**Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever**" (verses 1-6).

It is in chapters 40-46 of Isaiah that the Messianic prophecy reaches its highest heights and plumbs its deepest depths. The *Introduction* of chapter 40 is majestic beyond all words. It links on directly with the last chapter of prophetic visions (35). Chapters 36-39 are historical and divide between the three visions of judgment, ending with glory visions in the first part, and the three visions of peace ending with a warning of judgment, in the latter. Chapter 40 takes up the broken thread of chapter 35. The "Highway to Holiness" becomes the cast up way in the wilderness for the return of the glory into Israel's long desolate house. And the revelation of the glory of the LORD will be that of a Shepherd carrying the lambs in His bosom.

(f) The Ideal Servant - Chapters 42-53.

Chapters 40-46 are an epitome of the New Testament, beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, and ending with a preview of the new heavens and the new earth. The central chapter is the core of the New Testament, *The unveiling of the Cross*.

In chapters 42-53 the great theme is the *Ideal Servant of the LORD*.

When Israel failed there still remained an indestructible seed which preserved the continuity of her best life. This holy seed alone realizes the spiritual vocation of Israel and is the true Israel.

But this remnant is feeble and limited in every direction. It needs a leader, a Centre, one from whom it can derive inspiration and who can command its activities. And so in four songs this individual "Servant" is spoken of, the representative of Israel, and called by the name of Israel, to whom the genius of Israel comes to expression and the life of Israel to flower and fruit. These four songs are found in (1) Chapter 42, (2) 49, (3) 50, (4) 52:13 to 53:12. It is a transcendent personality who comes to view there, distinguished from Israel (49:5-6) and rejected by that nation, whose true personification He is, fulfilling her God-given destiny on earth. In chapter 42 the ideal Servant is presented.

In chapter 59 the ideal is realized. In chapter 1 the nation of Israel rejects Him. chapters 52:13-53 show how penitent Israel will finally receive the ideal, moved to jealousy by "**the fullness of the Gentiles**" whose light and salvation the rejected "Servant" has become.

Twenty times we read of the *Servant* of JEHOVAH in chapters 41:8 to 53. After that the term disappears. Another, the "Servants" takes its place some ten times. After the Cross of chapter 53 the one Servant works through the many servants who are progressively changed into His image. Historically this is being fulfilled, during the long period of Jewish unbelief, in a new and larger and universal Israel. Israel's still unfulfilled prophecy of world-wide service has become the conscience of Christianity. And will not this, when the Church wakes up to her proper calling, provoke Israel to jealousy at last (Romans 11.11)? \*

\* *The ideal Servant* presented in Isaiah 11 to 66, unites in Himself the threefold concept of the word "Messiah," the three divinely appointed functions in Israel to which the idea of "Messiah" (or "ANOINTED") was attached, those of Prophet, Priest and King. In chapter 42, the Servant is the *Prophet* who publishes salvation and establishes judgment, that is true religion, in the world. In chapter 53, He is the *Priest* who offers the perfect sacrifice and who intends to sprinkle many nation. In chapters 49:7-9 and 52:13-15, He is the *King* to whom the Kings of the earth will yet render homage in the day of His power.

#### (g) Summary of the "Servant" Songs

The Songs refer clearly to a Person distinguished from Israel whom He represents. See chapter 49:1,5,6. If Israel be the Servant, who is the "*He*," and who are the "*we*"? "**Surely, He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,**" etc.

##### 1. The vocation of the Servant.

The words: "**I have put my Spirit upon Him**" (42:1), mark Him out as the Anointed (i.e. Messiah). He brings forth judgment (i.e. the true religion) to the Gentiles. See also 49:6: "**He is the Salvation (of GOD) unto the end of the earth.**" Thus He establishes a universal (i.e. a world-wide) religion.

2. His character.

In spite of His exalted calling, He is subdued, humble, and of extreme gentleness (42:2,3).

