

The Big Picture 4 - Jesus, the Messiah

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Date: 19 December 2009

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[0 : 00] I have often been at a loss for words to describe the importance of what we are talking about in the plan and program of God. And today is no exception.

So I will do with this magnificent subject what I have done with many magnificent subjects in the past. Try to muddle through somehow.

But you do not do justice to a text of scripture. I do not care who the preacher is. How well equipped he is or how gifted he is as an orator.

No mere man has ever done justice to any passage of scripture. And we have no illusions of doing so today. We speak, of course, of the one who is above and beyond all.

Yeshua HaMashiach. Jesus the Messiah. Jesus the Christ. The Son of God and the Son of Man. He is none other than God himself in human flesh.

[1 : 05] He voluntarily vacated that rightful position with the Father and the Holy Spirit and condescended to be born of a woman in entering the world that he himself had created.

This created world in its original principal inhabitants had rebelled against him as creator.

And thus stood in danger of being separated from him through all eternity. But Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, in concert with the Father and the Holy Spirit, devised a plan of restoring mankind so that man might dwell with God for eternity rather than be separated from him.

This is called redemption's plan. This is called redemption's plan. Or the buying back of that which was lost. And to effect this redemption, there had to be a redeemer.

And that, of course, is where Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah, comes in. There is but one. There is but one redeemer and but one plan of redemption.

[2 : 21] Regardless of all faiths, beliefs, isms, cults, splits, and splinters to the contrary, who might suggest that there is some other way, there is no other way than that singular way that God has provided, and that is through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The hymn writer said, Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan. Oh, the grace that brought it down to man.

Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary. And God spanned that gulf in no other place and with no other person.

When mankind rebelled and took a sinful nature upon themselves, our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the garden created for them, God promised a way back.

By way of one, he would send who would be born of one of them. And this promise of God set in motion a monumental anticipation and expectancy of the arrival of this promised one.

[3 : 48] When would he come? How would he look? What would he do? How would he do it? Well, when he would come would not be for 4,000 years after the promise.

Promise was given in Genesis 3 and verse 15, what is frequently referred to as the first proclamation of the gospel in all of the Bible.

And God was there with the promise of a redeemer just as soon as man needed redemption. And that was in connection with their rebellion and falling away from God.

Genesis 3.15 tells us that God is going to provide a redeemer and that the serpent, Satan, would bruise his heel, but that he, the Messiah, Redeemer, would crush the head of the serpent.

I think those two analogies are designed to depict the idea that the adversary, Satan, would do harm and injury to the redeemer, but it would not be permanent.

[5 : 08] And that, of course, is speaking of his death and burial. It would not be permanent in that there would be a resurrection. But this same redeemer is going to crush the head of the serpent.

And that's rather permanent. A crushed head will ruin your whole day. And that's precisely what is going to happen when that time comes.

So, it would not be for 4,000 years. And how would he look? He would look just like one of us. Or just like your typical Mid-Easterner of that day.

I have no reason to believe that if Jesus were standing among the 12 apostles, and they were all there together, and each of them just struck a normal pose, I would be rather surprised if any of us could say, There is Jesus right there.

See? He's the fourth one from the end. I don't think we would be able to thus identify him. I think he would look much like a Mid-Eastern peasant of his day.

[6 : 23] Like a fisherman. Like a carpenter. Probably no remarkable distinguishing characteristics. We tend to think that he's had to be the most handsome man who ever lived.

I doubt that. I think he probably looked rather ordinary. I think he probably intended to look rather ordinary. And I believe he did. What would he do? He would redeem humanity.

But how would he do it? That is part of the mystery of the Christ. He would redeem humanity by dying for it.

Isn't that something? This is the old, old story. He would redeem humanity through an avenue that never even entered the mind of the most astute Jewish student of scripture of his day.

But you see, the entire system of Judaism, under the Mosaic law that God gave to Moses when he came down out of the mount, the whole system was predicated upon the principle of sacrifice.

[7 : 40] It is the death of the innocent. It is the death of the innocent, making payment for the guilty. A complete opposite of what we would call justice.

And it isn't justice at all. It is unmitigated grace and favor. It is not justice. If there is anything you do not want from God, it is justice.

We plead for his mercy and his grace. I want nothing to do with his justice. And you must understand that God is committed. God is absolutely committed to dispensing justice at the least. He cannot, he cannot do less than dispense justice. But he can do more. And that is grace.

