

THE APPLE OF HIS EYE

ימצאנו בארץ מדבר ובתהו ילל ישמן יסבבנהו יבוננהו יצרנהו כאישון עינו:
He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about,
he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.



«For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins». (Ro.11:25-27)



THEN SANG MOSES AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THIS SONG UNTO THE LORD, AND SPAKE, SAYING, I WILL SING UNTO THE LORD, FOR HE HATH TRIUMPHED GLORIOUSLY: THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER HATH HE THROWN INTO THE SEA. THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND SONG, AND HE IS BECOME MY SALVATION: HE IS MY GOD, AND I WILL PREPARE HIM AN HABITATION; MY FATHER'S GOD, AND I WILL EXALT HIM. THE LORD IS A MAN OF WAR: THE LORD IS HIS NAME. PHARAOH'S CHARIOTS AND HIS HOST HATH HE CAST INTO THE SEA: HIS CHOSEN CAPTAINS ALSO ARE DROWNED IN THE RED SEA. THE DEPTHS HAVE COVERED THEM: THEY SANK INTO THE BOTTOM AS A STONE. THY RIGHT HAND, O LORD, IS BECOME GLORIOUS IN POWER: THY RIGHT HAND, O LORD, HATH DASHED IN PIECES THE ENEMY. AND IN THE GREATNESS OF THINE EXCELLENCY THOU HAST OVERTHROWN THEM THAT ROSE UP AGAINST THEE: THOU SENTEST FORTH THY WRATH, WHICH CONSUMED THEM AS STUBBLE. AND WITH THE BLAST OF THY NOSTRILS THE WATERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, THE FLOODS STOOD UPRIGHT AS AN HEAP, AND THE DEPTHS WERE CONGEALED IN THE HEART OF THE SEA. THE ENEMY SAID, I WILL PURSUE, I WILL OVERTAKE, I WILL DIVIDE THE SPOIL; MY LUST SHALL BE SATISFIED UPON THEM; I WILL DRAW MY SWORD, MY HAND SHALL DESTROY THEM. THOU DIDST BLOW WITH THY WIND, THE SEA COVERED THEM: THEY SANK AS LEAD IN THE MIGHTY WATERS. WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE, O LORD, AMONG THE GODS? WHO IS LIKE THEE, GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS, FEARFUL IN PRAISES, DOING WONDERS? THOU STRETCHEDST OUT THY RIGHT HAND, THE EARTH SWALLOWED THEM. THOU IN THY MERCY HAST LED FORTH THE PEOPLE WHICH THOU HAST REDEEMED: THOU HAST GUIDED THEM IN THY STRENGTH UNTO THY HOLY HABITATION. THE PEOPLE SHALL HEAR, AND BE AFRAID: SORROW SHALL TAKE HOLD ON THE INHABITANTS OF PALESTINA. THEN THE DUKES OF EDOM SHALL BE AMAZED; THE MIGHTY MEN OF MOAB, TREMBLING SHALL TAKE HOLD UPON THEM; ALL THE INHABITANTS OF CANAAN SHALL MELT AWAY. FEAR AND DREAD SHALL FALL UPON THEM; BY THE GREATNESS OF THINE ARM THEY SHALL BE AS STILL AS A STONE; TILL THY PEOPLE PASS OVER, O LORD, TILL THE PEOPLE PASS OVER, WHICH THOU HAST PURCHASED. THOU SHALT BRING THEM IN, AND PLANT THEM IN THE MOUNTAIN OF THINE INHERITANCE, IN THE PLACE, O LORD, WHICH THOU HAST MADE FOR THEE TO DWELL IN, IN THE SANCTUARY, O LORD, WHICH THY HANDS HAVE ESTABLISHED. THE LORD SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.





Truths of Christian Faith.

Special Revelation of God. «God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds».

4

God's People.

Israel. Unfortunately not many Jews today know what makes their nation different from all other nations in the world. What is so special about Jewish people and what kind of historical mission do they have? To be able to answer this question we need to look at the role of the Jewish nation as it is given by the Almighty in the Holy Scriptures, His plan for humanity in general..

6

The history of Israel's messianic movement.

Prophets. «Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us»».

8

Mashiah/Messiah.

Who is the Messiah?. «The principal statement of the Christian faith is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ/the Messiah. But who is the Messiah? How did this concept appear? What is the biblical view of the Messiah?».

10

New Testament reading

Gospel of Mathew. According to Papius, Apostle John's disciple, Mathew wrote down the teaching and the life of Jesus in Hebrew, or actually the Aramaic language.

13

The Apple of His Eye - Russia.

Rev. Alexey Shepelev. Shalom Dear Friends!

15



Even if we have discerned God's majesty and His works in the created world, human history and the testimony of conscience, all of this is still not enough to truly know God. We cannot rely on our own thoughts and ideas about the Almighty, for they cannot lead us to Him. They can only assist us in 'seeking' and 'feeling' the presence of the Unseen (Acts 17:27). Even the conscience, capable of distinguishing between the truth and falsehood, is not a good helper. Man turned away from God as a result of the fall. His understanding of spiritual matters became obscure to the point of utter blindness. Therefore our spiritual connection with God not only does not function, but it is lost and needs to be restored. As a consequence there are serious limitations in our perception of God if it is based on the created world and our moral sense. The Almighty Himself set this boundary having presented Himself and His will more clearly in His **special revelation** which put an end to the 'the times of ignorance' (Acts 17:30).

In the context of Christian theology, special revelation is understood as God's self-presentation, revealing Himself to specific people in the times and places set by Him and allowing these people to enter into a saving relationship with Him.

We should wonder about the character of this special revelation and its main attributes. First of all, it's personal. God reveals Himself to individuals. All Holy Scripture - a testimony and a document of the special revelation - is personal in its nature. What we find in it is not a set of universal rules, like Euclidian's geometry axioms, but rather a number of particularly direct statements about certain events in which the Almighty revealed Himself and His will. In the same way the Holy Scripture is not a strict theological treatise with evidence and counter-evidence, which we can see in a theology book. Neither does it contain systematic definitions of the statement of faith or doctrine. It does have elements of doctrinal teaching, but from the philosophical point of view there is no complete and perfectly logical explanation of doctrine. The Holy Scriptures do not contain theoretical thoughts on issues that are not directly connected with God's saving actions and His relationship with man. The Scripture is not a textbook on scientific and philosophical studies (cosmology, anthropology, etc.) or a historical work. In His special revelation the Almighty primarily reaches out to us with the news

about Himself and His plan for the world and humanity. The main purpose of the special revelation is the restoration of the unconditional love relationship between the Creator and His creations that was destroyed by sin.

