

# Handel's Mashiach

## A classical Christian work reinterpreted as Hebrew liturgy

Scripture passages from The Orthodox Jewish Bible, AFI International Publishers  
Edited by Morgan Squicciarini

### \*PART I\*

#### OVERTURE

##### RECITATIVE (Accompanied - Tenor)

Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith Eloheichem; speak ye to the lev Yerushalayim (*the heart of Jerusalem*); and preach unto her, that her time of hard service is ended, that her elon (*iniquity*) is nirtzah (*pardoned*). The voice of him that crieth bamidbar: Prepare ye the Derech HaShem (*the Way of the L-rd*): make straight in the aravah a highway for Eloheinu.

Comment [MAS1]: Who is the comforter?

Comment [MAS2]: Is the highway for G-d to use? Or is it "for" Him in the sense that all nations will be coming to worship in Jerusalem?

##### AIR (Tenor)

Every valley shall be raised up, and every har and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

##### CHORUS

And the kavod HaShem shall be revealed, and all basar shall see it together; for the mouth of HaShem hath spoken.

Comment [MAS3]: When will the glory be revealed?

##### RECITATIVE (Accompanied - Bass)

Thus saith Adonai Tzva'ot: Yet once a little while and I will shake HaShomayim and HaAretz, the yam and the karavah; and I will shake kol goyim; and Chemdat HaGoyim (*the desire of all nations*) shall come. HaShem, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to HaBeit, even the Malach HaBrit (*messenger of the covenant*), whom ye chafetz: hinei, He shall come, saith Adonai Tzva'ot.

Comment [MAS4]: He does not come quietly...

Comment [MAS5]: The temple rebuilt.

##### AIR (Bass)

But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's eish.

##### CHORUS

And He shall purify the b'nei Levi, that they may offer unto HaShem a corban tzedakah (*offering in righteousness*).

Comment [MAS6]: A futuristic reinstitution of the Temple services? Priests and sacrifices?

##### RECITATIVE (Alto)

Hinei, a virgin shall conceive and bear ben, and shall call sh'mo Immanu El.

##### AIR (Alto)

O Mevaseret (*Preacher of the Gospel*) Tziyon, get thee up into the har gavo'ah, O Mevaseret Yerushalayim, lift up thy voice with ko'ach; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Yehudah, hinei Eloheichem (*behold your G-d*)! Arise, shine, for Tziyon's Ohr is come, and the kavod HaShem is risen upon thee.

Comment [MAS7]: And what IS the gospel message?

##### RECITATIVE (Accompanied - Bass)

For hinei, choschech shall cover Eretz, and great darkness the goyim; but HaShem shall rise upon thee, and His kavod shall be seen upon thee, and the goyim shall walk with Tziyon's Ohr, and

melechim by the brightness of thy shining.

**AIR** (Bass)

The people that walked in choshech have seen an Ohr Gadol; and they that dwell in the erez tzalmavet (*shadow of death*), upon them hath the Ohr dawned.

**CHORUS**

For unto us a yeled is born, unto us a ben is given, and the misrah (*dominion*) shall be upon His shoulder; and sh'mo shall be called Peleh, Yoetz, El Gibbor, Avi Ad, Sar Shalom.

**PASTORAL SYMPHONY**

**RECITATIVE** (Soprano)

Ro'im were in the same region, living outside in the open air, keeping shomer over their eder b'lailah.

**Comment [MAS8]:** The way that shepherds "guard" their sheep is the same way we should be guarding the mitzvot .

**RECITATIVE** (Accompanied - Soprano)

And suddenly a malach HaShem stood before them, and the kavod HaShem shone round about them, and they were afraid with a yirah gedolah.

**RECITATIVE** (Soprano)

And the malach said unto them, "Do not have pachad (*terror*); for hinei I announce Besurat HaGeulah to you of great simcha, which will be for kol Am; for hayom in Ir David, is born to you a Go'el, which is Yeshua HaMashiach."

**RECITATIVE** (Accompanied - Soprano)

And suddenly there was with the malach a multitude of the Tzivot HaShem, the Tzivot HaShomayim, praising HaShem and saying:

**Comment [MAS9]:** As we know, they're not beautiful singers but powerful warriors – the Host of Heaven.

**CHORUS**

Kavod to HaShem in the highest, and on haaretz shalom and kavanah tovah among b'nei adam.

**AIR** (Soprano)

Rejoice greatly, O bat Tziyon! Shout, O bat Yerushalayim! Hinei, thy Melech cometh unto thee! He is a tzaddik, and having salvation, and He shall proclaim shalom unto the goyim.

**RECITATIVE.** (Alto)

Then shall the eyes of the ivvrin be opened, and the ears of the chereshim unstopped; then shall the pisei'ach leap as a hart, and the leshon of the illem shall sing.

**AIR** (Alto)

He shall feed His eder like a ro'eh, and He shall gather the tela'im with His zeroah, and carry them in His kheyk, and gently lead those that are with young.

**AIR** (Alto)

Come unto Him, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and He will give you Shabbat menuchah (*rest and security*). Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is anav and shiflut in lev, and ye shall find menuchah unto your nefashot (*souls*).

**Comment [MAS10]:** What is His yoke?

**Comment [MAS11]:** Where do we learn of Him?

**CHORUS**

His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

**\*PART II\***

**CHORUS**

Hinei! The Seh HaElohim that taketh away the avonot HaOlam Hazeh.

