

## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

### WEEK 3 – THE SILENCE IS SHATTERED! THE BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER AND JESUS

February 4, 2020

Mark 1:15 – *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.* What is the kingdom of God? When you're reading about "the kingdom of God/heaven" in Scripture, you need to know the context of the passage you're in to be able to answer, "what is the kingdom of God?" Within Scripture "kingdom" means the rule of God. God is sovereign. He rules the universe. (Psa. 19:1 – *The heavens declare the glory of God....*; Isa. 66:1 – *Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool.*) Within Scripture we read of the spiritual kingdom of God – being born again. The kingdom that God promised the Jewish people about which we read in the OT is primarily the future earthly Messianic Kingdom which we know as the Millennial Kingdom where the Messiah will rule and reign and believers will reign with Him (II Tim. 2:12). What does "at hand" mean? WHY would Jesus declare "Repent"? Had Israel as a nation repented? If they had, why would Malachi end with...

Mal. 4:5-6 – *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. '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.*

Psa. 33:12 – *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance* (Dt. 32:9; Isa. 19:25) – speaking of the entire nation coming to know God.

Jer. 31:31-34 – speaks of the spiritual restoration of Israel in the future

Eze. 36:24-27 – spiritual restoration in the future

Deut. 30:1-6 – future restoration

Hosea 5:15 – future acknowledgement of sin

Zech. 12:10 – amidst the campaign of Armageddon, the third of the Jewish population remaining will be restored (2/3 die in the tribulation – Zech. 13:8-9)

God speaks to Israel, the Jewish people, through the last prophet in the Hebrew Scriptures...REPENT or I will come and strike the earth with a curse. And so...430 years of darkness! 430 years of silence – no prophets warning the children of Israel – no angelic visits – no revelation from God! AND THEN – that silence was shattered! God was about to reveal to the people His Anointed, the Messiah, JESUS!

The belief systems that existed in the world into which Jesus was born: paganism; Greek philosophy; Hellenism; Emperor worship. Summation: man-made. There was within the Jewish world the teachings of the Rabbis who created embellishments to the law

regarding how to live out the law. The embellishments are known as the oral law. And these applications/interpretations became law and became more authoritative than the written law in the Torah! Summation: man-made.

Rabbinic thoughts concerning the Messiah: Keep in mind that many of the ancient Rabbis (before 1100 AD) viewed Psa. 22, Psa. 45, Psa. 110, Isa. 53...as Messianic. In the Talmud (Rabbinic opinion/debates), it is written “All the prophets prophesied only of the

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days of the Messiah” (Sanh. 99 a), and “The world was created only for the Messiah” (Sanh. 98b). Yet, there were Rabbis who believed that all Israel hoped for was the national restoration and glory of Israel. Everything else was a means to these ends. The Messiah would be the means to the end of becoming restored!? HOWEVER, the Hebrew Scriptures teach that the Messiah is the Son of God, He is God (Psa. 2)!

Jesus spoke against the teachings of the Rabbis. Jesus separated Himself from Rabbinic ideas. And so, Jesus was not viewed by the religious leadership as the Jewish Messiah. The first believers in Jesus, however, were Jewish! At the outset of His public ministry, Jesus ministered in Nazareth in Galilee, away from Jerusalem. Traditional Judaism was focused upon in Jerusalem. There was a general contempt in Rabbinic circles for all that was Galilean. The people of Galilee were blamed for neglecting the study of their language and neglecting traditionalism. We need to know, though, that there were Rabbis who believed that the Messiah pre-existed before coming to earth...that the Messiah is higher than Moses...that He would suffer and face a violent death. Find out what your Jewish friend believes. Find out what your Gentile friend believes.

In turning over from Malachi to the book of Matthew we read the bridge between the Old and New Testaments. Matthew’s readership was Jewish. Matthew’s purpose was to demonstrate that Jesus was 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 support the conclusion that He is the prophesied Messiah of Israel!

We turn to Matthew and read...

Matthew 1:1 - *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: the Son of David* – a Messianic title.

