**Eternal Issues, Lesson 8**

Luke 1:31-33

“…behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him **Jesus**. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Map Slide… Roman Empire, Parthian Empire, Armenia

**FIRST ROMAN-PARTHIAN WAR:**

**Battle of Carrhae**

**53 B.C.** Crassus and Orodes

*Crassus (Roman general who defeated Spartacus) ruled Rome in a triumvirate with Julius Caesar and Pompey, and wanted a war record like Caesar, so tried to subjugate Parthia. Caesar sent 1000 cavalrymen to assist Crassus.*

*Rome: 40,000 army came in the provinces of Parthia, pillaging them. Parthia (under commander Surenas) met them in battle.*

*10,000 Roman soldiers died, ¼ fled, 10,000 captured. Crassus killed and his head and right hand were cut off.*

**50 B.C.** Parthia retaliated for Rome’s invasion and attacked Rome’s eastern provinces

**48 B.C.** Julius Caesar burned the athenaeum of Alexandria, *destroying 700,000 of the most valuable scientific works of the classical world.*

**40-37 B.C.** Parthia attacked Rome. *Took Syria, Judea, and pushed Rome out of Asia Minor. Parthia ruled Judea these three years. The Jews asserted their independence from Rome in this time and the Jewish prince Antigomus ruled Palestine as a Parthian satrap.*

**37 B.C.** Rome counter-attacked and regained their territories, *re-established the Euphrates boundary.*

 Phraates IV, *son of Orodes, (next king) killed his brothers and father Orodes and some of the nobility.*

 Mark Antony ordered the Jewish Vassal King Antigomus beheaded. King Herod replaced him.

**37 B.C.** Mark Antony (famous w Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt) invaded Parthia *with 16 legion and 113,000 man army, trying to recover the seven legions of soldiers captured under Crassus.*

 *Parthia dominated in battle. Rome lost 10,000 men and retreated in winter through Armenia.*

**36 B.C. – 58 A.D**. *peaceful period, no wars or attacks*

*Both empires agreed to co-exist on their own side of the Euphrates. Caesar ordered peace with Parthia.*

**2 B.C.** Phraates IV assassinated by his wife and son

**8-2 B.C.** Jesus born somewhere in here…

*[this is best guess, though there’s a five year window of ambiguity] Steve Collins suggests 2 b.c. while Ellis Skolfield suggests 8 b.c.*

The following slides are used by permission of the author, Ellis Skolfield, from his extensive research and work at Fish House Ministries. They are slides 8-14 from his study guide on Daniel and Revelation.

His website is: <http://www.fishhouseministries.com/>

Stranger on the Beach slide…

*Peter and Andrew… implication is they knew Jesus before the invitation.*

Slide: Actual years of Jesus’ ministry questioned here…

Slide: three recorded Passovers, but look at all the data…

1. Qurinius was pro-counsel in Syria when Jesus was born. (Luke 2:2)
2. A census sent Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. (Luke 2:3)
3. Herod ordered babies killed two years old and under. (Mat 2:16)

Luke 2:1-5 [NASU]

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

1. Herod died in June of 4 B.C.
2. Quirinius was pro-council of Syria, 7-8 B.C.
3. Romans took a census every 14 years.
4. Archaeological support for the Roman census of 6 A.D., which is too late for Christ’s birth.
5. Archaeological support for the Roman census of 8 B.C.
6. No archaeological support for a Roman census between those dates.

Slide of Biblical Forties…

Slide of chart of dates 8 B.C. to 32-33 A.D….

Slide from Skolfield… 40 years is the age of King appointment

*Now this word “apantesis” is really important and carries serious implications. The Greek word literally means “to meet one” and is used only three times in the Bible: Matthew 25:6, Acts 28:15 and 1 Thesselonians 4:17. Let’s sidebar for a minute…*

“apantesis” = Greek word translated “meet”, Strong’s 529

Matt 25:6 KJV

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go out to meet him.

Acts 28:15 NASU

And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

1 Thess 4:17-18 NASU

 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

*So this “apantesis” according to Vine is: “It is used in the papyri of a newly arriving magistrate. It seems that the special idea of the word was the official welcome of a newly arrived dignitary"…*

*It’s a welcoming party, if you will, to receive royalty or dignitaries. They send a delegation for a reception of the coming dignitary. The welcoming party leaves the destination point to receive the coming dignitary a bit out of the city or locale, and then accompanies him/her back to the destination point.*

*In this case, it’s relevant to the welcoming of Jesus into Jerusalem with palms, in the same manner as an apantesis. We know it as the “triumphal entry” of Jesus into Jeruslaem. You can find it in Mark 11 and John 12. It was such a threat that John 12:19 recorda: So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."*

*In each of the three uses of “apantesis” in Scripture, it clearly depicts a scenario of:*

1. One traveling to a point of destination [Bridegroom to the marriage feast, Paul to Rome, Jesus to earth]
2. A group coming out to greet/meet and accompany the traveler [virgins, brethren of Paul, believers still alive]
3. An accompanied continuation to the original destination

*End sidebar.*

Return to timeline: We’re discussing the events at the end of the fourth day. Parthia, