



## The Definition of Redemption

After the Jewish people's victorious war with Amalek, Moshe builds an altar and names it "God is my miracle." The midrash uses this odd name as a springboard to discuss God's closeness with the Jewish people:<sup>1</sup>

You find that whenever a miracle occurs for the Jewish people, the miracle is before Him as the verse states "God is my miracle." Whenever the Jewish people are in distress, the distress is before Him as the verse states "in all of their distress, He is pained." Whenever the Jewish people experience joy there is joy before him... as the verse states: "And I will rejoice with Jerusalem, and I will exult with My people, and a sound of weeping or a sound of crying shall no longer be heard therein."<sup>2</sup>

God, so to speak, experiences whatever the Jewish people experience.

Let us hone in on the last verse cited above. This is part of Yeshayhu's beautiful prophetic description of the future redemption. This is when the Jewish people, together with God, will experience the epitome of joy.

With this in mind, let us look at the subsequent verses:<sup>3</sup>

There shall no longer be from there a youth or an old man who will not fill his days... And they shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat, for like the days of the tree are the days of My people, and My elect shall outlive their handiwork.

This description is strikingly captivating, but simultaneously surprisingly prosaic. Could Yeshayahu envision no greater future than people living long lives in their own homes and fields?

Perhaps the key to this description is the confluence of the people and setting. The people will not be living their lives in the diaspora, in foreign grounds, as a minority within a majority

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<sup>1</sup> Midrash Tanchuma, end of Beshalach.

<sup>2</sup> Yeshayahu 65:19.

<sup>3</sup> Yeshayahu 65:20-22.



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culture. Yeshayahu emphasizes that this future story occurs in Yerushalayim – the ultimate home of the Jewish people. And this makes all the difference.

At home, even the most prosaic aspects of life can take on great significance and meaning. Living peacefully with family, in a place that is both our home and God’s home, experiencing the joy of having things the way they ideally are meant to be, is really the zenith of a redeemed world.

This is reminiscent of the famous prophecy of Zecharya who also focuses on the “prosaic” elements of life in Yerushalayim as the ultimate marker of redemption:<sup>4</sup>

So said the Lord of Hosts: Old men and women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of old age. And the streets of the city shall be filled, with boys and girls playing in its streets. So said the Lord of Hosts: As it will be wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, it will also be wonderful in My eyes, says the Lord of Hosts.

We have already begun to taste this reality and may we soon see the complete fulfillment of these stirring prophecies.

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<sup>4</sup> Zecharya 8:4-6.