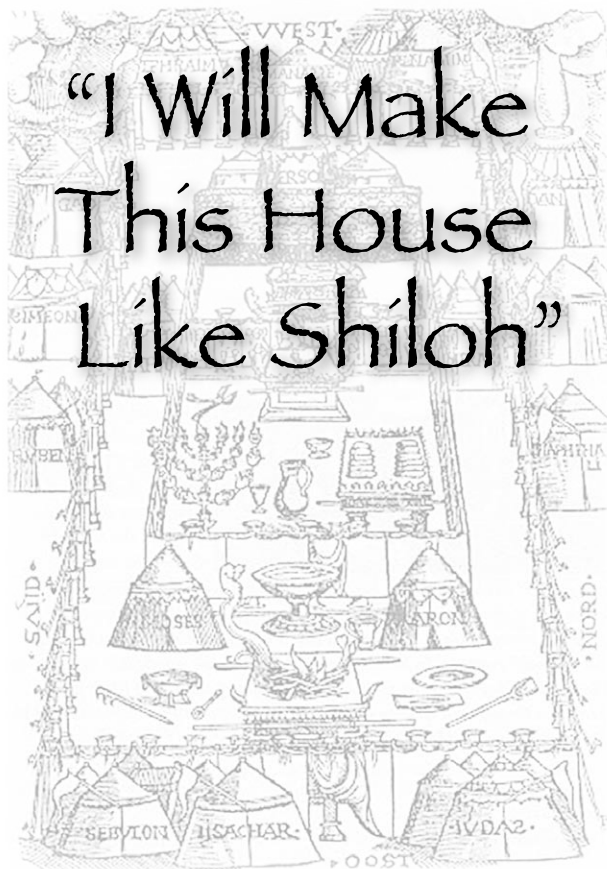


“I will Make  
This House  
Like Shiloh”



# “I Will Make This House Like Shiloh”

*by Tom Quinlan*

A detailed look at the meaning of Shiloh in the Scriptures and how it relates to this prophecy from Jeremiah. Primary texts are Jeremiah 26 and 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel ch. 4-6.

The Strongs Hebrew Dictionary defines Shiloh and its root words as follows:

7887 Shiloh {shee-lo’}; *from the same as 7886*; Shiloh, a place in Palestine.

7886 Shiylah {shee-lo’}; *from 7951*; tranquil; an epithet of the Messiah, Shiloh.

7951 shalah {shaw-law’}; or shalav (Job 3:26) {shaw-lav’}; a primitive root; to be tranquil, i.e. secure or successful:--be happy, prosper, be in safety.

In two different portions of the book of Jeremiah (Chapters 7 & 26), the prophet instructs Israel to go to Shiloh and see what happened there, because God is about to do what he did there to the current house of Israel. If you look up Shiloh in Strongs Hebrew Dictionary, you could come to the conclusion that the LORD is about to do something wonderful. “I will make this house like Shiloh” could read, “I will make this house safe, prosperous, tranquil; like Messiah.” Let us take a closer look at the scriptures to see if this promising rendering holds up under scrutiny.

Remember that the LORD delivered Israel from the oppressive slavery of the Egyptians by sending the ten plagues which had culminated in the death of every firstborn in Egypt, except in Goshen, where the blood of a lamb without blemish had been applied to the doorpost of every Israelite home. God then caused the Red Sea to part for the children of Israel when Egypt decided to pursue them. After crossing the Red Sea, into the wilderness, the LORD instructed Moses to build a special tent where He would meet and dwell with Israel. This tent, known as the Tabernacle, is where the atoning sacrifices and daily prayers of the

priests took place. In the innermost room, known as the Holy of Holies, the ark of the Covenant was kept. Inside the ark were the stone tablets inscribed with the commandments God gave Moses, and it was covered with the Mercy Seat and the two cherubim.

The tabernacle was designed by God to be portable, so that He could personally lead the children of Israel into the promised land. When they finally entered the land after forty years of wandering, the Tabernacle was set up somewhat permanently at a place called Shiloh. Therefore the name Shiloh became synonymous with the home of the tabernacle and the presence of the LORD. In fact, even before the nation of Israel was delivered from Egypt, Jacob mentioned Shiloh prophetically when blessing his son Judah by saying, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” Jacob foresaw a gathering of the nations to Shiloh, the presence of the LORD.

*Shiloh became synonymous with the presence of the LORD.*

In this context, the prophetic utterance of Jeremiah, “I will make this house like Shiloh” still has that ring of a profound promise, perhaps like a restoration to the status in which God created mankind when He said “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...”

Consider that the prophets foresee that God’s people will, at the end of this age, become as a bride unto the LORD. Hosea says, “And I will betroth thee unto Me **forever**; yea, **I will betroth thee unto Me** in righteousness, and in justice, and in lovingkindness, and in compassion”.