3. His personal appearance.

He looked unattractive. Men turned from Him. Appearances were against Him. Yet His innocence was evident. There was neither deceit nor violence in Him. He suffered not for His own sins. "**He was wounded for our transgressions.**"

Another proof that He is the Messiah is that kings and princes fall down before Him. Many nations are sprinkled from their impurity by His priestly ministry (compare 49:6,7 with 52:15). The suffering Servant is led like a lamb to the slaughter and cut off out of the land of the living. A malefactor's grave is prepared for Him, though finally He is laid in a rich man's tomb. He pours forth His soul unto death, He makes Himself an offering for others' sins. But in resurrection He sees an abundant "seed"; He divides the spoil with the strong, and the pleasure of Jehovah prospers in His hand. It is in resurrection that He accomplishes the great Messianic program committed to Him.

Chapters 52:13-53:12 The unveiling of the Cross.

Every New Testament writer, except James and Jude, applies it to our Lord. Its five strophes have three verses each and give in their opening words the key note. Thus:

- (1) "**Behold my Servant shall deal... be exalted and extolled, and be very high**" . . . His certain exaltation.
- (2) "**Who hath believed?**" . . . Israel's unbelief.
- (3) "**Surely He hath borne our griefs**" . . . The vicarious nature of His sufferings.
- (4) "**He was oppressed . . . yet He opened not His mouth.**" The power of His silent submission.
- (5) "**It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.**" The divine purpose to vindicate and glorify Him. The poem ends as it began with the counsels of GOD to exalt the rejected Messiah.

### **The Man of Divine Selection**

The four "Servant" songs bring before us the Man whom GOD has chosen. They thus give us the very heart of Messianic prophecy, for "**the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**" The prophetic Word points out the Man of GOD's purpose, and the kind of Man who will finally rule in GOD's universe, people it with a generation after His own order.

We see Him as presented to GOD for His approval and selection, and we see Him too as presented to us for our approval and selection.

For thirty years He lived in obscurity and abject poverty. Then at His baptism, under the opened heavens, GOD made a public declaration of His irrevocable choice: "**This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.**" Then also was His holy humanity anointed by the Dove-like SPIRIT.

It was an application of both Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42.

But it was a critical moment for the world. If GOD publicly declared His choice, would men join in it? Alas! Man's choice and GOD's are not always the same. The fleshly mind has another kind of man in view, and he will yet come into view having many forerunners, the Antichrist, the super-man, the contrast to the God-Man.

No wonder his number is three times six (Revelation 13). Man's proper number is five. Everything about him is in fives: five senses, five fingers, five toes, etc. Seven is the number of divine perfection. Six is the effort of fallen man to exalt himself above the level of the human, but he cannot reach up to perfection by self-exaltation.

The flesh in true saints has often chosen the wrong man. Thus Abraham pleaded for Ishmael; Isaac would have blessed profane Esau; Joseph would have prevented Ephraim from obtaining the priority; Samuel looked at the outward appearance of the stalwart sons of Jesse, when forgotten David was the man after GOD's heart.

Israel was always rejecting GOD's Man for the moment, as Stephen pointed out in his Apologia (Acts 7). Finally they shouted: "**Not this Man, but Barabbas!**" And later on they will put themselves under the protection of "the Beast," to their unspeakable sorrow. One came in His Father's name and they received Him not, another will come in his own name, and him they will receive. So in Isaiah: "**When we shall see Him . . . no beauty!**" Yet the One "**disallowed... of men**" is "**chosen of GOD**" (I Peter 2:4,5). Finally penitent Israel will ratify GOD's choice.

(h) The Book of Consolation. Chapters 40-66.

It is evident that the ministry of Isaiah had three generations in mind. (1) His own times (chapters 1-35); (2) the generations of the Exile (chapters 40-48); (3) The generation living in Israel's darkest hour, at the time of the end, just before the dawn of her brightest day (chapters 49-66).

Isaiah knew from the beginning that his generation would reject his ministry (chapter 6). In the chapters beginning with 40, his spirit is projected into the future. He beholds the long-drawn exile and the closing agony before divine deliverance. They are in three groups of nine chapters each, in which the threefold controversy with Israel is taken up and settled. (1) Chapters 40-48: How Israel is delivered from idolatry. (2) Chapters 49-57: How Israel is at last won over to recognize the Messiah. (3) Chapters 58-66: Israel's final deliverance from "Judaism" and self-righteousness, in order to take up her world-wide witness to spiritual religion.

(i) The Sure Mercies of David. Chapters 54-66.

