

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH

Week 1 – Matthew and the Kingdom? The Bridge!

January 26, 2021

Psalm 146

The Gospel of Matthew:

“Gospel” – good news... In the Greek, the root word for Gospel is *evangel* – from which we get evangelism.

“Matthew” – a Jewish tax collector whose Hebrew name was Levi...whom Jesus called to be a disciple. Throughout the Gospel penned by him, Matthew called himself “Matthew [gift of the Lord], the tax collector.” Tax collectors were hated in Israel at that time. The tax collectors in Jesus’ day were Jews working for the hated Romans. Jewish tax collectors were seen as turncoats, traitors to their own countrymen. It was common knowledge that the tax collectors cheated the people from whom they collected. Jesus called Matthew, the tax collector, to serve HIM. Matthew could never forget God’s grace being poured down upon him. And so, he always spoke of himself as “Matthew, the tax collector” – a sinner saved by God’s amazing GRACE!

Why is the “Gospel” good news? Firstly we need to know the bad news:

**Bad news:**

Gen. 3:15 – man sinned

Rom. 3:23 – *for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*

Rom. 6:23a – *the wages of sin is death....*

**Good news:**

Gen. 3:15 – when sin entered the world through man’s sin, God IMMEDIATELY PROMISED the solution – the Seed of the woman, the Redeemer.

Rom. 6:23b – *the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ (the Messiah).*

I Cor. 15:1-6 – The gospel: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose the third day.

“The Kingdom of God”

Consider the words: “throne,” “house (of Jacob),” “kingdom,” “forever” (Luke 1:32-33).

God made promises to Israel through four unconditional covenants: Abrahamic Covenant, Land Covenant, Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. “Unconditional” – GOD ALONE will deliver on these promises. The fulfillment of God’s promises is NOT based on Israel’s obedience; the fulfillment of God’s promises is based on GOD!!! Heb. 6:13 – God swore by HIMSELF. What God has promised to Israel through four unconditional covenants WILL happen.

The Davidic Covenant promised a kingdom on earth (II Sam. 7:16 – *And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.*”). The prophets described the GLORIES of the Kingdom of God on

earth. The prophets had a message of hope that caused Israel to eagerly anticipate the fulfillment of God's promise re: the kingdom.

Isaiah spoke and wrote of the kingdom before the Babylonian captivity: Isa. 2 (speaks of the Temple in the Millennial Kingdom); Isa. 11 (conditions within the

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Millennial Kingdom): Isa. 62 (the promise of the restoration of Israel in the Kingdom): Isaiah 66 (speaks of the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal State) – cross reference these passages with others.

Jeremiah was in the midst of the Babylonian captivity when he spoke and wrote of the kingdom: Jer. 16:14ff; Jer. 23:5-6; Jer. 31:31-34; Jer. 32:26ff; Jer. 33:1ff – and then cross reference.

The prophecies of the kingdom spoke of Israel's restoration...and the people thought of it as the golden days of King Solomon who reigned over a united Israel from 971 to 931 BC. Time passed. A millennia/1,000 years passed and we then read of Jesus beginning His public ministry on earth at His first coming approx. 1,000 years following Solomon.

The HUGE application for each of us in our study of Scripture – KNOWING WHO GOD IS!!!! Psa. 46:10 – *Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.*

God promised that Israel would be an instrument of blessing to the world – to us! The Kingdom of God has relevance for the world – for us! (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 18:18; Rom. 11:15)

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In approaching the theme of “the kingdom,” we need to understand the relationship between the OT and the NT. Biblical principle – all passages in Scripture harmonize and complement each other. And, so...all kingdom passages in the Bible harmonize and complement each other.

Because God is the author of the Bible – and because Scripture has authorial intent – God had INTENT in giving His promises. We might ask as we study, “What did the text mean to the Biblical audience?” – the people who were receiving God's message. The NT does not reinterpret the OT!!!! Matthew, has much to tell us about the kingdom of God ON EARTH, in HARMONY with OT passages!!!

Why are there four Gospels? Do the four Gospels contradict one another? NO!!!! Do we realize that the four Gospels do NOT present a biography of Jesus. Each of the Gospels has its own emphasis on the ministry of Jesus. The Gospels do not contradict; they complement what each presents:

Matthew, writing to a Jewish audience, emphasizes Jesus' fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, proving that He is the long-awaited Messiah.

Mark writes a fast-paced, condensed account, recording Jesus' miraculous deeds and not recording His long discourses.

