

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

Week 1 – Who is Jesus?

January 21, 2020

Galatians 4:4 - ... *when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

Two timeframes are noted: eternity past and approx. 6 BC. God sent forth His Son (pre-existence of God the Son). We are being told of God's timetable. We're reading of a certain completion of events that had already occurred – in God's plan of redemption! We've been studying several of the Messianic prophecies and foreshadowings as we've discussed "Messiah in the OT". God is telling us in Gal. 4:4 that the events in the past have something to do with God the Father sending the Son.

In the fullness of the time...

"Fullness" – completion. According to God's plan, this verse is addressing a specific time - "THE time" - when all the religious, cultural and political conditions were in place – in God's plan!

God unfolded His plan of redemption in the Tanakh/the Hebrew Scriptures – because...

- God created us for eternity and He desires to dwell with us.
- Sin entered the world. And, God told us that our sin has separated us from God (Isa. 59:2). But, God's desire is not to be separated from His creation.
- God promised One Who would resolve that sin issue – the Redeemer – the Messiah/the Anointed One – God the Son.
- God told His people how they would RECOGNIZE the Messiah. And, thus He gave us a Messianic THEME in the OT – Messianic prophecies and foreshadowings.

In the Gospels during Jesus' life we read that the people "were AMAZED":

Matt. 7:28-29 - *And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*
Matt. 13:54 - *When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?"*

What was being taught in the synagogues? Had there been a change of some sort? We do know that GOD doesn't change (Mal. 3:6). God promised that He would refine/purge the children of Israel, the sons of Jacob. Because of the idol worship on the part of the Jewish people and because of many forsaking God, God's chastisement was severe!

Jesus was born into the Jewish world. The Hebrew Scriptures prophesied that He would.

Deut. 18:15-18 – God told Moses that He would raise up for them a Prophet like Moses. This Prophet would be Jewish. *I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.*

Gen. 49:10 - the Messiah will come from the tribe of Judah. The Messiah would come through the lineage of King David.

2

As students of the Bible, you need to know that God, throughout the OT, speaks to the children of Israel, the Jewish people, corporately and individually. God spoke to them as the NATION of Israel. God chose the NATION of Israel to accomplish His/God's purposes on earth. God has guaranteed Israel's existence. This does NOT mean that God has guaranteed the salvation of each individual Jewish person.

God also spoke to individuals within the nation. God spoke to Abraham.

Gen. 15:6 - *And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.* God gave Abraham HIS righteousness...God's righteousness – based on what? Abraham BELIEVED!!! Abraham placed his faith in God! Abraham has been assured of heaven and so has Moses (Matt. 17), and Joshua, King David, Daniel...many others. The OT saints – Jewish people who trusted in GOD and in WHAT GOD SAID ABOUT THE MESSIAH JESUS – are called:

The remnant (Isa. 1:9; Isa. 6:13; Rom. 11:5....)

“So great a cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1)

OT saints are FAITHFUL Jewish people who will be in heaven, who will see King Jesus because their sins are forgiven (Isa. 33:14-24). Jesus told the Jewish religious leadership...John 8:24 - *if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*

Faithful Jewish people who have placed their trust in Jesus are righteous and are written in the book of life and will not be separated from God for all eternity (Ex. 32:31-35; Psa. 69:27-28; Dan 12:1; Mal. 3:16; Heb. 12:22-23).

What about God's severe words to His people, the Jewish people, spoken through Jeremiah and all the other prophets? We must know that God spoke these words from a heart of love and from His desire to see His people come to faith through the Jewish Messiah Jesus Whom He revealed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures!

We read of God's amazing grace poured out on Israel.

Isa. 40:1-5 - *Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God. ² 'Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her; that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice is calling, Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'*

And, so God the Father sent His Son Who has existed from eternity past because His Son, Jesus is God!