In chapter 54. we have the glory of the New Jerusalem and in chapter 55. we have Messiah's appeal to the Gentile world. As chapter 53 is the story of His atoning sacrifice, the foundation of all good; chapter 54, the application of His redeeming work to the new and spiritual Israel; chapter 55 gives us the overflow of the blessing to the Gentiles. "**Ho! Everyone that thirsteth . . .**" There is "water," "wine," "milk" and "bread" to satisfy the needs of the ends of the earth.

We hear the testimony to the risen Christ in verse three: **"Incline your ear and come unto me: hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."** That the early Church saw the resurrection of the Messiah in these words is clear from Acts 13:32-34. If the Messianic representative of the house of David be **"cut off out of the land of the living,"** how could the covenant with that house (II Samuel 7) be fulfilled, except the slain Messiah be raised again? David's name is in the beginning and at the end of the New Testament (Matthew 1:1; Revelation 22:16). And it is part of Paul's gospel that JESUS CHRIST of the seed of David was raised from the dead (II Timothy 2:8). It is in resurrection that the Davidic covenant, which embraces the Kingdom of GOD over all nations, is fulfilled, as Peter argued on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:25-36). And it is He, the risen Messiah, who according to Jeremiah 30:9, is called "David," whom GOD has given as the Witness, Leader and Commander of the peoples. This is an echo of the ancient "Shiloh"-prophecy: **"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."** Israel cannot exhaust the mercies sworn to David. Hence redeemed Israel is addressed in verse 5: **"Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy GOD, and for the Holy One of Israel, for He hath glorified thee."** To spread the blessings of the everlasting covenant made with the house of David will be the Millennial ministry of regenerated Israel. Israel will then be "glorified" by the glory-presence of the Messiah in her midst.

#### (j) The Jubilee Proclaimed

As the jubilee trumpet was sounded after the expiration of the Day of Atonement, the High Priest having resumed his garments of glory and beauty, so after the passion of the cross, the PRIEST-Messiah resumed His glory (John 17) and the glad tidings of the jubilee could then be proclaimed. This lies at the heart of chapters 60-62 of this portion of Isaiah's prophecy.

In chapter 59 we have Israel's day of Atonement and national repentance. We can almost hear the High-Priest confessing the "transgressions," "sins," and "iniquities" of the people (59:12,13). Then, after the penitential wail, a new day dawns for the people.

Our Lord found His message and ministry in Isaiah 61, and openly declared that He was the fulfillment of those inspired words, in His inaugural sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4). Orthodox Judaism had become mere "Biblicism," the *letter of the Book* had become central and all-sufficing, the *living GOD* was not known. Christianity, on the other hand, is pre-eminently the religion of a Person, but a religion with the Book which testifies of Him. It is very significant, that our LORD **"closed the Book... and sat down. And the eyes of all them... were fastened upon Him,"** while He said: **"This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."** The Book is not the end, but a means to the end, and that end is the Divine-Human CHRIST.

We hear three voices in chapter 61. In verses 1-3 the Anointed Man Himself speaks. He presents Himself as Prophet and Evangelist, as Physician and Saviour of souls. He not only announces spiritual good, He bestows it. He binds up broken hearts. That is a peculiarly divine prerogative. **"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"** (Psalm 34:18) and again: **"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names. Great is the Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite"** (Psalm 147:3-5) and again:

Majesty and meekness are combined here. The architect of the skies is the surgeon of human souls. And thus we find in the great Messianic pronouncement of Isaiah 61 how Deity and humanity unite in the Anointed man.

The second voice is that of the SPIRIT through the prophet (verses 4-9). The salvation bestowed by the Messiah is described. His people become "**priests**" and are "**the seed which the Lord hath blessed.**"

Finally, the redeemed themselves speak (verses 10, 11). The joy and gratitude of the new Israel of the end-time (or of the church drawn now from all nations to form one believing family) is expressed. It is adorned with bridal beauty and clothed in a righteousness not her own. It becomes a garden where the fruit of the SPIRIT is brought forth. It joys in GOD through the Messiah in whom it has obtained the reconciliation. The spiritual blessing of the year of Jubilee, "**the acceptable year of the Lord,**" are already imparted, as the fruit of the Atonement, wherever faith welcomes the divine approach in grace, while awaiting a still wider diffusion in that phase of the kingdom of GOD in which all things shall be subdued under the feet of our Lord.

