

**THE MESSIANIC HOPE
OF ISRAEL**

Studies in Messianic Prophecy

by

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4. THE HOPE RE-AFFIRMED

The Books of Joshua, Judges and first Samuel, while they do not add much to the elucidation of the Messianic hope, are nevertheless important links in the chain of events which run on till the appearing of the Messiah. Joshua records the conquest of the land by the miraculous aid given to Israel, GOD using His redeemed people as the executors of the judgment on the corrupt Canaanites, their cup of iniquity having become full, in spite of the warning which the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah had given.

Judges records the failure of the tribes in executing this judgment to the full, which led to their degeneration eventually. As Delitzsch said: "The course of the true seed of the woman went at that time through the mire of great waters." Judah practically lost the leadership which was given to him by a divine oracle in the beginning of the Book: "**And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand**" (Judges 1:2). And the end of the Book gives a terrible picture of unspeakable corruption in Judah, with Bethlehem as the centre (chapters 17-21). We are told that in those days there was "**no king in Israel.**" Anarchy prevailed. "**Every man did that which was right in his own eyes**" (Judges 21:25).

However, a remnant was preserved. Hence the Book of Ruth, which takes you to the very Bethlehem whose shameful record had just been told. And in the Book of Ruth, one hundred years before David, we see how divine providence prepared for the needed King, out of whose loins, in the fullness of time, the Messianic KING was to arise.

A further step towards the ultimate fulfillment of the Messianic hope, centered in the Divine-Human King, was the preparation of the one who was qualified to anoint the King out of whose house, according to the flesh, the Hope of Israel was to spring. The first Book of Samuel gives us the record of this divine preparation. We read of the lonely exercises of Hannah, at a time when priesthood in the house of Eli had utterly failed. Out of those exercises Samuel was born, and dedicated to the LORD to serve in the sanctuary. The song of Hannah looks beyond the time then present to the end-time when "**He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be shaken to pieces; out of Heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed**" (I Samuel 2:9-10).

The ministry of Samuel ushered in a new era, that of monarchy in Israel. He was a descendant of the ill-fated Korah whom the pit swallowed up for his rebellion, and whose descendants, spared in mercy, became the doorkeepers of the sanctuary. And that was indeed Samuel's first occupation: **"And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision"** (I Samuel 3:15). But as his mother had prophesied: **"He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them"** (I Samuel 2:8), so the child Samuel became the spokesman of the Word of the LORD which had become rare in Israel, the restorer of a backslidden people to allegiance to the LORD, and the instrument for introducing the Messianic house of David. Samuel was the spiritual father of David, who as the man after GOD's own heart, upon whom Samuel had poured the holy chrism, typified, as well as predicted, the One whose appearing meant the moving of the longed for Kingdom of GOD.

We see constantly in sacred history that as in creation darkness preceded light, so GOD's beginnings of a new era are often preceded by false moves on the part of man, ending in disappointment. Thus Cain, the firstborn of Adam, was hailed as the promised one by Eve: **"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD"** (Genesis 4:1). Thus Abraham hoped that Ishmael might live before the LORD as the long expected seed. Thus the misrule of Saul came before the reign of David, the man after GOD's own heart, and the true King had to reach his throne by the way of suffering and renunciation.

David completed the conquest of the land when he became the possessor of Zion, the Jebusite stronghold which had defied Israel since the days of Joshua. And there he set up the religious, as well as the political centre of the nation. The long neglected ark of the covenant was brought out of obscurity and placed in a suited tabernacle in the court of his palace. David's enthusiasm in the execution of this concern marks him as the man who knew the desires of the heart of GOD and was determined to gratify them. It was when David **"sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies"** (II Samuel 7:1), that the thought arose in his heart to build a temple for the ark of GOD. It would seem David had Deuteronomy 12:10-11 before him, where the setting up of a central sanctuary, the place where the LORD would put His name, is connected with the fact that He had given rest to His people from war. Doubtless David felt that time had come and that therefore it was his royal duty to build such a House.

The prophet Nathan, to whom David had confided his concern, gave his endorsement at once. But that night the word of the LORD commanded him: **"And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee. And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?"** (II Samuel 7:3-5). Howbeit, the LORD told David by the lips of Nathan that He would build David an house, and the One should proceed out of his loins who would be the divinely approved temple-builder and that His kingdom would be established forever by the LORD: **"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever"** (II Samuel 7:12-13).

Now we must not limit this prediction, as Jewish commentators do, to Solomon, who did indeed build the temple. That temple was of *temporal duration*, but the temple which Nathan spoke of in the spirit of prophecy is connected with a *kingdom of endless duration*. When the kingdom which Solomon reigned over came to an end in the days of Jeremiah, the temple was destroyed also. The heart of the prophecy is that the Kingdom of the house of David is inseparably linked with the Kingdom of GOD. So in Psalm 89, based on the Nathan prophecy, the words "forever" are made synonymous with "**the days of Heaven**" (vs. 29).

"Then went King David in and sat before the Lord" (II Samuel 7:18). The effect on him was to produce adoring worship. He was overwhelmed by the grace revealed to him in the everlasting covenant with his house. That he saw the messianic significance of the communication made to him by the mouth of Nathan is clear from his "last words" recorded in II Samuel 23:1-5. He there looked beyond Solomon or any other descendant to One whose coming shall be "**as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God,**" was the confession of the founder of the dynasty, which he foresaw would eventually fail as Saul's house, and Eli's house had failed before him, "**yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.**"

These words were not just a pious wit of David's. He said of them: "**The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.**" It was a further unfolding of the Nathan prophecy, confirming it and connecting its fulfillment with the Messiah of David's royal seed of whom the LORD had said: "**I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son**" (II Samuel 7:14). So David sings of Him in Psalm 2 as the Anointed of the LORD, the Son whom he has begotten, and as the One who saves those who put their trust in Him.

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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