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The Highway and Messiah's Return! In Celebration of the Feast of Trumpets A Scripture Study in Isaiah 35 Written for September 18, 2020

The Feast of Trumpets begins at sunset on September 18th in this year 2020. This celebration foreshadows the return of our Beloved Messiah Jesus! Christians and Christian leaders all over our nation and the globe have joined hands to declare September 18th through the 29th as a time to turn to the Lord in personal and national repentance (See 2 Chronicles 7:14). We have been asked to pray for revival in our land at this critical time. Saturday, September 26th will be a National Day of Prayer on the National Mall in Washington D.C., as well as in State Capitols, in our churches, and in our homes.

This time between September 18th and 29th is also known as *The Days of Awe* on the Hebrew calendar. These days are marked by repentance and preparation and end with a day of fasting called Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement.

Before I share from Isaiah 35, I feel it is important to share this introduction with you about the three types of Messianic prophecy. I will then focus on the third type.

Introduction

In September 2019, we heard Rabbi K.A. Schneider teach about **Three Types of Old Testament Messianic Prophecy**. **Prophecies** are messages from the Lord that give warning, encouragement or foretell future events. **Messianic prophecies** foretell the life of Jesus hundreds of years before His birth.

1. **Types and Shadows**

These prophecies are events in the history of the Israelites that mirror or foreshadow the life of Jesus. They are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit through the consistent reading of Scripture. Only a large book could contain all these prophecies. Here are just a few:

- Moses was hidden in Egypt; Jesus was hidden in Egypt.
- The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years; Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days.
- Moses made and lifted up a bronze serpent in the wilderness so that anyone who looked to it would be delivered from the biting serpents, which were a consequence of their sin of grumbling against God and Moses; Jesus was lifted up on the cross and became sin to put sin to death and deliver us from our sin and its consequences. (Numbers 21:5-9; John 3:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- The Passover lambs were killed for the sins of the people; Jesus was killed for our sins at the same time the lambs were killed for Passover that year.
- The book of Hebrews is full of these shadows. For a full study, please see my *Learning Tool* called *The Work of Rest*.

2. **Specific and Measurable**

These prophecies are direct predictions about Jesus. Here are just a few examples:

- Jacob’s blessing (Genesis 49:10) – “The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until Shiloh [Messiah of Peace] comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”
- Also, see Jeremiah 33:14-16; Daniel 9:24-27; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; and Psalm 110:1

3. **Midrashim**

These prophecies are pieces of Israel’s history that are reflected creatively in Jesus’ life and in the lives of His disciples. Rabbi Schneider said, “Jesus’ life was a beautiful painting of Israel’s history.” These prophecies are not logical, straightforward predictions or shadows, but creative beauty. They are hidden manna.

- For example, in Matthew 13:14, Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9 saying, “And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled that says, ‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand and you will keep on seeing but will not perceive...’” In other words, Isaiah said people wouldn’t listen to him, and Jesus said that, just as the people didn’t listen to Isaiah, they would not listen to Him.

It is a common Jewish practice to pull verses out of context and give them new meaning. Learning this was quite a paradigm shift for me, because the principle that “all meaning is context-dependent” has been ingrained in me. **This Midrashim method of interpretation does not negate the importance of understanding context when applying Scripture to our lives (i.e., the culture, history, and events surrounding the passage) to gain the fuller meaning of the passage.** But Midrashim allows for us to see the nuances and hints of Jesus’ life throughout Scripture and for us to freely hear the Lord to speak to us individually. Although we must accurately handle the Word of God and be careful not to misuse Scripture for our own purposes, we must also freely allow Him to speak to us personally. This requires discernment, humility and reliance on the Holy Spirit.

More about Midrashim (the third type of prophecy)

The Old Testament prophets and writers gave messages pertaining to their current situations; however, often they would not know that their writings were meant for people and situations beyond their immediate surroundings and lifetime. A single passage of Scripture can have multiple fulfillments – in the current time, in the immediate future, and in the far future. The Old Testament prophecies are like watercolor paints that overlap, creating new colors and meanings. The colorful words flowed from the prophets by the Holy Spirit Who wrote through them.

- For example, the Song of Songs is a prophecy written about the Messiah’s wooing of and union with His bride (us) and gives hints of passages in the Psalms, Revelation and other parts of Scripture. It was written by Solomon who knew little about faithfulness in marriage. God used Solomon to write His thoughts to you and me about our intimate relationship with Jesus.
- Another example is Genesis 8:8-9:
Then Noah sent out a dove from him to see if the water was abated from the face of the land, but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark to himself.

I remember the first time I read this passage. It jumped off the page and into my heart! I knew the original context very clearly, i.e., I knew what happened to the dove, and I understood Noah’s purpose to determine when the water would abate from the land so that he and his family could come out of the ark. But for me, I knew that God had taken me into the ark of His heart where I found my resting place. In returning to Him, I found strength, safety, rest and quiet trust.

Isaiah 35

Like these other prophecies, Isaiah 35 comes off the page with multiple fulfillments. I would like to focus on what I believe to be its future fulfillment.

Just before Chapter 35, we find a promise in Isaiah 33:16-17 for those who walk in God's ways and keep their ears and eyes from looking upon evil: "He will dwell on the heights; His refuge will be in the stronghold of rock. His bread will be given to him and his water will be sure. His eyes will see the King in His beauty. They will behold a far distant land." Then, Isaiah 34 speaks of the judgment that will come and the day of the Lord's vengeance upon evil (extremely pertinent to the days in which we live).

Then, Isaiah 35 changes to a tune of joy and deliverance from evil. I believe that Isaiah 35 contains hints of the return of Jesus the Messiah and our deliverance from this corrupt world just as the celebration of the Feasts of Trumpets foreshadows His return and the gathering of the saints after the last trumpet sounds. As I read Isaiah 35, I see Jesus coming to take us to Himself as we journey on the highway of transformation and the redemption of our bodies! Let's look at Isaiah 35 along with other Scripture passages about Jesus' return!

Isaiah 35

¹The wilderness and the desert will be glad,
And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom;
Like the crocus ²It will blossom profusely
And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
The majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They will see the glory of the Lord,
The majesty of our God.

³Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble.

⁴Say to those with anxious heart,
"Take courage, fear not.
Behold, your God will come with vengeance;
The recompense of God will come,
But He will save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind will be opened
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.
⁶Then the lame will leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.
For waters will break forth in the wilderness
And streams in the Arabah.
⁷The scorched land will become a pool
And the thirsty ground springs of water;
In the haunt of jackals, its resting place,
Grass becomes reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway will be there, a roadway,
And it will be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean will not travel on it,

Other Scripture Passages

²¹...that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:21-23)

2020 has been difficult, but take courage! The Lord will come! He will judge those who rejected Him (John 3:17-20)

But He will save you!

He is coming for you to bring you to Himself!
(See John 14:3; 17:24)

⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)

¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will

But it will be for him who walks that way,
And fools will not wander on it.
⁹No lion will be there,
Nor will any vicious beast go up on it;
These will not be found there.

But the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰**And the ransomed of the Lord will return**
And come with joyful shouting to Zion,
With everlasting joy upon their heads.
They will find gladness and joy,
And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Dear brothers and sisters, may your celebration of the Feast of Trumpets and Jesus' return be full of hope, resolve and joy!

rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
"Behold He is coming in the clouds..." (Revelation 1:7a)

We will proceed up "the Highway" to meet Him!

See Revelation 19