Matthew: Old Testament, part 2
Matthew Overview
(preached Pine Grove 2/21/16; Sunday PM)

Introduction

On March 21, 1980, someone walks into an office building and shoots JR Ewing of the popular TV soap opera Dallas…

The episode ends and no one knew who did it….

For 8 months, the phrase "Who shot JR?" was all over the nation as people wondered who was responsible for shooting J.R.

On November 21, 1980, exactly 8 months later, the new season of Dallas came back on the air…

In that episode, it was revealed that a lady named Kristin has shot JR in a fit of anger.

Now, let's just say that the new episode has aired but it was a completely different story and it didn't even talk about or answer the question of "Who shot JR?"

It would angered and confused people who had waited 8 months to get the answer..

Let just say that the new season started out and it didn't even mention a character named JR…

People would have been outraged and lost…

The point of a season premier of a show is to connect it back to what happened in the last show..

Just recently, Star Wars Episode 7 came to theaters…

Imagine if people had gone to see that movie but Luke Skywalker or Hon Solo or the force or Darth Vader were never mentioned in it…

Movie goers would have been lost and confused and upset…

When you go to see the sequel of a movie, you count on the fact that you kinda know what is coming.

You know the characters, you know the plot and the storyline…

Though a sequel is different, it has much in common with what came before.

The same is true for the Old and New Testaments…

People get confused when they fail to see the connection between Genesis to Malachi and Matthew to Revelation…

Though the NT was written 450 - 500 later than the NT, it is not a completely different story…

The NT has the same author as the OT, who is God Himself..

The NT and the OT have the same theme and focus…

The Kingdom of God and how Jesus is the King of that kingdom…

The NT and the OT have the same problem…

Man is sinful and therefore not a part of that kingdom…

The NT and the OT have the same solution for that problem…

Believing in God's promise of salvation that comes through the Messiah and King, Jesus Christ…

Though we are tempted to think we are moving from the OT to the NT in our overview of the Bible, we are simply continuing the story line…

The OT left with a cliffhanger of sorts…

What is next for the nation of Israel?

They are a rebellious people, who have rejected their God and disobeyed his Laws…

As 400 BC approached, what would their future hold?

Would they repent and turn back to God?

Would they continue on their present course headed for continued disciple and punishment from the Lord?

What would God do if they continued to disobey Him?

Well, some of the answers lie outside the Bible and we simply are given clues to them by looking at history…

The time from 400 BC to the birth of Jesus is simply not talked about much in the Scriptures…

We do know that God cut off communication to Israel through the prophets as no prophet came to them in that time frame…

However, we do know that God didn't stop working in the world at this time….

God didn't take a break at all.

In fact, he was even active fulfilling prophecies between 400 BC to the birth of Jesus around 6 BC…

If you remember in the book of Daniel, God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream, and in that dream was the history of world empires that would follow..

The dream was about a statue that would have looked something like this..

The dream contained a statue made of a head of gold that represented Babylon…

The chest and arms were silver representing the Medes and the Persians…

The belly and thighs were bronze representing Greece…

The legs were iron representing Rome…

And then the feet were iron and clay representing a revised Rome united with other nations of clay…

Well, over the last few weeks of looking at the OT, we have seen the head of gold change to the chest and arms of silver…

IF you remember, the Babylonians are the ones who conquered Israel in 586 BC and carried them into captivity for 70 years…

Here is a map that we have seen over the past few weeks that talks about that…

Well, we have also talked about how that captivity ended when the Babylonians were conquered by who?

The Medes and the Persians…

You can see their original homeland in the top right here, and in 536 BC, they headed out and overthrew the Babylonians…

Here is a map that shows how big the Persian empire had become and how easily they overthrew the Babylonians…

That set the stage for the Jews to return to the land and for the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi…

But what is also important to see is that God was bringing the statue that Daniel saw to life…

The head of gold representing the Babylonian empire was now a chest and arms of silver repressing the Persian Empire…

And that was the empire that rules over Israel as the God went silent in the OT with the book of Malachi…

That is important to see because that tells us that God's plan for Israel and even the world is still moving forward even though he is going to be silent for 400 years…

And so the Jews live under Persian rule for some time until 330 BC when the Greeks rise to power…

A name yo may remember from history class is Alexander the Great….

