



MBS078

A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



THE PRESENT WORK OF THE MESSIAH



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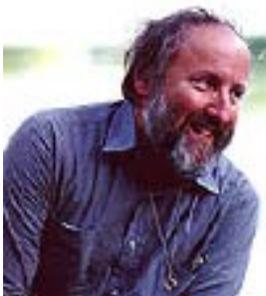
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*Jehovah said unto my
Lord, Sit you at my
right hand, Until I
make your enemies
your footstool.
Psalm 110:1*

What is Yeshua (Jesus) doing today? Bible teachers often speak about the work of the Messiah in the past, during His lifetime. They also speak about what Jesus will do in the future, such as the Rapture, the Second Coming, the Kingdom, and the Eternal State. It is rare to hear someone teach on what Jesus is doing today. This will be a discussion on the present session, as theologians call it, or the present work of the Messiah. It will be about what Yeshua is doing today.

This topic will be studied in four areas. First, His present position; secondly, His present work in heaven; thirdly, His present work on the earth; and fourthly, the seven figures that illustrate His present work.

I. THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE MESSIAH

What is the position of the Messiah today? Positionally, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father. The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would be seated at the right hand of God the Father. It was predicted in Psalm 80:17, which also used one of His famous messianic titles, the Son of Man: *Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, Upon the son of man whom you made strong for yourself.*

It was also prophesied in Psalm 110:1, where God the Father is viewed as speaking to the Messianic Son, saying to Him: *Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit you at my right hand, Until I make your enemies your footstool.*

After God the Son took on human form at the Incarnation, after He fulfilled in His life the purpose of the Incarnation, and after His death, Resurrection and Ascension, He was seated at the right hand of God the Father. He left Heaven in the form of God, but He returned to Heaven having two natures: divine and human. He is now the God-Man and, as the God-Man, He fulfills the prophecy that He would be seated at the right hand of God the Father.

The New Testament verifies that Psalm 110:1 speaks of the Messiah (Mat.

22:43-45; Mk. 12:35-37; Lk. 20:41-44). In fact, Yeshua quoted this very verse (Ps. 110:1) to the Pharisees with the question, “Whose son was the Messiah to be?” They correctly answered, “David's.” Then Jesus answered, “If the Messiah is David's son, why does David call Him his Lord?” It was a question that the Pharisees could not answer. But the answer lies in the God-Man concept: as to His humanity, Yeshua is David's son, but as to His deity, He is David's Lord. Furthermore, in addition to the Old Testament predictions, there are the Messiah's own predictions. While still on earth, Jesus Himself predicted that He would be seated at the right hand of God the Father (Mat. 26:64; Lk. 22:69).

Finally, the New Testament contains the record of the fulfillment of these prophecies. Yeshua is now seated at the right hand of God the Father, in fulfillment of the Old Testament passages. This fulfillment is verified by: Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33-36; 5:31; 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20-22; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; and I Peter 3:22. Insofar as His present position is concerned, Jesus is seated today at the right hand of God the Father.

II. THE PRESENT WORK OF THE MESSIAH

The second part of this study will focus on the present work of the Messiah in Heaven. He is in Heaven seated at the right hand of God the Father, but what is He doing there? He is doing five things.

A. Exercising His Authority

First, He is exercising universal authority: *All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth* (Mat. 28:18). He controls the universe in general, and He also controls the affairs which come into a believer's life (Eph. 1:20-22; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3-13; I Pet. 3:22).

B. Preparing a Place for Believers

Secondly, Yeshua, at the present time, is *preparing a place* in Heaven. This is what He promised His disciples He would be doing after He left them (Jn. 14:1-3). He is preparing a place right now for believers so that, when they go to join Him in Heaven, He will have a place all ready for them.

C. Mediating Between God and Men

The third work Jesus is doing in Heaven is that of mediating. He is the *one mediator between God, the Father, and men* (I Tim. 2:5). It was necessary for the mediator to be human, and that is why Yeshua became a man. Israel had the Levitical high priest as their mediator, but believers today have the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

D. Serving as Advocate and Comforter

A fourth work that Jesus is doing in Heaven is that of an Advocate or Comforter. The Greek work that is translated “advocate” is *parakleitos*, which literally means “comforter.” The Greek word speaks of one who is called upon for aid, one who pleads for the cause of another, one who gives

wise counsel. Indeed, Yeshua is the One upon whom we can call for aid. Jesus is the One who is pleading our cause before the Throne of God, especially in those cases when Satan has grounds for accusing us. Yeshua is the One who gives us wise counsel and wisdom. Thus, Jesus is the parakleitos; He is the Comforter and the Advocate.

