

# THE MESSIANIC HOPE

## OF ISRAEL

Studies in Messianic Prophecy

by

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### Chapter 9.

#### THE ATONEMENT IN THE RELIGION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE heart of the spiritual message of the sacred Scriptures of Israel, i.e. the Old Testament, is that divine love is sacrificial in its nature. The prophet Isaiah speaks of JEHOVAH as One who in all our afflictions is Himself afflicted (chapter 63:9). His love is a suffering love bearing on its heart the sufferings of man. He is sensitive to human pain; He is no mere glorified Buddha in the sky, passively looking down from His sublime elevation on the distressed conditions below, while Himself outside of it.

The 53rd chapter of Isaiah is felt universally to be the highest peak of Old Testament prophecy. It speaks of One arising out of Israel in whom this sacrificial principle, embedded deep in the love of GOD, would be expressed. And this incarnation of the vicarious love of GOD would bring healing and redemption to others, those who come to it in penitence and faith. We know that the ancient Synagogue saw the Messiah in this chapter, whatever modern Jews might say about it.

For some one thousand and five hundred years Israel offered daily sacrifices unto JEHOVAH. These pointed to the coming of One who would fulfill their intention. They were not an end in themselves, but a means to an end. This is clearly the message of Psalm 40, where we hear the language of One of whom it had been written "**in the volume of the Book,**" that the will of GOD would be accomplished by Him, and that this would mean the ending up of the sacrificial types which had preceded Him. And so the prophet Daniel also, speaking of the cutting off in death of Messiah, connects His work with the finishing of transgression, the making an end of sin, the making reconciliation for iniquity and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness (chapter 9.24-26). The outward sacrifices never accomplished these results. They were more of the nature of promissory notes looking to the future for the fulfillment of the promise.

As we study the ancient sacrifices we find that they are divided into two groups. The first being of the nature of "sweet savor" offerings, the second have to do with GOD's judgment on sin. These two groups are again subdivided. The "sweet-savor" offerings into burnt-offerings, meat (or "meal") offerings, and peace-offerings. The second into sin-offerings and trespass-offerings. The sin-offerings had reference to sin as being chiefly against GOD, and provocative of His holy horror, elsewhere called "**the wrath of God.**" The second, added to this the injury done to man,

for which reparation was due.

I believe it a mistaken view that the sacrificial system of ancient Israel was merely ritual. The sacrifices had an ethical content, and were profoundly educational. Alas! they frequently degenerated from this ideal into mere external performances. Then GOD expressed His repudiation of them. See I Samuel 15:23; Isaiah 1:11; Amos 5:21-24; Proverbs 15:8, etc. They were a positive offence to GOD if taken by themselves and apart from the state of the offerer.

The doctrine of the remnant also stands out very prominently in the Old Testament. The entire history of Israel illustrates the truth that the mass was blessed through the piety, the service, and the suffering of the godly remnant. Thus Isaiah 1:9 shows that Israel escaped the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah because JEHOVAH found "**a very small remnant**" in her midst. This remnant was despised by the apostate mass. Yet did this remnant take the blame and shame of their people's condition on itself, confessing their sins as its own. (Read Daniel 9, Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9) The penitence of the godly remnant was vicarious in its character. Did not Moses express this spirit when he offered himself to be blotted out of GOD's book, when he went to "**make an atonement**," after the setting up of the golden calf? See Exodus 32:30-32. Israel often owed her very continuance to the sacrificial service of her noblest sons. The SPIRIT of CHRIST was in them (I Peter 1:11) and made them not only heralds, but, in some degree, types of the coming One.

The Messiah, as the Anointed of JEHOVAH, bore a threefold mark in the Old Testament - prophetic, royal and priestly. JESUS, according to the record in the New Testament, bore those marks.

(1) Prophet. His word was with authority. It dropped like the manna from Heaven, like refreshing rain from the clouds. Never man spake like this man. The woman of Sychar said to him: "**Sir, I perceive thou art a Prophet**," after He had revealed her secret life to her by His word.

(2) King. Though His Kingly rights were denied Him, and though "Immanuel" had nowhere to lay His head in "Immanuel's land," He ever acted as a King, in a Kingly way. He was truly Master of every situation. He was never baffled or put off His balance. He was always in victory. He overcame the world. Sickness, demon power, stormy waves, an unbroken ass' colt, yea, death itself, obeyed His royal command.

(3) Priest. His final act was to die on the altar of the cross. It was His being a willing sacrifice that transfigured the tree of the curse and shame into glory. "**His decease which he should accomplished at Jerusalem**" was His greatest accomplishment. It was the fulfillment of Isaiah 53, to lay in death the foundation of His own exaltation, and of the salvation of His people Israel, and of the nations, whose kings shall shut their mouths before Him in the day of His power.

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