

UNDERSTANDING THE “ONE STORY” OF SCRIPTURE

Week 15 – Backdrop to the First Messianic Miracle – Pt. 3

March 8, 2026

What did the Jewish world prior to Jesus’ day at His first coming look like?

- Religious diversity within Judaism: various sects that didn’t agree with each other, i.e. Pharisees - separatists; legalists re: the law; strict adherence to the oral law in place of what was recorded by the OT authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; Sadducees – a priestly sect, primarily aristocrats, who rejected oral traditions, focusing solely on the written Torah, and denying resurrection and angels. Essenes: A monastic community that lived in isolation. Primarily men. Practiced asceticism - abstinence from worldly pleasures through self-discipline, self-imposed poverty, and simple living. Awaited the apocalyptic end times and the Messiah Whom they called “The Teacher.”
- Roman Occupation: Judea was under Roman rule, leading to political tension and unrest among the Jewish population.
- Cultural Exchange: Hellenistic/Greek influences permeated daily life, affecting language, philosophy, and customs.
- Messianic Expectations: Many Jews anticipated a Messiah who would deliver them from oppression and restore Israel's glory.

The Covenant God cut with Abram, the Abrahamic Covenant, promised Israel: land, seed (descendants), THE Seed (the Messiah), and a blessing (salvation). The Davidic Covenant (one of the sub-covenants of the Abrahamic Covenant) (circa 1,000 BC) promised the Kingdom of God on earth!!

While the Prophets in the Tanakh warned the Jewish people of veering from God, they also proclaimed a message of HOPE that caused Israel to eagerly anticipate the fulfillment of God’s promises to them. The Prophets described the glories of Messiah’s earthly Kingdom!!!

The Prophets spoke of David’s Son, the Messiah, coming to bring peace (Isa. 9:6), righteousness and prosperity to the nation. He would come as a Savior to redeem (Isa. 53) and as King to reign. Israel would know the promised peace that the Prince of Peace would bring.

John the Immerser – *Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand*, Matt. 3:2.

Jesus made the same proclamation following John – Matt. 4:17 - *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’*

There were many Jewish people who were anticipating with great FERVOR the Kingdom of God! (Luke 13:24)

Luke 16:16 – In the midst of Jesus teaching parables, the Pharisees showed up and derided Jesus. Jesus told the Pharisees they were self-righteous...but GOD knows their hearts.

Jesus then stated, *The law and the prophets were until John* (up to John's time). *Since that time* (since John the Immerser) **the kingdom of God has been PREACHED** (you-an-ga-lee-zo – to bring good news, to announce glad tidings [variation of evangelizing] – glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God and of what relates to salvation). THEN Jesus told the Pharisees, **and everyone is pressing into it.**

Matt. 3:1-2 - *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he who was spoken of by the*

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prophet Isaiah saying: The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.

Matt. 3:4-6 – *Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, ALL Judea, and ALL the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins*

They were all pressing into it – desiring to repent so that they could enter the Kingdom. The Kingdom does NOT enter us. We who are believers enter the Kingdom – the Millennial Kingdom...in the FUTURE!.

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

Matt. 4:23-25 - *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching 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. THEY WERE ALL PRESSING INTO IT.*

Matt. 5:1-2 - *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying....*

And Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount during which He taught them how to pray... *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* (Matt. 6:9-10).

And so, we're back to understanding what the Holy Spirit inspired the Prophet Isaiah to write so that the people in Jesus' time would know...He had come...the Messiah had entered the world as Emmanuel – God with us - Who performed miracles depicting the FUTURE GLORY OF ZION!

Isa. 35:3-6 - *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,*

with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.” Those who fear are told to be strong and NOT fear. Yes, God will come with vengeance but He will DELIVER 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* (having reference to casting out demons who had caused their host to become dumb). *For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.*

A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; it shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there, ¹⁰ and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.