

JESUS, ISRAEL & PROPHECY

Week 4 – The Authority of the King; The Rejection of the King; The Mysteries of the Kingdom

Biblical references/background to better understand Matthew 8 through Matthew 13:
Genesis 6:3 – “*And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive^[a] with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”*”

This is the judgment of God. The Holy Spirit has been striving with man to bring them to repentance. There will come a time when God no longer strives with somebody. We don’t know when that cut off time will occur. “Nevertheless his days shall be 120 years” is an introduction of God’s grace. God gave man, in this instance, 120 years to repent. Many scholars teach that 120 years were given as the countdown until the flood. II Pet. 2:5 – “Noah was a preacher of righteousness”, who, during the building of the ark (some say Noah built the ark for 120 years; some say Noah built the ark for 75 years) preached the message of repentance, of grace, and forgiveness.” God used Noah to warn the wicked. Then judgment came.

When Jesus came to the banks of the Jordan River, John directed everyone’s attention to Jesus, “*Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). John announced to the masses gathering at the Jordan River, “*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*^[b] ¹² *His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*” (Matt. 3:11-12). John introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God, the sacrificial Lamb, the Suffering Servant, as the Messiah Who would die for the sin of the world. John also introduced Jesus as the conquering King Who will come in judgment. We see the two comings of Jesus in John’s declaration.

Isaiah 42 through Isaiah 53 – the Suffering Servant passages.

Isa. 42:1-4 “*Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him;*

He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. ² He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

³ *A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. ⁴ He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law.”*

We see Jesus’ two comings in these four verses. We see Him as the Suffering Servant. “A bruised reed (weakened) He will not break, and smoking flax (dimly burning) He will not quench (extinguish). The Servant will bring comfort and encouragement to the weak and oppressed. And we see Him as the conquering King establishing His kingdom. AND, we know that there is a GAP of time between His first coming and His second coming.

Matt. 7:21-23 - “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in*

that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness! (iniquity/violation of the law of God)'

“Faith” that says and doesn't do is unbelief. Jesus is teaching that only true faith – being rightly related to Him – will produce the fruit of good works. Being connected to Jesus we are secure; without connection to Him all the miracles and great works prove nothing.

Here we have more background into what the Jewish people knew from their Scriptures re: redemption through the Messiah.

Matt. 7:28-29 – “*And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*”

The method used by the scribes in lecturing was to quote from the opinions of respected Rabbis who debated with one another. Traditional interpretations were taught by the Rabbis based on the “oral law.” The oral law is a commentary on the first five books of Moses, the Torah. The oral law explained how the written law was to be carried out. This is what the Rabbis ADDED to the 613 commandments. Many of the Rabbis differed from one another re: the interpretation. Thus – they engaged in debates. How tedious must have been those debates compared to Jesus' authoritative words, “I say to you”!

How thankful we should be that Jesus first came to offer salvation. Jesus' second coming will be for judgment!

THE AUTHORITY OF THE KING

Matt. 8:1-2 – “*When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.² And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”*”

Jesus comes down from the mountain. . . from delivering what we have entitled the Sermon on the Mount – and He continues to demonstrate His authority as the King through countless miracles.

Matthew selected specific miracles in his Gospel to prove that He is the Anointed One – the Son of God – God! And, Matthew wrote, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, how Jesus gave to His people a FORETASTE of the Kingdom of God – what it would look like when He would come to establish it on earth. Matthew also chose specific miracles in the beginning of his Gospel that would establish Jesus' authority over virtually every realm of human existence. John recorded in his Gospel, “*And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*” (John 21:25) As we look at the specific miracles that Matthew lays out for us we see so clearly Jesus' authority over every realm of human existence!