### **(8) The Witness of Jeremiah**

In some respects Jeremiah is the greatest of the post-Mosaic prophets, as he prepared a remnant for the Exile, making the return from it possible. In his personal experiences he was strangely JESUS-like, a type of Him in an Old Testament setting. He endured a long martyrdom because of his obedience to the heavenly vision. His book is made up to a considerable extent of extracts from the diary of his inner life; the phases of his secret history with GOD; his misgivings and sinkings of heart; his doubts and problems. But it was thus he became an iron wall and a brazen pillar against which priests, princes and people dashed themselves in vain for over forty years.

Jeremiah is pre-eminently the prophet of the spirit of the new covenant, but he has also his own special contribution to make to the unfolding of the Messianic Hope.

There are two outstanding utterances which claim our attention. At the time when things were rapidly nearing the end, after the deportation of King Jehoiachin and the accompanying scattering of the people (chapter 23:3), Jeremiah was permitted to look beyond the dismal present and the still more terrifying future, to behold the arising of that righteous Branch of David in whose days a reunited Israel would be "**saved.**" "**And this is the name whereby He shall be called: the LORD our Righteousness**" (23:1-6).

This consolatory prediction is repeated in chapter 33:14-16 during Jeremiah's imprisonment, at the instigation of the princes of Judah in the tenth year of Zedekiah. Again he calls the Messiah the *Zemach Tzaddik* - the righteous Branch; and again he names Him *JEHOVAH Tzidkeun*, a name which the new and regenerated Jerusalem of the end time will have put upon her, as a bride takes on the name of her husband on her wedding day. In that day will Israel renounce her own righteousness and glory in no other righteousness except that which is in CHRIST.

Thus is the Messiah considered as the Mediator of Salvation and righteousness - righteousness to enable sinful man to stand before GOD, and salvation to deliver him from the fear and

oppression of the enemy. See Romans 10:9, 10: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD JESUS and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Thus is "the good thing" (33:14) which GOD has promised, "performed," even today to every penitent believer, while the nation of Israel is still at odds with GOD concerning this matter (See Romans 10:1-4) and must perforce wait for its fulfillment.

#### (a) Jeremiah and JESUS

Though six centuries separate between Jeremiah and JESUS, the times in which they lived and labored were in many aspects alike. Both lived in the shadow of an impending catastrophe - the fall of Jerusalem. The temple as well as the throne were doomed in the days of Jeremiah, and the Jewish religion as established in glory in Jerusalem, was about to pass away in the days of JESUS. In both instances true religion was buried under a crust of formalism and empty talk.

It is remarkable that the common people, when JESUS was here, saw points of resemblance between Him and Jeremiah (Matthew 16:14). Both were men of the country, and the beauties of nature had a powerful appeal to them. Both had the background of a distinguished ancestry and the advantage of having been reared in a pious home.

Both were early conscious of their high destiny. JESUS saw it at the age of twelve. So in Jeremiah 1:17, the word "lad" means a boy of twelve years. And both refused matrimony (Jeremiah 16:2). Both had to face the same crisis in their public life. Jeremiah stood in the temple and called it "a den of thieves," as JESUS did afterwards (Jeremiah 7:11 and Matthew 21:13).

Both were known for their tears, as their patriotic heart broke over the misfortunes of the people they loved in spite of their sins.

When our LORD partook of the farewell meal with His disciples, the shadow of Jeremiah fell on the occasion (compare Jeremiah 31:31 with Luke 22:20).

But in one thing they were miles apart. Our LORD was sweet to the end. Jeremiah broke down (see chapter 18:21-23). Never a murmuring word escaped the lips of JESUS. He said: "**the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?**" But Jeremiah, like our LORD, intensely lonely on the human side, had an intimate fellowship with GOD, which was his compensation amidst the heart-breaking experiences that made up his public life.

#### (b) The New Covenant

It is to the book of Jeremiah we owe the term which is characteristic of Christianity, i.e., "New Covenant." Hence our LORD is spoken of as "the Mediator" of this new covenant (or testament) (Hebrews 9).

According to the letter of Jeremiah 31 the New covenant belongs to Judah and Israel. But according to the SPIRIT it belongs to Gentiles also (See II Corinthians 3:6).