And how he is going to redeem humanity is by substituting himself as the payment for sin. This is a huge, huge item.

[8 : 48] This is Christianity. This is biblical Christianity. Leave this out and whatever you have, it isn't Christianity. Maybe religion or churchianity.

But it has got to have Christ at the core doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Paul said, I delivered unto you that which I first of all received.

How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. That he was buried and he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. That is the key to our redemption.

And in God requiring for thousands of years innocent animal sacrifice to atone for the sins of the guilty.

He set in motion and created a mindset in the culture of the Jewish people. So that when Jesus came and made that ultimate sacrifice, they would be able to connect the dots and make a connection between his death for sin as the innocent one.

[9 : 53] He who knew no sin being made sin for us. They would be able to see the connection and what God was doing. Alas, so many of them missed it.

And they still miss it today. The nation as a whole missed it. He came unto his own, John tells us. That's the Jewish people.

And his own received him not. Has to be one of the saddest verses in all of the Bible. They're in John's Gospel, chapter 1.

So Christ himself would be the sacrificial lamb of God who should take away the sins of the world. He would be a Jew. Has to be a Jew.

The reason he has to be a Jew is because this promise was originally given to Adam. And it was transmitted through his son, Seth, who was the replacement for Abel.

[10 : 50] You follow the genealogical line and you come right down to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. They are out of Shem in the Shem, Ham, and Japheth trio that descended from Noah.

So they are Shemites or Semitic people. This Messiah had to be a Semite. Jesus was a Jew. He always was a Jew.

He is not a Christian and he never will be a Christian. He is a Jew. And as a Jew, he redeemed the entire world. And this is what puts the nation of Israel on center stage because this was the national vehicle God used through whom to bring the Messiah.

This is why Israel is so strategic. Israel is far more strategic than they even know. Than they even believe. But they really are. And one day, that is going to come to fruition. What we must do now, and I am consolidating this as much as I can, but we are going to look at a number of Old Testament passages. I have grouped them together for easy finding and turn to Isaiah chapter 7.

[12:06] We are simply going to look at some of the content that was provided prophetically for the coming of the Messiah. Then see as quickly as we can how it was fulfilled.

You already know that, but my responsibility is to remind you of what you already know. So that's what I'm going to be doing. In Isaiah chapter 7, and I should like to just lift out a verse.

Verse 14 is familiar to most of you. Bear in mind that Isaiah was written approximately seven centuries before Bethlehem. Before Jesus was ever born.

And this is what the prophet said. Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14. Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign.

And he is speaking, of course, to and for and about the nation of Israel. The Lord himself will give you, Israel, a sign. Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.

[13:15] Immanuel literally means God with us. This utterly unique son is going to be born of a virgin.

That is an absolute essential requirement. Had to be born of a virgin. Because there was no suitable male to maintain the line and create the seed that would be impregnated into the womb of the Virgin Mary.

So Mary provided the humanity for Jesus Christ. And God the Father impregnated the womb of Mary supernaturally with divine seed.

How did he do that? Haven't the slightest idea. That's not part of my job description. But it is part of God's. And however he chose to do it, we are told that the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.

And that holy thing that will be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. Mary was absolutely flabbergasted.

[14:24] And well, she might have been. Turn over, if you would, a page, please, to Isaiah chapter 9. This is quite remarkable because in chapter 7 we have the birth of Christ.

In chapter 9 we have the rule and reign of Christ. And has this content in chapter 9 beginning with verse 6 ever been fulfilled? No. Of course not. At least not in the main.

If you will look at verse 9 or verse 6, if you will. In chapter 9 of Isaiah. For a child will be born to us. Who are the us? Same people as Isaiah was addressing in chapter 7. The Jewish nation. He came into his own.

They were his own people. The Jew. Child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. And you see the distinction here.

[15:24] It isn't a repetition of the same thing. It is a child who is born, but it is a son who is given. And the government. What government?

The whole government. The world government. The entire government. Not just little tiny Israel. The whole government. Will rest on his shoulders.

What's that mean? It means he will be the supreme potentate. He will be the ruler of the entire world. The entire world government will rest on his shoulders.

It means he will have personal responsibility for everything. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace. On the throne of David and over his kingdom.

[16:26] To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

Do you see anything that remotely resembles this? Neither do I. Is there anything in history that even comes close to this?

Nothing at all. This is all future. This is what is going to transpire. This is what he is going to finish. That he started when he was here the first time.