This can be seen from three key passages. The first is John 14:16, which calls the Holy Spirit another parakleitos, another Comforter. The term “comforter” in that passage is speaking of the Holy Spirit and not of the Messiah. But notice the word another. The Holy Spirit is another Comforter. Of the two Greek words, which mean “another,” the one that Yeshua uses here is the one that means “another of the same kind.” The Holy Spirit is another Comforter of the same kind. Of the same kind as what? The same kind as Jesus! Just as Jesus is a Comforter, so is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a divine Comforter and, therefore, so is Yeshua. The second passage is Hebrews 9:24, which teaches that being the “paraclete,” the Advocate, is part of His present priestly ministry: now to appear before the face of God for us. The third passage is I John 2:1, which mentions the fact that He is our Advocate and spells out the need for an advocate. We need Him because of actual sins committed by believers. When a believer sins, he offends a righteous God, and that is why we still need the Messiah as our Advocate; in order to plead our cause.

The last thing to note about the Advocate is that the basic necessity of having an Advocate is to counteract the accusations of Satan. According to Revelation 12:10, Satan has the right to appear before the throne of God to accuse the brethren. Whenever a believer falls into a state of unconfessed sin, sooner or later, Satan will appear before the throne to accuse that believer before God the Father. That is why believers need the ministry of Yeshua as an Advocate: whenever Satan has any grounds for accusation, Jesus can then say, “Lay that sin upon my account; I have already paid for that sin when I died for that person on the cross.”

E. Interceding on Our Behalf

The fifth major work that Yeshua is presently doing in Heaven is the work of an Intercessor. He is interceding on our behalf. Why is the work of intercession necessary? His work of intercession is necessary because of our weakness; it is a work that has to do with our weaknesses and our helplessness. The two main passages of Scripture that talk about the intercessory work of the Messiah are Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25. These passages, taken together with Hebrews 9:24, picture vividly the Messiah as our Intercessor. First, because He is seated at the right hand of God, He has the continuous, unending ability to appear before the face of God the Father and makes intercession for us (Rom. 8:34). The Greek word translated for us means “on our behalf” or “for the benefit of.” And secondly, He draws near to God (Heb. 7:25). The Greek word translated draw near means “to meet with.” In other words, the picture of the Messiah as our Intercessor is that He appears before God the Father, meeting with Him on a face-to-face basis on our behalf and for our benefit

as He pleads our cause.

The nature of His intercession is priestly. Jesus is now functioning in the second of His three offices, the office of High Priest. Yeshua has three offices: Prophet, Priest, and King. He does not function in all three offices simultaneously, but rather, chronologically. When He was here on earth during His First Coming, He functioned in His first office as Prophet. When He returns to set up His Kingdom, He will function in His third office as King. Meanwhile, at the present time, He is functioning in His second office, that of Priest. One of the functions of a priest is to do the work of intercession. So the nature of the intercessory work of the Messiah is that of Priest in His priestly office. The objects or beneficiaries of His intercession are believers only, as He said He would do in John 17:9 and 20. He never intercedes on behalf of unbelievers.

The last thing about His work of intercession concerns the content of His intercession. The Messiah intercedes for us concerning two things. First, He intercedes when believers are tempted. Temptations which believers face are part of the content of His intercessory work (Heb. 4:14-16). The second content of His intercessory work is the purity of believers, to keep them from sinning (Heb. 10:21-22).

III. MESSIAH'S PRESENT WORK ON EARTH

The third part of this study concerns the present work of the Messiah on earth. While He is in Heaven seated at the right hand of God the Father, what is He doing on earth? All together, He is doing eleven things. First, He heads up the Church on earth (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).

Secondly, Jesus is building His Church on earth (Mat. 16:18). He is building the Church and will continue to do so until the Church is complete, at which point He will remove it and take it to Heaven where He is.

Thirdly, He is present in the Church (Mat. 28:20; Jn. 17:23, 26). The Messiah is divine as well as human. In His humanity, He is in Heaven only. However, in His deity, He is omnipresent, so He is also in the Church.

Fourthly, He imparts eternal life. It is Yeshua who imparts eternal life to those who believe. Every person who is saved receives eternal life. This impartation of eternal life is a work of Jesus here on earth (Jn. 1:4; 10:10; 11:25; 14:6; I Jn. 5:12; Col. 3:4).

The fifth work Yeshua is doing on earth is that He indwells the believers (Jn. 14:20, 23; 15:4-5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:26-27; I Jn. 3:24). Again, in His humanity, He is seated at the right hand of God the Father; but, in deity, He is omnipresent and He indwells every believer.

Sixth, He is the source of strength for believers here on earth (Phil. 4:13). Seventh, He is the source of power for believers here on earth (Mt. 28:18-

20).

Eighth, He answers prayers that believers are praying here on earth; every answer to prayer is a work of the Messiah (Jn. 14:14).

A ninth work, which Jesus is doing on earth, is that He helps believers who have particular needs. When a particular need is met, that is a work of the Messiah here on earth (Heb. 2:18; 4:16).

A tenth work, which Jesus does here on earth, is that He is the ground of the believer's hope. Although believers on earth may suffer physical limitations and struggle in spiritual battles, we have *the hope of glory*, the hope of *adoption* and the *redemption of our body*. Yeshua is the basis, the foundation, and the ground of that hope (Col. 1:27; Rom. 8:23).

The eleventh work that Jesus does here on earth while He is seated at the right hand of God the Father is that He sends the Spirit. Yeshua is responsible for the various works and ministries, which the Holy Spirit performs (Lk. 24:29; Jn. 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15).

