

dominate the thoughts and actions of many. Having these Isaiah passages to meditate upon are a great reminder that the Lord will fulfill His promises **as Savior of His people!**

I believe it would be beneficial for you to recollect all of the promises which are communicated throughout Isaiah chs. 40-66. As you do this, you might want to reconsider the opening verses of Deuteronomy 30, that in essence, bring these promises into a summary overview:

“So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live” (Deuteronomy 30:1-6).

We have two witnesses in Moses and Isaiah, who confirmed that the Lord is going to fulfill the purposes that He has predestined for His people. I consider it to be a great blessing to be able to witness elements of this beginning to take place at this very point in time! I am encouraged that more is going to happen as we move ahead and as the Messianic movement grows at the Father’s pace.

May we all take great comfort as we prepare to enter into the Fall feasts, knowing that they are all foreshadowing rehearsals of the great works of the Messiah!

Haftarah V'yeilekh “A Restoring God”

Hosea 14:2-10; Micah 7:18-20;
Joel 2:15-27

V'yeilekh (Deuteronomy 31:1-30) is one of the briefest Torah portions, where we see Moses’ in the final days of his life, and the Ancient Israelites preparing to end their desert sojourn. Moses was quite aware that crossing over the Jordan River and into the Promised Land was not for him, but rather for the generation—of those twenty and younger—which wandered in the wilderness and had been prepared by him:

“So Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. And he said to them, ‘I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I am no longer able to come and go, and the LORD has said to me, “You shall not cross this Jordan”’” (Deuteronomy 31:1-2).

At this point in the illustrious life of Moses, some final words of encouragement came forth. Moses assured the people of Israel that the Lord God would never leave or forsake them. When they enter into the Land they are to remain strong, courageous, and be fearless before its current inhabitants:

“Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

Even though many will surely follow Moses’ admonition, the sad reality is that many Israelites in the future will turn themselves away from God. Moses was directed to compose a song which was intended to communicate the Lord’s intention in chastising His people when they prove themselves to be unfaithful toward Him:

“Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, ‘Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?’ But I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods. **Now therefore, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel**” (Deuteronomy 31:17-19; cf. 32:1-43).

There is something very beneficial about the ability to memorize songs with key lyrics and melodies. The Bible is replete with songs, hymns, and creedal formulas which communicate important messages about our Heavenly Father and His plan for the ages. The poem Moses communicated in Deuteronomy 32 is a place where Bible readers and interpreters frequently turn for teaching about the heritage and destiny of Israel. It is surely a passage which has generated much discussion among today’s Messianic Believers!

V’yeilekh actually includes three separate passages for its Haftarah: from Hosea, Micah, and Joel. Providentially I think, the Hosea and Micah readings are closely similar to Moses’ final words. Even though the Deuteronomy 32 song Moses composed speaks of judgment, God does promise restitution and restoration for His people (Deuteronomy 32:36-43), and He will deliver them from their exile and banishment. This is also a major theme of the Prophets, which we can be considering this week from several distinct witnesses.

The Prophet Hosea declared that the Lord will heal Israel’s stumbling and apostasy, He will love them freely, and He will turn His anger away from them. The key to receiving the Almighty’s blessings is to simply understand Him and walk in His ways. This surely requires His people to allow themselves to be submissive to His words, and allow His words to convict their hearts toward repentance:

“Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to Him, ‘Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, that we may present the fruit of our lips. Assyria will not save us, we will not ride on horses; nor will we say again, “Our god,” to the work of our hands; for in You the orphan finds mercy.’ **I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from them.** I will be like the dew to Israel; He will blossom like the lily, and he will take root like *the cedars of Lebanon*. His shoots will sprout, and his beauty will be like the olive tree and his fragrance like *the cedars of Lebanon*. Those who live in his shadow will again raise grain, and they will blossom like the vine. His renown *will be* like the wine of Lebanon. O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like a luxuriant cypress; from Me comes your fruit. **Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the LORD are right, and the righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them**” (Hosea 14:1-9).

The Prophet Micah’s message is an encouraging reminder that the Lord does not retain His anger forever. The Lord promises to have compassion on His people, demonstrating unconditional love and casting all of their sin into the depths of the sea:

“Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? **He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.** You will give truth to Jacob *and* unchanging love to Abraham, which You swore to our forefathers from the days of old” (Micah 7:18-20).

The third part of Haftarah *V’yeylekh* is a long selection from Joel 2. This also attests of God’s love for His people, despite their wondering ways. The Lord will fulfill His obligations to His chosen people Israel, despite their widescale lack of allegiance. After being brought back from being the reproach among the nations, God will restore what the locusts have eaten and His people will not suffer shame again:

“Blow a trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room and the bride out of her *bridal* chamber. Let the priests, the LORD’s ministers, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, ‘Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not make Your inheritance a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, “Where is their God?”’ Then the LORD will be zealous for His land and will have pity on His people. The LORD will answer and say to His people, ‘Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied *in full* with them; **and I will never again make you a reproach among the nations.** But

I will remove the northern *army* far from you, and I will drive it into a parched and desolate land, and its vanguard into the eastern sea, and its rear guard into the western sea. And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up, for it has done great things.' Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad, for the LORD has done great things. Do not fear, beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, for the tree has borne its fruit, the fig tree and the vine have yielded in full. So rejoice, O sons of Zion, and be glad in the LORD your God; for He has given you the early rain for *your* vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, the early and latter rain as before. The threshing floors will be full of grain, and the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil. Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; **then My people will never be put to shame. Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and there is no other; and My people will never be put to shame**" (Joel 2:15-28).

Today, whether we are Jewish Believers who have finally come to know the Messiah Yeshua, or non-Jewish Believers who have been enriched by our Hebraic Roots—we should take encouragement from knowing that Israel will be restored by the supernatural hand of our Creator! Like Moses and the Prophets attested: *it is just a matter of time*. Even if we might get frustrated when various individual voices deter or complicate the process of restoration, Israel's restoration is a work of God and not of limited mortals! While each of us should make sure that we have appropriated the salvation available in the Messiah *as individuals*, it is only the King of Kings who can restore us *corporately* to Himself.

Haftarah Ha'azinu

"The Rock at the End"

2 Samuel 22:1–22:51

Occasionally, life's challenges tend to intersect with our weekly study of the Torah and Haftarah. This week is one of those times, so please allow me to share with you some intimate thoughts which have been on my heart and mind.

By the time one reaches this point in the annual cycle of Torah teachings, the Fall appointed times have commenced, and we anticipate the severity of *Yom Kippur*. The thirty days, of personal reflections during the month of Elul, are amplified as the Ten Days of Awe complete the total time period of forty days, preparing the seeking heart for the Day of Atonement. It is appropriate that Torah students can