

MATTHEW – Chapter 1 – Introduction (2)

One of the most significant events in the history of the Jewish people was the 70 years of Babylonian captivity they endured. Failure to obey God's laws resulted in this separation from their homeland. Captivity meant that they were removed from their homes, their jobs were left behind, everything they loved and were familiar with was no more. They were in a foreign land where people spoke a different language and had *different* gods - everything was different. Of all the changes, the most significant was the fact that the temple of the Jews was gone. The center of their worship of God was no more. The question became, how will the Jewish people continue as one people without a temple, without sacrifices, without a priesthood? What would hold them together as the people of God?

That is when a group of 120 men who were Torah scholars, led by Ezra, came together and assumed spiritual leadership of the Jewish nation in Babylon. They were called the Men of the Great Assembly, and their leadership was invaluable.

In this group were men of true G-dly character including Mordecai, Daniel, Ezra, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zacharia, Malachi and many more. This is the group that wrote the Amidah which was said in the morning, at noon, and at evening, when the morning noon and evening sacrifices would have been made. Because there was no temple, they decided that prayer was their best alternative to keep the Lord in their thoughts and actions, and prayer took the place of sacrifices during the time they were without a temple.

This group divided the Torah into portions that would be read weekly by all Jews regardless of their location, therefore keeping all together in the Word - creating unity even in times of absence from each other

- times of dispersion. Throughout the world, these Torah portions are still read today!

1. What lessons can we learn from this dispersion and the Men of the Great Assembly?

Even though the Babylonian captivity did come to an end, and all were free to go back to their homeland, only a small remnant returned. And it seems that even the captivity in Babylon and the miraculous return and the building of the Temple and the wall, had not had the purifying affect on the hearts of the Jewish people that G-d wanted to see take place. Corruption, spying, hatred, mistrust, disobedience to G-d's laws crept into the ways of the Jewish people again.

So G-d sent Malachi, who faithfully records God's warnings of judgment to His people. God's people had become corrupt as priests and practiced false worship and had become arrogant. Apparently they believed God's blessings would continue to flow in spite of their behavior, and they could live their lives without obeying and loving the Lord with all their hearts.

2. Do you see any similarities in our world today?

Then there comes a 400 year period of silence. During this time, prophets were not speaking. However, **G-d is still at work.** During this time period, G-d is working through politics and governments. He was moving history forward. The Greeks rise in power, bringing their way of life to Israel, and many are assimilated. The temple is desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, the war is fought and won by the Maccabees, the Romans rise to defeat the Greeks and take over rule in Israel. And all the while, the political corruption grows among the rulers and priesthood. There is constant turmoil, no one could trust anyone else. All of this produced *sinat chinam* - the hatred of one Jew toward another - division was the result. As Yeshua said, Knowing their thoughts, Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste, and

every city or household divided against itself will not stand. Matthew 12:25. Destruction loomed!

But in the days of chaos, political corruption, baseless hatred and division, G-d spoke once again. **Suddenly, in those very troubled times, He spoke as He had never spoken before. He sent His Son to speak this time. The first time Yeshua came times were chaotic!** And these were the days when Matthew steps onto the scene.



Matthew was a Jewish tax collector who lived in Israel. Tax collectors are usually hated, but Yeshua called Matthew to be one of His disciples. The name Matthew means "gift of the Lord." Matthew is a Jew who wrote to Jews about the Jewish Messiah. Matthew observed Yeshua fulfill the prophecies in the Tanack, and he connected the dots. Matthew walked and talked with Yeshua! He heard *Yeshua* teach - in person. With his own eyes, Matthew saw the miracles Yeshua did!

Matthew summarized and recorded what he heard and what he saw in this book we are about to study.

3. If someone asked you to prove who Yeshua is, what would you say? Matthew begins to build his case about who Yeshua is with a family tree.

Everybody has a family and a family tree. Matthew begins his book about Yeshua by telling us who His earthly relatives are and this family tree produces a treasure chest of evidence.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham;

Matthew 1:1 KJV The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Genesis 5:1 This is the book of the generations of Adam in the day that God created man.....

Notice that genealogy can also be translated as generation. Toldot is the Hebrew word meaning generations. We will discuss this later in the genealogy. Remember Augustus ordered a census of the empire to be taken, and each Jewish family went to their own city. Genealogies were kept in the days of Yeshua. They were important in territorial divisions as well as matters of family descent. Luke 2:4 says, So Joseph also went up from Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, since he was from the house and line of David.

