

Haftarah

Isaiah 46:3-5, 8-13 + 47:4

Commenting on the mention of the redemption of the first-born in Exodus 13-14

Isaiah 46:3-4 - "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."

Rashi - "who are borne from birth": Since you were born in the house of Laban the Aramean, I bore you on My arms, for since then, adversaries stand up against you in every generation and not like the idolaters (other nations [K'li Paz and mss.]) who are laden and carry their Gods, as is mentioned above, but you are laden and borne in My arms.

Isaiah 47:4 - "As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel."

Jeremiah 31:8-16, 19

Jeremiah 31:15-16 - "Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy."

Rashi (commenting on **Genesis 48:7**) - I know that you hold it against me; but you should know that I buried her there by divine command, so that she would be of assistance to her children. When Nebuzaradan exiles them (the Israelites), and they pass by there, Rachel will emerge from her grave and weep and beg mercy for them, as it is said: "A voice is heard on high, [lamentation, bitter weeping, Rachel is weeping for her children]" (Jer. 31:14). And the Holy One, blessed be He, answers her, "'There is reward for your work,' says the Lord, ... 'and the children shall return to their own border'" (ibid. verses 15, 16) (Pesikta Rabbathi ch. 3).

Rachel actually is comforted in the rest of the passage with the promise of a regathering of both Israel and Judah. It's clear that this is something not fully accomplished by the return of the exiles (in Jesus' day the exile and diaspora was still considered to be ongoing) but is for the Days of Messiah, because the New Covenant is part of the promise (**Jeremiah 31:33**).

The New Testament writers saw this fulfillment in the events around the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem. Christ would be the comfort for both tragedies. (**Matthew 2:16-18**)

