

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 21

Mishpatim, Sicha 2

The Verse:

Foretelling the Jewish people about their eventual entry into the Land of Israel, G-d says:

“Behold, I am sending an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.” (Shemos 23:20)

The Rashi:

That I have prepared — I have invited it, to give to you. This is its simple meaning. Its Midrashic interpretation is: "That I have prepared": My place is already recognizable opposite it. This is one of the verses that state that the heavenly Temple is directly opposite the earthly Temple.

The Questions:

1. Why does Rashi need to elaborate on the simple meaning, “I have invited it, to give to you?” It is obvious that G-d is speaking to the people, and that He will be giving the land to them.
2. Rashi includes the Midrashic reading because it explains why the verse used

the euphemistic word “the place,” instead of the more direct “the land.” With this, the verse means to allude to a well-known, designated place, the place of the Beis Hamikdash. But why does Rashi need to add, “This is one of the verses that state that the heavenly Temple is directly opposite the earthly Temple”? Rashi cited this teaching twice previously and did not include this explanatory addition.

The Explanation:

Rashi is addressing the following problem: the verse uses the word, “prepared,” which implies a physical change in the item to prepare it for future use. But at this point, the Land of Israel was not “prepared” for the Jewish people’s conquest. In fact, the verse continues to say that the Canaanite nations still lived there, and the process of conquest would be slow. What, then, is the meaning of the phrase, “I have prepared”?

Rashi therefore explains that this was not a physical preparation but an “invitation,” a verbal commitment to give the land to Jewish people when the time came.

Yet this still goes against the grain of the literal meaning of “prepare.” Rashi therefore cites the Midrash which explains that G-d prepared the supernal Beis

Hamikdash to be aligned with the terrestrial one, "My place is already recognizable opposite it." In this interpretation, a change was done to prepare the Beis Hamikdash for the Jewish people, but it was done to the Heavenly Beis Hamikdash.

Still, the verse implies that there was a preparation made in this world, not only in the Heavenly realm. Rashi therefore adds, "this is one of the verses that state that the heavenly Temple is directly opposite the earthly Temple." With this, he means to explain that the preparation did not happen at this time, but rather, that the verse is referring to an earlier preparation which G-d made in the heavenly Beis Hamikdash.

Legal Aspects:

There is a debate if a verbal designation can change the legal status of an item. According to Rashi's first explanation, G-d's "invitation" is referred to in the verse as a material "preparation," suggesting that verbal designation does have a legal impact.

According to the Midrashic explanation, that the preparation of the verse refers to the tangible act that G-d performed with the heavenly Beis Hamikdash, there is no support for the position that verbal designation has legal impact.