He was called the great because he single-handedly conquered all the known world in his day…

And that certainly meant conquering the Persian Empire..

So the world at one time was completely Greek..

Well, that falls right in line as we get back to our statue…

The Greeks were represented by the bronze thighs and belly of Daniel's statue…

And so even though, we don't have a book of the Bible that describes the nation under Greek rule, we know that Israel was ruled by the Greeks beginning in 330 BC or so..

Now, Alexander decided the best way to keep his empire together was for them to all have a common language and heritage…

So, the Greeks set out to make the whole world Greek…

They taught the Greek language to everyone…

They spread their culture everywhere..

They built roads and buildings and sports arenas with the same style architecture all over the kingdom…

Now, long story short…

This greatly impacted the world…

For one, it modernized the world by linking cultures together by road and travel…

And it brought some peace and stability to the world for a while…

And even though the Greek empire would eventually split into parts after Alexander died, their language and culture would still go on and spread…

It is no accident that the NT was written in Greek…

Jews spoke that language along with Aramaic and Hebrew…

Now, all this occurred form the 300s BC - 170 BC…

As the Greek empire split into pieces, a power struggle occurred…

People sough for who was in charge of the empire…

This affected Israel as men came to power fighting for the right to control the area of the world where Jerusalem was located…

Eventually in 170 BC, that area of the Greek empire fell into the hands of a man named Antiochus IV…

He was a mad man who tried like so many before and so many after to wipe the Jews off the map..

He burned the OT and tore down their temple.

He ordered that the Jews become fully Greek in every way.

He stopped the Jewish festivals and halted their sacrificial system.

Well, this didn't sit well with some of the Jews and they revolted and even won their independence as nation for a short while from 140 - 63 BC…

However, in 63 BC, the nation of Israel was conquered by the Romans…

Which is exactly what the Lord had predicted in Daniel…

Rome is represented by the legs of iron…

And the Roman began to rule to Jews in 63 BC….

That is why we find a Roman king in charge of Israel when the NT begins…

A man by the name of Herod the Great was appointed by the Romans in 37 BC.

And He was known as the King of the Jews when God decided to send the true King of the Jews to Israel…

Now, all of that is called the Intertestamental Period of the Bible…

It is simply a period of history between the Old and New Testaments…

And I share all of that with you for two reasons…

One, to show you that the NT is not just a new story; it is closely connected the story that ended in 400 BC with the book of Malachi…

Though history had changed, God had not and He was still dealign with His people as the NT began..

But two, all of that is supposed to illustrate how God never stopped working even when He stopped talking to His people…

His plans were going forward as He was setting the stage to send the King of the world to save His people form their sins…

And so when we get to the book of Matthew, it is important to have a background on what Matthew writes…

He is going to be unlike the other gospel writers in one way…

He is writing his story of Jesus Christ to the Jews to convince them that Jesus is their long awaited King and Deliverer from sin…

And it makes sense that Matthew is the first book of the NT…

God is continuing his story by going to Israel first…

Yes, they have been disobedient to Him..

Yes, He has not spoken to them in over 400 years…

Yes, they deserve judgment..

Yes, their worship of Him is broken…

But despite of all of that, the message of Matthew is a clear message to Israel that God had sent their long awaited Savior and King….

And how do we know that?

How does Matthew open up his book?

With a genealogy showing that Jesus was a son of David….

The Jews knew that their true king would be a descendant of David..

God had promised them that one of David's descendants would sit on the throne forever…

And Matthew starts his whole book by showing that Jesus was a true descendant of David….