At the same time the God of the special revelation is 'Totally Different'. He is beyond the limits of our sensual experience. He is incomprehensible in His knowledge and power, wisdom and love. He is not bound by any limitations

«God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds»

He. 1: 1-2

SPECIAL REVELATION OF GOD

of space and time, logic and ethics. Consequently, this revelation inevitably implies gracious condescendence towards man on the part of the Almighty Creator. Man is not able to reach out to God to study Him logically or 'mystically'. But even if he could, he would not understand Him. That is why the Almighty shows Himself through the special revelation in 'human' form. This special revelation is expressed in human language and terms. God stoops down to our feebleness, adjusts to our weakness, like the teacher speaking 'children's language' or the father caring for his children and adapting to their level of thinking and acting.

When speaking to little children you have to understand that their mental ability is limited. If you try to treat them like adults and use words and concepts beyond their experience, you will not establish contact with them. In His special revelation God adapts to the ability of the human mind and shows Himself in the way that we can comprehend.

Now let's move on to looking at specific ways and means that the Almighty uses to show Himself in the special revelation: historical events, divine 'speech' and the apex of the Revelation - the mystery of God's incarnation in the Person of the Messiah/The Christ.

The Bible emphasizes in a special way certain historical events in and through which God reveals Himself. Probably the most important event for Israel, celebrated by



the Jewish people to this day, is the liberation from Egyptian captivity after the famous ‘ten plagues’ culminating in Pass-over (Pesah) and the crossing of the Red Sea that ended with the making of the Sinai Covenant. The Almighty has clearly revealed Himself during the conquering of the Promised Land, the returning of the Jewish people from the Babylonian captivity and even in the captivity itself. The birth of Jesus, His deeds, His death and especially His resurrection were also performed by God. All of these were actions of the One God and therefore they are His revelations showing us His Image.

Another very important way of expressing special revelation is God’s speech. There is a very common phrase in Tanach (Old Testament): “The word of the LORD came to me...” The prophets knew, that they were not proclaiming their own message but that of the One. But God shows Himself not only thru His actions. He also speaks in a sacramental way about Himself, His plans and His will. Certainly God’s speech is not physical in nature, like when people talk to each other. That is why the mechanism of transmission of the divine message to the prophet will always remain a mystery to us.

Very often what God said was an explanation of a certain event. Although usually the event would precede the record or coincide with it, it happened that an interpretation would take place at the same time with the event which was the case with the prophesies. And the most important – without specially revealed interpretation the event itself would seem to us obscure and confusing and therefore totally unclear. This event would become subject to a number of interpretations. Let’s take such an important event as the Exodus for example. In and of itself without proper explanation to an unaware observer it may appear to be just a series of coincidences and interesting natural phenomenon without any particular design. It is only

because of the prophetic interpretation that we can see the deep meaning of the Exodus itself and the events that

accompanied it. We can say the same about all other events described in the Holy Scripture.

The fullest and the most complete form of God’s revelation is the incarnation of God in the person of the Messiah/ the Christ. The life and the preaching of Jesus from Nazareth were the culminating point in God’s revelation to humanity. Here the revelation becomes absolutely apparent as an event. The life of Jesus, His death and resurrection – is the story of revelation and salvation in the most condensed, concentrated and deep form. Here we find revelation as divine speech – Jesus’ sermons superseded those of the prophets and were pronounced ‘with authority’. When the prophets spoke they were proclaiming the message from God and about God. When Jesus spoke – it was LORD Himself. His preaching was the direct and unaltered Word of God.



The very perfection of the Person of Jesus Christ was revelation itself. In His Person God really showed Himself to us. His actions, His attitude to others, His love did not only reflect the Father but they revealed that God was not a mere external observer who occasionally intervened in the course of events, but that He was actually the Living God, unspeakably and continually present among people and mysteriously sharing with them their joy and grief, triumph and tragedy. Revelation as an action and as a word finds ultimate unity in the Person, word and deed of Jesus Christ. He is the most complete and perfect revelation of God because He is God.

Lastly, special revelation is complete and adequate because it destroys the barrier created by our sin, the barrier between us and the Almighty. God Himself has destroyed this barrier in His saving revelation having showed us His Image in the Message of unconditional forgiveness and acceptance of man in Christ Jesus, God’s Messiah. **“No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known”** (John 1:18).



Unfortunately not many Jews today know what makes their nation different from all other nations in the world. What is so special about Jewish people and what kind of historical mission do they have? To be able to answer this question we need to look at the role of the Jewish nation as it is given by the Almighty in the Holy Scriptures, His plan for humanity in general.

The word 'Israel' according to the traditional etymology means 'wrestles with God'. It is the second name of one of the patriarchs, Jacob, who received it after struggling with God near the stream of Jabbok (Genesis/Bereshith 32:28). This name is made up of two Jewish words meaning 'wrestle' and 'God'. After Jacob returned to Canaan, God told him

sor (Genesis/Bereshith 35:9-12). The name 'Israel' implies the idea of a struggle, a strong bond with God and is God's way of confirming His covenant with Jacob and all of his offspring. This name signifies that Israel is bonded to God thru a life-long relationship and love. Sometimes the Scriptures call Jacob's descendants Hebrews (Genesis/Bereshith 39:14, 17; 40:15; 41:12), also during the Egyptian captivity (Exodus/Shmoth 1:15; 2:13) and time from time in other places (Deuteronomy/D'varim 15:12 and others). Finally Hebrews become known as 'Jews' (first mention in Jeremiah/Yermiyagu 32:12). The mention of the words 'hebrews' and 'jews' indicates that surrounding nations looked upon the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob mainly in a national or ethnic way. On the oth-

given by the Almighty. This role first of all lies in the fact that God thru His supreme and sovereign power chose to prepare and use Israel as His special mediator in the salvation of all races, nations, nationalities and ethnic groups, ALL THE WORLD.

God's plan to choose Israel can be discussed in several mutually dependant aspects.

