

The First Coming of King Jesus Part 7: The Hatred of the King

November 06, 2022

Matthew 2: 16-18

The passage for today's lesson is a dark and painful event from a king whose hatred for Jesus, the True King, was demonstrated by murdering all of the babies under 2 years old in Bethlehem and the entire region. We read this passage and we try to find meaning in this great loss.

- 1) **Entering the Dark Room:** V16, Herod is enraged by God and causes those first murdered for the sake of Christ. Is God to be judged for the outcome of Herod? Job 38:1-3 provides us assurance that God is in control over all that happens. In Job 10:18, we need to be mindful that we don't attribute to God a lack of understanding or of not being merciful.

>>>Remember the three general principles of prophesy from a few weeks back as we consider V17, 1) The NT always uses the OT in context. 2) Bible prophecy includes several variations but doesn't change the original prophetic meaning. There is direct fulfillment, partial fulfillment, typology, and correlations that are used to show prophecy being fulfilled, Luke 4:17-19, Micah 5:2, Acts 2& Joel 2. 3) God sovereignly orchestrates historical parallels. He often links events throughout Israel's history because the Jewish reader wouldn't believe in coincidences and would see the parallels.

- a. V17, Rachel is weeping for her children, unable to be comforted due to the death of her children in the passage that is referenced in Jeremiah 31:15. 1) Rachel is seen as the mother of Israel sometimes understood as her children being called Ephraim instead of Israel (Jer.31:9). Jacob worked 14 years to marry her and she died in child birth with Benjamin, Gen 35:16-20. 2) Ramah is the site of Rachel's tomb, Gen. 35:19, referenced here in Matt. 2:17-18.
 - b. Babylon was used to bring judgement to Israel for their wickedness and disobedience to God. The northern kingdom of Israel had been destroyed by Assyria a hundred years earlier. Nebuchadnezzar had invaded Israel in 605BC, 597BC, and 586BC. In 586BC they sieged Israel and starved its people until the men of Israel tried to escape through a break in the walls (2 Kings 25:4). They were caught and the best of the men were carried away to Babylon, never to return (2 Kings 24:13-16). Only the poor remained in Israel to farm. Babylon assembled them at Ramah and they were carried off to Babylon, the women and aged remained behind.
- 2) **A Crack of Light through an Opening Door:** A hope of a future king and of a restored Israel would come, Jer. 31:1-14. Matthew references the death and pain in Israel during Babylonian destruction of Israel along with the slaughter of many innocent children during Jesus' time. The hope of king is coming and so there is some hope that God gives in Jeremiah.
 - 3) **An Open Door to the Light and Hope of Christ's Coming:** Still referencing Jer. 31:15-16, God tells Rachel (V16) to stop weeping because her children will come back to Yahweh. Jer. 31:31-40 speaks of a new covenant coming and a righteous King that will rule Israel. Christ has come to take upon Himself the wrath of God (Matt. 27:45-46) so that we might inherit eternal life and have salvation and communion with God.

Those who are in the room and see the door closing and the light turning to darkness are those who are hearing the Gospel message and not responding. Today is that day. Today is the day to be rescued from darkness and come to Christ, Col. 1:13.

Further Discussion and Application

Considering the attributes of God, how does this part of the early life of Christ demonstrate God's faithfulness to keep His word and to bring salvation to the world through His Son? Why are the means difficult to reconcile? Understanding the depravity of man (Rom. 3), what is the end of mankind without God's mercy and lovingkindness demonstrated through Christ?

How does Matthew use references to OT passages in his Gospel to demonstrate the depth of despair that Israel is in (and by extension if Israel is in a dire place, how much more those who haven't received knowledge of God's Word in the OT)? Why are these references needed for a Jew reading and learning about Christ?

How can we be sure of our hope in Christ as we read the story of Jesus' birth and early life? How did God demonstrate His sovereignty over evil and wicked men? How will He show His faithfulness to Israel promised in Jer. 31 and to Abraham in Gen. 15, 17, 22? A simple definition of the Gospel answers that question – write that simple account of the Gospel in terms of Jesus rescuing those who were without hope and trapped in sin?

What can you expect from your study of God's Word as you examine how He is bringing about His plan and keeping His promises to His people, both Jew and Gentile?

What can we expect from the remaining promises made by the Lord? What are those things that we will see Him accomplish in our lives and that of the church?

Why should we continue to be faithful to the Lord and keep His commandments even though we don't see triumph or relief at the present time? How can we stay focused on our Savior during these trials? How can we love others going through trials? How can we encourage one another in this life?