

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

Week 5 – CONFLICT! VICTORY!! Jesus' Baptism/Declared to be the Son of God;
Jesus' Temptation/Proven to be the Son of God

February 18, 2020

Gen. 3:15 – *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.* Enmity in the Hebrew means a blood feud! CONFLICT! Throughout the OT we read of Satan's attempts to destroy the line through which the Messiah would come. But Jesus came! Was there conflict when Jesus came to earth as Immanuel, God with us/God in the flesh? Why? _____

Matt. 2:7-10 - *Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.'* ⁹ *When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.* ¹⁰ *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.*

Matt. 2:12-16 - the Magi were divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. ¹³ *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.'* ¹⁴ *When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵ and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt I called My Son.'*

¹⁶ *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.*

Mary, Joseph and Jesus left Israel for Egypt in 4 BC. Jesus was two years old. The Magi visited the King of the Jews when Jesus was two. Why was Joseph directed to Egypt? Matthew 2:15 cites Hosea 11:1 – *Out of Egypt I have called My Son*. This refers to the exodus of Israel from Egypt. Matthew presents the contrast between Israel, as the son of Jehovah (Ex. 4:22) going to Egypt and returning, and Jesus, the greater Son, Who also went down to Egypt and returned. Matthew is declaring how Israel's destiny is aligned with the Jewish Messiah. What does Israel as the son of Jehovah mean? Jehovah is YHWH in Hebrew. Jehovah/YHWH is the covenant name of God. God told Moses, "I AM that I AM" – the eternal One, the self-sufficient One. And I AM calls Israel His Son, His firstborn. To the ancient Egyptians, the firstborn was sacred. Moses told Pharaoh

that the children of Israel were God's firstborn and they were to be released! Ex. 5:1 - *Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go....* Ex. 5:2 - *Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.* CONFLICT!

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No Scripture is found as to where they stayed in Egypt. Josephus documented that Jews settled in Alexandria at the beginning of the third century BC during the time of Alexander the Great. Josephus records that when Rome was in control two of the five quarters in Alexandria were inhabited by Jews, and synagogues existed in every part of the city. Mary, Joseph and Jesus left Israel for Egypt in 4 BC as Jesus was two years old when the Magi visited the Child. The family remained in Egypt for under one year (some say a few weeks) and returned to Israel when Herod the Great died in 4 BC.

Matt. 2:19-23 - *Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." ²¹ Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. ²³ And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'*

An angel of the Lord – we are not reading of “the” angel of the “LORD”. The angel of the LORD Who is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus is not seen in the NT because Jesus entered the world at His incarnation.

Through the succession of Herod's line, and the madness of Archelaus, God warned Joseph and Joseph turned toward Galilee and dwelled in Nazareth... *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene'* There is no verse in the OT stating *He shall be called a Nazarene*.

Nazareth is the focus and this prophetic expression (looking forward to the Messiah) was spoken not just by one prophet but the prophets. It has been suggested that Matthew saw in the obscurity of Nazareth the fulfillment of Old Testament indications of a humble and rejected Messiah. If there was any specific passage in Matthew's mind, it was likely Isaiah 11:1: *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots*. The Hebrew word translated *Branch* is *nezer* which is a root word of Nazar – the Hebrew word for Nazareth. Isaiah 11:1 speaks of a branch – a cut down part of a tree – that shall spring out of Jesse's root. The prophets spoke of the Messiah coming in lowliness and in humility. Isa. 53 – the Messiah was a root out of a dry ground without form or comeliness, with no beauty that men should desire Him.

The family returned to Nazareth where Jesus lived until.... Nazareth was looked upon as a habitation of the *Am-ha-arets* – country people who by Judean standards were

considered uneducated. Jesus conducted ministry away from Jerusalem – away from the center of Rabbinism – away from the manmade system of religion. The Rabbis focused on the letter of the law. Jesus taught the spirit of the law – the heart behind the law. And, Jesus was away from Rabbinical scrutiny until it was time! Nazareth was obscure, immoral, a germ of a place. Nazareth speaks to what Jesus gave up for us.