AND, the first miracle – the healing of a Jewish leper – which was known as a “Messianic Miracle.” The Rabbis were powerless re: healing a leper. They taught that only the Messiah – when He comes – could heal a Jewish leper! Luke 4:27 – “*And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.*”

Matthew 8:3-4 – “*Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.* ⁴ *And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”*”

Jesus touched a leper. Lepers were the outcasts of society. This dreaded disease was highly contagious and there was no known cure. The Rabbis taught that only the Messiah could heal a Jewish leper. This leper believed Jesus could heal him. Only the Messiah would touch a leper! Leprosy was a graphic picture of sin. Sin defiles from within. With leprosy we have such a horrific outward display of how sin impacts our entire being. How Jesus healed the leper demonstrated His kingly authority over sin as well as over physical and emotional disease. And, this man was a Jewish leper! How do we know? Jesus instructs him, upon being cleansed, to go to the priest – to go to the Temple – and offer an offering according to the Law of Moses (Lev. 14:1-32)! What a HUGE message to the priests of Jesus’ day. There had been no record of any Jewish lepers being cleansed (Luke 4:27). The Rabbis taught that only the Messiah would be able to heal a Jewish leper!

Matthew 8:5-13

Jesus ministered to a Gentile. A Centurion, a powerful Roman officer, dared to approach Jesus, a Jewish Rabbi, asking for help. The Centurion came to Jesus on behalf of his servant. Under Roman law, a master had the right to kill his slave. And, it was expected that he would do so if the slave became ill or injured to the point where he could not work. The Centurion did not make a casual request; he pleaded with Jesus on behalf of his servant. Jesus’ response: “*I will come and heal him.*” Jesus did not hesitate to go to the Centurion’s house. It was completely against Jewish custom to enter a Gentile’s home. But, it was not against God’s law. The Centurion said, “*Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.*” Perhaps the Centurion understood Jesus’ worthiness and his lack of worthiness. Jewish tradition taught that if a Jewish person entered a Gentile’s home, the Jewish person would become ceremonially defiled (John 18:28). Obviously, the Centurion was familiar with this belief. Perhaps the Centurion felt unworthy in the sense that this Jewish teacher/healer, Jesus, would suffer such inconvenience for his sake. However, the Centurion also had faith enough to know that Jesus could heal by merely speaking a word. The Centurion then spoke, “*But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.*” ⁹ *For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”*

The Centurion shows great faith in Jesus’ word. Jesus praises the Centurion’s faith, “*Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!*” Israel had

received a wealth of revelation from God. Israel is God's covenant people (Rom. 9:4). And yet, Jesus did not find in Israel the faith exhibited by this Gentile Centurion! The fact that such faith is present in a Gentile causes Jesus to announce that there will be Gentiles in the kingdom of heaven and that they will even sit down to dinner with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was an unheard of idea to many of the Jewish people of Jesus' day. Matt. 8:11 – *“And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”* Jesus words, *“But the sons of the kingdom (physical heirs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (agonies of those separated from God for all eternity),”* convey the truth that ethnicity is not a prerequisite for salvation. This was the opposite of the Rabbis' understanding. The Rabbis taught that the kingdom would feature a great feast in the company of Abraham and the Messiah which would be open to Jewish people alone. Without true faith, mere ethnicity is not a qualification for entrance into the kingdom of God/heaven. Jesus offered the kingdom to the Jewish people; however, only those born again can enter the kingdom (John 3:3). Only those who receive the message of the kingdom, who realize they are spiritually bankrupt, who mourn over their condition – can enter the kingdom.

And, at the very moment Jesus uttered the words, *“Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you,”* the Centurion's servant was healed! —

Matt. 8:14-15

The culture of the Middle East during Jesus' times regarded four groups of people as outcasts of society: lepers, Gentiles, slaves, and women. While Jesus ministered primarily to Jewish people during His first coming, we do read of His ministering to Gentiles – and that was prophesied!

Isa. 49:6 – God the Father told God the Son prior to His incarnation – to His coming to earth – *“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 Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

Jesus is a compassionate King Whose kingdom is open to all.