We need to understand that genealogies were significant to the Jewish people. Genealogies...

- Proved that the person was indeed a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Identified the tribe to which he belonged.
- Qualified certain Jews for religious duties such as the Levitical and priestly service.

There are two genealogies of Jesus in the Gospels: Matt. 1:1-17 through Joseph; Luke 3:23-38 through Mary.

Matthew records Jesus' genealogy of Jesus through Joseph for legal purposes. The Jews' custom in keeping records is to trace descent through the father. Matthew is writing to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. Also, Joseph's lineage is given to emphasize the fact that Jesus had been born of a virgin. Because of a curse that [God](#) placed on one of Joseph's ancestors (Jeconiah, also known as Coniah), Jesus could never sit upon the throne of David if Joseph had been His natural father. How, then, could Jesus be a descendant of David and qualify to sit on the throne? Enter the genealogy in Luke 3, which is Mary's. According to Jewish usage, Mary's ancestry is given in her husband's name. The original Greek merely says Joseph was "of Heli" or Eli (verse 23). Heli was Mary's father, Joseph's father-in-law. Unlike Joseph's lineage, there was no roadblock in

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Mary's genealogy to Jesus sitting on the throne of David. Mary's descent from David comes through David's son Nathan. But how could Mary transmit David's royal inheritance—the right to the throne—to her Son, since all inheritances had to pass through the male line? According to Israel's law, when a daughter is the only heir, she can inherit her father's possessions and rights if she marries within her own tribe ([Numbers 27:1-8](#); [36:6-8](#)). Further, the genealogies prove the virgin birth: The curse on Jeconiah's line would have passed on to Christ if He were Joseph's natural son, but He was not—He was the Son of God the Father, begotten by the [Holy Spirit](#). Matthew's genealogy concludes with Joseph being described as the "husband of Mary" but explicitly excluded from being the actual father of Jesus. In the phrase, "of whom was born Jesus," *whom* is a feminine pronoun, referring to Mary.

An unusual feature, not typical of Jewish genealogies, is found in the Matthew genealogy. Four women are mentioned.

Tamar, a Canaanite woman (Gentile) who posed as a prostitute to seduce Judah. She gave birth to Perez and Zerah (Gen. 38:13-30).

Rahab, a Gentile, a harlot rescued from Jericho because of her confession of faith and her protecting the two Jewish spies (Josh. 2). Rahab is declared by Matthew to have been the wife of Salmon, the father of Boaz (no OT support).

Ruth, a Gentile, a Moabitess (Moab was an enemy of Israel). Moabites worshipped idols.

Bathsheba, alluded to as "who had been the wife of Uriah" - the mother of Solomon, who had been the wife of Uriah. Bathsheba's relationship with David began with adultery (II Sam. 11) and resulted in the murder of her husband. Grandfather: Ahithophel – a Gilonite (Canaanite) (II Sam. 15). Ahithophel had been David's trusted advisor.

Mary – Jewish, who bore the stigma of pregnancy outside of wedlock.

The inclusion of the Gentile females loudly speaks to Jesus as the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles, men and women. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant that through the Messiah all nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 22:18). Jesus is the Savior of sinners!

Each of these women proclaims God's GRACE!

Between 6 BC and 4 BC, two special baby boys were born in the land of Israel - Jesus and John. . . and they were related. Mary was a relative of Elizabeth (Luke 1:36). The lives of John and Jesus were intertwined. HOW were these two lives intertwined? God prophesied John's calling as the herald of the Messiah: Isa. 40:3 – *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'*

Matt. 3:1-3 - *In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'*

WHY was Jehovah coming?

Why was there the need to make a highway – and to make it straight?

How were the people to prepare?

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Isa. 40:4-5 - *Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; <sup>5</sup> The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.* The glory of the LORD, His localized physical presence, shall be uncovered/revealed when this voice crying in the wilderness, John, calls the people to repent.

