

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

JROC - Week 3 – The World of Jesus was NOT the OT Hebrew World!

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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. Jesus is the coming King – the exalted King – the King Who will 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, 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' 2nd 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

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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.*

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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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:

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- 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.

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.*