God created and chose the nation of Israel so that they would be His people, people living in the covenant (agreement) with God. 'The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth' (Deuteronomy/D'varim 7:6). The Torah clearly says that the Israelites were chosen not because of their own achievements. The reason

ISRAEL

«... to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever». Ro.9:4,5



to settle in Bethel, where He once again appeared before him and confirmed that from that time on his name was not Jacob, but Israel. Following this confirmation of the new name was the confirmation of the covenant between God and Jacob, as Abraham's heir and succes-

er hand the name 'Israel' first of all points to the spiritual heritage that has to do with the covenant between Jacob's descendants and God. It also shows the particular relationship that ethnic Jews had with God and as a consequence, special role in history this nation was

for choosing Israel was God's free and undeserved love, His grace (Deuteronomy/D'varim 7:7, 9:4-6). In response to God's mercy expressed in the covenant Israel had to take certain responsibility. The covenant nation had to admit and demonstrate with all of their life of faith that God was their one and only King. First of all it naturally excluded worship of any other gods. The Israelites were not supposed to acknowledge any other god as their supreme power or source of life and blessings. This fundamental truth is most vividly expressed in the famous Shema Israel: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength'. Initially the covenant was established with the forefather of the Jewish nation, Abraham. It contained the promise of numerous descendants and vast lands as well as the blessing that all the nations of the earth would have in Abraham's descendants. The covenant with Abraham was made 400 year before the Jewish people received the Law. The Almighty confirmed His faithfulness to this covenant to the patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob.

The establishment of the covenant on Mount Sinai was followed by Moses receiving the Law (the Torah's commandments) in which God expressed His will concerning the way His chosen covenant nation was to live and worship Him. We must remember, however, that the relationship with God is based not on following the law but on the grace of the covenant. All of the Torah's commandments should be viewed in the context of the covenant between God and Israel. Keeping the law was not the reason Israel entered into covenant relationship with God. Instead it was the responsibility they took before God when making the covenant and the condition of keeping this relationship, remaining under God's protection and blessing. In this way, according to God's plan Israel was to become a holy nation (separated) – living under direct protection and guidance of God – nation, called to show the world the supreme power, wisdom and justice, mercy and goodness of the Almighty.

As a live witness of God before the nations of the world, Israel acted as mediator-nation between God and the world. Having chosen Israel God put her in the very middle of all the nations of the world. Here in the 'Holy Land', with nearest neighbors like Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, Philistia, Tiro and Sidon and more remote ones like Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians and Arabs, Israel was to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, whose purpose in life was to 'walk before God' and to be a witness for the LORD to the nations of the world. To fulfill this task of a mediator and witness Israel had to live by faith in the Almighty according to the will of God revealed to her in His Word, the law and promises in such a way that other nations would seek to share in the blessings, miracles and the glory of life under the gracious rule of the Almighty (Isaiah/ Yeshayagu 2:1-5, Micah/Miha 4:1-5). This way, people from other nations, drawn to Israel, were receiving a chance to know the revealed will of God and share with the nation of Israel in the blessings of the covenant with God. This was the case of Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah etc. These people were not Jews, but became true citizens of Israel, people of God's covenant.

An integral part of this purpose was the part appointed by God, according to which Israel had to create, confirm and to keep the Holy Scriptures. It was the written Word – reliable and inerrant testimony to the fact that God Almighty, the Creator of the Universe, eternally predestined His plan to give redemption and regeneration to His creation and is in the process of doing just that. Without the Holy Scriptures we would have no sure proof of what God has done, promised, accomplished and is accomplishing now to carry out His intention – THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD.

The Bible is very harsh yet realistic when it speaks of how Israel did not stay faithful to the covenant with God. Short periods of religious revival were followed by complete spiritual decline and disintegration. Every time backsliding and breaking of the covenant was leading the Jewish nation to the brink of national disaster. God was rebuking His people thru the prophets, punishing them thru other nations when they were not willing to listen to Him, but He always remained faithful to Israel. God remained faithful to the covenant with His chosen nation even when the Jewish people were destroying it with their unbelief and the lawlessness resulting from it. Paradoxically this is also the spiritual and historical calling of Israel. She became a live example and witness to all nations of the free and undeserved mercy and faithfulness of God. Mercy and faithfulness that come from His unlimited and unconditional love to His creation.

But the main task of Israel and the purpose of her calling were to prepare the way in the world dying from sin and evil for the One, Who would redeem and save Israel as well as the rest of the world; to prepare the way for the One, of Whom Israel's prophets were speaking as the only hope for Israel and for the world; to prepare the way for the Messiah. Abraham, the father of Jewish nation,



was given a promise: "And through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Genesis/Bereshith 22:18). God, being faithful and true, kept His promise to Abraham, He kept His promise to Israel –THE MESSIAH HAS COME. The prophesy according to which all the nations of the earth will be blessed came true in the Person and the works of Jesus Christ, God's Messiah, Who came as long promised Descendant of Abraham (Mathew 1:1, Galatians 3:16).

His redemption death defeated the power of sin, guilt and death over people. Two thousand years after Abraham, a Jew, Simon-Peter addressed his people and said: "You are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways." (Acts 3:25-26). The history and the destiny of the Jewish nation, Israel's history and the destiny as God's chosen people become complete in the Person of Jesus Christ (Messiah) – The Son and the Savior of Israel. They become complete in glory. For it is written: "**For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.**" (Luke 2:30-32).



Prophets

«Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us» He. 12:1

All the prophets in the Bible are called nabi. The verb derived from this word means to speak or to prophesy. Most likely this verb is related to the root meaning 'to call, to proclaim'. Therefore, nabi is the one who is called and who proclaims. Both meanings of this verb lead us to the understanding of the essence of the Old Testament prophesy. The prophet is the messenger and the interpreter of a divine word. In the Old Testament the idea of the prophetic ministry is illustrated by the relationship between Moses and Aaron. When Moses refused to speak on behalf of God personally, God chose Aaron to be the herald (nabi) for Moses (Ex. 4:12-16). Aaron had to become the mouth of Moses and speak from his name. Later on Aaron's function was understood as Moses' prophet. In the same way God's prophet is the one speaking God's words. God talks to His nation through the mouths of the people chosen by Him to serve as trumpets of divine revelation. This is supported by the words of the Lord addressed to Jeremiah: "I have put my words in your mouth" (Jer. 1:9). The prophets knew the divine origins of their sermons and started them with the words: "Thus says the Lord". The word spoken to them subdues them and they cannot keep silent: "The Sovereign LORD has spoken - who can but prophesy?" - cries out Amos (3:8), in the same way Jeremiah struggles in vain with the power over him (Jer. 20:7-9).

