

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 6

The Kingdom Arrives

Main Idea

Jesus succeeds where Israel failed.

Exercise

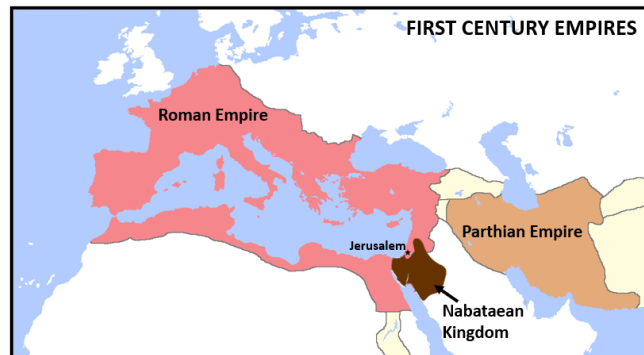
Did you ever have a solution to a problem come from an unexpected place?

Core questions

1. What is the significance of the temple being transferred from a place to a person?

Background Notes

- 1) The minority report
 - a) There are many reasons the OT is unique. Most of the histories that survive are written from the vantage point of the victors, written on behalf of those who were in power. However, the OT is openly critical about both those leaders who were in power and the people of Israel as well. There are hints in the OT that the OT writings served as minority report on Israel and its leaders in which the minority referred to the prophets and those who followed the prophets. It was that group that wrote, maintained and edited the OT writings.
 - b) In the NT times, this minority group may have included people like Simeon and Anna who were waiting for the Messiah in the temple. At the same time, the Jewish leaders were not waiting for the Messiah to come and so were unprepared for the arrival of Jesus.
 - c) Most of the NT authors, whose first language was Aramaic, were not likely trained to write in Greek, so it is probable that they had secretaries (**amanuenses**) who probably wrote the gospels and the epistles for them. The use of amanuenses would explain the differences seen in the writings attributed to Peter and Paul.
 - d) The Magi
 - i. The gifts of the magi may have looked like these: (Left) A gold Nabataean pendant with garnet dating to ca. 2nd to 1st century BC. It is currently housed in the Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim. Photo Credit: Neck Bürgin. (Center) A ceramic Nabataean unguentarium in which perfumes like frankincense were kept. Photo: Metmuseum.org/Public Domain. (Right) A calcite alabaster beehive jar was the type of jar used for myrrh; these are found all along the trade route from the area of modern-day Yemen up to the area of ancient Petra. This one dates to the second century BC. Photo: The British Museum/CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2022/12/22/who-were-the-magi/>).
 - ii. Most scholars think the Magi were Zoroastrian priest-astrologers from Persia. While we know there was a sect of astrologer-magicians in Persia, it is also true that Persian wise men were dispersed across the Parthian Empire, which stretched down into the Arabian peninsula and beyond. It is also true that the Persian Zoroastrians were not the only astrologers and wise



Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 6

The Kingdom Arrives

men. The knowledge and wisdom of ancient astrology and prophecy were practiced across the ancient world. (<https://catholiceducation.org/en/controversy/we-three-kings-who-were-the-magi.html>)

Unity of Yahweh and Jesus (Dancing in the Kingdom, Chap. 11, Recognizing the unity of Yahweh and Jesus)

1) *Wherever Yahweh appears in the OT, Jesus was there. Jesus was complicit in all things that Yahweh did.*

- a) “While we usually have no problem seeing Jesus as a one bringing peace, Yahweh also desired peace. When Yahweh needed to discipline his people, he desired to show mercy, as well. While human sin drew the wrath of Yahweh, it also brought Yahweh sorrow. We also see that Yahweh did not correct His people when they petitioned Him to show mercy to others.
- b) On the other side, while we usually have no problem seeing the violence of Yahweh, Jesus himself never promised not to use violence. In fact, he promised to bring division. Jesus did not admonish Roman soldiers about their jobs when he encountered them, even complementing them on their faith. At one point, Jesus even violently attacked property in the temple.
- c) In the present time, we are instructed, if it is possible, to live peaceably with all people and that vengeance is reserved for God. But we also know that at the end of the end times, violence will be unleashed in the final judgment.
- d) When Jesus broke into history, we no longer saw the kingdom of God overlapping the earth in a place as in the Garden of Eden or a place in the Holy of Holies. This time the kingdom of God had entered by a person, Jesus, who was anointed with the power of the Spirit. His next goal then was to invade the earth with his kingdom by that same Spirit entering our lives, by the overlapping of Heaven and Earth within each of us as Heaven and Earth overlapped within Jesus. “God’s kingdom” in the preaching of Jesus refers not to postmortem destiny, not to our escape from this world into another one, but to God’s sovereign rule coming “on earth as it is in heaven.” (re: Dancing in the Kingdom, Inaugurating the Ministry, The Kingdom Arrives)

The kingdom arrives: heaven and earth joined in Jesus

2) *Promised Messiah (re: Dancing in the Kingdom, Appendix D)*

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

- i) In the time of Isaiah, there were some hints about the coming of the Messiah: some referring to a king establishing a kingdom but other hints mysteriously referring to a lowly Messiah, a suffering Messiah. It was not easy trying to figure out how that would all go together. In the meantime, Israel was living in the crossroads of empires: the northern kingdom had been scattered through the Assyrian empire; the southern kingdom had been pulled into exile by the Babylonian empire.

