

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

Week 4 – Galilee of the Gentiles

October 5, 2021

How are you studying the Bible? Are you understanding Scripture as one story/one narrative? Are you remembering the 4 plots within Scripture?

CREATION FALL REDEMPTION RESTORATION

Prophecies are connected to God's promises in Scripture. Do you know God's promises? Do you know God's covenants that He made with Israel? Abrahamic (Gen. 12, 13, 15, 17); Land (Gen. 17; Dt. 30:1-6); Davidic (II Sam. 7); New Covenant (Jer. 31:34; Eze. 36:24-27). Research the verses in these chapters that speak to the specific covenant.

How are you reading/studying/understanding the lessons in our study? Are you reading the accounts as disconnected or connected? If we're grasping the accounts as disconnected we will not comprehend the one story!

Did you observe the irony, the contrasts, and the conflict during our last lesson?

- Regarding the Father's house, God called it "a house of prayer for all nations (Isa. 56:7). His house had become corrupted and defiled!
- The word, "Father," in reference to God, is not a theme in the OT. With Nicodemus, Jesus spoke much about Himself as the Son! Would Nicodemus know about the Messiah as the "Son" in the Hebrew Scriptures? (Psa. 2:7, 12; Prov. 30:4; Isa. 9:6). And, Jesus told Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten SON... (John. 3:16).
- Nicodemus focused on life achievements. Jesus spoke of faith in God and the love of God from the account in Num. 21 with which Nicodemus would be well acquainted. Just as the children of Israel, against all "logic," looked upon the bronze serpent on a pole...the bronze serpent representing sin that was judged... they looked upon it in obedience to God and faith in Him. Even so, Jesus told Nicodemus the Son of Man must be lifted up that whoever believes in the Son of Man, exhibiting faith, would have eternal life and would not perish.
- The Jewish religious leadership focused on Jewish lineage as the requirement to enter the Kingdom of God. They were NOT focused on the regeneration by the Spirit upon each individual – Jew.
- The Samaritan woman was so hated by her people and so loved by Jesus!
- The Samaritans who believed were ripe for the harvest (John 4:35). Samaria was a land and a people in which the Jews had NO interest! The disciples following Jesus, made no comment and nothing is said of them in the text in reference to what had occurred in the hearts of those Samaritan at the end of John 4!

God's story, the one story, continues!

John 4:43-45 - Now after the two days He departed from there...from Samaria – where many believed. Jesus “needed to go to Samaria” (John 4:4) to meet with a social outcast. Jesus’ circle was widening - from rejected disciples (stay tuned for next week), corrupted Jewish business people, a religious/legalistic Jewish ruler, and one who was hated by her own people!

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John 4:43-45 - Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee ⁴⁴ For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. ⁴⁵ So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

Of what country in which He will find no honor is Jesus speaking? Matt. 13:54-57 and Mk. 6:1-6 relate it to Nazareth – where He grew up.

The Galileans, those who were Jewish, had traveled to Jerusalem for Passover and had seen Jesus...in action! Many in Jerusalem at the Passover believed in HIS NAME (ALL Who He is) - genuine belief. Perhaps many from Galilee believed in His name.

Luke 4:14-15 - Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵ And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. In Galilee we’re told that the people in their synagogues glorified (exalted; lifted up) Him.

Did you observe Jesus returning in the power of the Spirit to Galilee? What does that mean?

Isa. 61:1 – Isaiah speaks of one Who is coming Who will declare, *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me*. The “Me” is THE Messiah Whose coming Isaiah was prophesying. THE Messiah would indeed be anointed. “Messiah” means anointed – empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is THE ANOINTED ONE!

In John 2, following the cleansing of the Temple complex we read...John 2:23-25 - Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs (authenticating Jesus and His message) which He did. ²⁴ But Jesus did not commit (entrust) Himself to them, because He knew all men (perceived them as men), ²⁵ and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man (the condition of man). We see two parallel paths of man emerging – leading to a large following after Jesus for Who He is...leading to those desiring only His miracles...leading to Jesus’ crucifixion...and resurrection...leading to VICTORY! God’s plan – Jesus’ crucifixion - was carried out by Pilate, Herod, the Jews, and the Gentiles (Acts 4:27-28). YES - this was GOD’S plan (Acts 4:27-28) and it was PERFECT! PERFECT – because it led to resurrection – new life – in the midst of the suffering of the Promised One because of the sin of the world!