At one time they heard the powerful voice of God (Am. 7:15; Is. 6). The Lord chose them to be His messengers. They were sent to proclaim God's will and be a sign to the Word of God. Not only their words, but their actions and their whole life must become a prophecy. Hosea's unhappy marriage has symbolic meaning (Hos. 1:1-3); Isaiah must walk naked (Is. 20:3), for he and his children are the 'signs and symbols' for Israel (Is. 8:18); Jeremiah's life is the true expression of his preaching (Jer. 16); and when Ezekiel obeys God's commands that seemed so strange, he becomes 'a sign for the house of Israel' (Ez. 4:3; 12:6, 11; 24:24).

God can call a prophet in a number of different ways - in a vision (e.g. Is. 6, Ez. 1, 2, 8, etc.), more seldom in a dream (Dan. 7), in an audible way, but more often thru an inner inspiration (that is why the words "the word of the Lord came to me" are repeated so often). Sometimes it happens suddenly, sometimes in some seemingly insignificant circumstances, like the almond tree (Jer. 1:11), two baskets with figs (Jer. 24) or the visit of the potter (Jer. 18:1-4). The received message is transmitted by the prophet also in different ways: thru poetry, narration, in parables or using short prediction-like sentences; often some literary forms of narration are used, court talk, preaching, sayings of the wise, liturgical psalms, love hymns, satire, lamentation...

These different methods of receiving and giving information are related to the personality of the prophet. But all the prophets have something in common: every true prophet is filled with the idea that he is nothing but a tool and the words that he speaks are at the same time his and not his. He is grounded in the fact that he received God's Word and must pass it on.

This conviction is based on the mysterious practice of direct communion with God. God's intervention into the prophet's soul puts him in a kind of 'supernatural' psychological state of mind.

The Old Testament prophecy however is not something dark and chaotic. It does not make the person egocentric, involve anybody in the occult or lead down the way of self destruction. As the voice of God, the prophets exhorted, warned and encouraged the people. They opposed the sin that has strongly occupied the hearts of men for a long time with the word of God.

The prophetic message is not often addressed to an individual. When a prophet talks to a king or high priest, who became the head of the community after the return from the Exile (Zach. 3), he sees them as people responsible for the entire nation. In all the accounts of calling of the prophets they are being sent to the nation of Israel or even to all the nations, as in the case of Jeremiah.

Prophet's words have to do with both the present and the future. He is sent to his contemporaries and gives them God's decrees. But as God's trumpet he is above time and his admonitions are confirmed and continued by his predictions. Sometimes a prophet proclaims a future event as a sign, which will confirm his words and his mission. He foresees the punishment for the sins that he exposes and the salvation that will follow the conversion to which he calls. The later prophets even slightly uncover the last days, the time of God's final triumph, but even this always has a lesson for the present time. The message of the prophets has two sides: convicting and consoling. Their words are often harsh, full of threat and reproach. This ruthlessness can testify to the genuine nature of the prophecy, for the sin that hinders people from following God's commandments, is constantly on the prophet's mind. The hope for the salvation of their people is always there too. God's mercy and His justice are combined in His attitude towards His people.

The prophets' role in Israel's religious development is extremely important. They proclaimed the true faith to the people and served as the mediators between God and the people thru whom the Revelation was given. Every one of them contributed to the making of the teaching, in which we can define three components, particular to the Old Testament faith: monotheism, ethical teaching, and waiting for salvation.

In their struggle with pagan cults that were threatening Israel's faith, the prophets showed the impotence of false gods and idols. The One God is above the world. The prophets testify to His otherness calling Him 'Holy'. This is one of their favorite themes, especially developed in Isaiah. God is surrounded by mystery. Ezekiel keeps reminding us that He is immeasurably higher than the 'sons of men'. At the same time He is close to His people and shows to them His goodness. Man's filth is opposed to God's holiness. This contrast makes the prophet realize human sinfulness even more. In the prophetic writings the idea of sin becomes one of the most impor-



tant: sin separates man from God, offends the righteous, merciful and holy God. It is the raging evil that causes God's punishment, which will finally take place in the coming 'Day of the Lord'. The so called 'ethical monotheism' of the prophets is based on the Sinai law proclaimed by God Himself. In their sermons, the prophets first of all condemn the breaking or the neglect of this law. They addressed their exhortations and convictions to all circles society and scourged every instance of sin.

At the same time the prophets accomplished a unique religious revolution, by mercilessly throwing down the usual pagan idols. They never idealize their nation's past. They op-



pose Israel's persistent inclination towards: paganism with the faith in the One, magical understanding of liturgy with the religion of the spirit, national narrow mindedness with universalism. They deepen the concept of religious life.

You need to 'seek God' and 'follow His laws'. God requires the sincere inner righteousness of the heart. All religious life must be filled with this spirit and the prophets condemn the rituals apart from the true faith and good morals. In spite of the people's backsliding, however, God does not want them to perish and continues to fulfill His promises while taking care of the 'Remnant'. Prophets were the first to understand the times and to realize that all the earthly events make the history of LORD's struggle for His creation. The final result of this struggle is the total victory of the Divine Goodness.

The prophets predict the age of great happiness: when the Exiles of Israel and the dispersed Jews would return to the Holy Land and the time of goodness would come. But most important is not material welfare and power, these thing will only accompany the coming of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of truth and holiness, preceded by

God's forgiveness, true conversion and knowledge of God that bring peace and joy. To establish His kingdom God will send His 'Anointed One – the Messiah'. This Savior was first of all foreseen by Isaiah, then Micah and Jeremiah. The Messiah will be a descendant of David and will come from Bethlehem. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him in all the fullness of His gifts. The names given to Him by the prophets: Emmanuel i.e. 'God with us', 'Lord is our justification', 'Son of God' – express their messianic hopes. One of the high points of the messianic prophecy is chapter 53 of Isaiah. Finally Daniel sees the One 'like the Son of Man', coming 'on the clouds' and receiving from God the authority over all nations. His Kingdom will not pass away. **The message about the Messiah is the epicenter of the prophetic writings.**

We should say a few words about the history of the Old Testament prophetic ministry that is divided into three main periods. All we know about the prophets during the early monarchy in Israel and Judea comes from the historical books. Such famous prophets as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah and Elisha all served in the 'preclassical' period of Israel's prophetic ministry. Since the mentioned prophets did not record their words, we know a lot more about what they did than what they said. The 'Classical' period of Israel's prophetic ministry – the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. – is already represented by the first collections of written prophecies. The host of prophets from this time seem to be trapped between the two terrible events – the fall of the state of Israel under the assault of the Assyria (Israel's prophets Amos and Hosea and Judea's – Isaiah and Micah) and the conquest of the Judean kingdom by Babylon (Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Jeremiah). And finally, the prophets of the Exile and the time of Captivity who proclaimed the word of God to the people during the hard times of the Babylonian captivity (Ezekiel and Daniel) and after the return from it (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi). The contents of the Holy Scripture's canon shows that after the ministry of prophets as the messengers of God's Kingdom came a period of silence – the time between the last Old Testament prophet Malachi and John the Baptist, whose ministry drew a boundary line between the two Testaments.

