Q5a. What is the Mission of Mashiach? (intro)

Like a young child who can’t imagine that his parents have a life outside the home, Israel has long imagined that Mashiach exists for the sole benefit of Israel. In this way, the Jewish thinking has popularly imagined Mashiach a bespectacled rabbi dispensing nice platitudes as the embodiment of Jewish life. In Psalm 2, we overhear the private, father to son conversation between the Lord God and His Son, the Mashiach. In the discussion of the Son’s world-inheritance, the only mention of Israel is the location of Mashiach’s throne, set on “Zion, my holy hill” (Ps. 2:6).

Furthermore, the “Lord of hosts” sends the “Lord” Mashiach to rescue the “daughter of Zion” (Zech. 2:9-10) as a father sends his son to a distant land to take for himself a precious bride. However, make no mistake—Israel as the one precious to this Lord Mashiach is the one in the position of need. Israel is being “plundered” by the “nations” (Zech. 2:8) and is spared only because this Lord Mashiach is the one “sent” to redeem her (Zech. 2:9) and to “dwell” in their ”midst” as a “wall of fire all around” (Zech. 2:5, 10). Though Israel is not the entirety of the Mashiach’s Mission to take for himself His rightful inheritance, the nation benefits from this mission as part of Zion, the Lord’s precious inheritance he wins from amidst the threatening nations. Like Rivkah choosing to follow Isaac and share in his inheritance, Israel has the right to take its place at the Lord Mashiach’s side. Not to replace him, but to honor Him as their rightful Lord.

So, to under Mashiach’s redemptive mission, we must first understand the mission of his kindred people whom He is called to redeem. For most Jews, it is easy to conceive their mission in entirely earthly terms, as the sons of Abraham. Called to live differently as God’s holy people as a witness to the nations, Mashiach is simply a means to achieve Jewish ends—to rebuild the Temple, to affirm Jewish identity, and to embody Jewish practice as a *tsadik*.

However, the Lord God originally designated the Mashiach’s line, starting with its first parents of Adam and Eve, as the “generations” (that is, Heirs), of “the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 2:4). For, the line of Adam, through the people of Israel, in the house of David, and for all families of the earth, would be the line of Mashiach himself, the Son of God (2 Sam. 7:14) and the Son of David (2 Sam. 7:12). Because Adam’s line as the “sons of God” (Gen. 6:2) were meant to inherit “heaven” and “earth” (Gen. 2:4) as the people of the Mashiach, they were entrusted with the holy “image” and “likeness” of *Elohim* (Gen. 1:26) as ones alive in earthly flesh and heavenly spirit (Gen. 2:7).

But, our first parents defiled God’s holy image with *death* (Gen. 2:17), sinning by creating a self-righteousness of their own design, defining “good” and “evil” for themselves as their own idolatrous self-lords (Gen. 3:5). Spiritually dead in sin and naked in our earthly flesh, as the Lord God had warned (Gen. 2:17), we lost everything. As creatures of dead flesh, we had no earthly ability to restore ourselves to spiritual life and righteousness. As Isaiah recounts, we are a people living in “darkness,” in the “land and shadow of death”—*tsalmaveth* (Is. 9:2).

Thus, ordained by God as the Firstborn Heir of heaven (the Son of God) and earth (the Son of Man), Mashiach is the family’s Kindred Redeemer. So, when the other “sons of God” (Gen. 6:4) were orphaned from God’s house in the “land and shadow of death (*tzalmaveth*),” the Kinsman-Redeemer became the “great light” to overcome the overpowering darkness to restore his family to life and light. As the Lord God had promised David, his *Zera* would redeem his people by being “disciplined” for sin (2 Sam. 7:14), building these redeemed into a spiritual “house” (v.13), to inherit an eternal “kingdom.”