It is in connection with his second coming. And if you will please, while we're still in Isaiah chapter 53. A very familiar portion. One which today is of great consternation to Jewish rabbis and scholars.

Isaiah chapter 53. Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of parched ground. [17 : 35] He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon him. Nor appearance that we should be attracted to him.

He was despised and forsaken of men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And like one from whom men hide their face.

He was despised and we did not esteem him. Surely our griefs he himself bore. And our sorrows he carried.

Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken. Smitten of God and afflicted. He was pierced through for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well-being fell upon him. And by his scourging we are healed.

[18 : 31] All of us like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way. But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him. You ask most of your Jewish friends today when you read that to them.

Of whom is this speaking? And they say, well that's speaking of Jesus. It's in your New Testament. Well the fulfillment of it is in the New Testament.

But the proclamation of it is in your Bible, my Jewish friend. Your prophet, Isaiah. Very precise.

And if it is not speaking of the one who was to come. Pray tell me. Who else fits this description?

There is none other.

In Isaiah chapter 61, if you would please. Just a few more pages. I'm trying to make this easy on you so that you don't wear your fingers out. Isaiah chapter 61.

[19 : 37] The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted. To proclaim liberty to captives. And freedom to prisoners. To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

And the day of vengeance of our God. To comfort all who mourn. To grant to those who mourn in Zion. And so on and so on.

And then, again, in Micah. We will not turn to it. But if you will make your way over to Luke's Gospel, please. And while you're turning to Luke's Gospel, I want to remind you that Micah, considered one of the minor prophets, said in chapter 5 and verse 2, But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Interesting. Think of it. Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Micah said, He'll be born in Bethlehem.

[21 : 00] The house of bread. Interesting that Jesus referred to himself as the bread of life. And where was he born? He was born in a little obscure village that means house of bread.

He is the bread of life for the entire world. And the passage that we just read from Isaiah 61 needs to be compared with Luke's Gospel, chapter 4.

And if you will come over there, please. Luke's Gospel, chapter 4. And verse 16.

This is early on in his ministry, shortly after his baptism and introduction to the nation of Israel. He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.

And as was his custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, and he opened the book and found the place where it was written.

[22 : 21] And here is what Jesus read on that Sabbath. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him.

Now, I want you to get the setting. This is in the hometown of Nazareth, where Jesus was reared, where he knew everybody, and everybody knew him.

And he went into the local synagogue. And because he hadn't been there for a while, he probably was treated as almost like a guest or a boy. Local boy makes good and returns home.

[23 : 27] And he is given the honor of reading from the Torah, from the scroll. And he opens it up, reads this passage from Isaiah. And as was the custom of the Jews, they stand up to read.

And then when the reading is finished, everyone sits down for the exposition. And they wait for what the speaker or the reader is going to say about the passage.

So, having read that, and then everyone is seated, I suspect, I do not know this, but I suspect, that Jesus may very well have provided for some very quiet time.

We would call it dead air, where nobody is saying anything. Everybody is just sitting there, waiting, expectantly, for what is coming next.

The silence was probably deafening. And then he begins to speak. And what he says is electrifying.

[24 : 37] Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your ears.

I can see heads turning and saying one to another, what did he say? Did I hear him say what I thought I heard him say? What did he say?

Today, this scripture is fulfilled. What's the implications of that? What does that mean? Who could possibly make a statement like that, saying that they are the one who was spoken of in Isaiah? 700 years ago. We know it's going to be somebody. Someday, we'll be able to say that. But not him. Why not him? Well, we know him.

This is Jesus. Read on the text, if you will. Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your ear. And all were speaking well of him and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from his lips.

[25 : 51] And they were saying, wait a minute. Is this not Joseph's son? He said to them, no doubt you will quote this proverb to me. Physician, heal yourself.

Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum. Do here in your hometown as well. And Jesus said, truly I say to you, the prophet, no prophet is welcome in his hometown.

But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah. When was that?

That was about 900 years ago from the time Jesus is speaking.

When the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land. And yet, Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon.

A woman to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of Elisha the prophet. And none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.

[26 : 51] What's wrong with Naaman? Naaman is a Gentile dog. And the Jews were the exclusive property of God.

And they had an exclusive on God. And here, he is talking about the widow of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. What's that? That's Gentile territory. And what is Elisha?

