

God's Everlasting Covenant
presents

Shadows of the Messiah (Part 3): Zerubbabel

In our teachings, we have written elsewhere many times that Messiah is “hidden” throughout the *Torah*. In fact, He appears in shadows and types in every single *Torah* portion. As one would suspect, He also appears throughout the entire *Tanakh* (Old Testament). One such place is in the prophet Zechariah in the person of Zerubbabel:

So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"' Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. (Zechariah 4:6-9)

Who is Zerubbabel? His name actually appears for the first time in I Chronicles 3:15-19. He was a descendant of King Jehoiakim and he returned from the Babylonian captivity with Nehemiah and Ezra due to the generosity and kindness of King Cyrus of Persia. According to Tsvi Sadan, who has written a fabulous book called *The Concealed Light*, the Jewish sages call Zerubbabel a “potential Messiah” because he built the second Temple (*aka Herod’s Temple*). It is written elsewhere in the Scriptures when Messiah comes, he will build the Temple. Though Zerubbabel was a descendant of King David and certainly could have been anointed as King, he only served as the governor of Judah because a Persian king reigned over Judah. You can read about Zerubbabel in Ezra (chapters 2-5), Nehemiah (chapters 7 and 12) and Haggai (chapters 1-2).

Now for some very interesting and hidden jewels! The name of Zerubbabel is written in Hebrew like this: זְרֻבְבָל. In the rabbinical fashion of interpreting Hebrew, we can divide the spelling of Zerubbabel’s name in such a way that other things come to light. But first, we need to lay some foundation.

The sages say that one of the Messiah’s names is “stranger.” Stranger is זָר “zar.” Why would Messiah be known as a “stranger”? According to Tzvi Sadan in *The Concealed Light*, the name of “stranger” for Messiah does not appear explicitly in Jewish sources. He writes:

This does not mean, however, that the concept is absent from these sources. In a Jewish context, a “stranger” most commonly means a non-Jew. A stranger, or the English has it, an “outsider,” is also someone from a tribe other than the Levi (Exodus 30:33). A stranger, therefore, for one reason or another, is an alien to the tribe of Levi, or to the Jewish people and religion.

In the case of Messiah, he is seen both as a “non-Jew” and as someone who went astray. For example, the sages believe that Messiah is from the seed of “non-Jews” like Tamar and Ruth. Tamar gave birth to Perez from whom Boaz came. And from the union of Boaz to a Moabite woman David was born, and from his seed is Messiah.

Isaiah 53 suggests the other possibility: that Messiah will be mistaken for a Jew who went astray. In Isaiah’s depiction, he was looked upon with contempt because of this erroneous perception. “We esteemed him stricken” was understood to mean, “We thought he deserved this from God,” meaning that people wrongly thought Messiah was breaking the Law. (*The Concealed Light, Vine of David – First Fruits of Zion*, 2012, p. 77).

This fits perfectly with what is written in the gospels. *Yeshua* was seen by the corrupt Saducean leadership and some Pharisees as one who broke the *Torah* of Moses. Indeed, most of Christianity teaches the same and stands behind the voices of Messiah’s accusers! Worse, Christians teach that *Yeshua* not only broke the *Torah*, but He has done away with it as though it were obsolete. This in spite of the fact He clearly stated in Matthew 5:17-19 He did not, and anyone who teaches disobedience to the least of the commandments would be called least in the Kingdom of God! The main point of all this is that *Yeshua* was rejected by many of His own because He was seen as a Jew who went astray. This is taught in Judaism to the present day. He is the “zar.”

To further our depiction of the “stranger” concept, there is a well known passage about Messiah in the Babylonian Talmud in tractate Sanhedrin 98a:

R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: 'Have I a portion in the world to come?' He replied, 'if this Master desires it.' R. Joshua b. Levi said, 'I saw two, but heard the voice of a third.' He then asked him, 'When will the Messiah come?' — 'Go and ask him himself,' was his reply. 'Where is he sitting?' — 'At the entrance [of the town].' And by what sign may I recognise him?' — 'He is sitting among the poor lepers.

The footnotes explain that at a later time, the Vilna Gaon, a rabbi from the middle ages, crossed out “of the town” and wrote “Rome.” This understanding caused many to speculate about this passage. Again, according to Tsvi Sadan:

Asking what Rabbi Joshua ben Levi meant by “Where is he [Messiah] sitting?” Abravanel says that it means: From which corner of the earth will Messiah come? The answer to the question is found in the same passage where Rabbi Joshua says that Messiah is sitting at the gate of Rome among the poor and the lepers. Abravanel’s interpretation is that Messiah will come from the West.