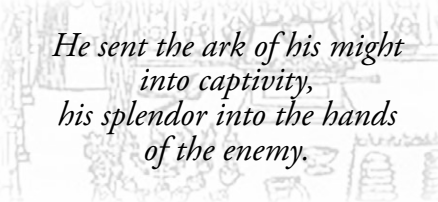
All this would neatly gel with the reading of Jeremiah as “I will make this house safe, prosperous, tranquil; like Messiah.” except that there are several serious problems we have deliberately ignored until now. First of all, in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 4 we see that after a battle in which the Philistines killed four thousand Israelites, the ark of God (including the Ten Commandments and the mercy seat) was brought from the tabernacle in Shiloh to be in the midst of Israel’s fighting men, in hopes that the Lord’s presence would help Israel defeat the Philistines. But God actually allowed the Philistines to capture the ark and further rout the Israelites. Some time after that, even though the Philistines returned the ark to Israel, it *never again* returned to Shiloh.

Secondly, Jeremiah was clearly referring to this terrible turn of events when the overall context of the “Shiloh” statement is read:

“Early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came from the LORD : “This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD’s house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the LORD. Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word. Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from his evil way. Then I will relent and not bring on them the disaster I was planning because of the evil they have done. Say to them, “This is what the LORD says: If you do not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, and **if you do not listen** to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (*though you have not listened*), then **I will make this house like Shiloh** and this city an object of cursing among all the nations of the earth.” Jer 26

This looks to be the death blow to the “like Messiah” interpretation we were seeing in Jeremiah’s Shiloh passage. Has this “like Shiloh” passage really been just a warning of judgement if the word of the LORD is not heeded?

Before we accept this conclusion, Psalm 78 recounts the 1st Samuel “Shiloh” events prophetically from God’s point of view:



*He sent the ark of his might  
into captivity,  
his splendor into the hands  
of the enemy.*

They [Israel] angered him with their high places;  
they aroused his jealousy with their idols.  
When God heard them, he was very angry;  
he rejected Israel completely.  
*He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh,*  
the tent he had set up among men.  
*He sent the ark of his might into captivity,*  
his splendor into the hands of the enemy.  
He gave his people over to the sword;  
he was very angry with his inheritance.  
Fire consumed their young men,  
and their maidens had no wedding songs;  
their priests were put to the sword,  
and their widows could not weep.  
Then the Lord awoke as from sleep,  
as a man wakes from the stupor of wine.  
*He beat back his enemies;*  
he put them to *everlasting* shame.

Wow! It is saying here that God *willingly* allowed the ark of His presence to be captured by the uncircumcised Philistines. He was “very angry” with Israel, His inheritance, but somehow after such a humiliating disaster the LORD beat back His enemies *eternally!*

How did God turn defeat into victory and how does this relate to Jeremiah’s Shiloh pronouncement?

To answer these questions let us go back to the beginning, even to the garden when God told Adam, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day you eat of it *you will surely die.*”

Could we have underestimated what happened that fateful day when Adam and Eve *did* eat of that fruit because we too have been affected by its poison? Through Jeremiah, the LORD reminds us of the fall when He says, “The heart is deceitful above *all* things and *beyond* cure. Who can understand it?” Without some type of heavenly intervention, the human heart is *dead to God* just as was spoken to Adam. This not only includes the hearts of Israel’s enemies but *even to the hearts of God’s chosen people.*

If you understand this, you will understand that the role of *the* Messiah *must* be more than to simply defeat Israel’s natural enemies and restore a nationalistic glory. As God said to the serpent after the fall, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he will *crush your head*, and you will strike his heel.” We see the same theme as the story of Shiloh here. God allows the enemy a huge victory, but promises to crush the enemy through the seed of the very vessel (Eve) whose actions ushered in the defeat. In fact, if Shiloh can refer

to Messiah, then this is not only the same theme but actually an unfolding fulfillment of the promised demise of the serpent.

Let us return to Shiloh and see what happened to the enemies of God's people when they captured the ark. The Philistines were thinking that the LORD was subject to their god Dagon because they had defeated the Israelites. So they put the ark of God's presence and his covenant with Israel, beside Dagon inside Dagon's temple. The next day they found Dagon fallen on his face before the ark of the LORD. They set him back up only to find him fallen again the next day with his *head* and hands *broken off*. The ark was then sent to Gath and Ekron where the people broke out with tumors and some even died. So the Philistines put the ark on a cart pulled by two cows that had just delivered calves and had never pulled anything before as a final test to see if the true and living God has actually been in their midst. These untrained and unmanned animals, though yearning for their calves, guided the ark perfectly back to Israel, demonstrating that the unseen God of Israel was leading the ark back to His desired haven.

