

My Favorite Thing About MATTHEW

Matthew 21:4

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Between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament there is a span of about **400 years** known as the quiet/silent years – a period of time that is not reflected in Scripture.

When the curtain closed on the Old Testament, Medo-Persia – located in the near east – was the world's greatest Empire. By 333 BC the center of world power had shifted to the west.

When Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, his empire was divided between 4 of his generals - **Ptolemy, Cassander, Seleucus, and Antigones**. For about **250 years** Palestine was caught in the power struggle between two of those empires – Ptolemaic and Seleucid.



In **164 BC** the Jews revolted under the leadership of the family of Mattathias – also known as the **Maccabees** {Hebrew for hammer}. **Antiochus Epiphanes** {Seleucid} was defeated and the Hasmonaean Empire was established.

The Jews celebrate this liberation every year during the **Feast of Lights** {Hanukkah}.

Meanwhile, Rome was on the rise and in **63 BC** the Romans brought an end to the Hasmonaean Empire and began to rule in Palestine.

So.... when the curtain opened on the New Testament the politics and culture of the world had completely changed:

- There was a world language - Greek.
- Travel was easy and relatively safe.
- Jewish settlements and synagogues were well established throughout the known world {Diaspora}.

The world was now ready for the rapid spread of the Gospel.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John make up the Gospel account of Jesus' Life. Only 3 – Matthew, Mark and Luke are considered Synoptic in that they share much of the same information – although their audiences were different. Most of John's book is unique and he is not included in the **"Synoptic Gospels"**.

Levi Matthew – the Tax Collector and disciple of Jesus – is believed to be the author of **"Matthew"** but he does not identify himself as such.

Matthew:

- Was written in Greek.
- To a Jewish Audience.
- Likely before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Which brings us to **My Favorite Thing** ---- The word *"fulfilled"* and Matthew's insistence that Jesus is the Messiah of Old Testament Prophecy.

Genealogy

Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Connecting Jesus to Old Testament prophecies that spoke of the lineage of the Messiah:

Matthew 1:1 - The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

- **Genesis 22:18** - And in your **Seed {singular}** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.
- **Isaiah 11:1** - A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
- **Jeremiah 23:5** - The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

Birth

Matthew's description of Jesus' birth is exactly 1 verse long. The rest of chapter 1 records Joseph's response to the news of Mary's pregnancy, his dream, and his obedience to God's instructions:

Matthew 1:22-23 – All this took place to **fulfill** what had been *spoken by the Lord through the prophet*: Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us.

- **Isaiah 7:14** – Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Visit by the Wise Men

Sometime later, the wise men came from the east and inquired where they might find the new born king. Herod, told of this inquiry, called the religious leaders to the palace to find out if they knew anything about this new *"king"* ---- they did:

Matthew 2:5-6 – ... He is to be born in Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been *written by the prophet*: And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.

- **Micah 5:2** - But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *too* little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

Massacre of the Innocents

After the wise men went home, Herod decided his best course of action was to murder all the male children in Bethlehem who were under the age of 2. We should be horrified but not surprised. History tells us that Herod was paranoid and cruel and did many horrific things - including murdering members of his own family in order to maintain his power.

Joseph had a dream in the night warning him of Herod's intent and he immediately took his family and moved to Egypt.

Matthew 2:15 – This was to **fulfill** what had been *spoken by the Lord through the prophet*: "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

- **Hosea 11:1** – When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Matthew 2:17-18 – Then was **fulfilled** what had been *spoken through the prophet Jeremiah*: A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.

- **Jeremiah 31:15** – Thus says the LORD: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.

Home to Nazareth

In 4 AD Herod died and it was finally safe for Jesus and his family to go home, but where?

Matthew 2:22-23 – When Joseph heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was **fulfilled** what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

Matthew records nothing of Jesus's early life. In fact, he doesn't pick up the story until Jesus is 30 years old and about to embark on His public ministry.

Ministry

After Jesus' victory over Satan in the wilderness, He learned that John the Baptist had been imprisoned, so He returned to Galilee:

Matthew 4:13-16 - Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali -- ¹⁴ to **fulfill** what was said through the prophet **Isaiah**: ¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles -- ¹⁶ the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

- **Isaiah 9:1-2** - Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan -- ² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

In Ch. 5-7, Matthew records the "**Sermon on the Mount**". Crowds followed Jesus wherever He went. As He traveled toward Capernaum, Jesus healed a man with leprosy and when He arrived at Capernaum, He healed the Centurion's servant and Peter's mother-in-law.

