

Jesus the Oriental King #1

Hi all,

A Malaysian friend and I were having lunch one day and talking about Bible culture. Malaysia sits at the end of the Malaysian Peninsula in South East Asia. The peninsula extends from Thailand in the north, nearly to the island of Sumatra in the south. Most Americans would recognize the region includes Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam in that same general area of SE Asia.

We were talking about Bible culture and he brought up the intimacy of having a meal in someone's home. My friend commented that when he goes to people who haven't heard of Jesus, the biggest reaction he gets from them is not about the torture and the cross, and not the healings and miracles. But rather when he tells them Jesus was betrayed during a meal, detailed in John 13.

He said he regularly sees tears running down the faces of the people at the realization Jesus was betrayed while having a meal with His closest friends. They cannot imagine a more hurtful situation, and many come to the Lord as a result, realizing the price He paid for our sins. The most intimate time one can have with friends in eastern culture, is over a meal.

We in the west see the cross alone as the hurt Jesus suffered, and read John 13's betrayal of Jesus as a mere dinner from which we get 'the Lord's Supper.' We completely miss the impact of the betrayal though the writers of the New Testament did not. Matthew mentions it more than 10 times, Mark at least 8 times, Luke 5, and John 9 times. Even Paul in I Corinthians 11 when sharing about the Lord's Supper, makes the point to mention Jesus was betrayed during dinner.

Clearly the gospel authors and the people of SE Asia understood the offense of being betrayed, and not just betrayed, but at dinner!

That difference in perception is the difference between *Orientals of the east, and the *Occidentals of the west. The Bible is an Oriental book, written by Orientals, with customs and practices largely unchanged from Abraham to The Revelation. The Bible is not written from the perspective of the west (Occidental), but of the Orient. We call China 'the far east' and are numb to the fact we call the land in the region of Israel 'the middle east'. It is still 'the east'. (*The word 'occidental' is Latin for 'west', and 'oriental' is from the Latin for 'east')

Why does it matter?

No one likes to have their words taken out of context. Yet that's what many Christians do when they read their Bible. They try to understand it filtered not through the Oriental culture of the day, but by their own 21st century western church culture.

In the same way the New Testament was written by apostles doing church in the house and writing to people doing church in the house, many pull the context of the '5-fold' and how the gifts of the Spirit function out of the home and try to put them into the auditorium building called church, only to end up confused and frustrated with few getting to flow in the gifts God gave them - and they wonder why.

The same thing happens when reading the Bible and trying to understand it for our personal lives. For instance, in Psalm 69:22 it says "Let their table become a snare to them; and that which should have been for their benefit, let it become their trap."

That passage is confusing to the westerner, for how can a table become a snare? But if we remember the oriental custom of laying a mat on the ground on which food is placed, and diners sitting on the floor on and around it, the verse starts to make sense.

The Hebrew word translated here as 'table' and pronounced 'shool-khawn' (shul-cha-nam) is literally "a skin or leather mat spread on the ground."

Therefore the Psalmist when saying 'let their table become a snare to them', is saying 'let them be tripped by the mat on the floor; and let that which would have been a blessing become their trap.' Now it makes sense, but only if you understand first the custom of eating on a mat on the ground.

Jesus the Oriental King

Today in the west a church 'altar call' (if they have one) often consists of the Pastor asking for every head bowed and every eye closed while they ask for a show of hands raised by those who want to 'accept Jesus'. That is so very western, for an Oriental would never think they have the privilege of merely 'accepting' the King into their lives. They in fact would instead, give their lives to the King, humbly asking that He accept them.

Dr. Michael Brown and I were having lunch one day while he was visiting Tulsa - I had ministered in his church and Bible school when they were located in Pensacola, Florida, and so when he was in town we got together for a meal. We were talking about some of these differences between east and west and he mentioned a trip to India and what one of the Indian pastors had said - India also being in the Orient.