Therefore, it was *because of* God's willingness to subject His own name and presence to humiliation that He was able to judge the false god Dagon, and bring the fear of the LORD to both the Philistines and again to Israel.

A servant is not greater than his master, so let's consider Moses,

*Was Moses more willing to suffer for his people than God is?*

the servant of God, for just a moment. Scripture says that Moses was the meekest man upon the face of the earth. It also says that Moses was prepared to have his own name removed from God's

book of life if the nation of Israel could not be forgiven. Was the meekness of Moses greater than God's? Was the willingness of Moses to suffer on behalf of his people greater than God's willingness to suffer for them? Of course not. Moses was unquestionably anointed of God to lead God's people out of bondage to Egypt. Shouldn't we expect "the" anointed one, the Messiah, to manifest these same attributes of God to an even higher degree in order to obtain a more lasting forgiveness for the people of God?

Why was Abraham, the father of faith, called upon to sacrifice Isaac, his son of the promise, if he did not first see that willingness in the heart of the everlasting Father? "God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering my son."

The prophet Isaiah saw this very clearly and said:

"His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness— so will he sprinkle many nations." **He** is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and **we** hid as it were our faces from him; **he** was despised, and **we** esteemed him not. Surely **he** hath borne **our** griefs, and carried **our** sorrows: yet **we** did esteem **him** stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

"But **he** was wounded for **our** transgressions, **he** was crushed for **our** iniquities: the chastisement of **our** peace was upon **him**; and with **his** stripes **we** are healed. *All we* like sheep have gone astray; **we** have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on **him** *the iniquity of us all*.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought **as a lamb** to the slaughter, and

as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so *he openeth not his mouth.*”

This “Anointed One” of Isaiah expresses more clearly than anywhere else in scripture the very heart of the LORD towards His people. We see the willingness of God to lose *everything* for those who despised and rejected him, just as we saw in Shiloh. Who, may I ask, resembles this picture and has been more despised by his own people than Jesus of Nazareth? *Jesus*, that rejected one, *embodies Shiloh like no other.* Therefore, “I will make this house like Shiloh” can be translated, “I will make my people Israel into the likeness of my son Jesus, who laid down his life for them.”

Just as God determined to use Eve’s seed to crush the one who seduced her away from God, He has also determined to make Israel, that nation most responsible for putting the Messiah Jesus to death, *to become like the Messiah,* and bring great blessing to all the nations of the earth.

*“I will make my people Israel into the likeness of my son Jesus, who laid down his own life for them.”*

If this is true, then events of an apocalyptic, Shiloh kind must surely come to pass for the nation Israel *and* those grafted into the commonwealth of Israel through the blood of Jesus. For Israel, as a nation, has yet to fulfill Zechariah’s prophecy:

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of *unmerited* favor and supplication. They will look on *Me, the one they have pierced,* and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a *firstborn son.*”

*As a nation,* Israel still rejects the Messiahship of Jesus and those who dare to proclaim it. In the past God allowed Israel’s hardness of heart so that Jesus, our great high priest could bear the sins of all men and sprinkle his blood in the heavenly tabernacle, the pattern Moses saw. He allows that hardness *still to totally* empty his chosen nation of deadly pride *and* to require the church to demonstrate *the same* Spirit of Jesus in the face of *life threatening* opposition. The Gentile church has yet to provoke Israel to jealousy as was prophesied by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy:

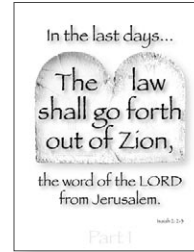
*“They made Me jealous by that which in not God, and made Me angry with their worthless idols, I will make them jealous by that which is not a people, I will make them angry by a vile nation.”*

For what could the nations possibly possess to provoke Israel to jealousy except they obtain, by no merit of their own, that divine willingness to lay down their reputations and even their very lives for their enemies. This is the long awaited fullness of the Gentiles that *must come* before the softening of a rebellious Israel.

So, dear reader, whether you be Jew or Gentile, God is *determined* to make you like Shiloh, which we now know is Jesus. His heart is *fixed* upon making you like Himself in all His humility and mercy. Resist Him and you will be crushed by the weight of His eternal glory. Yield to Him, and when your own strength and ability is broken by the requirements of His love, you will find the peace and tranquility that *passes understanding,* and, you will find the eternal resurrection life that runs deeper than *death to the earthly tabernacle* which is our body. **ZC**

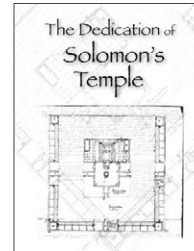
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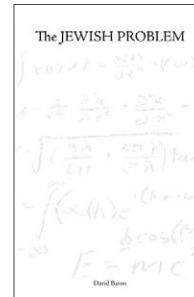


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