

**THE MESSIANIC HOPE
OF ISRAEL**

Studies in Messianic Prophecy

by

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3. THE HOPE REVIVED

The story of Moses not only explains the nationality of Israel, but is also the revival of the Hope of which that nation is the custodian. The choicest measure which the patriarchs passed on to their posterity was the Messianic expectation which would be fulfilled among them. But the period of alternate prosperity and adversity in Egypt was fatal to the Hope which is the very reason for which the people sprung from Abraham existed. The Hebrews gradually degenerated in Egypt. But for the bitter oppression which followed the period of prosperity while Joseph and his services to Egypt were still remembered, they would have become thoroughly Egyptianized and ceased to function messianically.

Ezekiel 20 tells us that when the GOD of their fathers lifted up His hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, the people had become idolatrous. They were polluted with all the abominations of Egypt, famous for its pantheism which saw in every object a manifestation of GOD and thus to be adored. In the delirium of idolatrous fascination the Hebrews had quite forgotten the very Name of the GOD of their fathers: "**And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?**" (Exodus 3:13). Their sacred past had become dim and hazy. Their present offered no testimony to the LORD. Their future was devoid of the element of hope.

But there must have been a remnant, however small and insignificant. There has always been a remnant in Israel, or else the people would have perished like Sodom and Gomorrah: "**Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah**" (Isaiah 1:9). There is such a remnant "**at this present time**" (Romans 11:5). Let the critics of the Jews, please bear this in mind. The existence of such a remnant made a revival always possible, even in the darkest day. There was never lacking seed for a new harvest, left over from the bad harvests of the past, "**There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth**" (Psalms 72:16).

How do we know that there was such a remnant among the degraded Hebrews in Egypt? By some of the names that were given to the children born in that dismal day.

The name of the father of Moses was Amram. His parents gave him that name, which means:

"the people is high," because they believed in the destiny of Israel. They did not develop an inferiority complex on account of the shame put upon them by the Egyptians. Israel had a future. The Seed of the Woman and of Abraham, the dispenser of universal salvation and of peace, would arise from this people. Hold your heads up, ye downtrodden slaves!

And so the name of the mother of Moses: Jochebed. That means: "JEHOVAH is exalted." Then not Ra or Isis, or the innumerable gods of Egypt, including not only sun, moon and stars, but also cats, dogs, beetles, in whose honor marvellous temples had been erected, were to be worshipped. JEHOVAH had not temple, or altar, or prophet, or priest in Egypt. But in due time He would execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, as He afterwards declared to Pharaoh. So the grandparents of Moses had faith in the ultimate victory of the GOD of Israel.

Into such an atmosphere of faith in a dark day Moses was born, miraculously preserved alive that he might be the type and earnest as a Mediator-prophet, of One greater yet. And little did the King of Egypt dream that he was actually educating the future champion of the people he meant to destroy. But GOD always makes his enemy look ridiculous. Pharaoh was but the unconscious instrument of Satan who hated the people out of whom his conqueror was to arise: "**And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child**" (Rev. 12:13). He has always had a special grudge against the national mother of the Messiah.

The personality of Moses towers aloft above all others. As a prophet he had unique relations with the LORD: "**And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches: and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?**" (Numbers 12:6-8) And he became the mediator through whom GOD effected redemption for His oppressed people. "*By faith*" he had identified himself when their fortunes were at the lowest. *To sight* they must have been most unattractive, but to faith they were GOD's elect vessel for the bringing in of salvation. GOD was preparing them to be the channels of salvation to the world, as our LORD said at the well of Sychar: "**Salvation is of the Jews.**" And again "*by faith*" Moses celebrated the first Passover. The people observed the rite of the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb. But Moses did it by faith in the greater Passover in the precious blood of the LAMB of GOD, without blemish and without spot. For GOD "**made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel**" (Psalms 103:7). They saw His mighty doings, but Moses had spiritual insight into His counsels. He foresaw the Messiah as Mediator-prophet of Israel in the end-time, to lead them out of the bondage to sin into the fullness of the blessing of His glorious realm of divine good. Hence "**the song of Moses... and the song of the Lamb**" are properly linked together in Revelation 15.