Mal. 3:1 - *'Behold, I send My messenger (John – [Matt. 11:1-10; Mk. 1:2; Lk. 7:27], and he will prepare the way (derek – path, journey, direction) before Me (panim - before My presence). And the Lord, Whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in Whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,' says the LORD of hosts.*" God makes mention of His "messenger," John, who has a message. "...the Lord whom you seek" – "Lord" – mal-ak – master; king. "Whom you seek" – the faithful remnant would be seeking (i.e. Simeon and Anna – Luke 2) – but this might be a sarcastic comment in the light of the many non-repentant people of Israel. The Lord "... will suddenly come to His temple" – suddenly – surprisingly/unexpectedly. Who is "the Lord"? He is the Messenger of the covenant (*bereth* – pledge, agreement, alliance)

A Messenger has a message. Angels had a message. Who is "the Angel of the LORD" we often encounter in the OT? A pre-incarnate appearance of the Messiah Jesus – God the Son – God! The One Who is the Angel of the LORD is only seen in the OT!

...in whom you delight (Sarcastic? In Malachi's day – corrupt priesthood was in place in the temple and blemished sacrifices were being offered)

Behold He is coming! God always reveals the way to Himself and provides.

The book of Isaiah was written 700 years before John and Jesus; Malachi was written 430 years before the births of John and Jesus were announced. And, so...

Luke 1:5-25 - *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, (Herod who was not Jewish...who was put on the throne by Rome – the government oppressing Israel...telling us that “the times of the Gentiles” continued having been established first with Babylon) a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (they were given God’s righteousness [Gen. 15:6]). <sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. <sup>8</sup> So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord (before the veil before the Holy of Holies). <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup> Then an angel of the Lord (NOT “the” Angel of the LORD) appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup> For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the children of*

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*Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’ ... <sup>21</sup> And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. <sup>22</sup> But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, (there was expectation following 430 years of silence – Lk. 3:15) for he beckoned to them and remained speechless. <sup>23</sup> So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. <sup>24</sup> Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, <sup>25</sup> ‘Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.’ (Stigma of not having children)*

Luke 1:26-56 - <sup>26</sup> Now in the sixth month (after Elizabeth conceived) the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth....

Nazareth

Nazareth was an obscure town where roughly two hundred people farmed land and tended animals. Nazareth sat in a slight depression high in the mountains overlooking the Jezreel Valley. This made it a perfect place for a garrison of Roman soldiers to keep watch over the region. They had their own observation tower. A group of soldiers in a tiny town – can lead to trouble. Consequently, the Jews of Nazareth gained a nasty reputation for immorality. When the disciple Nathaniel heard that Jesus grew up in Nazareth, he said, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46) That was how Nazareth was known! In fact, some connected “Nazareth” with a word which meant *germ* – something despised! Despised!

Nazareth – *nazara* – “the guarded one”

Branch - *nezer* (root of *nazara*)– to guard to watch. Branch – Messianic title (Jer. 23:5-6; Isa. 4:2; Isa. 6:12-13; Isa. 11:1; Zech. 3:8; Zech. 6:12-13). And He was called “Jesus of Nazareth”! Translation into the Hebrew “Yeshua (God is salvation) the Branch!

*27 to a virgin (Gk – Parthenos [translation from almah in the OT in Isa. 7:14 – over which there is a lively debate – many Jewish scholars contending that “almah” does not mean exclusively a virgin. The Rabbis who translated the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language took almah and gave it the exclusive virgin definition through parthenos) 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, for you have found (obtained) favor (grace – undeserved merit) with God. 31 And behold, 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.’ ... 46 And Mary said: ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; ... 54 He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.’*

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The lives of John and Jesus were intertwined and yet there was such a contrast:

John was born into the priestly family (division of Abijah [I Chron. 24:4-19] under the tribe of Levi.

Jesus, though born into poverty, was from the royal line of David.

John and Jesus were born six months apart.

Gabriel, an angel sent from God, prophesied both births.

The accounts of both births in the Gospels are ANNOUNCEMENTS – announcements regarding the glory of God – the grace of God!

