

CHRISTMAS AS SEEN FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

JROC/Week 2 – The Faithfulness of God

December 3, 2023

Matt. 1:1 - *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:* This is the beginning of the New Testament! This is the beginning of the book of Matthew! What does this tell us? And, to whom is the Gospel of Matthew written? To the Jews! In the book of Matthew we read of Jesus ministering to Gentiles as well.

Matthew and Luke...each addressing a part of what we would call the “Christmas account”... each announce that God’s program continues with the nation Israel. What does that say about God?

Did God give Israel promises? When?

God promised the physical descendants of Abraham...

Land (Gen. 15:18-20; Gen. 17:2-8) *I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. ⁸Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*

Seed (multiple descendants [Gen. 15:4] and THE Seed [Gen. 12:3])

Blessings - through you all the families of the earth will be blessed; Gal. 3]), and blessings (Gen. 12:2; Deut. 28; Deut. 30:1-6).

God reiterated the Abrahamic Covenant to Isaac (Gen. 26:1-6) and to Jacob (Gen. 28:10-15).

Heb. 6:13 - *For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself*

Because the Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant – the fulfillment of the promises in the Abrahamic Covenant is on the part of God. The promises God made to ISRAEL are not dependent upon ISRAEL’s obedience. And, these promises are eternal.

Rom. 11:29 - *the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

God is not an “Indian giver.” He has not and will not rescind His gifts and calling – He will not take away, cancel, or repeal what He has promised to Israel.

God’s program continues with the nation Israel.

A debate occurred between Justin Martyr and his Jewish opponent, Trypho in 155 AD. In a mere 50 years after the last book of the New Testament was written, Gentile Christians had already come to believe that the Church had replaced the Jewish people in God’s program and

that the only thing the Jewish nation could look forward to was condemnation (punitive replacement - a system of criminal justice based on the punishment of offenders – in this case the Jewish people – rather than on rehabilitation or RESTORATION!) Replacement Theology is

2

also called supersessionism and Fulfillment Theology. RT teaches that the Church has superseded Israel – has taken the place of Israel! How would RT/Supersessionism/Fulfillment Theology color your view of Israel?

Who does Matthew highlight in the first verse of his Gospel?

Jesus' genealogy includes David & Abraham. WHY?

The physical descendant of King David would be the Messiah (II Sam. 7:12-16). The Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah. And, the Messiah would be a physical descendant of Abraham (attested to through this genealogy).

WHY did Matthew, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, single out David and Abraham? What else do we know about David and Abraham? Two of the unconditional covenants that God made with the children of Israel were the Davidic Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant. Matthew is telling his readership (the Jewish people) that Jesus the Messiah had come as the Son of David to rule over Abraham's descendants in the land that God promised them.

In the book of Matthew, Jesus is presented as the King. As Israel's King...the King of the Jews. The Messiah is related to the covenants and the promises of God.

In the book of Luke, we see Jesus presented as the Son of Man. This is the title of deity!

Dan. 7:13-14, 27- (READ)

When we read the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke, we find references to four Biblical covenants: the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant.

Matt. 1:18-25 – an angel said to Joseph concerning Mary - *Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.* Which covenant is referred to in this passage? The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) when God promised to provide a basis for total forgiveness of sin.

Matt. 2:1-8 – When the Magi arrived in Jerusalem looking for the King of the Jews, they encountered Herod. *Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him. ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ So they said to him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶ 'But you,*

Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler

Who will shepherd My people Israel.'

What covenant are we reading of here? The Davidic Covenant. Bethlehem was David's city and from David's line would come the promised Davidic descendants who would rule over the nation of Israel. The chief priests and scribes whom Herod had called upon, by reading Micah 5:2 & 4, gave testimony to the fulfillment of the Davidic

3

Covenant which promised a King. This prophecy was also connected to the timeless Abrahamic Covenant which promised the perpetuity of Abraham's descendants (Isa. 66:22 - *For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD*)

Luke 1:13-17 (READ)

Luke 1:26-33 (READ) This is a specific reference to the Davidic Covenant. The angel spoke the three most significant words of the Davidic Covenant as found in II Sam. 7:16 – *throne, house, and kingdom.*

Luke 1:46-55 (READ) - God was setting in motion His plan to bring a King to rule over her people.

Luke 1:67-79 (READ)

New Covenant

Abrahamic Covenant

Luke 2:10-11 (READ)

Saviour and Sovereign – Jer. 31:34; II Sam. 7:16

Luke 2:21 – (READ)

Abrahamic Covenant - And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law (Gal. 4:4). Jesus Who came under the law, HAD to fulfill the Law.

Through circumcision, Jesus was identified with the Abrahamic Covenant. Circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:9-14).

Luke 2:22-35 (READ) - Simeon was led by the Holy Spirit to witness the presentation of Jesus the Messiah in the Temple 40 days after His birth.

Simeon was referring to Isa. 52:6-10.

The appointed king was announced (v. 7)

Isaiah anticipated...

The Davidic Covenant in the future kingdom.

The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)

Jesus redeemed and will reign.

Simeon spoke of Jesus as *a light of revelation to the Gentiles*, He was most likely referring to Isa. 42:6 – *I will keep You and will make You to be a covenant for the people (the Jewish people) and a light to the Gentiles.*

Isa. 49:6-7 – *It is too small a thing for You to be My Servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make You a light for the Gentiles, that You may bring My salvation to the ends of the earth.*

Luke 2:38 (READ) *Anna gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.* In Jerusalem there was a small remnant who possessed the Messianic hope!

4

Matt. 2:1-12 – the wise men, the Magi from Persia traveled to Jerusalem as they were looking for the King of the Jews.

These Magi were Gentiles.

How did the Magi know about the King of the Jews? (Dan. 2:48). Daniel wrote of the time of the Messiah...

King makers – their Persian King was dethroned at the time of Jesus' birth.

Gentiles coming to the King of the Jews – Isa. 60.

The birth narratives freely spoke of the four eternal, unconditional covenants that God gave to His covenant people, Israel: the Abrahamic Covenant (land, seed, blessing) which worked out into the Land Covenant (Deut. 30:1-6), the Davidic Covenant (II Sam. 7:12-16), and the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Eze. 36:24-27) – sub-covenants of the Abrahamic Covenant.

The very fact that the Messiah came to fulfill those covenants proves that Israel's disobedience had not disqualified them or nullified their place in the plan of God.

Throughout the OT we read a continual record of disobedience, lawlessness, and apostasy. Yet the Prophets who warned the people of discipline/judgment due to their disobedience, anticipated the fulfillment of the covenants and called the covenant people to confession and spoke of God's restoration of Israel so that the promised blessings could be theirs.

If disobedience could have abrogated the covenants in any sense, Jesus would never have come to fulfill them!

How is this impacting you?

What will you take away from these four Covenants from the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures being mentioned in the first book of the New Testament?