IV. THE SEVEN FIGURES

In seven different ways, the Scriptures portray, symbolize or illustrate the relationship of the Messiah, in Heaven, to the Church, which is His Body here on earth. Each figure emphasizes one or more key points.

The first figure is that of “The Last Adam and the New Creation.” The Last Adam is Jesus, who is now in Heaven; the New Creation is the Body of the Messiah, the Church. This relationship is given in I Corinthians 15:45 and II Corinthians 5:17. The basic meaning of this relationship is to give new life. For as in Adam all die, in the Messiah, the Last Adam, all shall be made alive. The basic thrust of this first relationship is that of giving new life, the impartation of eternal life.

The second figure is that of “The Head and The Body.” The Messiah is the Head of the Church, and the Church itself is His Body. The main passage for this relationship is Colossians 1:18, 24. This relationship emphasizes four things. First, it has the meaning of direction. Just as a physical head or the brain gives direction to a physical body, even so, the Messiah as the Head gives direction to the Church. Secondly, it means control. Just as the head controls the actions of the body, even so, the Messiah controls the Church. Thirdly, it means nurture. The head with its controlling power of the brain, nurtures the rest of the body. Even so, the Messiah nurtures His Church. Fourthly, it means the giving of spiritual gifts. The greatest passage on spiritual gifts, I Corinthians 12, bases its teaching on this relationship of the head to the body.

The third figure is that of “The Shepherd and The Sheep.” The main passage that describes this relationship is John 10:1-30. The meaning of this relationship is threefold. First is leading. It is a shepherd who leads a

literal flock of sheep, and so it is the Messiah, the Good Shepherd, who leads the Church. Secondly, it means caring. Just as a good shepherd cares for his sheep, even so, the Messiah cares for the Church. Thirdly, it also has the meaning of provision. It is not the responsibility of the sheep to find the pasture, it is the responsibility of the shepherd to bring the sheep to a place where they can be fed; thus, the Messiah takes the responsibility of providing for the basic physical and spiritual needs of the Church.

The fourth figure is that of “The Vine and the Branches.” The key Scripture for this relationship is John 15:1-7. This relationship has two meanings. The first meaning is that of fruitfulness. A branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains on the vine where it can partake of the life-giving sap of the vine. When it partakes of the life-giving sap of the vine, then the branch becomes fruitful. The believer is to abide in the Messiah; if he abides in the Messiah, he will be bearing fruit. A second meaning of this relationship is that of reproduction. Not only does the vine produce fruit, it also produces seeds to produce more vines that will, in return, produce more fruit. The believer has the responsibility of reproduction, to produce saints by witnessing and sharing the gospel, and when they are born again, and then they, too, can produce fruit.

The fifth figure is that of “The Chief Cornerstone and the Stones of the Building.” The key Scriptures for this relationship are I Corinthians 3:10-11 and I Peter 2:4-8. This relationship has two key meanings. The first is that of life and stability. If the believer rests upon a sure foundation, which is the Messiah, then he is building a stable building. If he does not, he is building on a foundation of sand, and the result is instability. The second meaning of this relationship is that of a foundation for the spiritual life. The Lord Yeshua is the foundation, and *other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus the Messiah*. The Messiah and His work on the cross are the foundation for the spiritual life.

The sixth figure is that of “The *High Priest* and *the Royal Priesthood*.” The major passages for this relationship are Hebrews 7:1-10:18 and I Peter 2:5 and 9. This relationship has four meanings. First, it has the meaning of sacrifice, because it is the duty of a priest to offer up sacrifices. The sacrifice that Jesus offered was the sacrifice of His own blood. The sacrifices that believers are to offer are praise, thanksgiving, hospitality, and monetary support for the Lord's work (Heb. 13). Secondly, it means intercession. Just as Yeshua is interceding for believers, even so, believers are to be interceding for other believers. Thirdly, it means cleansing because the function of a High Priest was to cleanse the people he represented, the people of Israel. Today, Jesus is cleansing believers by means of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Believers are to do the work of cleansing as well, to co-participate in this work by means of our confession as stated in I John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.

The fourth meaning of this relationship is prayer. The function of a priest

was to represent the people to God, and that is why Yeshua prayed on the behalf of believers (Jn. 17). By the same token, believers should be praying on behalf of one another.

The seventh figure is that of “The Bridegroom and the Bride.” The main Scripture is Ephesians 5:25-32. This relationship has three basic meanings. First is the meaning of preparedness. Just as the bride prepares herself for the husband, even so, believers must live in constant preparation. Jesus has not yet come for the Church, but believers should always be prepared and ready for the moment that He does come. Secondly, it means union. The Church is united in a very unique way with the Messiah; all believers are now in *Christ*. Thirdly, it means communion. A husband and wife share a level of communion that is not shared by others, and believers are to share a unique communion with the Messiah.

These are the seven figures that illustrate the present work of the Messiah. Jesus is active and, because He is active, believers are recipients of many blessings.✧

NOTES

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BIBLE STUDY,
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067, 070, 075, 094, 127 and
133*