A Rabbi visited John MacArthur and asked, “I understand the OT. I’ve spent my whole life in the OT, but I don’t understand how a Jewish Rabbi should view the NT. How am I, as a Jewish Rabbi, to understand the meaning of the NT? How am I as a Jewish Rabbi to understand the meaning of the NT in connection with the OT?” MacArthur responded with, “Great question. ...the answer is – get in the sandals of Zacharias because Zacharias understood exactly what was

3

going on with the baby that he held in his arms and with what Gabriel had told Zacharias about this child who would be the Prophet of the Highest – the most High God – El Elyon.”

Why Zacharias? The Angel Gabriel told Zacharias that he and Elizabeth would give birth to a son who was going to declare the arrival of the Messiah. The Jewish people had been waiting for the Messiah. John was going to be born to Zacharias and Elizabeth. Zacharias then knew that the Messiah was soon to arrive on earth as God had promised. When Gabriel visited Zacharias, Jesus hadn’t as yet been born. Zacharias knew, however, what was about to happen because Zacharias knew the OT. Zacharias, in his praise of God found in Luke 1:68-75, most certainly understood that the Messiah is the theme of the OT!

A Jewish man, not a believer in Jesus, who is a Professor of Talmudic Culture and Rhetoric at a California University wrote the following, specifically addressing Jewish people who are not believers in Jesus, “I wish us to see that Christ too – the divine Messiah – is a Jew. Christology, or the early idea about Christ, is also a Jewish discourse. Many Israelites at the time of Jesus were expecting a Messiah who would be divine and come to earth in the form of a human. At the time of Jesus, all who followed Jesus – and even those who believed that he was God – were Jewish!”

Re: the title of our study, “The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah,” we need to realize that the history of the world before Jesus’ incarnation shaped the world into which Jesus was born. Knowing about that world will give us more insight into why Jesus said and taught what He did.

“I am the door,” “I am the bread of life” Has anyone ever asked you what Jesus meant by these declarations? Jesus proclaimed, “I am the door!” What would the Jewish people focus on? The blood of the Passover lambs on the doorposts and lintel of the Jewish homes in Egypt at that first Passover. It occurred in history. The blood of the lambs brought the children of Israel deliverance from slavery in Egypt. In Jesus’ day the Jewish people were yearning for deliverance from Roman oppression. “I am the bread of life!” What would the Jewish people remember? The provision from God – the manna that God fed them with for 40 years in the wilderness!

How do we read the Gospels? Consider the following: “Jesus’ ministry and the kingdom He came to establish have deep roots in the soil of Israel’s history. For centuries the strip of land between the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea and the western boundary of the Arabian

Desert has been – and continues to be – ground zero for an ongoing conflict between good and evil. The conflict is – and will be – spiritual/cosmic, not political. Therefore, it is no accident that Jesus was born there or that His destiny is so intricately intertwined with the future of Israel's throne.”

Luke 1:26-33 - *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ... ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, ..., you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.'*

4

Why did Jesus come to earth?

What did Jesus do for 3.5 years?

Have you ever considered that regarding Jesus' earthly ministry, many times we focus on Jesus' incarnation and then His death?

If we have studied many of Jesus' teachings, was there a specific purpose to His teaching?

Why does Matthew begin with Jesus' genealogy traced through Joseph?

Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem Ephrathah?

Why was the proclamation of Jesus' birth first made to the Jewish shepherds?

Why did Jesus perform miracles?

What was John's ministry?

Why were Jewish people coming to John to be immersed?

Why did John preach “Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand”? (Matt. 3:2)

What did “repent” mean to the Jewish people?

Why did Jesus, from that time (following His temptation in the wilderness) begin to preach “Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand”? (Matt. 4:17) What does it mean?

Why did Jesus preach “the gospel of the Kingdom”?

Why do we read in Luke 2 that Simeon was waiting for the Consolation of Israel?

Why did Anna speak of the baby Jesus to those waiting for redemption in Jerusalem?

Why did the disciples drop everything when Jesus told them to follow Him?

As we study the life and times of Jesus, my prayer is that we will fall in love with Him...perhaps for the first time...perhaps like never before.

WHO IS THIS MAN?