If Jesus wasn't born of a virgin, if He didn't fulfill 300+ Messianic prophecies, if He didn't rise from the dead – then He's the Messiah of no one! If Jesus was born of a virgin, if He did fulfill 300 + Messianic prophecies, if He did rise from the dead – then He's the Messiah for all!

Matt. 12:18-20 – Jesus' healings were consistent with Messianic prophecy. *“Behold, My Servant”* – this is the Messiah. The Messiah was not to arrive with a political agenda or with a military campaign but with gentleness and meekness – declaring righteousness to the Gentiles. He didn't stir up a revolution.

A “bruised reed/smouldering wick” The reed was used by shepherds to fashion a small musical instrument. Once cracked or worn, it was useless. A smoldering wick/smoking flax was also useless for giving light. These represent people who are deemed useless by the world. Jesus' work was to restore and rekindle such people, not to “break” them or “quench” them. This speaks of His tender compassion toward the lowest

of the low. He did not come to gather the strong for a revolution. He came to show mercy to the weak.

Matt. 8:16-17

Matthew announced that Jesus fulfilled the OT prophecies regarding healing miracles. Isaiah 53:4 - in eternity, all sickness will be removed, therefore, ultimately, it is included in the benefits of the redemption.

Matt. 8:18-22

We read of the price of discipleship. One “would-be” disciple failed to count the cost in terms of suffering and inconvenience. Then “another of His disciples” expressed a commitment to Jesus that demanded no risk. “I must bury my father” was a common figure of speech meaning, “Let me wait until I receive my inheritance.”

Matt. 8:23-27

In this second group of miracles, Jesus demonstrated His authority over the natural realm when He calmed the fierce storm. Before the disciples witnessed one of the most awesome displays of Jesus’ deity, they were given a picture of His humanity. Jesus was so weary that not even the violent tossing of the boat awakened Him. Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea!! CONSIDER: Jesus created the heavens and the earth. Col. 1:16a – “*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, . . .*”

Matt. 8:28-34 – Jesus cast a legion (up to 6,000 strong) of demons out of two men. In this case, Jesus demonstrated His kingly authority over the supernatural realm.

Matt. 8:28 – this demonic activity was “. . .*exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.*”

While Satan masquerades as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14), violence is one of the most obvious fingerprints of Satan. Peter described Satan as “a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. 5:8). NOTE: Throughout the Millennium, Satan will be bound (Rev. 20:1-8) and there will be no demonic activity!!

Satan and the demons know about their doom. Matt. 8:28-29 – “*When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes,^[c] there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.²⁹ And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”* Not only do the demons recognize that Jesus is God, they also know that there is a divinely appointed time for their judgment! Satan will be bound – thrown into a bottomless pit – into an abyss (Rev. 20:2-3). “Abyss” – chasm, ravine, pit; some definitions associate an abyss with a watery pit. After the demons were cast – upon their request – into the swine and not into an abyss – what happens? “. . . *suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.*” Ironic!

What a HUGE proclamation Jesus made to His people in freeing those who were demon possessed. Isa. 61:1 - *“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”*

Matt. 8:33-34 – *“Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.³⁴ And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.”* Perhaps they were concerned with the financial impact from the loss of the pigs. PERHAPS they were frightened to be in the presence of such spiritual power. Mark 5:14-16 – records that when the people of the area came out and saw the formerly demon possessed man, *“... they were afraid.¹⁶ And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine.¹⁷ Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.”* We see that this was all for the glory of God! Luke 8:38-39 – *“Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying,³⁹ “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.”* This man went home – he didn’t go back to the tombs! This formerly demon-possessed man, at first, simply sat at the feet of Jesus (Luke 8:35). But now he wants *to be* with Jesus! The true change in his heart was voiced by his desire of wanting Jesus Himself! But Jesus sent him away. Jesus knew that this man had a more important ministry with his own family and community. Is God calling you to a ministry within your own family? Perhaps the hardest place to minister – to be a witness. But God might be calling you to that most difficult place! This man had a great message to share: *“what great things Jesus had done for him.”* Isn’t this our message for a lost world?

