

Rediscovering Jesus in The Jewish Gospels

If a person loses one eye or even a lens from their eyeglasses, their vision will lack depth perception. It can cause them to miss steps, miss their cup when pouring coffee or worse, to misjudge distances when driving. Falling down-stairs or burning your hand or having a fender bender is physically costly but poor vision when studying NT scripture is spiritually costly in many ways: 1) Confused Christians are susceptible to either walking away from the church and the Bible or falling for false doctrines of the cults who claim to have the real truth. 2) It makes one easy prey for false doctrine. 3.) Christians totally neglect the Gospel to the Jewish people. 4.) Entire churches go astray in wrong doctrine. 5.) Souls die in deception to “another gospel.” To “rightly divide” scripture we need clear vision in both eyes as we read and study. It takes both a Church lens and an Israel lens to correct our depth perception problem.

What are we missing?

- 1. The blessing of God within the Church.** (Romans 11:15). Viewing the Jews as having missed their only opportunity when their leaders rejected Christ 2,000 years ago and viewing them individually as rejected by God today.
- 2. The salvation of Jewish people.** Replacement theology, also called supersessionism is “the theological conviction that the Christian Church has superseded the Jews and the nation of Israel, assuming their role as God’s covenanted people.”ⁱ These two misinterpretations alone account for the theological position of the majority of “Christianity.” The salvation of Jewish people and Israel are either off the radar, out of sight and out of mind or worse, puts them in the target zone of blame resulting in apathy to their salvation or even their persecution. The seeds of the Holocaust were sown for 1600 years in the theological vilification of the Jewish people by the leaders of “Christendom.”
- 3. Clear interpretation of scripture.**
- 4. The richness of the contextual meaning of the scriptures.**

What were the early disciples missing?

Much is written in Acts and the epistles to address the vision problem that the early Jewish disciples had toward Gentiles. At first the Church was missing the grace for Gentile lens until the decision of the Apostles in Acts 15:11. Their new prescription allowed them to see us who were previously viewed as unacceptable, as accepted and welcomed in the Jewish church. “we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”

Now, 2000 years later, the Gentile Church needs to refocus through that same verse and reach and disciple them into the Church. We need to see Jew and Gentile as distinct but saved the same way. “we shall be saved, even as they.”

Study Objectives

- To see why and how it was necessary for Jesus to live in the Old Testament period under the Law
- To understand the Jewish context of the ministry and message of Jesus and His disciples and to verify His credentials as Messianic King of a prophesied literal kingdom,
- To contrast Jesus’ message of a literal kingdom, postponed and the parables about it’s mysteries
- To differentiate between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection
- To correct misinterpretation that propose that the Jews cannot be saved and the Church has replaced Israel
- To see Jesus in a whole new light and love Him more.

We are overdue for an eye exam. Until we take a vision test, we think that we see clearly.

The main events and teachings of the New Testament are like the BIG LETTERS across the top of the chart which are clear to most. As we look down the chart we may find ourselves squinting. Besides the doctrinal disagreements, there is a whole lot of guessing going on both sides in Bible interpretation, because its really a vision issue. So let's move down the chart from the clear truths like JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD and THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED to the fine print.

Q1. - What is the last verse in the Old Testament period?

If you say Malachi 4:6, then you are missing a Jewish lens. When we read the gospel accounts, we are reading about the events of the last 3 years of the Old Testament period. Everything Jesus said and did was in the O.T. era under the Law. We will further examine the Biblical evidence to support this claim. Hebrews 9:12-24 & 10:10-18 says that until the moment Jesus died, Jews were still under the Law and had to make a sacrifice for atonement at the Temple.

Q2. How did they get saved in the Old Testament.?

If you answer through faith plus keeping the Law of Moses, you are missing both New Testament and a Jewish lens. Since the Apostles did not have the Gospels in written form during the first 30 years, what Scripture were they using to share the Gospel? Though we can find the plan of salvation in the O. T., the best example is in John 3 with Nicodemus since that whole discussion happened... you got it! in the O. T. period. Jesus questioned Nicodemus' lack of knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" John 3:10

Q3. Does Jesus describe himself as "Son Man," to emphasize His humanity and "Son of God" to emphasize His deity?

Actually, it is just the opposite. A study of the prophet Daniel in chapter 7:13-14 shows that the one sitting on the throne with the "Ancient of Days" coming with clouds to establish an everlasting dominion and kingdom on earth is called "the Son of Man." It is used 69 times in the Gospels. In Mark 2:28 Jesus says "The Son of Man is LORD of the Sabbath," ie: Son of Man = Jehovah God. In Rabbinic sources "as late as the second century," this passage was "unequivocally related to the Messiah" ⁱⁱ Mark 14:61-64. In Matthew 24:30; 26:64, and Luke 21:26-27, He unmistakably connected the dots to the "Son of Man" term in Daniel 7. The identification was so clear to the High Priest that he erupted. "Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." He knew that Jesus was claiming to be the divine Messiah King from Heaven.