Mat 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 6

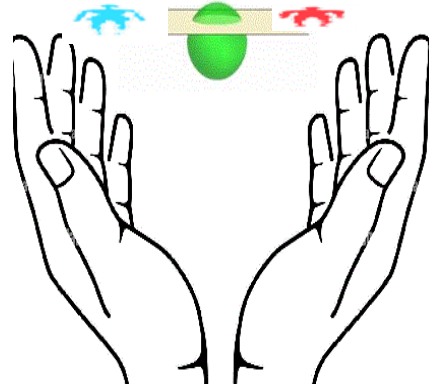
The Kingdom Arrives

- 3) *There were some hints about the coming of the Messiah: some referring to a king establishing a kingdom but other hints mysteriously referring to a lowly Messiah, a suffering Messiah. It was not easy trying to figure out how that would all go together.*

Mat 3:16-17 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Mat 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day

John 2:19-22 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.



- 4) *It was not until Jesus’ resurrection that the disciples fully grasped that heaven and earth were contained in the person of Jesus, fully God and fully human*

- i) Transcendent nature of God (re: Hugh Ross, Beyond the Cosmos, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xz7gf_4WH9E) Based on current knowledge of universe, the math shows that the Big Bang needed to have 9 spatial dimensions. A few nanoseconds after the big bang gravity kept all but the dimensions we see from expanding. The other dimensions are 1000 smaller than the electrons and so we don’t see them, but God can do his work through them. To begin to grasp how God may see us from His perspective, let’s imagine two people in a 2-dimensional universe as shown on right.
 - (1) All the people see of each other is a line but a 3-D person would see all the sides of each person at once and would also see their insides, therefore knowing more about the people than they would know about themselves.
 - (2) A sphere moving through the plane looks like an expanding circle
 - (3) 1 finger poking through looks like 1 circle and 3 fingers would look like 3 circles
 - (4) A hand placed 1mm below the plane would be invisible but it would be closer to the people than they are to each other

5) *Confounding the strong*

Isaiah 54:1-3 “Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,” says the Lord. “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.

- i) A recurring theme in scripture is God’s habit of turning the tables on conventional thinking:
 - (1) the weak become strong
 - (2) the wise are foolish
 - (3) the barren shall become fruitful.
- ii) God chose a small, seemingly insignificant nation to be the people through whom God would send someone to redeem the whole world.
 - (1) God called Abram from a major city to go to a land promised to his descendants. Neither Abraham, his children, grandchildren or great grandchildren would be more than guests in a land not yet their own. Abram’s great grandchildren and their descendants would find themselves first guests, and then slaves, in a foreign country. When the captive nation

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 6

The Kingdom Arrives

finally returned to the promised land, they kept on assimilating themselves into the culture of the land they had supposedly captured. Overseen by a puppet king of the Roman Empire, the religious rulers, the Sadducees, were infused with Greek culture. The more devout rulers, the Pharisees, were focused more on external appearances and not on the one issue that God had chastised the nation over and over again, justice. In the midst of this, there would be a faithful remnant, ready to receive the Messiah.

6) *The Messiah, The Suffering Servant*

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Matthew 3:16-17 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

