

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Understanding Torah Society part 19

The Coming King? – Examination of Hoshea 1:11

Hoshea 1:11

And the children of Yehudah and the children of Yisrael shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Yizrael.

Is this passage speaking of Mashiach or some other type of leader? Where should one place this passage in the prophetic timeline? What is happening in this passage? The answers to these questions and other questions will depend largely upon how one understands this passage. Let's dig into the nuts and bolts of this passage a little to see if we can increase our understanding of it, thus, increasing our understanding of what is coming in the future.

The first question we would like to examine concerns of whom this passage is speaking. The "head" which the children of Yehudah and the children of Yisrael appoint for themselves comes from the Hebrew word ראש – "rosh," which means *begin* or *head*. This does not seem to be a king, but rather some other type of head of state such as a prime minister or president. Typically, a king is not appointed, but rather inherits his position from his father before him. In our modern world, a president or prime minister would normally be thought of as being elected by the people of the nation in which he serves.

Therefore, one might conclude this word does not seem to be pointing to the coming Mashiach. Next, let us examine how this leader is selected to see if this confirms this conclusion.

The word "appoint" from the above passage comes from the Hebrew word שום – "sum" (pronounced as soom), which means *to place*, as in "appoint." We see this very thing happening in the following passage.

Shemot (Exodus) 18:21

"Moreover you shall provide out of all the people able men, such as fear Elohim, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be princes of thousands, princes of hundreds, princes of fifties, and princes of tens.

The word "place" in this passage is the same word שום "sum." Some have suggested the word שום "sum" in Hoshea 1:11 means this leader is elected. However, there is nothing in the context of Scripture to suggest such a process. While this could be true, it is not necessarily true, as we are not told how this "head" is selected, only that he is placed over both nations,

making them one nation. This seems to be the point of the passage, the two nations becoming one nation.

Since we are not told in this passage how this “head” is selected, this does not help us much in determining whether this person is Mashiach or not. Next, we will look at the activity of this leader to see if this can help us determine if this may or may not be Mashiach.

The phrase describing their joined activity under the leadership of this “head” is ***and shall go up from the land***, which consists of two words in Hebrew. וְעָלוּ מִן-הָאָרֶץ v’alu min-ha’aretz. As a point of clarification, when two Hebrew words are joined with a maqeph, these words are pronounced and treated as one word. Thus, מִן-הָאָרֶץ is seen as one word, rather than two words. The phrase וְעָלוּ מִן is quite common in Scripture. It means to leave where one is and go somewhere else. For example, please consider the following passage.

B’reshit (Genesis) 13:1

And Avram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev.

The only difference here is Avram left Egypt, whereas Yisrael and Yehudah are leaving the land. However, for whatever reason, under the leadership of this newly placed “head,” Yehudah and Yisrael have chosen him for the express purpose of leaving the land. This seems to indicate to this writer this is not Mashiach. Mashiach returns to lead us back into the land, not out of the land. Therefore, this would place this passage sometime before the return of Mashiach.

Please note that Yehudah and Yisrael have chosen to join back together from two separate nations into one in order to leave the land. This strongly suggests to us the reunification of Yehudah and Yisrael shall transpire before the return of Mashiach.

There is one final item which we need to examine in this study: the play on words between Yisrael and Yizrael.

יִשְׂרָאֵל - Yisrael = princess of El (pronounced – yis-ra-ale)

יִזְרְעֵאל - Yizrael = seed of El (pronounced – yiz-r’-el)

These two words are phonetically similar. However, it is not just the changing of the ש (shin) to a ז (zayin), but is also the addition of an ע (ayin). First, let us examine the meaning of the words themselves. Let’s remember, when Hoshea was the prophet sent to the northern kingdom of Yisrael, the nation had already been split into two separate houses. Since that time, these two nations have never yet rejoined as two nations becoming one nation. Therefore, while this prophetic word could have come true in the days of Hoshea, it did not.

יִשְׂרָאֵל – “Yisrael” consists of the joining of two words, יָשַׁר – “yasar” which means *to straighten*, and אֵל – “el” the shortened form of אֱלֹהִים – “alah,” which means *master*. Thus, we have in the name of Yisrael, those who have been straightened by the Master.

This word is then played upon with יִזְרְעֵאל – “Yizrael.” The last two characters are the same with the same meaning. זָרַע – “zara” means *to cast from a distance* as one casts seed. With the beginning יָ – “yod” standing for the name of YHWH, one would then have the meaning “Yah casting the seed of El.” In this case, He seems to be casting them out of the land once again.

Both Yehudah and Yisrael have come back into the land, have joined forces under one leader, and then leave the land. Since this has never happened, we can rightly surmise this is still sometime in the future.

Is it possible this is a reference to all of Israel fleeing to that place of safety in the wilderness? Why would she flee?

Matithyah (Matthew) 24:15-16

15 "When therefore you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (let the reader understand),

16 "then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains."

If this is the reason for her leaving the land, then there does not seem to this writer enough time for any election. But rather this is done in haste.

All indications within this passage and its context seem to indicate this passage is not dealing with Mashiach in person. Rather, it is dealing with an event which transpires sometime before His return.

This passage therefore seems to indicate to the reader that the two nations of Yehudah and Yisrael have been formed in the land of Israel and become two separate nations. Then, events happen which cause these two nations to join together to form one nation, and a leader is placed at their head to lead them out of the land. This is suggested by the name of Yizrael as well as openly stated in the verse.

Thus, this passage suggests the Torah society of both nations is well established and functioning before Mashiach returns.

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