



Tisha B'Av

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Our G-d is able to take that which is not good and turn it into that which is very good. The destruction of the First and Second Temples were extremely painful experiences for the Children of Israel. For the purpose of this article, we will focus on the destruction of the Second Temple. It is important for one to remember that both Temples were destroyed on the same date upon the Biblical calendar, **the ninth day of the month of Av (Tisha B'Av)**. There is no disagreement that it was due to Israel's sin that these two Temples were laid waste with the Holy City of Jerusalem. Also, the nation of Israel ceased to be and the people went into exile.

The longest and the most difficult period of exile for the Jewish people began after Titus destroyed the Kingdom of Judah in 70 AD. During the Babylonian captivity, Jewish life was relatively good; and when the 70 years ended and the opportunity to return to Judah presented itself, many from the Jewish community chose to remain in the Babylonian empire. However, during this Roman exile (from 70 AD until now), the Jewish people suffered much persecution and many pogroms. The height of such suffering was of course the Holocaust. Although the L-rd was NOT the cause of the Holocaust, He allowed it. This fact has caused many of those who survived the Holocaust to become atheists. In some way, they blame G-d for what occurred. It is odd that it is quite common for people to blame G-d for the actions of humans. It is also important to remember that there is an enemy, i.e. Satan, who is constantly at work to hinder the purposes of G-d and therefore he frequently attacks the Jewish people, using a variety of people and means.

It is of course most sad and can be very discouraging when reviewing the numerous places throughout the world where laws were enacted to deny Jewish individuals the same rights as others. Such policies often resulted in members of the Jewish community suffering and many of whom also lost their lives. Yet, G-d in His providence preserved a remnant of His people and after nearly 1,900 years, reestablished a nation for the descendants of Jacob. Although there is a nation of Israel, until the Third Temple is established, it is generally viewed that the Roman exile has not ended. Since Tisha B'Av is strongly connected to the destruction of the Temples, it is appropriate not to view the exile as ended until there is once again a Temple in Jerusalem.

Biblical prophecy demands that there will indeed be another Temple in Jerusalem. However, this Temple will not be pleasing to G-d. It will actually be for the desire of the anti-christ that this Temple will be built. This is not to say that Jewish people will not rejoice when this Temple is built. Despite whatever legitimate feelings and proper intent that they may have, this Temple will be initially used for the purposes of the anti-christ and not Messiah Yeshua.

There is a perspective which is gaining support that Jerusalem should not be viewed as the capital of Israel and the center of Judaism, but more of an international city and a symbol for unity of all the religions of the world. A major objective for those who share this view is **religious tolerance** and even though many world religions do not have any connection to Jerusalem, the hope is that seeing the three major monotheistic religions (Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam) at peace with one another will serve as a powerful testimony to the desired goal of religious pluralism.

It is stated emphatically in the book of Daniel (see Daniel 9:27 and 12:11) that during the first three and half years of the Temple functioning, sacrifices and offerings will be made at this Temple. The context demands that these will be offered to the G-d of Israel. However, in the middle of the final seven years (Daniel's 70th week), the anti-christ will bring an end to such sacrifices and offerings by committing a specific action known as the **Abomination of Desolation**. This event is mentioned five times in the Scriptures: Daniel 9:27, 11:36, 12:11, Matthew 24:15 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4. However, only in Daniel 11:36 and 2 Thessalonians is the Abomination of Desolation specifically discussed as to what this action will be comprised. Both Daniel and Paul reveal that it will be the anti-christ who will enter into the Holy of Holies and exalt and magnify himself above all that is thought of as godly and proclaim himself that he is G-d.

It may well be the case that the Jewish community will appreciate the “seemingly good” things that the anti-christ will do for Israel and the Jewish people at the beginning of his administration as the leader of an empire that will rule over the world. However, when he commits the Abomination of Desolation, Israel will reject him and it will be **only at this time** that it will become clear that this leader of the world is indeed the anti-christ. It will be precisely because **the Jewish people will not accept the anti-christ**, and now will strongly reject him in every manner, that the worst time of persecution of the Jewish people will begin (See Daniel 12:1). G-d will use this persecution to bring one third of the Jewish people in the world to faith in Messiah Yeshua prior to His Second Coming and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom (see Zechariah 13:8-9).

It is during the Second Coming that the enemies of Israel and the antichrist himself will be totally defeated and destroyed. Then Yeshua will begin to rule and He will do so from the Temple. The question that is frequently raised is what Temple is this? There are two possible answers and both are connected to what is revealed by the Prophet Zachariah in the sixth chapter of his prophecy.

יב ואמרת אליו לאמר כה אמר יהוה צבאות לאמר הנה איש צמח שמו ומתחתיו יצמח ויבנה את-היכל יהוה: יג והוא יבנה את-היכל יהוה והוא ישב ומשל על-כסאו והיה כהן על-כסאו ועצת שלום תהיה בין שניהם: יד והעטרת תהיה לחלם ולטוביה ולידעיה ולחן בן-צפניה לזכרון בהיכל יהוה: טו ורחוקים יבאו ובנו בהיכל יהוה וידעתם כי-יהוה צבאות שלחני אליכם והיה אם-שמעו תשמעו בקול יהוה אלהיכם:

“And you will say to Him, ‘Thus said the L-rd of Hosts, saying, Behold a Man, Branch is His Name and underneath Him will sprout and will build the Sanctuary of the L-rd. And He will build the Sanctuary of the L-rd and He will lift up splendor and He will sit and will rule upon His Throne and He will be a Priest upon His Throne and the counsel of peace will be between them. The crown will be to Khelem and to Toviya and to Yidayah and the son of Tzfyah for a memorial in the Sanctuary of the L-rd. And those far away will come and build the Sanctuary of the L-rd, and you will know that the L-rd of Hosts sent me unto you when you will certainly hear the voice of the L-rd your G-d.” Zechariah 6:12-15

These few verses provide some interesting information about the Temple. The question which must be answered is, "*Are these verses speaking about ONLY about the Third Temple that will be functioning during Daniel's 70th week or only about the Temple during the Millennial Kingdom or both periods of time?*"

Although these verses can be interpreted in a variety of ways, it would best be understood that the Temple which Zechariah is referring to is primarily the Millennial Temple. The reason for this is the clear emphasis on the Messiah sitting and ruling from His throne, which will only take place in this manner during the Millennial Kingdom. Likewise, we also see the unity between the Messiah and the Priest, which is also spoken of by the Prophet Ezekiel, as a Millennial event. In verse 14, Zechariah returns for a moment to the days in which he was living. The purpose of this is to teach the reader that because the Temple was built during Zechariah's lifetime and there was good leadership, so too will this prophecy truly come about. The passage concludes with a statement that those far away will return and build the Sanctuary. The idea here is simply that the Millennial Kingdom will not exclude any of the Jewish people who were left in exile at the Second Coming of Messiah. In fact, Yeshua Himself said that when He comes the Second Time, He will send forth His angels to gather the elect from wherever they might be upon the earth (See Matthew 24:31).

When observing Tisha B'Av, one should not only think about the events that have already occurred, but also the wonderful prophetic promises that G-d has made to Israel, which will have their fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom, when Yeshua will be reigning from the Temple in Jerusalem. Amen