The outstanding ministry of the Old Testament prophets came to an end with the coming of Jesus – the last and the greatest Prophet, as He said about Himself (see Luke 7:24-28). All the prophets before Him were pointing to Him. So that when He came, the other prophecies were fulfilled and lost their future perspective. On the day of Pentecost all the people of God received the Holy Spirit and the prophetic gift continued in the early Church.

The New Testament prophets were a given different kind of authority – they were inspired by the Messiah – the Christ. That is what makes them different from Old Testament prophets. The Ministry of the Word Himself was accepted by the apostles and then by the Church founded on their testimony. The Good News is not proclaimed in many different ways anymore as it was done by the Old Testament prophets. But ancient Israel's prophets remain the messengers of God's word for the Church. Even after many centuries they are still the voice of God, talking to His people at all times. **The voice speaking of Israel's Savior – the Messiah.**



The principal statement of the Christian faith is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ/the Messiah. But who is the Messiah? How did this concept appear? What is the biblical view of the Messiah?

The word Messiah is the translation of the Hebrew word 'mashiah', 'anointed one', derived from the verb 'mashah', 'to anoint'. In the Greek translation of the Scriptures the word 'mashiah' is replaced by the Greek word 'Christos', 'Anointed'. In the ancient eastern

and given authority for a special ministry and the duties related to it.

If we look at the meaning of the term 'messiah' specifically from the biblically theological point of view then immediately a number of questions arise. The first one has to do with the origin of this concept in the context of the ancient Middle Eastern culture. In modern days many conservative and critically disposed scientists have closely studied ancient Middle Eastern documents in the search for the possible parallels or

a common historical and therefore literary background with the Holy Scriptures. But once we look into the spiritual meaning of these documents we realize that their views are radically different from the biblical ideas. First of all the non-biblical texts deal with the royal and priestly duties and their attitude towards the gods. The reason these views differ radically from the biblical ones lies primarily in the polytheistic nature of the cultures that produced these documents. This of course is in a stark contrast with

Who is



the Messiah?

cultures the term 'anointing' was widely used by Israelites and other nations. Grease or oil was put on various dedicated objects and in this way they were sanctified for special ritual purposes. The word 'messiah' could not refer to inanimate objects. It was used only for the people who being 'anointed.' These people were chosen, dedicated, assigned

the origins of the ideas that could have been borrowed, creatively developed and reconsidered by biblical writers. The careful study of Mesopotamian, Hittite, Egyptian and Canaanite sources showed various accounts similar to the biblical stories. However they are only indirectly related to the biblical concept. Mesopotamian, Hittite and Canaanite texts have

the Jewish mindset filled with faith in the One True God. We can say the same thing about Egyptian texts and the ideas contained in them. Thus, although we can see some similarity, the biblical concept of the Messiah is totally different from the ideas of the other ancient nations in the Middle East. Therefore, in light of the recent studies, we can exclude the pos-

sibility of considering other Middle Eastern systems of belief as direct sources for the biblical messianic idea.

The second question has to do with the specific objects and individuals who were anointed and the connection between the actual anointing and the messianic meaning, that the object took on. We should say from the very beginning that not all instances of anointing have direct messianic meaning. For example, anointing or sprinkling with oil of the unleavened bread and ritual dishes does not directly point to its special messianic purpose. We should remember however that the custom of anointing ritual dishes and people does contain such ideas as election, separation and dedication. These ideas also characterize those rituals and acts of anointing that truly have the messianic meaning.

The third question has to do with the anointed person as the most adequate and complete expression of the messianic concept. The anointed person is chosen, dedicated and consecrated to take the special place related to the certain ministry assigned to it. Some scientists insist on the idea that only the actual King can be regarded as the Messiah. The Messiah does need to be regarded as a royal person. Although such point of view is technically correct, in reality it becomes extremely narrow and does not go along with all of the biblical ideas about the person of the Messiah and his ministry.

Biblical messianic concept does not limit the person of the Messiah to royal duties, but it also speaks of his priestly and prophetic ministries. The biblical messianic concept speak about royal, priestly and prophetic ministries being fulfilled and accomplished in the ministry of the Messiah. That implies the unique nature of the Messiah as a Person, in Whom these ministries find their final realization.

The messianic concept also has universal dimension that includes characteristics, objectives, means and the results of the actions of the messianic figure. This allows us to consider those passages of the Holy Scriptures where it speaks about the character, goals and the influence of the Messiah as references to Him even though He is not mentioned there directly. Such view proves right the messianic interpretation of many biblical texts by the Church. This is also supported by the ancient Jewish

interpretations that were not censored by rabbinic Judaism.

The fourth question has to do with the status of the Messiah. As we demonstrated before, the unique nature of the messianic ministry is directly related to the uniqueness of the person of the Messiah. In the biblical context Messiah's ministry is first of all related with the mediation between God and His chosen people and on a broader scale – between God and the world. Therefore in order to fulfill his duties the person of the Messiah must be equally and truly close to both of these worlds – divine and human. Biblical Messiah is the person uniting God and man. It is the person whom God the Father predestined to be the mediator of the eternal covenant between God and humanity and the ruler of the Kingdom of God.