When we see the term "son" in the Bible it can have more than one meaning. A son can be a physical descendant, or one with the same characteristics or the same heart.

I Timothy 1:2a To Timothy, my true son in the faith.....

4. Do you have a cousin or a brother who is like you in some way, even similar enough to be a "son?" Discuss.

John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but **the son of perdition**; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

5. Who is the "son of perdition"?

Perdition is destruction, ruin or waste.

6. What did Judas do that brought destruction and ruin?

7. Why would he be called the "son of perdition"?

In the genealogy we are about to look at, Yeshua is in the blood line of the people mentioned.

Matthew 1:1, The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, **the Son of Abraham**;

We are going to come back to Son of David next week, but right now let's focus on Son of Abraham.

Genesis 17:5-8 No longer shall your name be called Abram but your name shall be Abraham; for I have **made you a father of many nations**.

8. Was Abraham the father of one nation?

9. **What is meant that he would be the father of many nations?**

In Hebrew the word used for nations is "goim" and this word also means Gentiles.

Isaiah 49:6b I will make you a light for the Gentiles that my salvation may reach to the **ends of the earth**.

10. How does Isaiah show us that Yeshua's role is tied in with Abraham's role?

Isaiah is talking about Yeshua being a light to the Gentiles; He came to be a light to both Jews and Gentiles. He would bring salvation to the whole world

~~~containing many nations or all the goim.

**11. If we follow Yeshua as our Lord and Savior, how do we fit into the role of being a light to the nations?**

Now let's read Acts and see what else Abraham and Yeshua have in common.

**Acts 7:8** Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs.

**12. Did Yeshua follow the covenant of circumcision?**

**Luke 2:21** When the eight days until His circumcision had passed, He was named Jesus, the name the angel had given Him before He had been conceived.

**13. Acts 7:8 tells us that Abraham became what people group?**

**14. How does Acts 7:8 link Abraham with Yeshua?**

**Isaiah 11:1a** A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

**13. Who is the "Branch?" What is the fruit the "Branch" bore?**

"Netzaer" is the Hebrew word for Branch. He would be the Branch and He would come from Nazereth or Branch Town!

**Jeremiah 23:5,6** "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

**14. What idea does Jeremiah add to Isaiah's description of the Branch?**

**15. How does this name, 'The Lord is our righteousness' apply to your life?**

**16. How do we partner with the Lord to make His righteousness a way of life?**

**In what way is Abraham connected to righteousness? Please read the following:**

**Genesis 15:6** And he (Abraham) believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness. (word in parenthesis added)

**Romans 3:22a** This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

17. How did G-d attribute righteousness to Abraham?

18. What additional reasons do you see in Romans 3:22 that Yeshua is a Son of Abraham?

19. Who was the LORD in Genesis 15:6 (Hint: the yood, hey, vav, hey)

**20. How does "believing" tie Abraham and Yeshua together?**

### **THE BLESSING**

**Genesis 12:3** I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you; and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you.

**On Board** The Hebrew word for bless is "barak."

Barak has the same root as the word "grafted in" which is "bareek." Bareek is an agricultural term meaning to graft in.

**21. Because these words, bless and grafted in have the same root, can you figure out what the blessing is that was promised to all the families of the earth through Abraham?**

## Why is Being Grafted In-Important?

**Ephesians 2:11a-12,13,14** Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, ... remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,....

21. Can you name the problems that the Gentiles had?

22. How do we come in to all the above blessings listed in Ephesians?

**Romans 11:17** But some of these branches from Abraham's tree - some of the people of Israel - have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in the rich nourishment from the root of God's special olive tree.

23. How do the Ephesians 2 verses and Romans 11:17 show what happens when the blood of Yeshua draws us near? To what are we drawn near?

24. Explain the blessings of being grafted in.

25. How are Abraham and Yeshua connected in the grafting in process?

*What did this lesson teach you about G-d?*



*Why is it important to know that Yeshua is a Son of Abraham?*

Galatians 3:29 "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." ... You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you."

**25. What does the above verse tell you about G-d's plans for you?**

*Is there someone you can encourage with Galatians 3:29 this week?*