- i) 2000 years ago the Son of God, Jesus, would be born to a **devout** couple but who were of no political or social **influence**. His childhood was un-newsworthy to the point of it still being mostly **unknown**. But when Jesus' brief 3-year **public** ministry finally begins, it seems that not enough could be written.
 - (1) Jesus was born to an apparently ordinary, nondescript couple, Joseph, and Mary. There was nothing outside the ordinary about Mary except that, unlike Zechariah, she believed and accepted the words of the angel, Gabriel, and the miracle was to come upon her. Joseph was only an ordinary tekton (stone mason or carpenter), but he also accepted the words of the angel and received Mary as his wife. The responsibility that this humble couple accepted was full of unknowns for this was no ordinary boy that they were supposed to raise. The unknown hardships they would endure included 1) a trip from Galilee to Bethlehem while Mary was heavily pregnant, 2) giving birth in first floor of a house overflowing with guests and needing to use a feeding trough as a crib* 3) and then a trip to Egypt where they stayed for an extended period while the life of Jesus was in danger from Herod, 4) then when Herod died, back to Bethlehem only to find Herod's son, Archelaus, in charge so they fled past Jerusalem to Nazareth. Joseph and Mary also witnessed several supernatural events around the birth of Jesus: the appearance of shepherds who witnessed the angelic announcement, the prophetic announcements of Simeon and Anna when they brought Jesus to be circumcised, the appearance of Magi from the east. Outside those events, Mary and Joseph seemed to have ordinary lives as shown by the reaction they had when twelve-year-old Jesus was accidentally left behind during a family trip to Jerusalem.
 - (2) * The word translated as "inn" can also mean "guest-chamber." Bethlehem was too small to have anything like an "inn." But it would be customary for residents to house visiting relatives in their homes which usually had the living quarters on the second floor and the animals on the first floor. So their rejection for quarters was not from an unknown inn-keeper, but from their own relations.
- ii) To begin his ministry, Jesus, the Son of God, instructed John the **Baptist** to baptize him. As Jesus went up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended like a **dove** and the Father **spoke**. "This is my **son** in whom I am well pleased."
 - (1) In his baptism, Jesus identifies with us in our baptism, and His needs for cleansing when He took all of our sins upon himself on the cross.
- iii) Jesus, in conversation with the Father and empowered by the Holy Spirit established the Kingdom of God on earth.

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 6

The Kingdom Arrives

- iv) Jesus' **miracles** – his healings of the lame, the blind and other diseases; the casting out of demons – **validated** his ministry. His teaching with such **authority** distinguished him greatly among the other teachers of the law. His life, totally without sin, was undeniable.
- v) The Kingdom of Heaven was made **visible** by the presence of Jesus, by His healing touch, and the good news taught to the poor.
 - (1) When Jesus broke into history, we no longer saw the kingdom of God overlapping the earth in a place as in the Garden of Eden or a place in the Holy of Holies. This time the kingdom of God had entered by a person, Jesus, who was anointed with the power of the Spirit. His next goal then was to invade the earth with his kingdom by that same Spirit entering our lives, by the overlapping of Heaven and Earth within each of us as Heaven and Earth overlapped within Jesus. “God’s kingdom” in the preaching of Jesus refers not to postmortem destiny, not to our escape from this world into another one, but to God’s sovereign rule coming “on earth as it is in heaven.”

7) Law fulfilled; Life given

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Matthew 5:17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Romans 5:20-21 The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- i) Jesus was born as **human** so that he could **die** on our behalf. He had to die the death that **we** were meant to die and to suffer what **we** were meant to suffer so that **he** could offer the life he meant us to live.
 - (1) (re: Hugh Ross, Beyond the Cosmos https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xz7gf_4WH9E)
Use multi-dimensional perspective to explain: Transcendent & imminent; How God is One and God is Three can work; how free will and determinism can both be true.
- ii) In Jesus we see the **fulfillment** of what was spoken of before in the Law and the Prophets about the Law, the Tabernacle and the Sabbath.
- iii) The **Law** was given to expose our sins. The **Tabernacle** was given to show us how our sins could be removed. The **Sabbath** was given to reveal the rest that was available to us.
- iv) All these were **fulfilled** in Jesus.
 - (1) We no longer need the Law to **correct** us because the law was fulfilled and is now written in our hearts.
 - (2) We no longer need to perform **sacrifices** in the Tabernacle because Christ was the sacrifice once and for all.
 - (3) We no longer need to observe a **Sabbath** although we still need to rest in Jesus
- v) The **promises** given by God are **gifts** for us to receive through faith and by His **grace** turn away from our sin and to turn towards the God who loves us.
 - (1) If we are “in Jesus” then we are considered as if we have already fulfilled the law - through Him we have fulfilled the law – *already fulfilled the law, already are righteous, that’s why we are not under the law.*
 - (2) Our modern-day perspective has us looking at the Bible from an individualistic perspective whereas the community in which the Biblical texts were written were more communitarian.

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 6

The Kingdom Arrives

- (3) When Jesus came, teaching, healing, and identifying with the common people more than the elite, it seemed that the more Jesus revealed himself the more the people seemed to think that Jesus would be the one – to rescue them from the Roman government. Even Jesus' chosen twelve disciples, the ones who would spend three years with him day and night ... even they could not understand the type of rescue they would need. Jesus would explain many times about what he needed to do, but the disciples could not understand.
- (4) Even as we look back and see what Jesus had to do, we also have a challenging time fully understanding just how desperately that we need rescuing. We do not understand the depths of our own depravity.
- (5) The disciples were redeemed by God even though there was so much they could not understand. Similarly, we need to keep in mind that people can be "in the Lord" despite how little they understand God, themselves, doctrine, etc. We should be slow to judge others' faith. Lack of understanding Jesus may affect how well we follow Jesus, but it does not necessarily prevent us from following Jesus.