

From *Tzion* to *Bat Tzion*: the Expanding Boundaries of Redemption

This week's *haftorah* opens with the *navi Zechariah* (2:14) calling out to the *Bat Tzion* – daughter of *Tzion* – declaring that she should “sing and be glad.” The *navi* promises that *Hashem* will again dwell amongst this daughter of *Tzion* and choose *Yerushalayim* as His portion.

As we have noted in the past, *Tanach* and *Chazal* use *Tzion* and *Yerushalayim* interchangeably – both titles refer to our holy city. Therefore, the commentators note that *Bat Tzion* clearly refers to *Am Yisrael* – those who dwell within the city of *Tzion*.

This *nevuah* seems beautiful. But upon analyzing *Zechariah's* prophecy in context, something strange emerges. Earlier, the *navi* dreams of an encounter with a man attempting to measure *Yerushalayim*. Two angles then arrive and inform *Zechariah* that such an exercise is futile: the city is destined to expand far beyond its walls due to an enormous influx of people, making current measurements pointless. The *navi* goes on to address *Tzion* – conspicuously *not* referring to *Bat Tzion* – and promises that He will dwell in her. He promises to be a protective wall of fire, punishing all those who once attempted to destroy her and occupy her.

Only after the vision of the angles and measuring line does *Zechariah* finally turn to the *Bat Tzion* and promise that *Hashem* will dwell in her. Why the separate references to *Tzion* and *Bat Tzion*? And why two separate promises regarding *Hashem's* love and restoration?

The *Alshich* notes that the initial promise of redemption recorded by *Zechariah* in the beginning of chapter 2 is not due to the merits or worthiness of *Am Yisrael*. *Hashem* will not initially redeem *Yerushalayim* because of us. Rather, He will zealously pursue the honor of the holy city itself, for its own sake.

This is why *Zechariah* only emphasizes *Hashem's* glory in the midst of the city, not the people. He will be a wall of fire protecting the city. Miraculously, *Yerushalayim's* boundaries will exponentially expand beyond her walls, making her recently measured size irrelevant.

But eventually, the daughter herself will merit *Hashem's* redemption. (Crucially, the *Alshich* notes that this will only be true once the children of *Am Yisrael* unify into a single organic unit in *achdus*, becoming a singular *Bat Tzion*.) Only then will *Am Yisrael* rejoice in the streets of *Yerushalayim*, recognizing that *Hashem* has now chosen to reside amongst them, not just His holy city.

The physical redemption of *Yerushalayim* and its miraculous expansion is only the beginning. When true unity is achieved – marked by a shared destiny and vision of

eternity – the *Bat Zion* will eternally rejoice within the ever expanding boundaries of her mother city.