

HIDDEN IN THE GLORIOUS DARKNESS

A Devotional Meditation on NITZAVIM (YOU ARE STANDING) & VAYALEKH (AND HE WENT)

Deuteronomy 29:10-31:30; Isaiah 53:1-12, 61:10-63:9; Hosea 3:1-5;

Romans 9:1-5; Ephesians 2:11-13; Philippians 2:1-11

Albert J. McCarn

September 5, 2026

It's a mystery why Jews and Christians are divided about the Messiah when expect his coming to bring peace to the world. It's not that we are expecting different Messiahs, but rather that we have different expectations of how Messiah will come.

Christians expect a Messiah who comes twice, the first time as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Yeshua came as the one with "no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2). He didn't come to rule, but to lay down his life for our transgressions. This is the Savior who, as Paul explains,



Photo by Bruce, July 25, 2021, [on Unsplash](#).

. . . though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:6-8 ESV

Why did Messiah have to come that way? The answer is because that's how we needed him to appear. Again, Paul supplies the reason:

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ [Messiah], alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:11-13 ESV

We from the nations were outside the covenant of redemption God made exclusively with Abraham and his descendants in the nation of Israel. The Jewish people are the natural descendants of Abraham and the visible remnant of Israel. Paul says of them:

They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Romans 9:4-5 ESV

We from the nations, regardless of whether we are in any way descended from Israel's tribes, were caught outside this covenant until God himself, the maker and guarantor of the covenant, intervened to bring us in. At the same time, he intervened to extend grace and mercy on the Jewish native born.

Hosea prophesies two distinct destinies for Israel's divided kingdom, the Jewish people, or House of Judah, and the rest of the nation which is called the House of Israel:

. . . I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.

Hosea 1:6-7 ESV

God divided his covenant people into two parts, cutting one part out of the covenant entirely, and sending the other part into exile. Those who were cut out of the covenant forgot who they were and merged with the nations. The Jewish part retained their identity even through two periods of exile. The Jewish people have preserved all those things Paul says were entrusted to them. They have clung tightly to the Torah and persistently prayed toward Jerusalem, the center of God's Kingdom.

As Jews pray toward Jerusalem, they are following the instructions of Moses:

And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

Deuteronomy 30:1-3 ESV

They are also following the example of Solomon, who dedicated the First Temple with a prayer that God would honor the petitions of both the native born of Israel and the foreigners when they prayed toward his holy House. As Solomon said,

The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.

1 Kings 8:12-13 ESV

The Hebrew word translated as "thick darkness" refers to the cloud of glory of God's presence. That cloud rested on Mount Sinai, on the Tabernacle, and on Solomon's Temple. Ezekiel saw the cloud depart in the time of the Temple's destruction. It's that cloud of glory that faithful Jews have been expecting to return ever since.

Yeshua didn't bring the cloud of God's glory into the Second Temple, and that's a big reason why he hasn't been received by his brethren. They expect Messiah to regather all Israel and restore the nation to the glorious covenant status they have held in their collective memory for millennia.

What's missing in this expectation is the Messiah's task to gather all the outcasts of Israel, along with multitudes from the nations. That task is tied to the reason the House of Israel was cut out of the covenant and scattered to the nations. God didn't forget them.

He sent Messiah the first time to open the way for their return, and for strangers from the nations to join them.

We from the nations have missed the significance of God's covenant city of Jerusalem, his covenant land of Israel, and the Jewish remnant of the covenant people of Israel. All we know is that once we were in darkness, but in Yeshua we are brought into the light. This is something else Hosea prophesied:

For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

Hosea 3:4-5 ESV

Both Houses of Israel have lived for millennia without the visible elements of God's presence. Perhaps that is how God has been removing the heart of stone from his people, both the native born and the grafted-in strangers. If we can learn to love, honor, and obey him without seeing the visible cloud of his glory, then perhaps our hearts will remain inclined to serve him forever.

This is where the Jewish and Christian expectations of Messiah merge. We know we are living in the latter days because his people from both sides of the family are beginning to recognize each other as somehow connected through his covenant. It's still a mystery how it works, but the answer could be hidden in his glorious darkness.