

## **God Reveals His plans**

By Moshe Schwab

Words that have to do with God revealing His plans were well understood by the Jewish people in the first century. They looked forward to what God was going to do and key words referring to God's revealed plans were part of their faith. Indirect as well as direct references such as "good news" (Isa. 61:1-2; 52:7), "made us sit together in heavenly places"<sup>1</sup> (ref. Eph. 1:3 NKJV) and other references were understood. Today we also have words like "end times" or "tribulation" and other words that make us think of future times. Many of these words that they understood back then came from prophets like Isaiah. God was always in the business of using prophets to warn His people, direct His people, give ordinary directions for life, give directions to help them live right, encouragement, and also prophesying future events.

In Romans 1:2, when it talks about the promised good news, it is talking about the promised news of the Messiah. Shaul (Paul) as a Jewish teacher uses key words from the Tanakh (Old Testament). When it is talking about this news being given in advance or before it is talking about the prophetic goodness of God who has revealed His plan to man since the time of Adam. Romans 1:2 NKJV says, "Which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures." God revealing His plans is nothing new although some New Testament theologians think it is new because they don't apply their knowledge of the Old Testament to what Rabbi Shaul (Paul) wrote.

For example, some say that God's plans began only with the coming of the Messiah and of course that is not true. God has always tried to help man. The first promise of the Messiah is said to have been made in Genesis 3:15. That was only the beginning of the renewal of a long relationship between God and mankind that began with Adam. When we read the New Testament portion we have to try to understand how early Jewish believers in Yeshua would understand it. They understood the continuum of God's interventions in the world since Adam and Eve.

Here are a few scriptures about prophesy:

"But someone prophesying is speaking to people, edifying, encouraging and comforting them." 1 Cor. 14:3 CJB.

"ADONAI, God, does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7 CJB

"See how the former predictions come true; and now new things do I declare — before they sprout I tell you about them." Isaiah 42:9 CJB.

So prophecy can comfort, build up, and encourage. God wants to inform us and help us. It is not just telling the future although prophesy can include that.

Through the prophets believers (in this case Old Testament believers) could understand what was going to happen including that a messiah would come. Yeshua was expected because the prophets told us He was going to be born in Bethlehem (Beit-Lechem). "But you, Beit-Lechem near Efrat, so small among the clans of Y'hudah, out of you will come forth to me the future ruler of Isra'el, whose origins are far in the

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<sup>1</sup> There were clusters of stars that were visible in their day so they could look up at the stars and see them. They represented the beautiful assembly of believers. E. W. Bullinger in his book, The Witness of the Stars, on page 121 says that the name for the star cluster Pleiades means, "the congregation of the judge or ruler." This is a physical example in the heavens of the reality that God has made believers in the true God His heavenly people. Also on page 121, Bullinger says that the word for the star cluster Hyades means "the congregated."

past, back in ancient times. (3) Therefore he will give up [Isra'el] only until she who is in labor gives birth. Then the rest of his kinsmen will return to the people of Isra'el." Micah 5:1-2 CJB.

God tells Habakkuk that the prophesy given him will "surely come" to pass. "Then ADONAI answered me; he said, 'Write down the vision clearly on tablets, so that even a runner can read it. For the vision is meant for its appointed time; it speaks of the end, and it does not lie. It may take a while, but wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.'" Habakkuk 2:2-3 CJB. What God tells us and promises us will come to pass. We can count on Him, just like Yeshua came from heaven and became a man, and was born in Bethlehem according to the scriptures. Key words that point to God's plans were part of biblical Jewish understanding and not something that only "came of age" when the Messiah came.