And that sets the stage for the entire book of Matthew and the theme of Jesus as the King who has come to the Jews and even to the whole world…

Though Matthew has benefit for Gentiles, it was written to Jews who had not heard from God for 400 years…

And it was written to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was the King who gave His life for them…

So, with that in mind, let's get back to our outline of Matthew and take a little closer look at this book…

I have divided the book into 7 parts bad on the theme of Jesus as king…

We will take a quick tour through these sections tonight as a way to get a bird's eye view of this incredible God-inspired book of the Bible…

Here is the outline…

I. The King's Arrival (1-4)

II. The King's Authority (5-9)

III. The King's Agenda (10-12)

IV. The King's Adversaries (13-17)

V. The King's Administration (18-23)

VI. The King's Atonement (24-28:15)

VII. The King's Assignment (28:16-20)

So, let's dive into Matthew tonight in the time that we have left and it should not take long….

You are familiar with much of it as we have been studying the book of Mark on Sundays, so this will not take long…

But there are also some features of Matthew that we need to highlight as well…

Let us begin in chapters 1-4 with what can be labelled as…

I. The King's Arrival (1-4)

In the first chapter of Matthew as I have already mentioned, Matthew highlights the family tree of Jesus…

Jews took their genealogy seriously…

So seriously that you didn't have a shot to even be their King if your weren't from the right Jewish branch…

But Jesus certainly was, as Matthew proves that he was from the line of David and the tribe of Judah…

He then moves from that to the actual story of Jesus' birth in verse 18…

Now, this is something that we didn't get in Mark…

Mark skipped right over the Christmas story….

And why is that?

Mark was mainly writing to Gentiles…

They could care less if Jesus was the rightful Jewish king and if his parents were from the right line…

Mark was only seeking to prove that Jesus was the Son of God…

Therefore the story of Jesus family lineage would be less important to Mark…

However, Matthew gives us some of the details surrounding the arrival of Jesus to the world…

In chapter 2, he gives us the story of the wise men, the escape of Mary and Joseph to Egypt to protect Jesus and their eventual return to Israel..

Then in chapter 3, Matthew focuses on John the Baptist…

And we see a few things in the opening verses of chapter 3 that points to the focus of Matthew…

Matthew 3:1-3…

Now in those days John the Baptist *[a]came, [b]preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven [c]is at hand." 3 For this is the one referred to [d]by Isaiah the prophet when he said,
"The voice of one [e]crying in the wilderness,
'Make ready the way of the Lord,
Make His paths straight!'"

One thing that Matthew does a lot is focus on the fulfilled prophecy that is found in the events around the life of Jesus..

Here he talks about a verse in Isaiah…

The other gospel writers do this as well, but Matthew does it the most…

And that makes sense due to the fact that he is writing to the Jews who would be familiar with the OT…

One of my dad's favorite sayings was this…

"What did I tell ya?"

He would often say this after I goofed up in some way even after he had warned me that I was about to mess up….

It was his way of him reminding me that he was pretty wise and I was pretty dumb…

In some ways, Matthew points to the OT to show that what Jesus did was exactly what God had predicted…

In this case, God had predicted that man would come crying the wilderness to prepare the way for the Messiah…

And Matthew is quick to point out that John the Baptist was that man…

“What did God tell ya? It’s John the Baptist.”

But another thing we see here is Matthew’s use of the term kingdom of heaven…

Folks have written about this for yearend wondered if the kingdom of God is different from the kingdom of heaven…

And the answer is no…

Matthew just used the term out of respect for his Jewish audience who never spoke God’s name out of reverence for it…

Matthew just simply refers to the kingdom of God as the kingdom of heaven to endear himself to the Jews..