Matthew 8:17 – This was to **fulfill** what had been spoken through the prophet **Isaiah**: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

- **Isaiah 53:4** – Surely, he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.

Jesus was always getting into trouble with the religious leaders, especially when it came to the issue of proper Sabbath keeping. Ch. 12 gives us some insight into this conflict:

- **Matthew 12:1-2** - At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ² When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."

Jesus responded:

- **Matthew 12:7-8** - If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice' **{Hosea 6:6}**, you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Moving on, Jesus went to the local Synagogue:

- **Matthew 12:10** - A man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

Again, Jesus responded:

- If you had a sheep that fell in a ditch on Sabbath, wouldn't you pull it out? Isn't a man worth more than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful **to do good** on the Sabbath. Then turning to the man, Jesus said, "**stretch out your hand**", and immediately he stretched out his hand and it was completely restored **{12:11-13}**.

The Pharisees were so angry that they went away to plot how they might kill Jesus.

Matthew 12:17-21 – This was to **fulfill** what had been spoken through the prophet **Isaiah**: "Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope."

- **Isaiah 42:1-4** - "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. ² "He will not cry out or raise *His voice*, Nor make His voice heard in the street. ³ "A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴ "He will not be disheartened or crushed, Until He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law."

Jesus was fond of teaching using Parables. After one such occasion, even His disciples were confused, so they went to Jesus and asked, "**why do you speak to the people in parables?**"

Matthew 13:13-15 - This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. ¹⁴ In them is **fulfilled** the prophecy of **Isaiah**: "'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. ¹⁵ For this people's heart has become calloused; they

hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

- **Isaiah 6:9-10** – Go and say to this people: 'Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.' Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.

Prediction of Death

One day, some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus and asked him for a miraculous sign

Matthew 12:39-40 – He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet **Jonah**. "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster {**Jonah 1:17**}, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth."

Triumphal Entry

Jesus' ministry had finally come to a close and He was on the outskirts of Jerusalem. He instructed 2 disciples to go into town where they would find a donkey with a young colt. "**Bring them to me**", He said, "**And if anyone asks you about it tell them it the Lord needs them.**"

Matthew 21:4-5 – This took place to **fulfill** what had been *spoken through the prophet*, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

- **Zechariah 9:9** - Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Crucifixion

The Passover Supper was concluded. Judas had betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Jesus had been arrested and taken to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. Peter had denied Jesus and then had run out into the night weeping bitterly at his own betrayal. Early in the morning, Jesus was taken to Pilate, where He was eventually condemned to die, beaten and led away to Calvary.

Matthew 27:35 - When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots --- **Fulfilling** Ps. 22:18.

- **Psalms 22:18** - They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Matthew 27:38 - Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left --- **Fulfilling**, in-part, Is. 53:9.

- **Isaiah 53:9** - He was assigned a grave with the wicked....

Those who passed by mocked him and abused him including the chief priests, scribes and elders:

Matthew 27:42-43 - He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him. ⁴³ "He trusts in God; let Him deliver *Him* now, if He takes pleasure in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God' --- **Fulfilling** Ps. 22:7-8.

- **Psalms 22:7-8** - All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: ⁸ "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

Between the 6th and 9th hours (noon-3pm) darkness encircled the cross.

Matthew 27:46 – At about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" --- **Quoting** Ps. 22:1.

- **Psalms 22:1** – "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?"

Finally, after all had been accomplished:

Matthew 27:59-60 - Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away --- **Fulfilling** the rest of Is. 53:9.

- **Isaiah 53:9** - and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

The word, *“fulfill/fulfilled”* is used at least 11 times in Matthew’s book. More than any other Gospel, Matthew links who Jesus **WAS**, what He **DID**, and how He **DIED** to Old Testament Prophecies.

For Matthew, Jesus wasn’t a random zealot eager to overthrow Rome or a crazy alt-religion teacher. He was **Yeshua** – The Messiah of Prophecy – The Savior of the world.

Matthew 1:21 - and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

Isaiah 9:6-7 - For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

That’s why the word, *“FULFILLED”* is **My Favorite Thing About MATTHEW**.