Luke portrays Jesus as the remedy of the world's ills, emphasizing His perfect humanity and concern for the weak, the suffering, and the outcast.

John emphasizes Jesus' deity by selecting many conversations and sayings of Jesus on the subject and also including "signs" that prove He is the Son of God.

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Matthew, Mark, Luke, John wrote for different audiences:

The Gospel of Matthew was written for a Jewish audience.

Matthew used Jewish terminology:

- Matt. 27:33 – “Golgotha” – in the Hebrew – “place of a skull” (interesting in light of Gen. 3:15 and Heb. 2:14).
- Luke 23:33 - “Calvary”–the Latin equivalent of Golgotha.
- Matthew used the term, “Kingdom of heaven” – not “kingdom of God.” My view is that “the kingdom of heaven” and “the kingdom of God” are the same. Why, then, does Matthew call “the kingdom of God” “the kingdom of heaven”? Matthew is sensitive to Jewish sensitivities. The name of God was/is too holy for them to speak.
- “Son of David” – Matthew continually refers to Jesus as the “Son of David,” emphasizing that He is indeed the Messiah – the Anointed One.
- Matthew doesn't translate Aramaic terms such as *raca* (Matt. 5:22) and *corban* (Matt. 15:5). Jewish people in Jesus' day spoke Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek. Jewish people would understand the Aramaic terms Matthew used.
- Significantly, the Gospel of Matthew triumphantly ends with Jesus commanding His Jewish followers/disciples to make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19-20). God had called the nation of Israel to carry out this task (Isa. 43:10). What a joy for Jesus to commission the Jewish disciples to carry out what God had originally called the nation of Israel to do.

Mark wrote to the Romans

Luke addressed the Greeks

John wrote to MANKIND!

Matthew – written as early as 50 AD

Mark – in the early 50's – AD

Luke – 60-61 AD

John – 80-90 AD

The Gospel of Matthew is the BRIDGE between the Old and New Testaments. It provides the reason/the link for the BIG PICTURE of the Bible. Matthew wrote to the

Jewish people. John MacArthur has stated, “The Jewish flavor of Matthew’s gospel is remarkable.” This is evident even in the opening genealogy, which Matthew traces back only as far as Abraham. In contrast, Luke, aiming to show Jesus as the Redeemer of humanity, goes all the way back to Adam. Matthew’s purpose is somewhat narrower: to demonstrate that Jesus is the King and Messiah of Israel.

SO? What’s the big deal re: the Jewish flavor of Matthew? Matthew deals primarily with the life of Jesus the Messiah as fulfilling OT prophecies relating to the coming King. Matthew’s purpose was to demonstrate to the Jewish people of the day that Jesus the Messiah is the promised Messiah of the OT, that He fulfilled the requirements of being the promised King Who would be a descendant of King David, and that His life and ministry fully supported the conclusion that He is the prophesied

Messiah of Israel. That Jesus is the coming King – the exalted King – the King Who would sit on the throne of David as the angel Gabriel had told Mary in Luke 1:26-33. CONSIDER: do we see Jesus as the King on King David’s throne at the end of Matthew? How do we see Jesus at the end of Matthew?

Jesus was born into chaos! Jesus was indeed born into a world of darkness and violence! “What led up to this? The Bible is a history book BUT – it is a SUPERNATURAL history book. History doesn’t occur in a vacuum...there are causes and influences... And so, we should ask when we read of events in Scripture, “What led up to this?”

CONSIDER this with me: “The world of Jesus was NOT the OT Hebrew world!”

Israel was multicultural. Israel included a combination of Aramaic Greek, and Roman influences. The Hebrew world of the OT was originally God-centered. The Hebrew world became man-centered before Jesus’ incarnation – before Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem Ephrathah. Daniel 2 lays out the Gentile empires that would rise up, one after another, beginning with Babylon, to rule over Israel and to oppress Israel through Israel’s history from 605 BC through to the entire Tribulation until Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> coming – until the Millennial Kingdom is established by Jesus.

While the Jewish people were in their scattered state - exiled in Babylon – they did not have access to the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple had been destroyed! Synagogues were established. Rabbis replaced priests as there were no sacrifices to offer!

Hosea 3:4 - *For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice....*

Before Jesus was born into this world, another Judaism began to develop – Rabbinic Judaism. The Jewish leadership thought that they needed to build a hedge around the law. They attempted to protect the law so that they would never again disobey the law. In building a hedge around the law, the Rabbis created manmade embellishments adding on to the 613 commandments. These manmade embellishments are called “the oral law.” They were adding to God’s law which already had been written (Ex. 24:3-4, 7; Josh. 8:34).