Knowing that Messiah is going to be revealed in the west leads Abravanel, who was a fifteenth-century Spanish Jew, to conclude that “King Messiah is going to be born in the lands of the Christians who are in the west, who are drawn to the religion of Rome.” (*The Concealed Light*, p. 79)

We should all find this fascinating since Christianity has, in a sense, hijacked the Jewish Messiah. We have explained in our teaching, *Shadows of the Messiah*, [Parts 1](#) and [2](#), how Christianity has

clothed Him in gentile garments and made Him appear as if He was one from the nations! He is hidden from His brothers' eyes because He doesn't look like a Jewish Messiah at all. Who can blame the Jewish people for their blindness when we have helped to contribute to it? We have painted Him as one who abolished the *Torah*, started a new religion, abrogated the kosher laws, changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and replaced the Feasts with new holy days, namely Christmas and Easter, which to the Jew, are pregnant with pagan trappings! This fits with the Joseph typology and with Moses, the "First Redeemer", as well. Moses was born in Egypt and Joseph was hidden in Egypt. Both appeared as Egyptians in every way and were, at first, "strangers" to their people! In a manner of speaking, we could say *Yeshua* is living in the West (Rome) and is currently hidden away from His brothers. In a very real sense, the Messiah is exiled from His true home, Israel. He is the "zar", the "stranger" who lives among the Gentiles!

Let's now return to the name of Zerubbabel, for we have now laid the foundation so we can interpret his name according to the Hebrew. The letters of the name can be divided into three groupings or words:

ז ר ו ב ב ל

The first word, "zar", as we have already discussed means "stranger." The second word is the "u" sound, made with the letter *vav*. In the paleo-Hebrew, *vav* always meant "to be attached" or "connected" to something. The *vav* is also the conjunction "and." The last word is 'Babel', which means "confusion" or "Babylon." In the Jewish mind, "Babylon" represents the Gentile world. Since Zerubbabel was born during the Babylonian captivity and literally came out of Babylon, this makes sense. Thus, his name can mean "the stranger connected to Babylon." This fits well with our discussion above about Messiah coming from the West or the land of the Christians. We know that the first time He "came," He was born in Bethlehem of Judah and was a Jew in every way. At the time of His second coming, when He will rescue and redeem Israel, it could be said that He will come from the West, the land of the Gentiles because He is the "stranger" who will come from Rome, which is where Christianity as a religion was founded. The Jewish sages were right! When will this all happen? In *Sefer Yeshu'ot Meshicho*, Rabbi Abravanel wrote that Messiah will be revealed when Israel is expelled from the Christian lands. If this is true, each one of us should be watching events unfold in the world. Jews have been expelled from Christian lands before, and it is likely to happen again. All people, especially Christians, should be ready to protect them and facilitate bringing these precious beloved brothers of our Master to the only place in the world that will accept and receive them: Israel.

There is one more thing about Messiah's two advents into human history that is worth noting. Scholars have pondered these words, and they have continued to remain somewhat of a mystery for the last two thousand years:

As lightning comes out of the east and shines even to the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:27)

I would like to suggest a somewhat different interpretation. Let's consider for a moment that Messiah's first entrance into human history obviously began in Israel. After His resurrection

and just before His ascension to the Father, He commanded His followers to make disciples, starting in Jerusalem, going out to Judea, Samaria and the rest of the nations of the world. History confirms this has taken place. Interestingly, the good news has moved out in waves from its starting point in the east and has moved west, first to Africa, Greece, Turkey, Europe, the Americas, Australia, and so on. Every time it moves to another nation of the earth, from Jerusalem, it is always west. It might be southwest, or northwest, but the gospel has been moving westward since the disciples began spreading it in obedience to *Yeshua's* command. This makes perfect sense when we westerners remember the Bible was written from a Middle Eastern perspective. One of the last bastions to subdue has been the Asian continent, including India, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, and China. The Arab countries in the Middle East will be the last stronghold of the enemy and progress is being made there. If we skip over the Middle East for the moment, Asia is the farthest point west from Jerusalem where the gospel has penetrated. We are getting very close to ending up in Jerusalem again. Where is there revival at this time in history? In Asia! Asians are coming to Messiah, realizing the connection to their Jewish roots, and they are making pilgrimage to Israel by the thousands every year! Tourists from China and Indonesia are also on the rise. Koreans were the top visitors to Israel until 2010, when India surpassed them! India is west of Korea!

It is all a mystery that the God of Israel seems to be unfolding in these last days. Things that have been sealed up for centuries are becoming clear in our day. What a privilege to live in these times! Indeed, as the focus is returning to Jerusalem, we should be mindful of what the prophets teach us. The Son of Man's feet will touch on the Mount of Olives, on the east side of Jerusalem. From there, He will head west through the Kidron Valley, up through the Beautiful Gate on the eastern side of the Temple Mount and into the Most Holy Place, where He will take up His scepter and put on His royal garment. There He will be crowned by the people of Israel as King Messiah at long last! Come quickly LORD, and in our days!