So, what picture of the Messiah does the Bible give us? Adam and Eve, created in the image and the likeness of God, were partakers in the fellowship of life and love with God the Creator. Man was given the power, ability and freedom to reflect the image of God as a representative of sovereign Creator and King of the whole created universe. Adam and Eve were given the freedom of unconditional trust and service to God thru faith and love. We all know the story of the fall of Adam and Eve and, in them, the fall of the all humanity. Man lost the freedom found in the total and unconditional trust of God and became a slave to sin - a spiritual inability to trust God with his whole heart and, put all of his hope in Him. As a result, the personal relationship between man and God was destroyed and the union of love was replaced by the alienation of enmity. Being separated from the Source of freedom, love and life, man became a slave of sin and death. But God did not deprive humanity of His love and mercy. He promised to redeem the humanity from the slavery to sin and death and to restore the relationship of love between the Creator and the creation thru the victory that woman's seed (Messiah) would hold over Satan. All the plans and intentions for God's Kingdom will be fulfilled thanks to the seed of the woman.

Throughout the whole Scripture we read the account of Satan trying to hinder the fulfillment of God's promises. The murder of Abel (Gen. 4:8) and the moral decline prevalent in the times of Noah are the first and the most expressive evidences

of that. But God kept His gracious covenant with Noah who believed and was ready to serve in faith. Noah was the predecessor of the promised Messiah, Who will bring complete and total forgiveness before the Judgment. Noah prophesied that the messianic line would start from the seed of Shem (Gen 9:25-27).

Abraham, Shem's descendant, was called to represent the covenant and to keep God's promise of salvation. He had to leave his homeland and family to take the messianic blessings to all the nations of the earth (Gen. 12:1-3). God made a special covenant with Abraham and promised to redeem and restore the world through Abraham's descendants. The fact that God was going to accomplish it through Abraham and his descendants was confirmed in God's covenant promises: "I am God Almighty... will greatly increase your numbers... I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you" (Gen. 17:1-7). These words bring to the forefront two significant factors of the messianic promise: 1. The Lord, who made the eternal covenant with Abraham, will keep Abraham's descendants as a messianic dynasty; 2. Abraham was called to faith and service as the father of all believers who will receive the messianic blessings through faith.

The messianic promises' inheritance line was continued in Isaac and Jacob. Jacob prophesied that it was to be continued thru Judah (Gen. 49. 8-12). After that the line went thru Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 4:16-22). David was told, that the throne of his sons will be established forever (2 Sam. 7:11-16). Not all of the royal descendants of David were faithful and ready to serve God as messianic forerunners of Jesus – the Christ/the Messiah. But God in His mercy kept this family lineage from Abraham to David, then to Zerubbabel and finally to Mary and Joseph. This family line was connected to the royal aspect of Messiah's purpose and ministry in a special way. Although other aspects were also present and reflected the universal nature of Messiah's ministry, the royal aspect dominates and is the basis of them all. This domination of the royal aspect made many people interpret the figure of the Messiah strictly within the context of His reigning, establishing and ruling of the earthly spiritual and political structure in which the Jews would be the governing nation chosen by God. It is be-



cause of this wrongly narrowed view of Messiah that the Jewish leaders did not accept the messianic nature of Jesus.

At the same time the Scriptures also had a broader perspective. Noah, Messiah's direct ancestor, did not have royal origins at all, although he was the prototype for the carrying out of the messianic function. More general views on messianic ministry can also be seen in the life of Abraham filled with faith, with his intercession for the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18), with the sacrifice of sheep instead of his son Isaac (Gen. 22). Abraham's grandchild, Joseph, regarded as another prototype of the Messiah, was exalted to the royal position after having experienced great humiliation. After he reached his high position he acted as the savior of his relatives and all of their family line.

Moses, another prototype of the Messiah, although he fulfilled royal functions as the lawgiver, also carried out the prophetic ministry, being the greatest of the Old Testament prophets and the example for all prophets faithfully carrying the Word of God.

It was thru Moses that God established the priesthood, gave the orders about the Tabernacle and commanded the sacrifices to be made. These were the symbols and prototypes of the messianic purpose. The priestly ministry of meditation, the idea of God's constant presence with His people ('God with us') and the vicarious death for the redemption of sinners all find their expression in these symbols. Another messianic manifestation during the times of patriarchs and Moses was the Angel of the Lord, appearing in the form of theophany. We can also mention other messianic expressions in



the times of Moses: pillar of fire (Messiah – the light to the world), manna (Messiah – the bread of life), water from the rock (Messiah – the living water and the rock) and the bronze serpent (Messiah conquering death and giving life).

The authors of Psalms and the prophets continued to express messianic ideas started in the Pentateuch. The

Book of Psalms shows the royal nature of the Messiah, but it also talks about the priestly aspect and the suffering, including the death and resurrection. According to the psalmists, it is the royal person (narrow view), also carrying out priestly and prophetic functions. That means that the Messiah brings salvation and admonishes in all truth.

This way both narrow and wide views of the messianic ministry are combined in the prophetic view of the Messiah. We should also mention Isaiah's prophecies about virgin birth (Is. 7:14), about the wise and all-knowing son of David (Is. 9:16), the fruitful branch bringing redemption, regeneration and the blessings of life (Is. 11). It was Isaiah who prophesied that the Messiah is the light of the nations (Is. 49:6), the suffering and exalted Servant of God (Is. 52:13-53:12). He will be the great counselor and the preacher of freedom, bringing healing and joy (Is. 61:1-3). Micah prophesied that the

Messiah was to come from the royal house of David to keep His people and protect it (Mic. 5:1-4). In the same way Amos prophesied that the Messiah, from the house of David, would fulfill the promises regarding the nations that God gave in the covenant (Am. 9:11-15). Jeremiah prophesied about the Messiah, one of David's descendants, Who will be the

King of righteousness (Jer. 23:5-6). Ezekiel directs the Jews held in the Babylonian captivity to the Son of Man, the mediator of the covenant, Who will restore His people and will keep it (Ez. 34; 36). The prophets after the Babylonian captivity were talking about the royal figure of the coming Messiah, redeeming and restoring (Hag. 2:20-22; Zach. 4:1-14; 6:9-15; 9:9-10). And Malachi compares the Messiah with the refining fire; He will bring the healing as the messenger of the covenant and the Sun of truth (Mal. 3:1-4; 4:1-3).

The New Testament authors, evangelists and apostles leave no doubts to the fact that Jesus is the promised Messiah or, according to the New Testament terminology, the Christ. He appears as Abraham's and David's descendant (Math. 1:2-16; Lk. 2:4-15). When John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Messiah he refers to the broad aspect of messianic view, saying: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn. 1:29). Jesus is the One, Who must bring the judgment together with the life thru the Spirit of God (Math. 3:1-12).