Galilee is known as the “Galilee of the Gentiles.” One of the most important trade routes in the Middle East was situated near the Sea of Galilee. Traders from Gentile nations traveled along this route

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Isa. 49:6 – It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.

The Jewish people had been chosen to share the truth of the one true God with the Gentiles. Here was the Jewish Messiah doing so – ministering among the Gentiles and the Jews (Matt. 15:24; Isa. 49:6). Jesus is the quintessential Jew Who was taking upon Himself that which God called the Jewish people to do.

Let’s travel to the Jordan River...

Luke 3:1-6- *“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ John’s baptism is set solidly in the history of the time. Knowing the names of five political leaders and two religious leaders, it’s been calculated by some that John began to preach sometime in late 28 AD or early 29 AD (some have speculated a year or two earlier).*

God spoke to John directly. Where was John? In the wilderness. It seems that approximately 30 years following John’s birth he emerged from seclusion and began to proclaim what was about to happen.

Matt. 3:4-5 - *Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.* ⁵ *Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him* ⁶ *and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.*

The customary attire of a prophet in Biblical times: a garment of hair cloth or sackcloth around his loins and sandals on his feet. II Kings 1:2-8 gives us a description of Elijah... "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist." John wore a homespun camel's hair shirt, a wide leather belt, and ate locusts and honey. Why does the NT go into a detailed description of John? We don't have such a detailed description of Jesus. This description had special meaning for the people looking for the Messiah. The prophets told the people that the Messiah's arrival would be preceded by the appearance of Elijah. And here comes John looking like Elijah! Elijah ministered in a time of crisis in Israel, when the nation was far from God, and a time that immediately preceded a terrible judgment. The ministry of John signaled a spiritual crisis in Israel. Would the nation accept Jesus as their King? The ministry of John was to prepare the way by calling Israel to repentance. John was called to prepare Israel for their Messiah. John the Baptizer emerged from the same desert where Elijah spent most of his life. He preached with the same boldness as Elijah. He dressed like Elijah. As the angel Gabriel told Zacharias, John's father, John would come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Elijah, when he was taken up to heaven bodily, had crossed the Jordan from the

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west side to the east side. John baptized on the east side of the Jordan. That area was labeled, "beyond the Jordan." Was John "Elijah" who returned from where last he was seen? Remember we are told that John would come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). AND, multitudes from Jerusalem, ALL Judea, and ALL the region around the Jordan were being immersed (Jewish purification rite) – they were confessing their sins!

Luke 3 - *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'* It was the custom of some Eastern monarchs to send heralds before them to announce that they were on their way. They would send an envoy to ensure that the roads were safe. Obstacles had to be cleared away, causeways had to be built, crooked roads straightened, and the land leveled. But...valleys which are low would be filled (brought up) and mountains (which are high and lofty) and hills would be lowered? What occurs when a heart is changed by God? The humble are lifted up in a godly manner by God and those who elevate themselves will be brought low. John is regarded as the courier of the King; however, the preparation on which he insisted was a preparation of heart and life. "The King is coming. Mend your lives!" John was calling the people to repent. He proclaims it, "Repent!" Why? "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." John proclaimed a new government ("the kingdom" depicted by the stone that we read about in Daniel 2:35, 45 that crushes all the previously established kingdoms). John

did not proclaim this kingdom in Jerusalem, the nation's governmental center. Instead he preached first to a handful of country folk living along the Jordan River, twenty miles to the east of the capital city. ALTHOUGH there were those who came out from Jerusalem to hear John.

Why should Israel repent? BECAUSE THE KING WAS COMING! In his preaching repentance, John was addressing the entire nation of Israel. God had promised them the Kingdom but they needed to confess their sins, repent, and get right with God!

