

7 Elul 5776 (10/9/16)

Do You Know who the Messiah Is? Part One J. M. Terrett**Shoftim****Judges****Making Sure You Do It Right****Torah:** Deuteronomy 16:18- 21:9**Haftarah:** Isaiah 51:12-52:12**Brit Chadashah:** Matthew 3:1-17(Colette pp. 31,33) **Ps. 17** Jewish Hero: Luke. Torah Carrier: Donna

This portion covers all or part of five chapters in Deuteronomy and deals with various aspects of proactive judgement which the people were to exercise when they entered into the land. They were to set up a system whereby criminal behaviour was to be dealt with firmly and fairly, so that neither the idolatrous influence of the Canaanites nor any carnal compromises among the people would be allowed to infect the community and turn the people away from their singular devotion to G-d through His Word.

The prophetic portion deals with the promise of the restoration of Jerusalem and of the glory of the coming Kingdom when the entire earth shall be renewed. It was given to a reduced and scattered people to reassure them that G-d is still in control, no matter how much the world seems to be coming apart at the seams. It mentions the coming of the Messiah who will announce good news because the L-rd, through Him will console and redeem His people.

It takes the people from the uncertainty of their present distress and reminds them that one day all the pain and confusion and destruction of this life will be done away with, once the kingdom of G-d comes. We need to also take comfort in the promise of the coming Kingdom and let the comfort of this relentless certainty free us from being overpowered by the global foolishness which keeps swirling around us generationally.

The New Testament portion deals with the ministry of John the Baptist who prepared the way for the people to receive the message of the Messiah through sincere repentance and returning to the requirements of the revealed Word.

As we approach the Fall Feasts, I want to give you a balanced, biblical view of the Messiah and His ministry and all three portions this week, talk about the order He will bring out of the personal and communal chaos which the darkness of this life wants to invest our lives with. We have to be very careful about which spiritual influences we listen to and we need to use personal and communal judgement to establish wholesome spiritual order in our midst.

The promise of the coming Kingdom has been the hope of Israel ever since our father Abraham was told that we would become a great nation and be a blessing to all nations. A large part of that blessing is to be a testimony of light in the way we apply His Word into our lives and live in peaceful, spiritual harmony. I commend the content of these portions to you for personal study so that we learn to do it right in our lives become part of His solution by bringing order out of chaos and living by the kingdom standards of His Word in every area of our lives.

In chapter 18 of Deuteronomy, Moses speaks of a coming prophet who shall be like him but with two major differences. First YHVH shall put His Words in the prophet's mouth and secondly this prophet shall say whatever YHVH commands him to. At first glance this does not seem to be a radical departure from the way the L-rd spoke through Moses until you think about it.

G-d spoke to Moses and Moses recorded what was said to him. This future prophet will speak the words of YHWH directly and they will not just be spoken to him – the words shall be in him and it will be YHWH speaking directly through him. He shall be like Moses and yet he shall speak things which Moses never spoke, without contradicting what was already said.

He would take divine, revealed truth to a higher level because there were things which would need to be said which Moses was not given the mandate to say or to reveal. In other words, this prophet would be a direct, personal source of revelation, where the words of G-d would be put in his mouth. He would be the Word of G-d speaking from the lips of a human being.

The Tenach (Torah, prophets and writings) contain some 300 or so references to our Messiah and here is a one of them. He shall be the Word indwelling and He shall say things which Moses was not authorized or able to say. The passage indicates a new level of revelation and, by application all that was revealed by Moses was to be a preparation for that which was not yet revealed.

Now we know that our Messiah never contradicts what was said through Moses, but Moses himself indicates that there is more to come which the L-rd is not going to say through him, but only through the prophet who was then yet to come. The mystery of who the Messiah was to be and what He was to say is firmly imbedded in what was said through Moses and while Moses was able to speak the Word which was said to Him, this prophet would be able to speak the Word directly.

Let me say it another way. There is not a single word in the New Testament which contradicts or undoes anything which was said in the first Scriptures, but the New Testament does say things which the first Scriptures were not allowed to say and this is not a problem, because this is what the first Scriptures are saying in this passage.

All that Moses had to say was what the L-rd told him to say, but it was not all which the L-rd had to say. The full story and the complete message was given by our blessed Messiah who is the Word incarnate (the Word made flesh). Now we know that there are still things which will remain hidden and secret (Deut. 29:29) but the redemptive purposes of G-d which the revelation of Moses (and the other prophets) referred to would only be fully revealed when they were spoken through the coming prophet who had them in His mouth. This is what the L-rd said through Moses and which was fulfilled when the Word became a man and dwelt among us.

Moses gave the people instructions so that they would be sure to do it right when they entered the land and not allow pagan or carnal foolishness to take root in their midst. These instructions were given so that the Word of G-d would be applied in every area of their lives and we face the same challenge in our lives today. We are still called to do it right and not become infected with darkness or carnal foolishness. The revealed Word remains the basis upon which we are to build our lives and we have the added privilege of knowing the prophet who is the Word incarnate who Moses said was to come at a later time. We are living in that time and we need to listen to His words because that is what Moses said we need to do.