And what is Naaman the Syrian? He was not only a Gentile, he was an enemy Gentile. He was the commanding officer in charge of all of the troops of the nation next door that they hated with a passion.

The Syrians. This guy was their top general. And as a result, now could we use here in verse 28, could we use a little toleration and a little bit of political correctness?

Well, it didn't exist back then. There was no such thing. So, all in the synagogue were filled with rage.

[28 : 06] And he brought it right to the surface. He aggravated these people. And these were hometown folk. And they rose up and cast him out of the city.

I can just see them manhandling him, jostling him, pushing and shoving and agitating as they go right out of the city. And they brought him to the brow of the hill in which their city had been built in order to throw him down the cliff.

So much for local boy makes good. They were going to make him pay with his life. And the only reason they didn't was simply because, as the scriptures often indicate, his time had not yet come.

And he just was able to pass through their midst and get out of there. And his life was preserved.

But this is the beginning. This is the very earliest part of his ministry.

And there is going to be a great deal of opposition from this time onward. In Luke chapter 4, where we have just been, there is enormous controversy that is going to follow this scene that took place at Nazareth.

[29 : 18] And the one burning question that is going to exist in the minds of everyone, wherever Jesus goes and ministers, whatever he has to say, whatever miracles he provides, whatever teaching he gives, there was just one question that any Jew wanted answered.

And that is this. Is he the one? Is this Jesus of Nazareth, the one prophesied and promised by our forefathers, by Moses and the prophets?

If he is the one, then we give him carte blanche. We submit ourselves to him and his authority in complete and absolute obedience.

A number of people did that. He began with 12 who did that. Simply because they were convinced, whom say ye that I am?

Thou art the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Well, if he is, then you hang on his every word and you exert every energy and every effort you have to do his will.

[30 : 46] His wish is your command. You are absolutely at his disposal. If he is who we claim to be. That's still the question.

That's still the issue. There are those who claim that he is who he claimed to be. But they go on and live their lives as if he is not.

And to them, he says the same thing he said 2,000 years ago. How call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?

Translated, he is saying, where do you get off with acknowledging me as your Lord and then going about continuing to live your lives in your own way and do your own thing in complete disregard of me and who I am?

How is it that you do that? Be a fair question for Christians today, would it not? I want to take you, while we are here in Luke's gospel, back, if you will, please, to chapter 2.

[31 : 57] And let us, for time's sake, well, let me see.

Let me see. Let us begin.

Let us begin.

Verse 22. In the days for their purification, according to the law of Moses, were completed, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him, that is, Jesus, to the Lord. That had to be done, of course, at the temple.

As it is written in the law of the Lord, every firstborn male, which, of course, is what Jesus was to Mary, every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.

[33 : 38] In other words, God lays claim on the firstborn. In other words, God lays claim on the firstborn. He is entitled to have the firstborn. And the only other alternative would be to what they called redeem him.

And to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon.

And this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel. Now, let me just inject something here for clarification.

The consolation of Israel was a synonym for the Messiah. Because when the Messiah comes, he will console Israel.

Isaiah spoke of this also in chapter 40. And Handel includes it in his wonderful Messiah. Comfort ye! Comfort ye, my people! And that's what this is a reference to.

[34 : 38] This aged man, by the name of Simeon, had been promised by God that he would set his eyes upon the promised one before he died.

Now, bear in mind, 4,000 years of history had passed. And here is old Simeon, well advanced in years, but he knows one thing.

He doesn't have to worry about dying until he is able to feast his eyes upon the Messiah. And he knows also that shortly after that, he will be exiting the earth via death.

Joseph and Mary bring Jesus into the temple. And we are told that in verse 27, he came in the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to carry out for him the custom of the law, then he, Simeon, took Jesus into his arms, like I said, about six or seven weeks old, and blessed God and said, Now, Lord, thou dost let thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. What's he saying here? He's saying, Now, Lord, let me die. I'm ready to die. I'm ready to go on. Let me depart in peace. Why? For my eyes have seen thy salvation.

[36 : 16] What was that in the person of that little baby? Simeon is holding God's salvation for the entire humanity there in his arms.

Wow. Wow. Wouldn't that be something wonderful to exit the earth on? Having held God's salvation in your own two arms.

Nothing could top that. Nothing else is left worth living for. Might as well die now. And that, I assume, is what he did. Your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles.

Oh, to the Gentiles. Who is a Gentile? Anyone who is not a Jew. And when you take the Gentiles and the Jews and put them together, do you know what you have?