"You in America preach a different gospel that we do in India", the Indian pastor said. When Michael asked what he meant, the pastor replied: "You preach that if you accept Jesus He will heal your family, He will heal your money and give you more, and He will heal your body. You will be blessed if you accept Jesus. We preach that if you believe in Jesus your family may reject you, you may lose your health, you may lose your finances, and you may lose your life."

The west invites Jesus into their already busy lives, while the east gives their whole life to Jesus to the point of immediately being willing to die for Him if called upon to do so. The west doesn't understand Jesus is a King, but instead think of Him first as a friend, one on our side to make our boo boo's in life better. The east realizes He is the King who will rule the earth, and even now as Head of the body of Christ, rules and reigns as the God-Man.

One is horrified that God in the flesh would be betrayed by a supposed friend over an intimate dinner, the other merely sees a dinner in which one of the attendees left to carry out his plan.

I look around at the body of Christ in the west and see so much sin, so much love of the world and all that is in it, and I wonder at the lack of revelation about Who Jesus is. And that is the key, our churches have largely left receiving revelation from God as the purpose for meeting, and for prayer and worship, in favor of entertainment copied from the world. Instead of attracting people with the banner proclaiming they can know God, the church tries to attract people under the banner proclaiming Jesus can make your life better if you include Him in it.

But to the remnant who know Him as King...the King who is also our friend, but one cannot go without the other - to that remnant, great grace and peace is upon them. More next week on Jesus the Oriental King. Until then, Blessings

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Jesus the Oriental King #2; How kings are carried. 20190629

Hi all,

I've been sharing how the Bible is an Oriental book written by Orientals, and how we in the west (Occidentals) so often miss key points a verse is trying to make, or pull a scripture completely out of context to make it say something unintended.

The west is largely governed by elected officials, while Jesus is repeatedly described as a King, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Even if a nation has a king or queen today, they are submitted to parliaments and elected bodies in a legislative branch. The few modern absolute kings in the nations today could be described as dictators or despots, as their absolute rule with no accountability leads to the oppression of their subjects. So we don't have any modern examples of a good and kindly king, let alone the culture of a true kingdom in which the citizens benefit from the benevolent nature of a good king.

The kingdom of God

We lightly throw around the term 'kingdom of God' but have nothing in our minds to define and describe what that means. So let's start with ancient Israel, when God came out of the realm of the Spirit to meet with Moses on the Mount, 'face to face as a man speaks to a friend' (Exodus 33:11).

(For the sake of clearing up religious tradition: Many are confused how the Lord and Moses could talk 'face to face' in v11 while 9 verses later in Exodus 33: 20 it says, 'No man shall see my face, and live'. John's gospel in 1: 18 says no man has seen God at any time and in 6: 46 Jesus said 'Not that any man has seen the Father, except He who is of the Father, He has seen Him.' The context is talking about no man in the natural has seen or can see the Father. If you are in the Spirit, you can see His face and live. That is the difference between Exodus 33: 11 and v20.

In the flesh no man can see His face for the glory and power would destroy our earth-bodies. When we are there in heaven spirit and soul, or when we receive our heavenly-created bodies, we can see His face. Today, if one is in the Spirit, such a one can see His face. Thus in Exodus 33:11 Moses saw Him face to face as a man speaks to a friend as he was in the Spirit, but later in the natural in 20 he had to have his eyes covered.

The Father is seen by many when they were in the Spirit: Moses and the other 73 men in Exodus 24: 7-11, Ezekiel in chapter 1, Daniel saw Him as the 'Ancient of Days' with 'the Son of Man' in chapter 7: 9-13, and the apostle John describes Him in the whole of Revelation 4, to whom chapter 5: 7 says, the Lamb that had been slain but is now alive, came and took the book out of His right hand and began to open the seals - which is the rest of The Revelation.

Therefore if you hear someone say they went to heaven which would be in the Spirit, but couldn't see the Father's face, then run from that testimony for it is a lie or embellished or colored through their own religious traditions and lack of understanding and therefore will have inaccuracies, at least in part. In the Spirit one can see His face and live. In the natural it is not possible to do so and live.)