God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, our ways are not God’s ways (Isa. 55:8)

Matt. 4:13 - ...*He/Jesus departed to Galilee.* What do we know about Galilee?

(MAP from Week 3) In the time of Christ, Galilee was the northernmost of the three provinces of Israel, above Samaria in the middle and Judea in the south. The region of Galilee was a fertile, progressive, highly populated region. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian and citizen of Rome, recorded there were approx. 3 million people populating Galilee. Galilee was predominately Gentile in its population but with a large number of Jewish cities and citizens.

Upper Galilee is sometimes referred to as “Galilee of the Gentiles” in Scripture (Matt. 4:16), probably because it hosted various non-Jewish inhabitants. Jewish people

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living in other parts of Israel considered the Galileans as backward/unsophisticated people (John 7:52). Jesus’ boyhood years were spent in Nazareth, a town in Lower Galilee. Several major roadways of the Roman Empire crossed through Galilee. From the Galilee of the Gentiles came the launching of a strategic mission field for the gospel message into the world – the Gentile world.

Matt. 4:12b-16 – From Samaria, Jesus... *departed to Galilee.* ¹³ *And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,* ¹⁴ *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:* ¹⁵ *‘The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:* ¹⁶ *The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.’*

Matt. 4:13 - *And leaving Nazareth,*

Matthew very briefly and rather cryptically informs his readers that Jesus left Nazareth and settled in Capernaum.

And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt (Jesus went to Galilee, left Nazareth, and is now DWELLING [to settle; to inhabit]) in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,... Both Nazareth and Capernaum were in the region of Galilee. Capernaum was on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. What happened in Nazareth that Jesus had to leave?

Returning to...

Luke 4:14-30 - *Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.* ¹⁵ *And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. So (until?) He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up (familiarity leading to a lack of honor [?]). While in Nazareth...as His custom was, (perhaps as a young boy) He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ *And He was handed the book/scroll of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book/scroll, He found the place where it was written (Isa. 61:1-2):**

18 'The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed (schmeered with oil) Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.' 20 Then He closed the book/scroll, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down (Rabbis sat down to teach). And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." 22 So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" 23 He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.' (healing of a nobleman's son [John 4:46-54])" 24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.

The people were rejecting His word and demanding demonstrations through miracles to prove His Messiahship. Jesus reminded His Jewish brethren that Elijah the prophet spoke to Israel of impending judgment and called the people to repentance. The only one who received any benefit from Elijah's preaching was a Gentile widow (widow of Zarephath) whose obedience to God was evidence of her faith. Israel received no benefit. (I Kings 17).

Jesus further conveyed that in the time of Elisha the prophet there were many lepers in Israel. BUT Israel did not respond positively to Elisha's message regarding the one true God of Israel. The only one who received help from Elisha's ministry was Naaman, the Syrian, the Gentile (Lk. 4:27), who was cleansed/healed from his leprosy. In the Hebrew Scripture we read of NO Jewish leper being healed of his/her leprosy. (Remember this as we're going to consider the results of this fact in two weeks). Jesus' lesson was clearly understood by those in the synagogue in Nazareth. Jesus likened them to Israelites who responded in unbelief to the messages from God through OT prophets.

28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. 30 Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way. It was not yet Jesus' time. Jesus was on a timetable! The people at the synagogue in Nazareth desired His miracles and rejected His claims as the Messiah.

Matt. 4:13 – *and leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,...* WHY would Jesus NOT choose to make His home in Jerusalem or Judea? Wouldn't that have been a wiser choice?

WE ARE READING MUCH MORE THAN A CHANGE OF LOCATION FOR JESUS!!!!!!!

Matt. 4:13 mentions Zebulun and Naphtali and then quotes this passage from...

Isaiah 9:1-2: - *Nevertheless the gloom (the darkness) will not be upon her who is distressed, as when at first He lightly esteemed the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward more heavily oppressed her (best translation: will glorify her), by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles. ² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.*

Zebulun and Naphtali – two of the twelve tribes of Israel – on the northern border in NE Galilee west of the Jordan River. Capernaum was located on the border between Zebulun and Naphtali along the Sea of Galilee.

Isaiah had prophesied in that remote location that LIGHT would shine to those in darkness. Zebulun and Naphtali were the first to suffer from the invasion by the Assyrian King (II Kings 15:29) which some say marked the beginning of the dark days for Israel.