How many of us thought that baptism began with John? Immersion was nothing new to the Jewish people. We read of ceremonial purifications among the Jews. Priests were cleansed (Ex. 19:10-14; Lev. 8:6), and articles were also cleansed (Lev. 11:32). There was cleansing for bodily discharges. Leprous garments were cleansed as were leprous homes. The expression clean and unclean is one of the prominent themes in Leviticus. Unclean occurs 132 times in the OT; over 50% of these are in Leviticus. Clean occurs 74 times in Leviticus. It is important for us to realize that cleanliness and uncleanness is related to holiness! To be clean outside looked forward to the inward spiritual purity that God requires.

John's baptism: John told all who came to the Jordan River that he was baptizing with water unto repentance (Matt. 3:11). John told the people to believe in the coming One after him – Jesus. Being baptized by John demonstrated a recognition of one's sin, a desire for spiritual cleansing, and a commitment to follow God's law in anticipation of the Messiah's arrival.

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John's baptism brought the Jewish religious leadership to the shores of the Jordan. If immersion was practiced by Jewish people, why were the Jewish religious leaders investigating John?

“Those who confessed their sin and repented were immersed BY JOHN.” That's the difference. John was immersing the Jewish people! We need to know that Jewish people immersed themselves. And, Jewish people immersed Gentiles when they, Gentiles, converted to Judaism. Jewish thinking: one who is impure or ceremonially unclean, a Gentile, would be ceremonially clean after immersion. Jewish people immersed Gentiles who were seen by the Jews as being outside God's saving covenant.

But John immersed Jewish people who were seen as already clean! It was thought that Jewish people were already righteous because they were descendants of Abraham. That is NOT what Scripture teaches. The correct lineage doesn't assure salvation! Man, both Jew and Gentile, is declared righteous through faith alone in the Jewish Messiah alone! (Isa. 64:6 – good works are as filthy rags in God's eyes)

WHY did the Jewish religious leaders come to the Jordan?

John 1:19-28 - *Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews (religious leaders; Matt. 3:7 tells us that many Pharisees and Sadducees came to the Jordan to John's baptism) sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' 20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.' 21 And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No.' 22 Then they said to him, 'Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?' 23 He said: 'I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the LORD,' ' as the prophet Isaiah said.' 24 Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, saying, 'Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?' 26 John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. 27 It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.' 28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.* Why did the religious leaders come to see John? There was much Messianic expectation. How would that affect the Jewish religious leaders? Loss of power. Why did John tell them he was not the Anointed One – the Messiah/Christ? Because of the anticipation for the Messiah's arrival. Why did they ask if John was Elijah? Mal. 4:5-6 – God would send Elijah. And, Elijah was taken to heaven bodily at Bethabara...at the east side of the Jordan, "beyond the Jordan," where John was immersing! John was dressed as Elijah. John was stirring things up as Elijah had done so. Why did they ask if he was the Prophet? Who is the Prophet? Deut. 18:18-19 - *I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and 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.*

28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

II Kings 2:6, 8-11, 13.

Matt. 3:7-9 - In Matthew we're told that when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, *Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.* Stones? What stones?

Josh. 4:9 - *Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan,* Could John be baptizing at the place where Joshua was told by God to set up the stones in the midst of the Jordan so that when descendants ask

Josh. 4:6-7 ...when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' '7 Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever. '

Matt. 3:13 - Then Jesus came from Galilee...

Luke 3:23 - Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli,

Thirty years following His birth Jesus came to the Jordan River from Galilee. CONSIDER: Jesus waited those many years in Nazareth performing duties at home and at the carpenter's shop...knowing all the time that He was God in the flesh... knowing all the time that there was a lost world...knowing that there were those who were waiting and watching for Him.

All those years in Nazareth living within God's plan of redemption waiting for the right time. And – it was NOW...