A kingdom has its own rules, its own culture, and its all about its king

We are told in Hebrews 8:5 that Moses saw the plans for the tabernacle and all its furnishings, being told 'see that you make it according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain.' Moses had an exact set of plans that he had seen in the Spirit with the Lord of how the Lord wanted everything built.

Among the plans God gave him was how He wanted the Ark of the Covenant, His throne and the place of His presence, to be carried. Even as late as King David some 400 years later, he knew Him as 'the one who lives between the cherubs.' (II Samuel 6: 2)

In Exodus 25:9 we have the actual command from the Lord to build it according to the plan shown to him on the mountain, and among the first things He said in this passage was to build the Ark with 4 rings, one on each corner, through which poles slide, and by which the priests can put the poles on their shoulders and carry the Ark wherever Israel was wandering.

The litter

The fact the Ark of the Covenant, the place of God's presence, was to be carried on a 'litter' borne upon the priest's shoulders is completely consistent with kings of the day. In ancient during that same time in history, in Egypt, India and China, that is exactly how kings were carried. In India a statue of the god Krishna was carried about in the same way. It was so common, even in Europe, that by the year 675AD the Roman church had to make a command NOT to carry Bishops on a litter. (Third Council of Braga, 675AD)

I find it amazing we still have that concept today in some charismatic churches, in which the (so called) pastor or 'bishop' or 'apostle' has his coat and Bible carried by a lesser person, and there is even a video from 2016 of a Nigerian pastor held high by others as he sits in his chair and preaches. I wonder what part of 'for I am meek and lowly in heart, learn of me' they don't understand? The level of the lack of revelation of the Lord in our churches today is astounding and shameful.

But the fact the Lord gave instructions to carry the Ark of the Covenant with His presence on the shoulders of the priests is completely consistent with rulers of the day. The ancient Israelites understood the concept of a king, and that God is King of all.

Let us carry this understanding that Jesus is the King of kings, the Lord of lords forward to our time. He said in Luke 17: 21, 'Behold, the kingdom of God is within you!'. Paul said we have a mystery, 'which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.' (Colossians 1: 27)

Internally then, we have the absolute King in our spirit. But we live in an earth-body in a fallen world, so there is continual push and pull between the absolute King in us who we want to serve perfectly, carried within a flesh created from the fallen earth and which wants to go the way of the world. That give and take is life-long.

But we can learn to let the absolute King in us dominate us from within, which will change our thinking which then causes us to change what we allow our body to do or not do. In our hearts we carry the Lord in a litter above all, worshipped and adored as He should be, King of kings and Lord of lords. Our lives are spent making what is in our heart a reality in our thoughts and actions. That is normal Christianity. That is the discipleship process.

We are comforted by the words of the amazing apostle Paul, author of about 2/3 of the NT:

"I don't mean that I am exactly what God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach it and make it mine. That's what Christ Jesus wants me to do. It is the reason he made me his. Brothers and sisters, I know that I still have a long way to go. But there is one thing I do: I forget what is in the past and try as hard as I can to reach the goal before me. I keep running hard toward the finish line to get the prize that is mine because God has called me through Christ Jesus to life up there in heaven." (Easy to Read Version, ERV)

More about Jesus the Oriental King next week...until then, blessings,
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Jesus the Oriental King #3, When He takes His throne

Hi all,

I've been talking about how Jesus is an Oriental King, and the Bible is an Oriental book. Today: What happens when He takes His throne.

One of the characteristics of Oriental rulers that can be traced back centuries, is that the ruler is also considered divine, and worshipped. As such they had absolute rule.

For instance, the Emperor of China was considered to be the son of heaven, and absolute ruler of what was called All Under Heaven. Egyptian Pharaohs were considered to be incarnations of the god Horus. Romulus, the founder of Rome, was considered to be Quirinus the undefeated god, and by the time of the gospels and epistles Emperor worship was part of the Roman culture, among just a few examples.