The Gospel writers note that during His baptism Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus announced Himself Messiah in Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-22) and during the conversation with Samaritan woman near Jacob's well (Jn. 4:26).





The author of one of the Gospels, Mathew, was one of the twelve apostles. Luke calls him Levi and Mark calls him Levi son of Alphaeus. There is nothing strange about this because some Jews were known to have two names. Mathew was a tax-collector in Capernaum's customs located on the bank of the Sea of Galilee. Perhaps he was not serving the Romans, but the tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee – Herod Antipas. Mathew's occupation required him to know the Greek language. As one of the future Gospel writers, Mathew is pictured as a sociable person: many of his friends gathered in his house in Capernaum. That's pretty much all we know from the New Testament about the man who wrote the first Gospel.

According to Papius, Apostle John's disciple, Mathew wrote down the teaching and the life of Jesus in Hebrew, or actually the Aramaic language. But from the Gospel itself we can see that its author was a Palestinian Jew. He is familiar with the Tanach (Old Testament) and Palestine's geography, history and Jewish customs. The original Aramaic text of the Gospel of Mathew has been lost. All we have is a rather ancient Greek translation mentioned in the works of other Christian writers contemporary to the apostles.

According to the tradition, Mathew preached the Good News to the Jews in Palestine. Mathew wrote his Gospel specifically for the Palestinian Jews. It is obvious because the author assumes that his readers are familiar with Jewish speech, customs, rabbis' arguments and the geography of the Holy Land.

The main purpose of the Gospel of Mathew is to show the Jewish people that Jesus is the true Messiah promised by God to the chosen Jewish nation. The



with the whole nation of Israel, having set for them boundaries of the covenant thru the Law. The Law contained specific details about faith and obedience to the will of God, spiritual life, religious customs and the social life of Israel. However during the hundreds of years of wavering between the following the Law and backsliding, the Jewish nation gradually began to realize the inevitability of the coming judgment over sin, Israel's as well as the world's, and the necessity of the New Covenant between God and Israel based on unconditional forgiveness of Israel's sins. In this Covenant the promises given to Abraham would still come true in spite of Israel's sinfulness.

These hopes for the coming intervention of God were tied to the person of the Messiah Who was to lead His people to the triumphal culmination of God's actions in history – the reigning of Israel's God and His people over all the earth. Different visions of the justification, restoration and salvation of Israel closely intermingled in the Jewish mindset during the time of the Second Temple, but they all had the same essence – hope for the direct saving intervention of the Almighty in the history of Israel. Having connected in his mind this hope and the actual spiritual perception of the Person and the actions of Jesus, Mathew grew more and more compelled of the fact that the culminating chapter in his people's religious history is the birth, life, death and the resurrection of Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph. He is the One who was to come to save Israel and the whole world. And He, His Person and actions represent the highest revelation that was given to Israel about God and His will. That's exactly

Gospel of Mathew

Jews were waiting for the Messiah that would establish a powerful national empire and put Jewish people, as chosen by God, above other nations of the world. As a contrast to this narrow-minded earthly understanding of messianic prophesies, Mathew in his Gospel preaches about the true Kingdom of Heaven, proclaimed by the true Messiah – Jesus. It is a spiritual Kingdom. A Kingdom that has its beginning on the earth, here and now, and reaches out beyond the limits of human history to the future world where it will become complete.

The Gospel of Mathew is a review of Israel's history, as it was understood in the Judaism of that time, in the light of the revelation of the Messiah that has come. We know the history of Israel: the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, chose Abraham, entered into covenant with him and promised to keep this covenant with Abraham as well as with his descendants for all generations. Later, on Mount Sinai, God entered into covenant

what the Gospel of Mathew implies when it begins by giving an account of Jesus' ancestry.

Mathew looks at Israel's history from the point of view of the final revelation given through the Messiah's ministry. It was God's intention from the very beginning to give salvation to the Jewish nation and to the rest of the world. Now this salvation is being given by Jesus the Messiah. Those who trust their life to Him are the true heirs of the promises given by God to Abraham. The former covenant with Abraham was finally and completely fulfilled when Jesus established the New and Eternal Covenant. Jesus is the One, Who as Messiah fulfills the Old Testament messianic promises and brings God's salvation to the Jewish people. Being the Son of God, He teaches us to follow the true will of God. He Himself obeys this will all the way up to the death on the cross thus marking the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven to this world. In the Gospel of Mathew the Kingdom of Heaven (Jewish form of



the term 'Kingdom of God') is understood as the reign of the Almighty through the Person of the Messiah in the power of love, truth and forgiveness.

In his Gospel Mathew gives the answers to the questions that the coming of the Messiah in the Person of Christ placed before his fellow believers. Who are the Jews that believed in Jesus as the Messiah? How does the coming of the Messiah correspond to Israel's history? What was the main problem in the relationship between God and Israel and what is God's solution to that problem?

The Gospel of Mathew gives answers to these complicated questions in very simple and clear terms. The readers of this Gospel, who believed in Jesus as the promised Messiah, are the Church of God – the fulfillment and the completion of Israel's true purpose. Thru faith in the saving work of the Messiah they have become the true spiritual descendants of Abraham. Israel has continued in her unbelief and sin for too long, but God in His mercy and grace gave His people the Messiah, so they would see His truth and love. The coming of the Kingdom of Heaven was established through the teaching, life, death and the resurrection of the Messiah and all of those who respond to God's call would enter into it. This call is first of all addressed to the nation of Israel, the nation that was first to receive the promise of salvation. But the promises of the New Covenant, unlike those of the previous ones, apply to all the nations of the world and do not require biological relationship with Abraham, but faith. So the Church is God's people, consisting of believing Jews as well as gentiles. At the same time this 'new eschatological people of God' is inseparable from Israel's history.

The Church finds itself in the world during the time when the Messiah's coming marked the future restoration and deliverance of Israel. But it is still waiting for the last days when the Son of Man finally comes in Glory to fulfill God's promises first given to Israel and to the whole world.