Yeshua our Messiah is that prophet and no one else. He is the Word incarnate and He said and did things which Moses was not given the mandate to share and let me make one thing clear so that we make sure that we do it right when we walk with the L-rd in our day and age.

What G-d said through Moses is the word of G-d and what G-d said through our Messiah should also be seen as the word of G-d – that is what the L-rd was saying through Moses in our portion this week.

Said another way, Moses was given the Word of G-d, but the L-rd said to him and to all the people, including us, that there was coming another who would not be given the Word, but who would be the Word and say things Moses was not given the privilege of saying. This is the message of the Torah and this is the message we proclaim. Our Messiah is not a side note or an after thought which was added to the Torah. He is the Torah incarnate (the Word dwelling in the flesh) and the Torah says we should listen to Him – Moses says we should listen to Him, if we want to get it right and do it right.

Our Messiah is not in competition with Moses and the Good News which our Messiah brings was a promise which was given to Moses and which was revealed in the fullness of time. Let me conclude by saying something which may surprise you, but not if you take the time to think about it. Moses was a Messianic Jew and was a believer in our Messiah, because the promise of Messiah is at the core of all that it means to be a Jew and to walk with the L-rd according to both the words of Moses and of our Messiah.

Sermon:

In the final days before the arrival of the High Holy Days and Sukkoth, I want to take the time to speak about our Messiah as the fulfilment of all that this special time means and all that it says. The establishment of the Kingdom of G-d under the reign of David's greater Son is the message of Judaism and is the fulfilment of all that was promised to us and to the world through us. As we come to the Fall Feasts, we are renewing our commitment to make our lives revolve around the Word of G-d and to make sure that they are build on the solid foundation of the Word.

We are not to listen to lesser sources and we are not to let the birds of doubt, the rocks of temptation or the weeds of this life devour, wither or choke the Word which our Messiah placed in our hearts when we came to faith. In fact, our entire lives in the Messiah become a battleground where we either grow in grace and knowledge through the Word or where we sink back into the sand as the storms of life shatter our spirituality because it is not based on the rock of His Word.

Today I want to begin a mini series which asks the question: do you know who the Messiah is? And it is the same question which Messiah Yeshua asked His disciples and Peter was the first one to give the right answer. Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Mary is the Messiah, the Word incarnate which Moses spoke about in this week's Torah portion. And there are three aspects of His identity which I want to deal with so that we can get the most out of the High Holy Days and Sukkoth, because they are all about Him and what it means to walk with Him.

He is divine, G-d manifest in the flesh who walked among us. This is the testimony of the first Scriptures. He also lived as a human being, walking in Adam's flesh, sinless and offered Himself as the perfect, flawless sacrifice to win salvation for all the scattered sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. This is also the testimony of the first Scriptures.

Finally, He is the coming King who will usher in the Kingdom of G-d over all the nations and

generations of mankind, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. This is also the testimony of the first Scriptures.

In Yeshua's day there were many strange and confusing ideas about who He was and things haven't changed much over the years. As I teach you and remind you who our Messiah is,, let me clearly specify that whoever you say He is or believe that He is, needs to be based firmly and solely on the testimony of the Scriptures, both those which were given through Moses and the prophets and those which came to use through our Messiah and His apostles – nothing more and nothing less.

So let us deal first with the testimony of the Scriptures which declare that our Messiah is G-d the Son, the Word incarnate, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the same, unchanging G-d who has existed from everlasting to everlasting. Now I do not claim to be able to fully explain the mystery of the trinity, but I do claim and can show anyone who asks that the trinity is the clear testimony of the first Scriptures and not something which the church made up and tries to impose on the Scriptures.

There is only one G-d and there will only be one G-d who has always existed as an inseparable "echad", which in Hebrew means a composite unity. Yichad is a Hebrew word which means: one and only one and is never used to describe the singular wonder of G-d who has always been and will always be a composite unity: Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Before I deal with the clearest description of the singular divinity of our Messiah let me make three comments. First of all, the trinity is clearly indicated through the Bible, from Genesis to the Revelation and it is not a foreign concept which the New Testament introduces. I have a book in my library which outlines thousands of passages in the first Scriptures which teach this truth about G-d, His Messiah and the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, even though mainstream modern Judaism would vehemently deny it, the trinity is an idea which is found throughout the Talmud and other Jewish devotional literature. When I got started in the Messianic Movement, I acquired an Art Scroll orthodox Siddur, an Art Scroll Chumash (the Torah, with four commentaries in Hebrew, Aramaic and English). Over the years, I have built up an extensive library of mainstream, traditional Jewish books and commentaries, including a copy of the complete Talmud and even though Jewish people are allergic to the word "trinity", the concept of a triune G-d is consistently taught in mainstream Jewish sources.