Matt. 9:1-8 - Jesus healed the paralytic man. Jesus forgave this man his sins and then healed him of his infirmity to PROVE that He is God – and that He is able to forgive sin (Job 14:4; Psa. 51:1-2; Isa. 1:18; Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34; Eze. 36:25; Dan. 9:9; Micah 7:18-19; Mark 2:7). While we had said in our lesson of two weeks ago that the more difficult sin was the physical healing of this man because it required external evidence - Consider: the actual forgiving of the man’s sin was, in reality, the more difficult task. The forgiving of sin ultimately required Jesus to sacrifice His life.

Matt. 9:9-13

Jesus called Levi, Matthew, the hated tax collector. Tax collectors and sinners were often lumped together in Scripture. The Jewish people esp. hated tax collectors. To the Jewish people, God alone was the king – not Caesar! To pay taxes to a mortal ruler was an infringement on God’s rights and an insult to God’s majesty. When Jesus called Matthew, He called a man whom all men hated! But Jesus called him! We all have “baggage.” We need to know and remember that God is a God of restoration!

Matt. 9:18-19

Jairus, a ruler of Capernaum's synagogue, approached Jesus as his daughter had just died.

Matt. 9:20-22

As Jesus and His disciples were making their way to Jairus' house, a woman who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years. This appears to be an interruption in Jesus' route to the synagogue ruler's home. The woman has a specific illness. She has a bodily discharge – a discharge of blood. Lev. 15:19 – *“If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.”* Why would this woman allow herself to be out among the people? After the woman touched the hem of Jesus' garment (Mal. 4:2 – the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings), Jesus said, *“Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.”* *And the woman was made well from that hour.”* NOTE: Faith was noted on the part of the Gentile Centurion – and Jesus used this as a means of teaching the Jewish people that Gentiles can come into the Kingdom of God as well. NOTE: Jesus does not tell the woman to go to the priest and make an offering as noted in Lev. 15:28-30 – wherein the person cleansed was instructed to go to the temple with an offering. Was the woman a Gentile woman? How does this speak to the “interruption” in Jesus going to the Jewish home of Jairus?

When Jesus finally arrives at Jairus' home, He encounters musicians/flute players along with multiple people who are loudly mourning the death of the daughter. Jesus states that the girl's condition is not one of final death. He conveys that she is sleeping (as if in a temporary condition that can be reversed). The crowd objects and is put “outside.” Jesus goes into the house, takes her by the hand, and His touch causes her to arise. She arose from sleep.

My suggested question: could this “interruption” in Jesus ministering to Jews speak to the open door to the Gentiles that we see following Jesus' resurrection and ascension – at Pentecost? Jesus told the Jewish people He was calling another people group.

John 10:16 – *“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”* Could this miracle of the Gentile woman with the issue of blood have been a signpost along the way? Note that while the daughter of Jairus was thought of as dead, she was not – but merely sleeping. Blindness in part has occurred to Israel (Rom. 11:25) until God has completed His work for the Church. Just a consideration. Be Bereans!

Matt. 9:27-33 – Two blind men followed Jesus, calling out to Him for mercy. They call Jesus the “Son of David.” By using this label, the blind men convey that they recognize that Jesus is their Messiah. The Messiah would come from King David's lineage.

THE REJECTION OF THE KING

The opposition to Jesus which has been ever-present in the Gospels crystallizes in Matthew 11 and eventually erupts into full-blown fury unleashed upon Him in Matthew 12.

In Matthew 11, Jesus speaks out with a severe indictment upon the cities where His mighty works had been carried out.