When in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar saw the image with the head of gold, and the rest of the body made of lesser materials, he was told by Daniel that he was that head of gold - superior in government to the ones that followed. Nebuchadnezzar had absolute rule. His kingship had not submitted itself to the rule of law - what he willed was law.

The one in the image immediately following Nebuchadnezzar was the chest and arms of silver, the 2 arms describing the Medo-Persia rule. You will recall the ruler of the Medes and Persians, Darius (chapter 6) made a law saying that for 30 days no one may pray to anyone but him, the god-king Darius.

Daniel of course did not obey the law, which resulted in his conviction (6: 7-16). When Darius wanted to change his mind about the law because he had not intended to trap Daniel, he could not, for unlike Nebuchadnezzar, he had submitted himself to the rule of law, so he had to throw Daniel in the lion's den.

777 - Jesus is THE head of gold

Six has been seen as the number of man ever since it was observed he was created in the sixth day. Ever since Nimrod in Genesis 10 absolute rulers have tried to combine political, religious, and economics under them, in what is known as 666. The triune rule of man, for combining those 3 elements is controlling the people 100%.

For instance, Hitler was able to combine political and economic rule, but he could not get everyone to worship him, resulting in the holocaust which cost 6 million Jews their lives, and another 6 million Christians and political opponents theirs, in the camps.

The rule of man politically, religiously, and economically, will end with the Lord Jesus taking absolute control of the earth, in what will be the 777 so to speak. He will be the first ruler ever who will successfully combine politics, economics, and religion under one King.

We are now in a time when the great harvest of the earth is happening. This is why harvest terms are used to describe Jesus and us as the 'firstfruits of the earth', in James 1: 18, Romans 8: 23, 11: 16; I Corinthians 15: 23.

King over the whole earth

Zechariah 14: 9 tells us '...in that day the Lord will be King over all the earth...' Furthermore, THIS oriental King will demand worship, for Zechariah 14: 16-19 says this: 'Every year the nations will come to Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles (which celebrates God living with man) to worship the King, and if for instance, Egypt refuses to come, then 'upon them will be no rain...'

Revelation 2: 27, 12: 5, 19:15 all say He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Jesus will be the true and absolute, Oriental King. Jesus, King of kings, Lord of lords. The rod of iron is the Word - He is the Person of the Living Word, and from Him proceeds our written Word. That means He will be enforcing love, forgiveness, right dealings and honesty in every aspect of human life.

Administrators with gifts - Paul tells us in I Corinthians 6: 2 that we will 'judge' the world and angels, the word 'judge' is being an administrator of the world (not court judge like we think of in 21st century culture). We will administer the age when Jesus is King over the whole earth, Hebrews 6:5 calling the gifts of the Spirit 'the powers of the age to come'. We will have the gifts of the Spirit as we administer a forced righteousness on the earth, having words of knowledge and wisdom for situations and requiring people to be honest and transparent in their dealings.

Remember that people will be born during these 1,000 years, and we will have probably billions who survive the last years of this age to see the return of Jesus, and many of them will not like enforced righteousness. That is why Zechariah mentions what will happen to nations who refuse to come to Jerusalem to worship the King - they will dig in their heels and refuse to celebrate God living with man. Amazing.

Ezekiel 40-47 tells us of a temple that will be built, presumably a place for Jesus to call 'home'. The flow of water that starts there will flow into the Dead Sea, turning it into a fresh water lake! Can you imagine how huge that lake will have to become to dilute all that salt? Ezekiel 47: 6-12 tells us men will cast nets for the fish living there, and only the marshy places will be left briny.

The royal children...

One other trait of Oriental kings is their children are royalty, and they want their children to rule and reign. We are not only a kingdom of priests to the Lord, but also the children of God. We are royalty, and as such have a place in the kingdom to come that others do not.

Others in the kingdom? That will be related but different subject for next week...I'll pick it up there, until then blessings!

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