Lastly, let me demonstrate my second point. All Jews believe in one G-d. All Jews believe in the Spirit of G-d. And all Jews believe that the final Messiah, David's Greater son is divine. All Jews believe that divinity is reserved to G-d, His Spirit and His Messiah and only they are worthy of worship and have existed unchanged throughout eternity. The great majority of Jews do not (yet) believe that Jesus of Nazareth (whom we call Yeshua) is the Messiah, David's Greater son but all Jews, even the most liberal agree that the Torah teaches that there is a divine Messiah Saviour whom they are still waiting for.

Judaism teaches that there is only one G-d, who has only one Spirit and will rule for eternity through only one Messiah. Sometime, I would like to take you through some of my favourite passages which clearly teach the composite unity of G-d, both in the first Scriptures and in those which have come down to us in the New Testament, which is an entirely kosher, Jewish

document, and is the Word of G-d, with nothing added and nothing deleted.

As we bring another festival cycle to a close and get ready to welcome another year of Bible Study, prayer, fellowship, worship and outreach, let me take you the passage which first spoke to me as a very young convert about the incredible wonder of our divine Messiah who is and always was and always will be G-d the son.

Passage: ***For a child has been born for us and a son given to us; authority rests upon His shoulders; and He is named: Wonderful [Peleh], Counsellor [Yoayts], Mighty G-d [Ayl Gibor], Everlasting Father [Av Ad], Prince of Peace [Sar shalom].*** (Is. 9:6 [9:5 in French])

This verse is part of the scroll of Isaiah which was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, several centuries before the arrival of the One to whom it refers and it makes five declarations about the identity of the child which was born to us and given to us (Jews and Gentiles). But before I do that, let me just correct a false rendering from the Hebrew which the great talmudic scholar, Rashi made in the thirteen century of the common era.

Not even the most radical orthodox Jewish authorities dare to change what the Torah says, but many of them try and change what it means. In Rashi's commentary it says that a child is given and born who will come in the name of the wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty G-d and Everlasting Father and shall be called the Prince of Peace.

This is not what the Hebrew text says and we always need to be cautious and refuse to accept it when people say a verse in the Bible means something different from what it says. The phrase: "He shall be called" precedes the five declarations of Messiah's divinity and nowhere in the Hebrew does it say "He shall come in the name of". All five assertions apply equally to the one Messiah and they are not split up or divided. Let's look at them.

Wonderful, Peleh in Hebrew, means that He is worthy of praise and worship. And since Jews are only allowed to praise G-d and are to worship Him alone, wonderful is a word that describes G-d alone, not an exalted man or even a mighty angel. Our Messiah who was given to us and born for us is Peleh and we see in the Revelation that He is in the midst of the throne and is worthy to receive all praise. Yeshua is Peleh.

Counsellor, Yoayts in Hebrew means that the child embodies all the wisdom of G-d as G-d the divine Counsellor. He was born the Counsellor; He did not become the Counsellor or even acquire enough divine wisdom to become the Counsellor. G-d alone is all wise and this baby possess all the wisdom of G-d and we know that G-d will never share either His glory or His nature with anyone else. The full wisdom of G-d is fully and entirely embodied in this little baby. Yeshua is Yoayts.

Everlasting Father, Av Ad, in Hebrew states unequivocally that this child is the Everlasting Father. This means that there never was a time when He did not exist as the Father and there never will be a time when He shall not exist as the Everlasting Father. And since the Bible says that we only have one Father, then this little baby is that Father, from everlasting to everlasting. Yeshua is Ayl Gibor.

Mighty G-d, Ayl Gibor, in Hebrew declares loudly that this little newborn is none else that the Mighty G-d. The Bible firmly teaches that there is only one G-d who alone is mighty and this

passage recognizes that this child is the one and only Mighty G-d and there is none else. There never has been another G-d and there will never be another G-d and this child is G-d. Yeshua is Ayl Gibor.

Prince of Peace, Sar Shalom, in Hebrew means that He is the reigning monarch who shall achieve or bring peace. Since the Bible teaches that there is only one reigning monarch capable of bringing peace, this little baby is that reigning monarch. He is the King of Kings and the L-rd of L-rds, but the term Prince is used here to indicate His peace will overcome all war and conflict and will be established over all the nations and generations of mankind. He is the One who shall bring and establish His peace. Yeshua is Sar Shalom.

When adjectives or descriptive nouns are given in groups of five in the Scriptures it is a sign that what is being said is firmly established and is an unshakable reality. There are many other clear references in the Scriptures (First and Last) to both the divinity of our Messiah and to the singular trinity of G-d – His composite unity. This is the consistent testimony of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation and as we prepare to welcome the Fall Feasts, all of them refer to our Messiah and to both His kingship and His sovereignty. He alone, Yeshua the Messiah, is the divine judge and He alone is the true sacrifice for sins which brings us the eternal atonement. He alone will usher in the final Kingdom of G-d because He is and always has been: Peleh, Yoayts, Av Ad, Ayl Gibor and Sar Shalom.

Unless you realize this, you do not know what the Bible teaches about who Messiah is, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Shabbat shalom. Let's pray.