And, because God fulfills His word, approx. 800 years later the Messiah, the LIGHT of the world, traveled to the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali in the Galilee of the Gentiles.

The LIGHT of the world brought LIGHT to the Galilee of the Gentiles....

Isa. 49:5-6 – *And now the LORD says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob (Israel) back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him...⁶ Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the*
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Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' Ultimately Isa. 9:1-2 would be fulfilled at the physical Second Coming of Jesus when the land will be free from foreign invaders.

Matt. 4:17 – *From that time Jesus began to preach (to proclaim) and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*

From that time... when Jesus was in Capernaum in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali. This is when and where Jesus began to preach. In Galilee Jesus began to preach. The Gk. word for preach means to proclaim after the manner of a herald – to proclaim openly with formality and authority.

God required that Israel repent as a nation for the coming kingdom of God to be established. And, who is typically over a kingdom? A KING!

And now Jesus is echoing John's message, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand/has drawn near* – because the King was in their midst.

In both John's message and in Jesus' message, the emphasis was to move the people to repentance by announcing that the promised covenanted kingdom was near, upon them – because the King was here. Jesus!

Jesus was officially presenting Himself as the Davidic King – promised to Israel through the Davidic Covenant between God and Israel (I Kings 7:12-16).

Not once is the kingdom offered to Israel as anything but an earthly, literal kingdom.

Matt. 4:18-22 - *And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.*

Jesus had encountered Andrew and Peter in the Jordan region. Andrew and John were disciples of John the Baptizer. And, perhaps Simon Peter was as well.

Jesus had extended an invitation for them, to spend time with Him. The men left John the Baptizer to follow Jesus for a time.

It appears that Andrew and Peter returned to fishing in Capernaum. At this time Jesus tells them...

Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. They immediately left their nets and followed Him. ²¹ Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Matt. 4:23a - *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom.*

Jesus went about all Galilee – the imperfect tense of the verb (which doesn't mean it's “not perfect”!) means that there's continuous action on the part of Jesus through ALL of Galilee (comprehensive - relating to ALL!).

“teaching” – imparting instruction.

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“preaching” – lit. “heralding out; crying out; proclaiming”! It was as if Jesus had a megaphone and was making sure that all of Galilee knew about the good news - that the Kingdom was near at hand – because He is the King – because He was among them!

The gospel, the good news of the coming Kingdom of God, that Jesus preached was Israel's hope for the establishment of the promised rule of the Messiah in His kingdom on earth.

The gospel of the kingdom was preached because the King was here on earth. But the establishing of the kingdom on earth in Jesus' day was contingent on Israel's response... the response of ALL Israel – the entire nation – every individual in the entire nation re:

the Messiah!! Psa. 33:12 - *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.*

We've read and discussed the varying responses.

Matt. 4:23-25 - *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching (PROCLAIMING) the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. ²⁴ Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. ²⁵ Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.*

Why did Jesus specifically heal?

Isa. 35:5-6 – *The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; ² It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance (did Jesus come w/ vengeance at His first coming?), with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.' ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. ⁶ Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.*

What was Jesus' message to the Jewish people, based on Isa. 35:5-6? What is the time frame in this passage? When the Messiah comes, what will He do? How will we know Him?

Why did Jesus continually cast out demons?

Zech. 13:1-2 – *In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. 'It shall be in that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets (false prophets) and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.*

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What was Jesus' message to the Jewish people, based on Zech. 13:2? *In that day* – what day? What will be eliminated “in that day”?

We have been discussing how Jesus' miracles authenticated Who He is. And His miracles authenticated His message!

Here we find the credentials of the King in the Kingdom of God when He will be ruling and reigning from the throne of King David in Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom (Luke 1:30-33).

The results:

Matt. 4:25 - *Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.*

Jewish and Gentile believers in/followers of Jesus!

QUESTIONS:

Did you learn something new?

Did the Jewish culture and/or history shed more light on the text?

What HIT you?

What did you NOT understand?

How do you understand the two parallel paths of man emerging?

How do you study the Bible? Will you study the Bible differently?

Are you journaling observations/questions/answers from you study time?

How will you live for Jesus differently?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Week 4 along with the Scripture references.

Note observations; jot down questions.

Email Cathy with your questions.

Determine which questions you'll begin to research.

Begin to find answers in the Scripture for those questions.

What action will you take based on how the lesson impacted you?

Share with at least one person what you've been learning.

Read Week 5's handout when you receive it.

