

תשעה באב

The Ninth of Av

Most followers of Yeshua are probably not familiar with the date the Ninth of Av. This date is indeed a sad day, as both the First and Second Temples were destroyed on this date. This destruction was not by accident, as the term Av means Father and it was the G-d of Israel Who laid waste to both of these Temples, as a token of His displeasure with the people of Israel, who were either committing idolatry or hating one another without cause. It is customary for those who are committed to the G-d of Israel to read publicly the book of Lamentations. This book is called in Hebrew **אֵיכָה**, which can be translated by the expression, "*How Oh G-d?*". It was inconceivable for the Jewish community to believe that it would be G-d Himself that would bring about the destruction of His own Temple.

One of the primary messages of the book of Lamentations is that G-d will indeed hold all people accountable for sin. This is the same message to which the Cross also testifies. The book of Lamentations is a highly spiritual book, only totaling five chapters. Not only is central to this book the destruction of the Temple, but also the city of Jerusalem. In Lamentations 2:17, one reads these words,

עֲשָׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם בַּעַד אֲמָרְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר צָנָה מִימֵי-קֶדֶם הָרָס וְלֹא חָמַל וַיִּשְׁמַח עָלֶיךָ אוֹיֵב הָרִים קֶרֶן צָרֶיךָ.

"The L-rd has done what He has planned, He has carried out His word which He commanded, from the days before He has torn down and has not had pity and He has made glad an enemy over you, He has lifted up the horn of your adversaries."

Lamentations 2:17

What happened to Jerusalem was exactly what the L-rd had promised He was going to do. None of what took place should have surprised the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The primary problem was that the prophet Jeremiah had warned the people, but the people of Israel were unwilling to turn from idolatry and obey G-d. This was a willful disobedience, rooted in rebelliousness. Jeremiah understood that the people were trusting in the fact that the Temple was in Jerusalem; rather than in repenting and turning away from Israel's idolatrous ways.

אל-תבטחו לכם אל-דברי השקר לאמר היכל יהוה היכל יהוה המה.

“You should not trust in false words, saying the Sanctuary of the L-rd, the Sanctuary of the L-rd they are”. Jeremiah 7:4

As bad as the situation had become for those in Judah and Jerusalem, the L-rd provides hope to His people. In Lamentations 3:31, it is stated,

כִּי לֹא יִזְנֹחַ לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי.

“For My Master will not cast away forever.” Lamentations 3:31

The subject of this sentence is the Hebrew word אֲדֹנָי, which means literally my master. It is clear that the Master to which is being referred is the L-rd, unfortunately most translators do not recognize the actual meaning of the word and incorrectly translate it as The L-rd. “The title אֲדֹנָי (Adonai, “Lord, Master”) appears about 448 times in the Hebrew Scriptures as a reverential address to the one true God.” (Bible Hub). Even though many render the term אֲדֹנָי as the L-rd, the root אדון means in the simplest sense, “*master*”. Due to the respect for the Tetragrammaton יהוה, when coming across this four letter word, pronounce it as Adonai. The reason behind this is that without a Temple in our days, Jewish Law forbids pronouncing the word יהוה and instead one says Adonai.

Within the book of Lamentations, there is also a clear reference to the Messiah in chapter 4:20. It is very significant that the chapter concludes with a strong word of encouragement. For it is stated in chapter 4 and verse twenty-two,

תָּם-עֲוֹנֶךָ בֶּת-צִיּוֹן לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהַגְלוֹתְךָ פֶּקֶד עֲוֹנֶךָ בֶּת-אֲדָוָה גְּלָה עַל-חַטָּאתֶיךָ.

“The end of your iniquity, O Daughter of Zion, He will not again exile you, He will visit your iniquity O Daughter of Edom, He has revealed your sins.” Lamentations 4:22

This verse expresses a change whereby it is the end of Israel’s sins, but the L-rd will visit the sins upon the Daughter of Edom. Prophetically, Edom is an end time’s enemy of Israel that will ultimately be destroyed. Edom’s defeat will bring about the establishment of the Kingdom of G-d. First, the Millennial Kingdom and then the final state of the Kingdom of G-d, the New Jerusalem.

The fast of the Ninth of Av is mentioned in the Bible in Zechariah 8:19 as the fast of the fifth month. In this verse, the prophet Zechariah makes a wonderful declaration as

these fast days will be transformed into joy, gladness, good, true and appointed times when the will of G-d will be fulfilled.

כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת צֹם הָרְבִיעִי וְצֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי וְצֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְצֹם הָעֲשִׂירִי יִהְיֶה לְבֵית-יְהוּדָה לְשִׂשׂוֹן
וּלְשִׂמְחָה וּלְמַעֲדִים טוֹבִים וְהָאֱמֶת וְהַשְּׁלוֹם אָהָבוּ.

“Thus said the L-rd of Hosts, the fast of the fourth (month) and the fast of the fifth (month) and the fast of the seventh (month) and the fast of the tenth (month) will be for the House of Judah for joy and gladness and good appointed times truth and peace love.” Zechariah 8:19

In this verse, the Hebrew word הַשְּׁלוֹם (hashalom) appears. Although most translators render the meaning as “*peace*”, this is technically incorrect. Proper study of this word reveals that הַשְּׁלוֹם actually relates to the will of G-d being fulfilled. This means that all of these fast days which are connected to the destruction the Babylonian Empire brought upon Judah and Jerusalem will be transformed into days that will be celebrated with joy and gladness and be viewed as appointed times which will express the goodness of the L-rd of Hosts and the people of G-d will love the truth of G-d and the fulfillment of G-d’s will.

May your observance of Tisha B’Av be a meaningful one.