You have everybody. There isn't anybody left. Because anyone who isn't a Jew is a Gentile. And anyone who isn't a Gentile is a Jew.

[37 : 34] This is another way of saying the entirety of humanity. And the glory of thy people Israel. I'm going to say something, and I want you to get this.

This is really important. Salvation is of the Jew. God has provided the Jewish line through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

On down, 1,500 years later to David the king, then another 1,000 years to Jesus the Messiah. This has all come about through the nation of Israel.

This is a nation that God has raised up for the precise purpose of conveying the Messiah to the world through the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

They are the principal vehicle through which God is going to redeem all of humanity. No, he did not come exclusively for the Jew.

[38 : 43] But he did come exclusively to the Jew for the whole world. But it has got to be through Israel.

Why? What's the big deal about Israel? The covenants, the promises that God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He cannot go back on them.

They are unconditional promises. And an unconditional promise means, this is what I am going to do, Abraham, for you and your seed and the whole world. And it is not dependent upon your cooperation or your obedience.

This is what I am going to do. It is an unconditional covenant. And what did Israel do? Israel continued in a state of rebellion and rejection of the Messiah.

And they are there today. They are in a state of judicial unbelief. They crucified their Messiah. They would not have him to rule over them.

[39 : 45] And they are consequently set aside in judicial blindness until the time when it is ready for that Messiah to return.

And Jesus said something strikingly significant. He said, You will not see me again. He says to the house of Israel, Your house is left unto you desolate.

When he went out of the temple. Desolate. Empty. And you, you Israelites, you will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And Israel will say that very thing at the second coming. As they stand on the threshold of annihilation from the nations of the world that are gathered together in Israel.

As we shall see in our last scene upcoming in the next section. They are going to gather themselves together against the nation of Israel. And the only thing that will save them is their coming Messiah.

[41 : 02] They will look upon him whom they pierced. And they will mourn. As one mourns for an only child. They will say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Jesus, the Messiah. The central figure of all human history. The anticipated, longed for one of all of the nation Israel.

And then when he came, they didn't know him. The stone which the builders rejected. The same has become the head of the corner.

One day, Israel will be turned from their unbelief to an embracing of Jesus, the Messiah.

And what is this all about? This is all about the redemption. This is that scarlet thread of redemption that runs all through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

[42 : 10] And ultimately, it is going to result in the establishment of the worldwide kingdom of God.

And Jesus Christ will be ruling and reigning. And the thing that will characterize his reign is justice. Folks, we're really short on that today.

There is so much injustice in the world. There is so much that is wrong with this world. And Jesus Christ is going to set things right.

And it will be wonderful. Little wonder that the prophets call it the times of refreshing and restitution. It will be a glorious, glorious time.

And Jesus Christ will be right at the head of it. And Israel will be the central nation of the world. Jerusalem will be the world capital.

[43 : 14] And the word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem. He will rule and reign with righteousness. Something that this whole world has never had.

It's a glorious time. And it is coming. And what is the greatest evidence? What is the greatest confidence? The greatest proof? The greatest assurance that this is going to happen and that Jesus is going to come again?

The answer is his first coming. God has a reputation and a track record to maintain. And he will not come up short in it.

We can count on thus saith the Lord. And our Father. How grateful we are for your spelling out these things that provide such tremendous confidence and comfort for us.

We look around us today and we see so much that is broken and hurting and dying. And something deep within us longs out for all of these wrongs to be made right.

[44 : 25] And yet we can't do it. No matter who we elect. No matter how gifted or talented they are. No matter who we put in office. No matter who we support.

All are human and all fall miserably short of what this world needs. But we see the answer in the one who created it and redeemed it.

And with great joy and anticipation we look forward to the second coming. Much the same way that our Jewish friends look forward to the first coming.

And when he comes a second time. Nobody will miss him. For every eye will see him.

Till that time. Help us to be faithful. Help us to be about our Father's business. Not flagging in our zeal.

[45 : 23] Nor discouraged in what we undertake. But knowing that you really do mean what you say. And you do all things well. Thank you for the wonderful, wonderful redemption that we have in Jesus Christ.

Amen. I'll try to provide a little longer time next week for Q&A.; But I won't promise you. We may have to take a whole session for that.

But the final scene in the big wrap-up will be next week. I look forward to it. God bless you. Have a great day. Thank you.