Matt. 11:20-24 – “Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: ²¹ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be^[d] brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”

The cities that Matthew mentions in chapter 11 were where most of His mighty works took place. These cities are in Galilee. The word “mighty” which describes Jesus’ works is *dunamis* in the Greek which means *power*. Works of power which refer to His miracles. They had seen miracle upon miracle. The people, as a whole, did not repent. The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility. In the cities of Galilee Jesus had performed His mighty miracles. He had given them overwhelming evidence. But in their indifference they had not repented.

In the minds of Galilean Jew, the two most wretched cities were Tyre and Sidon ... historically. Tyre and Sidon were heavily into Baal worship. They were Gentile, pagan, heathen societies. And God destroyed them. And yet Jesus said, "If the works – My miracles - that were done in you, Chorazin and Bethsaida, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." In other words, you, Chorazin and Bethsaida, are worse than Tyre and Sidon!

Matt. 11:23-24 – “And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be^[d] brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”

Capernaum was guiltiest of all. Capernaum was the home of Jesus during His Galilean ministry. Capernaum had this illusion that they were going to be exalted to heaven. They were self-righteous.

If I were to ask you – what is the worst ancient city – what would come to mind? SODOM! Upon what other city did God rain fire and brimstone? What other city was populated by a whole group of homosexuals who tried to rape angels? You know what was worse than Sodom? Capernaum! They ignored Jesus! And that brings about the deepest damnation.

Matthew 11 closes with an invitation to individuals to come to Him for rest. In contrast to the rejection of many, Jesus offers comfort to the few who followed Him – or who would follow Him. And, herein we see a message for “the remnant” – Jewish people who trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and who embrace the Messiah Jesus.

God promises/speaks of a remnant in II Kings 19:30-31; Isa. 1:9; Isa. 6:13; Isa. 10:20-22; Isa. 11:11, 16; Isa. 37:31-32; Isa. 46:3; Jer. 6:9; Jer. 31:7; Jer. 40:11; Jer. 42:15, Eze. 6:18; Eze. 11:14-20; Mic. 2:12; Mic. 5:7-8; Zech. 13:8-9; Mal. 3:3. Even amidst a tidal wave of rejection, God will always preserve a remnant.

Matt. 11:28-30 – “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*”²⁹ *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*”³⁰ *For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*”

Here is an echo of the first beatitude – “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 5:3). This is an open invitation. Those who will respond are those who burdened by their own spiritual bankruptcy and the weight of trying to save themselves by keeping the letter of the law! Jesus offers His followers a “yoke” that is easy and a burden that is “light”. According to the culture of the times, when a disciple of a Rabbi submitted himself to his Rabbi, he was said to come under the “yoke” of his master/teacher. Jesus offered the Jews of His day inner satisfaction and rest to their souls!

And so we come to Matthew 12 which we need to remember – in our study of the Bible – as a turning point in Jesus’ first coming. We already looked at the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish religious leaders who represent the nation of Israel.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 13 marks a new division in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus addresses what will occur when He returns to heaven as the rejected King and the kingdom promised to Israel is postponed until His Second Coming. Matthew 13 introduces Jesus teaching in parables. A parable is a story that compares an unknown concept to a known concept. The parables were intended to reveal the truth only to believers and hide the truth from non-believers. When Jesus addressed the unbelieving multitude, He spoke in parables which then then interpreted to believers in private.

The time between the rejection and the return is a time that we call the mystery form of the kingdom which we know as the Church Age. “Mysteries” refers to truth that was not revealed in the OT but is revealed in the NT.

Col. 1:26-27 – “. . .*the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.*”²⁷ *To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which^[d] is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*” Read Ephesians 3:1-8.

QUESTIONS:

- What did you learn from this study?
- What impacted you?
- What are you digesting?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Regarding new concepts/teachings/principles, take those passages and observe the text, ask questions, and find the answers from the Bible.

Do you understand the Church as a “mystery” not revealed in the OT? If you don’t understand the Church as a mystery, find where the Church is mentioned in the OT and write down chapter and verse.