AND, these announcements connect the OT with the NT!

AND, with these announcements the 430 years of silence is broken!

Did you ever wonder why we read in the Gospel of Luke. . .

Luke 1:21 – *and the people marveled* – when Zacharias lingered in the Temple (in the Holy Place)

Luke 1:63 – *and the people marveled* - when Zacharias wrote, *his name is John*

Luke 1:65 – *all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea*

Luke 2:18 – *And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*

The setting in Israel at the time of John and Jesus was darkness and gloom. Israel was under “the times of the Gentiles”. Israel was under Gentile oppression. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the children of Israel had been promised the Kingdom of God – the physical kingdom on earth where the Messiah will reign from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2; Rev. 20:4-6). The southern Kingdom of Judah was taken into exile. BUT GOD orchestrated the return of the southern Kingdom of Judah (w/ many from the northern Kingdom [II Chron. 11:16ff; II Chron. 30:9; II Chron. 34:9, 21) to their land to rebuild the Temple. What a merciful God. He delivered on His promises that they would indeed return to the land (Deut. 30; Isa. 40; Isa. 54:4-8; Jer. 32:13-15...)

But, not long after they returned, the prophet Malachi warned them that they needed to offer sacrifices that were NOT blemished to God with the right heart attitude. In other words – they weren’t doing so! They had not repented as a nation! The priesthood was corrupt. Malachi delivered God’s message of judgment on Israel for their continuing sin and God’s promise that one day in the future, when the Jews would repent, Messiah would be revealed and God’s covenant promises would be fulfilled! God’s love for His people pervades the book of Malachi!

What did God call John to do? John was called to announce the coming of the LORD and to “prepare” the way for the Messenger of the Covenant. If you can see/grasp/understand who John is, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, then you can recognize the Messiah. There’s no mystery!

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And when John was born and named and circumcised, Zacharias spoke:

Luke 1:68-79 - *Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, <sup>69</sup>and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David,*

*<sup>70</sup> as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, <sup>71</sup> that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, <sup>72</sup> to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, <sup>73</sup> the oath which He swore to our father Abraham: <sup>74</sup> to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, <sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. <sup>76</sup> and you, child, (John) will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, <sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, <sup>78</sup> through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; <sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

*Dayspring* - the metaphorical spring (figurative way of saying that there is a spring from which the sun springs forth each day).

There is another great sunrise coming, as promised in the last chapter of the Old Testament. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" ([Malachi 4:2](#)). He who is Himself "the light of the world" ([John 8:12](#)) will someday even replace the sun in the new Jerusalem. There will never be another sunrise after that, for "there shall be no night there . . . neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" ([Revelation 22:5](#)).

Mary and Joseph probably didn't travel to Bethlehem from Nazareth to fulfill Bible prophecy. They traveled to Bethlehem because GOD orchestrated the events! God used pagan Caesar Augustus to issue a decree...that a census would be taken for the purposes of taxation which the Jews hated.

Caesar Augustus was moved by the Spirit of God at exactly the right time. And he unknowingly fulfilled Micah 5:2 – which was written centuries before. Micah 5:2 tells of the One Whose days were from eternity Who would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. How ironic was the census that Caesar Augustus issued. It was one of the ways he employed to get control over the various parts of his empire. He hailed himself as the Savior of the world... reigning over the entire known world. In the process, as he sought to tighten his grip, what he organized led to the fulfillment of the birth of the One Who would eventually reign over the world!

So, Mary and Joseph traveled to – Bethlehem...

#### QUESTIONS:

And you say regarding this lesson - ??

Did this lesson impact you? How?

What was new to you?

Are you seeing God unfolding His plan? How?

How would you share this lesson with a friend? And – why would you share this lesson?

#### SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:



Reread week 3's handout with the cross references

Jot down observations, questions, and begin to find answers from Scripture

Be careful not to assume the beliefs of another. Always ask others what they believe.

Share the lesson with at least one other person.

Read week 4's handout when you receive it.