

disciples of all nations is the kingdom age in which all of the OT promises are fulfilled?

Some observations will clarify the issue. (1) Jesus does not identify himself as Israel's king or mention the establishment of a kingdom in these verses. (2) The judgment that precedes the establishment of the kingdom, as predicted by the prophets, John the Baptist, and Jesus, has not yet occurred. (3) Nothing in these verses corresponds with the OT predictions of the kingdom: the kingdoms of men are not destroyed, the exiles are not restored, prosperity does not abound, and the day has not arrived when "no longer will a man teach his neighbor...because they will all know me" (Jer 31:34). Instead, Jesus is commanding his followers to make disciples from all nations. (4) Jesus does not explain that the Scriptures will *not* be fulfilled.

(5) Jesus' promise to be with his disciples to the end of the age gives comfort *until the time* when he is with them personally, ruling on his throne with the twelve disciples sitting on twelve thrones (Matt 19:28). (6) The kingdom is the time in the future when Jesus will again drink wine with his disciples (Matt 26:29). (7) The command to make disciples presupposes a world still in darkness with many opposed to God. (8) The apostolic writings of the NT do not suggest that Jesus was now ruling as king in fulfillment of the OT prophecies, but rather they look forward to the day when Jesus returns, defeats his enemies, and rewards the righteous in his kingdom.

Conclusion: the greater context precludes the interpretation that Jesus' authority is equivalent with the establishment of the kingdom.

GOING FURTHER

Read Psalms 22 and 69. How were these psalms fulfilled in Jesus' death? What other OT passages were fulfilled at the crucifixion?

PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT STUDY

Read John 1-12. Keep an eye out for the (seven?) signs and try to determine their significance. (For instance, why does Jesus change water into wine?) What do they tell us about who Jesus is?

CRUCIFIXION, RESURRECTION, AND THE OT (MATT 26-28)

PREPARATION FOR THIS STUDY

Read Matthew 26-28. Think about how Matthew shows Jesus' death as the fulfillment of the OT. How does Matthew's presentation correspond with Isaiah 53?

JESUS' AUTHORITY OVER HIS DEATH

Jesus has come to Jerusalem to die, just as the Old Testament predicted. In contrast to everyone else, Jesus knows what is going to happen and is entirely in control of events leading to his death. For instance, though the Pharisees think they're in control, they don't know how the people will react, and so they plan to kill Jesus after the Passover. Jesus knows that he will be crucified on Passover (Matt 26:1-5). Jesus and the woman understand that the anointing is for Jesus' burial, but the disciples do not understand and are indignant at the "waste" (Matt 26:6-13).

Jesus knows that the way the Jewish leaders will be able to capture him is through betrayal (Matt 26:21). Even when they learn this, the disciples do not know who the betrayer is (Matt 26:22). Jesus knows that his disciples will all fall away from him and that Peter will disown him three times, though they all deny it (Matt 26:31). (Jesus' prophecies come true even if the ones involved know the prophecy and intend to thwart it.) Jesus knows that he will rise from the dead after three days and meet the disciples in Galilee (Matt 26:32; 27:63; 28:6).

THE FULFILLMENT OF SCRIPTURE IN JESUS' DEATH

Jesus predicts that his disciples will fall away because he knows Zechariah's prophecy that when the shepherd is struck, the sheep will be scattered (Matt 26:31). Jesus knew that in not resisting, Scripture was fulfilled (Matt 26:54). The price of 30 pieces of silver paid for the rejected shepherd was the fulfillment of Zechariah 11:12-13, and the purchase of the potter's field pointed the reader to Jeremiah 18-19 and the national judgment Israel was under (Matt

27:6-10). Jesus recognized that his experience of death was in fulfillment of Psalm 22, seen most dramatically in his loud cry of the first verse, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46).

When Matthew reports that Jesus asked his disciples, “But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?,” the reader is to think not only of Jesus’ arrest in the garden (26:54) but of all of the events of his death. Matthew’s Gospel reveals in explicit quotations and implicit allusions that “this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled” (26:56).

JESUS’ ROYAL IDENTITY

Jesus testified under oath that he was the Messiah, the Son of God. He claimed to be the divine-human person described in Daniel 7 who rode on the clouds to the Father to receive authority to rule over God’s kingdom on earth. There was no ambiguity in Jesus’ claims and they would have been blasphemous if they were not true (Matt 26:63-65). In response to Pilate, Jesus acknowledged that he was the king of the Jews (Matt 27:11). Pilate said of Jesus that he was the one called the Messiah (Matt 27:22).

Jesus was not killed because his persecutors did not understand the claims he was making, for even the Roman soldiers dressed him up as royalty and mocked him as “king of the Jews” (Matt 27:27-31). The placard above his head stated his crime: “This is Jesus, the king of the Jews” (Matt 27:37). Passersby taunted him as one who would release himself from the cross if he was the Son of God (Matt 27:40). The Jewish leaders knew he claimed to be the king of Israel and the Son of God (Matt 27:42-43). In response to the miracles at Jesus’ death, the Roman soldiers guarding Jesus declared that Jesus was surely the Son of God (Matt 27:54).

JESUS, THE SERVANT OF ISAIAH

Matthew presents Jesus as the Servant that Isaiah described in chapters 42–53. Matthew had already alerted the reader to this

identification when he quoted from the first Servant Song of Isaiah (Matt 12:15-21). But it becomes crystal clear when Jesus does his Servant-work of dying for his people.

1. Matthew presents Jesus as one who is **perfectly righteous** (27:19) but who does not protest his innocence when put on trial. Jesus goes as a **lamb to the slaughter** (Isa 50:5, 7; 53:7). Though he could have called twelve legions of angels to rescue him, he rebuked his disciple for resisting (Matt 26:52-53). Jesus refused to defend himself before the Roman governor (Matt 27:14). Jesus kept silent while evil men taunted him during his crucifixion (Matt 27:39-44).
2. Isaiah predicted that the servant would be **beaten, mocked, and spit upon** (Isa 50:6). Matthew records that both the servants of the high priest and the Roman soldiers spit in Jesus’ face and struck him with their fists while mocking him (Matt 26:67-68; 27:28-31).
3. Isaiah spoke explicitly of the servant’s being “cut off from the land of the living” and being “assigned a grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death” (Isa 53:8-9). Matthew describes Jesus’ **death** between two thieves and his **burial** in the tomb of a rich man (Matt 27:38, 44, 50, 57-60).
4. The fourth Servant Song begins and ends with proclamation of the servant’s **exaltation** (Isa 52:13; 53:12), and Matthew shows that not only does Jesus rise from the dead but he is given all authority in heaven and on earth by the Father (Matt 28:5-7, 18).

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Do the last three verses of the book (Matt 28:18-20) suggest that Jesus is now ruling as king over his kingdom on earth? This is one possible interpretation. Jesus does say that he has been given all authority. Previously Jesus had identified himself as the Son of Man of Daniel 7 (Matt 27:64) and this figure is given “authority, glory, and sovereign power” over “all peoples and nations” (Dan 7:13-14). So is Jesus saying that the present age in which we are making