Jesus the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Son of God, Emmanuel (God in the flesh; God with us), entered our world at a specific time and place. He wasn't born in Michigan or in Southern California or in the Texas panhandle. He was born in a land that was a hotbed of political and religious turmoil – a country that had been the crossroads of the world for centuries. Jesus was

5

born into a race of people chosen by God to bear His name to the world – a people who had made a covenant with God and had broken it – had broken the Mosaic Covenant.

Israel was the vehicle that God used to bring Jesus into this world and God will use Israel to bring Him back at the consummation of the age. We read in Matt. 23:39, that Jesus told the Jewish people – you won't see Me again until you say, “Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.” Jesus did not come in a vacuum. Jesus had Messianic credentials. The Jews were the ones who were looking for the Messiah! He did not come in a vacuum. Israel provided the context for His arrival. She birthed Him into the world and He will come back when God pours out His Spirit upon Israel and they realize Who He is (Hosea 5:15; Zech. 12:10ff; Matt. 23:39).

Yes – Jesus is God – always was and always will be. He is eternally God! As Emmanuel – God in the flesh – He lived a perfect life and provided the final sacrifice for sin. But He entered this world to identify with man. Jesus was a Rabbi. He was a stonemason and carpenter (builder). He knew what it meant to tend sheep, to catch fish, and to live in the shadow of the kings and empires of this world. He wore tassels on the hem of His garment. He attended weddings. He experienced life in the everyday household of a Galilean community and sat in Moses' seat in the synagogue. Jesus' Bible was the OT – the Hebrew Scriptures – the Tanakh. His sandaled feet got dusty and dirty. He perspired and got thirsty in the burning sun of the Judean wilderness.

Recognizing all this doesn't diminish our Savior! Recognizing all this makes the fact that God was willing to experience life in a fallen world for us more astounding and overwhelming.

After the Rabbi and John MacArthur spoke, MacArthur told him to read the Gospel of John. After reading the Gospel of John, the Jewish man returned to MacArthur and said, “Jesus is not an ordinary man; He is God!”

So, Who is this Man? There is no middle ground!

C.S. Lewis wrote, in *Mere Christianity*:

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level with the man who says he’s a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Even Jesus’ disciples struggled to comprehend Who He was? What an incredible thought – God becoming man. YET – that’s what the Hebrew Scriptures taught (Micah 5:2; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6).

Ray Stedman wrote: “Who is this man? I have often pictured the disciples sleeping out under the stars with our Lord on a summer night by the Sea of Galilee. I can imagine Peter or John or one of the others walking in the night, rising up on an elbow, and as he looked at the Lord Jesus sleeping beside him, saying to himself, “Is it true? Can this man be the eternal God?”

6

Jesus told us that He is God:

John 14:7-11 – *‘If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.’*

John 10:30 – *‘I and My Father are one.’*

Jesus declared numerous times that He is the great I AM!!

This is how Jesus presented Himself to the world, and, in the end, how we must either accept or reject Him.

In the person of the Son, the timeless, all-powerful God voluntarily exited eternity and stepped into time to become a helpless human being. The Creator became as a creature to suffer the same pains we suffer, to endure the same heartaches and disappointments, struggles and temptations that afflict us, to bear the same injustices that plague human existence, and even to subject Himself to the awful consequences of sin. Jesus came into this world knowing what it would cost Him. He bore in His body the marks of evil and hatred that we deserve. The weight of our sin was upon Him so that we could be forgiven. Jesus took on our disfigurement – forever. We will see His scars in heaven! Who is his Man? Who do **YOU** say that He is?

QUESTIONS:

Have you read all four Gospels?

How would you explain the Gospels to a person who doesn't know Jesus?

What aspects of the Gospels would you discuss with a believer?

How did the questions posed during the class impact you?

Any V8 moments?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

As you read through your handout including the Scripture references, identify:

- God's grace
- God's truth
- "new to me" points; V8 moments
- key point for you
- application for your life!

Share what impacted you with at least one person.

Read Daniel 2 in preparation for next week.

Read week 2's handout when you receive it.