As we leave the preaching of John the Baptist, we see Jesus’ baptism followed by his Satanic temptation in chapter 4…

All of this sets the stage or Jesus to begin his ministry in chapters 5-7…

I have entitled this…

II. The King's Authority (5-9)

Matthew chooses to begin Jesus' ministry with his famous Sermon on the Mount in chapter 5…

In chapters 5-7, Jesus sits down on a hit and begins to teach the crowds that have followed him…

And the focus of this teaching is on the Jewish law…

The laws given to the Jews had only grown in the 400 years of God's silence toward them…

Man made regulations and not God's written law given to Moses dominated Jewish life…

And Jesus sat down to tell the people the purpose of God's law…

And it is simply this…

The law of God is meant to point out how impossible it is to follow God by keeping the law…

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said things like this…

Matthew 5:21-22

21 “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

Matthew 5:27-28

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; 28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

And Jesus point was this…

You will never be able to keep the law…

Jesus was demonstrating his authority to change the law; in fact, he never changed the law…

He was preaching about the law to show that the only rescue from the high standard of the law was found in believing in Him….

The King's authority is not that he has power to change the rules…

The King's authority comes from the fact that he fulfilled the law of God with Hie perfectly obedient life…

Jesus' teaching continues through chapter 7 and then in chapters 8 and 9, he performs two miracles…

And the point of the miracles is certainly to show Jesus' compassion, but more importantly, the miracles demonstrate that what he just taught has authority…

Jesus is teaching with authority but his words are matched by the authority that he shows over death and disease and nature…

That leads us to chapters 10-12 of Matthew where we find….

III. The King's Agenda (10-12)

In chapter 10, we get to the heart of Jesus' mission as he sends out his disciples al over Israel to point them to Jesus as their Messiah…

One Jesus sent them on their way, He himself went out teaching in chapter 11…

This is where it is important to see the model of how to do ministry…

People get confused over how to minister to others at times…

Should we feed them?

Clothe them?

Jesus cared for people but never at the expense of his primary mission….

Which was to seek and save the lost through his teaching ministry..

Jesus never let his teaching take a back seat to healing and miracle ministry…

He fed people but only as a secondary ministry to his teaching…

And in chapter 11, we see the King's agenda spelled out in verse 1…

Matthew 11:1..

11 When Jesus had finished [a]giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and [b]preach in their cities.

Unfortunately, his teaching was not well received in chapters 11 and 12 which leads to the next part of the book of Matthew, which we will call….

IV. The King's Adversaries (13-17)

At the end of chapter 12, the Jewish leadership is rejecting their Jewish king.

Their whole religious system and their whole way of living is being threatened by Jesus…

And they determine that he must be destroyed…

When Jesus sees their rejection of Him, he changes the way He teaches the crowd, and begins using parables in chapter 13…

And parables served a double purpose..

One on hand, they made Jesus' teaching easier understand by using common everyday situations…

But at the same time, they concealed the meaning from Jesus' enemies…

And so in chapter 13, Jesus tells great truths about the kingdom of heaven but hides their meaning in parables…

In chapters 14 - 17, the rejection of the religious leaders only grows more and more as Jesus continues to teach against their phony man made religion..

As Jesus begins to get closer to his own rejection and coming crucifixion, he begins to tells his followers what a true relationship with the lord looks like…

That teaching begins in chapter 18…

I have entitled that section…

V. The King's Administration (18-23)

This is how citizens of God's kingdom are to behave…

In this section, Jesus simply lays out what kingdom behavior looks like…

And it is extremely radical in the face of the false religion of the day….

Let me give you an example…

The Pharisees and scribes taught that it was only necessary to forgive a person 3 times…

Once that person had offered you for the 3rd time, you were no longer bound to forgive them…

And they twisted OT scripture to prove it….

Jesus came and taught them what kingdom forgiveness looked like….

Matthew 18:21-22..