After approx. 100 years back in the land of Israel after the exile in Babylon, the prophet Malachi warned the people that their priesthood was corrupt and blemished sacrifices were being offered to God. The people fell into self-righteousness (making of themselves god). And Israel, as a nation, hadn’t turned to God – they hadn’t repented. In the Bible, the word *repent* means “to change one’s mind.” The Bible also tells us that true repentance will result in a change of actions (Luke 3:8–14; Acts 3:19). The full biblical definition of repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action.

God had told the children of Israel to repent as a NATION!!

Psa. 33:12 - *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.* Deut. 32:9 - *For the LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance.*

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Isa. 1 – Israel is called to repent (see also Isa. 55; Jer. 3:6-25; Hosea 5:15; Joel 2:12-17...cross reference other verses/passages/chapters.

The last prophet that we read in the OT is Malachi. God sent Malachi to warn the Jewish people... Mal. 4:5-6 - *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.* And the 430 years of “Silence” began...the 430 years of no prophetic voice from God. And, it also seems as if there were no visions from God. No communication from God. BUT GOD!

And so, there was an air of frustration among the Jewish people prior to Jesus' first coming. God had promised His kingdom on earth. Gentile kingdoms had been trampling over them and setting up their own governments. BUT GOD through the prophets promised that the government would be upon the shoulders of the Messiah.

Isa. 9:6 – *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.* Israel was a nation in waiting.

Within those years of supposed “silence”...there was no Davidic king – but kings were set up by Rome. Herod wasn't Jewish!!!

During the years of “silence,” there was the attempted Hellenization of Israel – the attempt to get the Jewish people to embrace Greek philosophy:

- Man is the center of the universe, not God!
- Piety is in external actions and reality is based on human logic.
- Traditions are more important than any word of God.

Hellenism massively seeped into Judaism!

NOTE: In the OT there were many external rules through the Mosaic Law – BUT GOD always directed those rules to the heart. Salvation has always and only been by grace through faith in God's revealed message which always pointed to the Messiah:

- External purification commandments spoke to purification of the heart – cleansing of the heart through the Messiah!
- Hab. 2:4 – the just shall live by faith.
- Deut. 6:30 – “*And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*”

As we flip over to Matthew from Malachi, we are in the age of heightened MESSIANIC FERVOR because the world was in chaos, it was dark and violent!!! There was a longing for the Messiah. The people hoped in the coming of the Messiah based on what God had promised the Jewish people throughout the OT.

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But, among the Jewish people there were various agendas: Pharisees (separatists; NOT Hellenists); Sadducees (Hellenists who guarded their power); Zealots (desired to overthrow Rome even if it meant violence); Essenes (primarily Jewish men who desired the Messiah). This is the world into which Jesus was born.

*In the fullness of time God sent His Son. . . Gal. 4:4.*

As Hellenism/Greek philosophy infiltrated Judaism – many of the Jews departed from the Biblical Judaism that God gave to Abraham, Moses, and David. As we read the Gospels, we see Jesus continually contending with the religious Jewish leadership who placed more emphasis on the letter of the law and displaying an exterior/surface obedience to even the embellishments – their additions to the law. The religious Jewish leaders did not teach a heart change! Jesus taught the spirit of the law throughout the Gospels.

While the Jewish people were holding on to the promise of the Kingdom of God being delivered to them, do you think they focused on the need for repentance – as a nation?

And so, we turn the page from the end of Malachi to the beginning of Matthew – with all this knowledge in mind – and we read. . . . *The book of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.* Is this not a continuation of the OT? Is this not the solution to the last words of Malachi? Is Matthew not presenting the remedy for the curse of sin? God said He would strike the earth with a curse...and we turn from Malachi to the book of Matthew and we read... Matt. 1:1 - *The book of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.*

#### QUESTIONS:

What was significant to you in this lesson?

What are your questions? How are you going to find answers?

What was new to you during this lesson? How might it impact your understanding of the Bible...of your life?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread the Week 1 handout along with the Scripture references.

Note observations; jot down questions.

Determine which questions you'll begin to research.

Begin to find answers for those questions in the Scripture.

How has this lesson impacted you? What action will you take?

Read Matthew 1: note observations & questions.

Read Week 2's handout when you receive it.