Now, is it clearer like that or like this?

Maybe you have been reading the Bible with only one lens, the N.T. Church lens. But I have always heard...you say? Jesus dealt with that in depth by answering "*but I say unto you.*" So we will let His words be the basis of our faith even if it sounds unusual to our traditions. We must search the scriptures as those in Berea. Acts 17:11

When we get a new prescription of Biblical glasses with both a Church lens and a Jewish lens, a lot of fuzzy things clear up. They've been there the whole time. No new truth is to be discovered. When our depth perception is corrected, things that we once stumbled over really come into focus. Remember the first time you got glasses, how sharp things looked? If we want to read and interpret holy Jewish Scriptures about a Jewish Messiah, then we must have Jewish lens and take a new look at the Scriptures we have always treasured. The Holy Spirit who inspired them to Jewish penmen has promised to guide us.

Both the early Jewish Church and the latter Gentile Church were both afflicted with vision problems.

It's as if the early Jewish believers were near sighted while today Gentile believers are farsighted. "Nearsightedness

occurs when nearby objects appear more clear than distant ones. When you're nearsighted, you typically see close-up things in more detail. Farsightedness occurs when distant objects appear more clear than nearby ones. When you're farsighted, you typically see better when focusing on things that are farther away."ⁱⁱⁱ The early Jewish church was nearsighted in that they could only see salvation for Jews from Roman oppression through a conquering Messiah. The modern church is farsighted in that while we understand that some Jews got saved 2000 years ago and "all Israel shall be saved," at the end of the Tribulation, we just can't see how those Jews near us today can be saved.

The ultimate objective in this study is to refocus our Jewish awareness of scriptures, and of our Savior, and to equip believers to encourage Jewish acceptance of the Jewish Messiah Jesus as the most natural response for Jewish people. If the Jewishness of Jesus is missing in the Gospel record and in the Gospel mandate of Romans 1:16; "to the Jew first," then they are excluded in our prayers and our efforts. Paul said, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Corinthians 4:3,4)

The credibility of the Gospel record depends on Jewish eyewitnesses of Jesus and His fulfillment of Jewish prophecies.

Faith in Jesus as the Son of God was not an invention of Gentiles centuries later. If the Jewish people of Jesus' day had not been convinced by evidence of fulfilled prophecy and divinity in Jesus, then organic Jewish Christianity would have never existed. The Gospels are the record of their firsthand experience.

- **Luke** "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" Acts 1:1-3
"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order..." Luke 1:1-3.
- **John** "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" 1 John 1:1-3.
- **Peter** "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" 2 Peter 1:16.
- **Paul** "unless ye have believed in vain. I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, **then of the twelve**: After that, **he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once**; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." 1 Corinthians 15: 1-6

Jesus' disciples went to their deaths by martyrdom refusing to recant their belief in Him because of what they had witnessed, especially after spending 40 days with Him after His resurrection.

Why was it necessary for Jesus to live in the Old Testament period and observe the Law of Moses?

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Galatians 4:4,5

Matthew 5:17 "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

While Jesus lived in O.T. times the Old Testament/covenant was still in effect.

Hebrews 9:12 “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 **For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.**

26b but **now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”**

He had to die to take away the Old Testament/Covenant and to establish the New Testament/Covenant.

Hebrews 10:9 “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” 10 **‘By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.’**

The New Covenant or Testament was not in effect until the once and for all sacrifice for sin was made. That means that the life of Jesus written in the volume or "canon" that we call The New Testament actually records events that happened under the law in the O. T. period. He had to live perfectly under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law.

At what moment did the Old Testament era end and the New Testament era begin?

When His blood of the New Covenant was presented on Heaven's mercy seat.

Colossians 2:14 “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, **nauling it to his cross;**”

Hebrews 9:24 “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”

Not until He had lived a sinless life, fulfilling every jot and tittle of Moses' Law and not until He had offered Himself as a sinless lamb of God by shedding His blood on the cross, could the demands of God's righteousness according to the Old Covenant/Testament be fulfilled. The New Testament era could only begin when the Law was perfectly lived up to and after the judgment on Jesus satisfied God's judgment for those guilty of violating the law. God had to become sinless flesh and offer Himself and take our judgment. Matthew 26:28 “For this is my blood of the new testament/covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Preview

Next week we will give the background for Jesus' message of “Repent, for the Kingdom is near.”

We will see the distinction between Jesus' initial message of the Gospel of a literal kingdom and the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection. This is a major cause of misinterpretation in the Book of Matthew. Replacement theology thrives on this error.

ⁱ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersessionism>

ⁱⁱ Hoffmann, Heinrich. 1999. Craig A. Evans. Handbook on the Jewish Roots of The Christian Faith. Hendrickson Publishers. P. 158,

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.warbyparker.com/learn/nearsighted-vs-farsighted>