Israel's main problem throughout the many centuries of its history was the breaking of the Law given to the Jewish people by God on Mount Sinai. Not only did it cause God's punishment, but also put Israel outside of the covenant with God. It was only because of His unconditional love, expressed in the gracious covenant with Abraham, that the Almighty did not reject the Jewish nation. When the prophets spoke about the destruction of the covenant with God by Israel as a result of unbelief and lawlessness, they foresaw the New Covenant that would be directed towards the heart of man (the Law will be written not on the tablets of stone, but in the people's hearts) and sealed with the unconditional forgiveness of sin. Mathew in his Gospel acts as a successor of the great prophetic tradition. He emphasized in many different ways the intimate and deeply personal nature of the New Covenant, showing that not only does it help the true righteousness that is based on the genuine faith and love (the theme especially significant to Mathew, see Sermon on the Mount!), but it also frees the new agreement from the dangers of 'ritual religiosity' and ethnic exclusivity. The message brought to this world by God's Messiah, Jesus, is the expression of Divine benevolence – unselfish, one-way and eternal. This message establishes the true religion in spirit and in truth for the working out of the agreement of love between man and God. This agreement – covenant, that becomes unchangeable and eternal only because of the unconditional forgiveness of sins. This gives the message of the Gospel a truly universal and imperishable nature.

Mathew looks at the principal symbols of Judaism in the light of the Good News as well – the Torah, the Temple, Abraham's lineage, etc. Here we can see again that all these symbols are re-

garded by Mathew as having obtained their spiritual fulfillment in the Person and ministry of Jesus. That is why Jesus was so strict and harsh when talking about the distortions of these symbols of faith and Israel's spiritual identity. And there were numerous distortions of the true meaning of religion, of the Law and the Prophets then as there is now. The Torah ended up tangled by thousands of petty rules and interpretations, often contradicting its direct meaning. The Temple instead of the 'House of Prayer' became the hotbed of magical ritualism; kinship to Abraham lost its spiritual meaning of one faith and became a mere blood relationship. The message of Jesus becomes not only the prophetic judgment over these distortions, returning to the principal Jewish symbols their true spiritual meaning, but it goes further and shows in the ministry of the Messiah and in the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven announced by Him, the fulfillment of the hopes that these important symbols contained. At this critical time in its history all Israel must turn to the Truth brought by the Messiah that the Almighty sent, the Truth being carried around the world by His disciples – the apostles. Once again we need to notice that the only reason for this call is Mathew's understanding of the role that the life and ministry of Jesus played in the history of Israel. It is only thru Him that God's salvation and Heavenly Kingdom can come and are coming to God's people.

In the Gospel of Mathew the history of Israel is being reconsidered and told in such a way that it seems old and new at the same time. The Gospel writer saw the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel in Jesus and in the new people of God, made up of Jews and the gentiles accepted by God and blessed as it has been promised in the covenant with Abraham. While rethinking the history of his own people, Mathew turns to the focal points of Israel's faith and spirituality, putting the figure of Christ as the Messiah in the center of his theological picture. From now on the Image of the One and His will concerning man and the world was revealed to the Jewish nation and all of humanity. Israel – the people of God, chosen and predestined to become His faithful inheritance, must make the foundation of the people of God, an 'eschatological Israel', which will include all the nations of the earth. And this new nation of God is united in the New Covenant sealed by the blood of the Messiah to fulfill the prophecies given to Israel's forefathers.

According to Mathew, the hopes of Israel accompanying the Jewish nation throughout all its history have partially been fulfilled in Jesus and the Church that He created. The rest of these hopes are still waiting to be finally fulfilled when the Son of Man, the Messiah, comes in Glory for the judgment and final deliverance and transformation of the world in the Kingdom to come. The cornerstone of this hope for Mathew is the ministry of Jesus, who reconciled us to God through His sacrifice and led us into the New Covenant – the Covenant that cannot be destroyed by man's sin because it is based on unconditional forgiveness flowing from God's love towards man and the world.

This is the Gospel according to Mathew. The Gospel addressed to his fellow countrymen – the Jews. We did not give any Scripture references on purpose. Open this small book and come to know the power of Truth and Love of the One, Who, according to Mathew, came to save 'His people from their sins'.

Illustration: Caravaggio, Michelangelo Merisi de: Painting of Contarelli Chapel in San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome, the stage: The Calling of St. Matthew, the detail: Matthew as The tax-gatherer Levi from Capernaum.



Shalom Dear Friends!

Apple of His Eye-Russia exists to share Gospel with Russian speaking Jewish people. A big part of our work is writing and distributing printed materials.

We just finished translating a few of the articles from the issues of our Apple of His Eye-Russia Magazine. We hope you enjoy this sample and we look forward to hearing your comments.

We hope that our ministry equips and encourages you to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to both Jews and Gentiles. If you or someone you know has a friend who speaks Russian, please let us know. We want to help you share the Gospel with your friend.

In this Digest you also can find a list of all of our Russian language materials. Please feel to contact with us if you would like to receive one of these items, or the annual Digest of Apple of His Eye-Russia Magazine.

We are a faith ministry. The only way we can continue to serve is through the prayers and generous donations of ministry partners like you! It would be a great encouragement to us if you would let us know you are praying for us. You can send your tax-deductible donations to:

The Apple of His Eye Mission Society (designate to Russian ministry)

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Apple “Core” Values

א

Direct Jewish Evangelism:

It is vital that we focus energy on a clear presentation of the Good News of life and salvation in Y?hua to unsaved Jewish people world-wide. (Romans 1:16)

ב

Lutheran Biblical Doctrine:

We value sound Biblical grace-oriented teaching as we equip people to be witnesses to the life we find in the Messiah, Y?hua.

ג

Planting Messianic Congregations:

The planting of worshipping congregations with a messianic Jewish heritage is an important outcome of our ministry.

ד

Nurturing Mishpochah (Family)

We value a caring and committed community which will rejoice with one another in victory and mourn with those who mourn. We recognize that for some, faith in Y?hua may lead to loss of family and Jewish community support, and we willingly stand in the gap to provide support and community for those Jewish believers.

ה

Awareness and Training for the Church in Jewish Evangelism

We value raising the awareness level of Lutheran congregations for their Jewish community neighbors and we work to lift their zeal and skills in sharing their faith with them.

ו

Leadership Development

We prize the discovery and usage of the Spiritual Gifts and talents of Jewish and gentile believers, and we invest time and energy in training and deploying them to carry out God? mission in the community and the world.

ז

We Value God? Promises Concerning the Jewish People

We believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. The promises that He has made concerning the Jewish people will be consummated in His time (Jer. 31:35-37; Romans 11:24-26) We stand against anti-Semitism in all of its forms, and view withholding the Gospel from the Jewish people to be the worst form of anti-Semitism.



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Зеница  oka Его