**AIR** (Alto)

He was despised and chadal ishim; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He gave His back to them that deliver blows, and His cheeks to them that pulled out the beard; He hid not His face from kelimot and rok (*humiliation and spitting*).

**CHORUS**

Surely He hath borne our sufferings, and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised mei'avonoteinu; the musar which brought shalom was upon Him. And at the cost of His chaburah we are healed.

**CHORUS**

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own derech. And HaShem hath laid on Mashiach the avon of us all.

**Comment [MAS12]:** Shepherd analogy continued – we are like sheep, part of His flock.

**RECITATIVE.** (Accompanied - Tenor)

Thy reproach hath broken His lev; He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any menachamim (*comforters*).

**AIR** (Tenor)

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

**RECITATIVE** (Accompanied - Soprano)

He was cut off out of Eretz Chayyim; mipesha ami (*for the transgression of my people*) was He stricken.

**AIR** (Soprano)

But Thou didst not abandon His nefesh in Sheol; nor didst Thou suffer Thy Chasid to see shachat (*the abyss of corruption*).

**CHORUS**

Lift up your heads, O ye she'arim, and be ye lifted up, ye Pitchei Olam (*everlasting doors*), and the Melech HaKavod shall come in. Who is this Melech HaKavod? HaShem strong and mighty, HaShem Gibbor Milchamah. Lift up your heads, O ye she'arim, and be ye lifted up, ye Pitchei Olam, and the Melech HaKavod shall come in. Who is this Melech HaKavod? Adonai Tzva'ot, He is the Melech HaKavod.

**Comment [MAS13]:** Where are these gates and doors? Are they in the Temple?

**RECITATIVE** (Tenor)

Unto which of the malachim said He at any time, Thou art beni, hayom have I begotten Thee?

**CHORUS**

Let all the malachim HaShem worship Him.

**AIR** (Bass)

Thou hast ascended on marom; Thou hast led captivity captive, and received mattanot from adam, yea, even from sorerim, that HaShem Elohim might dwell among them.

**CHORUS**

HaShem gave the word, great was the company of the preachers.

**Comment [MAS14]:** Who are these preachers? Is this a Scriptural reference? Does it refer to the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai?

**AIR** (Soprano)

How beautiful (...upon the mountains) are the feet of the Mevaser that preach shalom, and bring glad tidings of tov.

**CHORUS**

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

**Comment [MAS15]:** What do the words say?

**AIR** (Bass)

Why do the goyim so furiously rage together, and why do the Amim imagine a vain thing? The Malchei Eretz rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against HaShem, and against His Mashiach.

**Comment [MAS16]:** Resistance is futile.

**CHORUS**

"Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their fetters from us."

**RECITATIVE** (Tenor)

He that dwelleth enthroned in Shomayim laughs; Adonai shall have them in derision.

**AIR** (Tenor)

Thou shalt rule them with a shevet barzel (*rod of iron*); Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

**CHORUS**

Baruch HaShem! For HaShem Eloheinu reigneth, El Shaddai. The Malchut of the Olam Hazeh has become the Malchut of Adoneinu, and of Yeshua HaMashiach; and He shall reign l'Olemei Olamim. Melech Melechim, and Adonai HaAdonim. Baruch HaShem!

**\*Part III\***

**AIR** (Soprano)

Ani yadati Goeli chai, and that He shall stand at Acharon upon aphar; and though worms destroy this body, yet in my basar shall I see Elohai. For now Yeshua HaMashiach is risen from the dead, the Bikkurim of them that sleep.

**Comment [MAS17]:** This beautiful meld of Job 19.25 with 1 Cor 15.20 is my favorite section. Translation: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the last days, and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God. For now the Messiah is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep."

**CHORUS**

Since by adam came death,

**Comment [MAS18]:** Reference to moedim – the feast of First Fruits.

**CHORUS**

By adam came also the resurrection of the dead.

**CHORUS**

For as in Adam all die,

**CHORUS**

Even so in Yeshua HaMashiach shall all be made alive.

**RECITATIVE** (Accompanied - Bass)

Hinei, I tell you a sod; we shall not all sleep like the mesim; but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last shofar blast.

**AIR** (Bass)

The shofar shall sound, and the mesim shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

**RECITATIVE** (Alto)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written; HaMavet is swallowed up in victory!

**DUET** (Alto and Tenor)

O Mavet, where is thy sting? O Sheol! Where is thy victory? The sting of death is chet (*sin*), and the ko'ach of chet is the law of condemnation.

**CHORUS**

But Baruch HaShem, who giveth us the nitzachon through Adoneinu, Yeshua HaMashiach.

**AIR** (Soprano)

If Adonai be for us, who can be against us? Who shall bring charges against the Bechirei HaElohim? It is HaShem who acquits and pronounces us to be yitzdak im HaShem (*justified with G-d*). Who is there to bring a judgment of harsha'ah (*condemnation*)? It is Yeshua HaMashiach who died, yea, rather that is kam litechyah (*raised to resurrection*), who is at limin HaShem, who makes intercession for us.

**CHORUS**

Worthy is the Seh that was slain, and hath redeemed us to Adonai by His blood, to receive oz (*power*), and osher (*riches*), and chochmah (*wisdom*), and gevurah (*strength*), and hod (*honour*), and kavod and bracha (*blessing*). Bracha and hod, kavod and memshalah (*dominion*), be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Seh, Olemei Olamim. Amen.

**Comment [MAS19]:** He is both the Shepherd and the Lamb. As the Shepherd, He cares for us, guiding us with His rod and staff; yet He is the spotless Lamb, the perfect atonement for sin.