(1) The Prophet Like Unto Moses

It was as Moses was about to leave the flock which he had tended so wisely and patiently those forty years, knowing that the people would feel bereaved, that he left behind the wonderful promise concerning another prophet, resembling him, who would be the Mediator between them and Israel. As is recorded: "**The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the**

midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me. They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

At Sinai, where GOD spoke directly from Heaven to the people, they could not endure to hear that awful voice. The people asked for a mediator, and GOD granted them their request: "**And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die**" (Exodus 20:19) and "**And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; And ye said, Behold, the Lord our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die**" (Deuteronomy 5:23-25). Moses predicted that a similar mediator would be granted in the future. It would be a solemn matter to reject His word. The apostle Peter, quoting this prophecy in Acts 3, applies the warning as involving excision from the people of GOD, from Israel. This terrible judgment has indeed befallen the unbelieving Jewish people. They are like branches cut off from their own olive-tree. They are no longer "**the Israel of God.**"

The attempt has been made to weaken the Messianic application of the prophecy by referring it to a succession of prophetic men who would be divine spokesmen to their generation. But the singular is retained throughout in the prediction. Moses clearly had one special prophetic personality, who would be like unto himself. Moses, we know, was the one chosen mediator of the Torah; the builder of the tabernacle of witness, and by whose ministry the LORD became "**King in Jeshurun**" (Deuteronomy 33:4-5). Among the successors in the prophetic ministry none were like unto Moses. In the postscript to Deuteronomy, believed (by some) to have been added by Ezra, as the spirit of prophecy was about to pass from Israel, it is definitely stated, that a Moses-like prophet had not arisen in Israel: "**And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face**" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

The early Christians made much of the parting words of Moses concerning this great prophet to come. Peter, commenting in Acts said, "**For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days**" (Acts 3:22-24), where this prophet is distinguished from all others since the days of Samuel.

Read the words of Stephen when before the Sanhedrin, declaring that JESUS was that predicted prophet: "**To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their**

hearts turned back again into Egypt" (Acts 7:39). So we read the testimony of the young convert Philip to Nathaniel: "**And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see**" (John 1:46), the confession of the woman of Sychar: "**The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things**" (John 4:25), and finally our Lord's own use of the prophecy under consideration: "**He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak**" (John 12:48-49).

Reading the prophecy in its connection we find it stands in contrast to the eight ways in which the world of darkness speaks to man. GOD speaks to man by and in a Man. Thus we have two voices out of the invisible world in Deuteronomy 18:9-22. From the beginning GOD meant to speak to man (John 1:1). He spoke to man in the days of his primeval innocence. Again He spoke after man fell. But in the meantime man lends his ear to the whisperings of the serpent, the slanderer of GOD to man, and man has believed his lies, as sweet as honey, but conveying deadly poison to the soul. Now GOD has spoken in a Man, His Son in manhood: "**A Prophet . . . of thy brethren**" - as Hebrews 2:17 tells us: "**in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren.**" We have no need to turn to the mediums of the world of darkness, survivals of pagan delusions. The light of Heaven shines for us in the face of JESUS CHRIST, the One Mediator between GOD and Man.

(2) The Star and Sceptre From Jacob

We cannot leave the period when Moses was the Mediator of the Old Covenant without noticing prophecy given under very different circumstances than those already considered, by a Gentile, to whom it was permitted to look into the future of the people of divine choice, and their history in connection with the Messiah.

The deliverance of Israel out of Egypt was more than an historical event. It had religious significance. It placed Israel in opposition to the pagan world from henceforth. What will be most likely the course and the end of this conflict? The prophecy of Balaam in Numbers 24 gives the answer.

Balaam's oracles fall into four groups and in them the future development of the spiritual kingdom of GOD first established in Israel is foreseen (See Numbers 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9; 15-24). With his spiritual eyes divinely opened Balaam saw a *Star* come out of Jacob and a *Sceptre* arise from Israel.

This gentile prophet saw Israel finally victorious over the world of pagan nations, Moab, Edom, Amalek, Assur, Eber, the maritime power of Chittim, the last of the gentile conquerors, the Roman empire, come with the range of his vision. "**Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion.**" He has the last word. "**when God doeth this**" (verse 23). Not by the sword but by the Word will this Ruler win out. This is an echo of the Shiloh prophecy. The obedience of the peoples to Shiloh is a willing surrender. His methods are peaceable, as His name implies. And it is also an anticipation of the visions of Daniel, which expand this oracle of Balaam. The goal of history is the supplanting of the *beast-Kingdom* by that of *the Son of Man from Heaven* (Daniel

7).

There is a remarkable combination of the earthly and the heavenly natures of the Coming One in Balaam's vision. He saw in Him One who would be both Star and Sceptre. Our LORD clearly refers to this prophecy when He says of Himself: "**I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star**" (Revelation 22:16). The language used by Balaam was that concerning earthly things, but the intention was to show the heavenly and spiritual nature of the Kingdom of GOD administered by the Divine-Human CHRIST.

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