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus *said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

In case you were wondering, seventy times 7 times simply means that there is no limit to how many times you forgive others…

Those in the kingdom should be unoffendable…

And when they are offended, they should reach in their bottomless bag of forgiveness and give it away…

In short, the administration of the kingdom or the living out of Kingdom values does not look anything like the world's system…

And this isn't just limited to forgiveness, it flows to every aspect of life for those in the kingdom…

We are in the world, but we are not of the world…

We live under an earthly king or government, but we obey our King in all things…

And Jesus teaches about how to live in the kingdom in chapters 18-23….

Now while he is teaching on kingdom living, he is also inching closer to the cross…

The bottom line is that Jesus was turning the world upside down and pointing out all the errors of what the religious leaders were teaching…

This wasn't sitting well with the folks in charge, and so they were getting more and more determined to silence Him…

So, in chapter 21, Jesus heads into Jerusalem…

In chapter 22, he goes into the temple and corrects the religious leaders tradition..

And in chapter 23, he beings to issue woes to the Jewish religious leadership…

Their time of repentance and faith in Him is over…

Their unbelief has now moved them to a place of no return…

And Jesus ends this section by weeping over the unbelief of the Jewish people at the end of chapter 23…

This leads us to chapter 24, which begins the section on…

VI. The King's Atonement (24-28:15)

Chapters 24-28 give us great details on the events before during and after Jesus' crucifixion…

We are very familiar with most of these details as we have been going through Mark…

But the cross become the place where Jesus dies to atone for the sins of those who believe in Him…

The great truth of the Christian faith is that the King died to see His citizens…

Instead of a king who demanded to be served by His people, Jesus is a Kign who came to serve His people…

And the greatest way He served them was dying as their substitute….

Think of is this way, becoming a citizen of a kingdom is a rigorous process…

In some instances, it make years to become a US citizen…

Paperwork, testing, and approval is not the quicker of processes…

And it is all your responsibility to jump through the right hoops at the right time with the right answers..

American citizenship is made possible through applications, paperwork, testing, questionnaires and patience…

Citizenship in the kingdom of God is made possible through the death of the king on behalf of those who desire to be in the kingdom…

In some ways, it would be like your state senator hearing that you want to a citizen….

And so he comes to you and says, let me fill out all that paperwork for you and go to your interview for you and answer the questions for you…

And spend those years doing all the legwork for you, but in the end, you just show up and take the citizenship oath….

That is what Jesus accomplished through his death..

Kingdom citizenship is made possible when the King dies for the citizens of His kingdom…

The final section probably didn't need to be separated for the last section….

But I broke it away to stress the King's commands to us while we are in the world as His citizens…

Let's call this….

VII. The King's Assignment (28:16-20)

As Jesus prepares to leave this world after his life, death and resurrection, he gives a clear assignment to citizens of His kingdom…

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 [e]Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you [f]always, even to the end of the age."

Like any good king, Jesus ends with a command for his people..

Go and make disciples of the nations..

Teach them what He taught us and wait for Him to return…

And that my friends, is what we are doing here tonight…

I am teaching and being discipled as I study…

And you are here being discipled as you are listening…

And we are constantly inviting others to join us by repenting and trusting in our King…

Conclusion

In a lot of ways, we often mistakingly think that God got a do-over in the NT…

People look and say, "Well, what God did in the OT didn't work, so He got a second shot in the NT."

I think you can see that the NT is simply the next book of the OT…

As God keeps his promise to Israel to send them a King and deliverer…

Unfortunately, Israel in the NT is like Israel at the end of the OT, and they reject the One that God has sent…

Their rejection however is going to bring blessings to Gentiles because God is going to send the news of His Messiah around the world…

And thousands upon thousands are going to be brought into His kingdom (including us) due to Israel's rejection of their rightful King.

However, I am not complaining…

But I am also understanding that God is not done with Israel…

They never fell beyond recovery in the OT, and they will fall beyond recovery in the NT…

And the second time, their King comes, they will look on Him whom they have pierced and then find salvation in Him…

The NT is simply the OT, part 2…

And it has started for us tonight in the book of Matthew…

Let us pray.