"**After those days,**" says Jeremiah. This is more than a point in chronology. It is a moral thought. After Israel's long unbelief; breaking the Law; persecuting the prophets; betraying the Messiah and delivering Him over to the Gentiles, who by the hands of lawless men crucified Him; after the long and futile effort to establish a righteousness of their own; the new covenant. When human failure and bankruptcy is fully demonstrated, Grace.

"**Not according to the [old] covenant.**" The old turned around the words "**thou shalt.**" The new turns around GOD's "**I will.**"

The new covenant has three engagements: (1) The Law in both heart and mind, really a new birth, a new nature. (2) They shall all know Me (know Me in themselves, J. N. Darby), i.e. conscious knowledge. (3) Sins no more remembered. The conscience purged. How? See Hebrews 10.

In "**the world to come,**" Israel will have the Law written in their hearts. This is celebrated in Psalm 119, the language of the new Israel under the new covenant. We, today, have CHRIST written on our hearts. Then will "**the righteousness of the Law**" be fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4) And that righteous requirement is "**love**" (see Romans 13:9, 10). Then also we shall have a firsthand knowledge of GOD, for "**every one that loveth is born of GOD, and knoweth GOD**" (I John 4:7). And knowing by the witness of the SPIRIT that our sins and our iniquities GOD will remember no more, we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all (Hebrews 10:17-19).

### (9) The Witness of Ezekiel

Ezekiel was one of the early captives when King Jehoiachin and the flower of the country were dragged away to Babylonia. Five years after he was called to the prophetic office. As he sat among the captives of Judah by the banks of Chebar, entering into their feelings, their mute despair, unable to find suitable words to express their discouragement, the heavens opened over him and he saw how the Shekinah, supported by the heavenly cherubim, had gone into exile with the exiled people, and was actually hovering over their camp, though they knew it not. He saw the majesty of the GOD of Israel, in human form, in the amber glory, on the throne. And he heard himself addressed, when prostrated in the presence of the glory, with the same name by which he had designated JEHOVAH on the throne: "**Son of Man.**" The Man in Heaven and the stricken man in the dust, had affinity; for is not man made in the image of GOD?

Out of the opened heavens Ezekiel got his commission. He ate the roll which was handed down to him, sweet to the palate, but bitter when digested. And out of the glory he heard that though the exiles were deprived of the temple and the externalia of religion, *JEHOVAH Himself* would be their sanctuary in every place in which they might find themselves, scattered, broken and disjointed captives of war under the chastenings of the government of GOD.

The Messiah was seen by him as a bright jewel of hope and consolation against the dark background of his times.

(a) In contrast to the evil shepherds of Israel, He would be the one good Shepherd. His name is "**My Servant David**"; He bears the name "David" because in Him the hopes of the house of

David are realized (34:23, 24) and through Him will JEHOVAH negotiate "**a covenant of peace**" with them. This hoped for sprout of David's felled tree, is also called "**a plant of renown**" (verse 29), who will invest Israel with glory and splendor again.

(b) The title "**my Servant David**" occurs again in chapter 37:24. In Him and under Him shall the divided nation become harmonized again. In His hands the two sticks of Judah and Joseph shall grow together into one stick.

(c) Beautiful is the Messianic parable of chapter 17. The tender twig which JEHOVAH plucks from the cedar of the house of David, doomed to be cut down in judgment, and which is planted on the mountain of Israel, becomes a goodly cedar, beneath whose shelter "**all fowl of every wing**" will find a home. Jehoiachin, the proud top of the cedar, is carried away to Babylon (verses 3, 4); Zedekiah, the vine, which pined for the waters of the Nile, the river of Egypt, is uprooted and withers away. But the tender one of his young twigs (verse 22), reminding us of Isaiah 11:1; 53:2 will re-establish the dignity of the fallen dynasty of David.

(d) In chapter 21:25-27, the last king of Judah is addressed as a profane, wicked prince, whose day is come, whose iniquity will have an end. The diadem will fall from his head. But after the overturnings comes One whose right it is to wear the royal crown dashed from the unworthy head of Zedekiah. And indeed, the universe will join the chorus: "Crown Him, Crown Him, LORD of all!"

"**He... whose right it is,**" are words which are wrapped up in the Hebrew "Shiloh," and are thus an echo of the ancient prophecy concerning the Messiah (Genesis 49), GOD's resource in the face of the breakdown of everything committed in responsibility to man, whether as prophet, priest or king.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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