And John cries out, *Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world* (John 1:29)

Matt. 3:13-15 - Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' ¹⁵ But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. The baptism of Jesus was unique. It was an initiatory right, setting Him apart to His role as Prophet (He is the Word), Priest (He is the One Who will offer the sacrifice – Himself!), and King (He presents Himself as the King of the Jews at His first coming). In the OT there were prophets, priests, and kings. Jesus fulfills all three roles. Jesus' baptism anticipates His death on the cross as He goes down into the water and rises up! At His baptism, Jesus identified with sinners. Jesus will bear our sins on the cross. Those who receive His gift of forgiveness will be forgiven/declared righteous. Thus, Jesus, in His identifying with sinner, fulfills all righteousness. He took upon Himself our sin and He offers to us His righteousness!

Jesus' baptism was the first public affirmation of Jesus as the Son of God – the Messiah – by testimony directly from heaven!

Matt. 3:16-17 - *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷ And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'*

The heavens were open to Jesus and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove (in bodily form – Lk. 3:22) “alighting upon Him.” Isa. 61:1 - *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me.* Psa. 45:7 - *Your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.*

And the voice, “This is My beloved Son.” Psa. 2:7 - *“I will declare the decree: the LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.* Quoted in the NT w/ reference to the birth of Jesus (Heb. 1:5-6) and also to His resurrection (Acts 13:33, 4; Rom. 1:4). Eternally Jesus is the Son of God!

Jesus' baptism declared Him to be the Son of God.

Matt. 4:1 - *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

The temptation of Jesus recorded also in Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13, occurred immediately after the testimony to His deity from John and God the Father.

Mark 1:12 - *Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.*

Jesus is driven into this period of testing by God. Tempted does not imply any inward cooperation with what Satan proposed. Unlike sinful man, Jesus has no temptation from within!

The time of trial consisted of forty days (Lk. 4:2 – the tempting encompassed the full 40 days) of fasting during which there was constant provocation by Satan. The adversary attempted to corrupt the Son of God, to usurp God's plan, to oppose God's will. The devil can only attempt as it is absolutely impossible to induce the Son of God to sin.

“If You are the Son of God”....

The first temptation encouraged Jesus to turn stones into bread. To agree to such at Satan's suggestion and to make satisfaction of His hunger the primary focus was contrary to the will of God.

Jesus replied by quoting Deut. 8:3 – declaring the priority of the Word of God.

The second temptation encouraged Jesus to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem (a wing of the Temple – 450' above the rocks and valley below). Satan highlighted Jesus' miraculous preservation by the angels which would demonstrate His deity and He would gain recognition. Satan's ultimate goal was for Jesus to bypass the cross and to worship him/Satan.

Jesus replied by quoting Deut. 6:16 – forbidding testing God in any way.

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The third temptation encouraged Jesus to accept Satan's offer of all the kingdoms of the world. Matt. 4:9 - *All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.* Here was the temptation to become King of kings without a cross! Bottom line for Satan: to become God and to be worshipped as God!

How could Satan offer the kingdoms of the world to Jesus? Satan is the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4) – but this is temporary for Satan!

Jesus replied by quoting

Deut. 6:13 & Deut. 10:20 - *You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him*

AND, Jesus commanded Satan to go.

Because of His humanity, Jesus could be tested. BUT, because He is the perfect God-man, Jesus could NOT be enticed to sin.

Matt. 4:11 - *Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him – most likely providing food to restore His physical strength and prepare Him for the task ahead.*

Luke 4:13 - *Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.*

Jesus' baptism declared Him to be the Son of God

Jesus' temptation proved Him to be the Son of God

QUESTIONS:

Why did we read and discuss Jesus' baptism and temptation?

In what way were you impacted (or not!)?

Did knowledge of Jewish history and culture help in understanding the significance of these passages? How?

What are you going to do with these passages?

Is there a specific theme/focus that you are understanding?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread the week 5 handout with the Bible references.

Jot down observations, questions, and specific phrases that you desire to research. Keep a journal.

Begin answering the questions you have from the Scripture.

Share what you've learned with at least one person.

Invite one or two Jewish people to the Purim Celebration!

Read week 6 handout when you receive it.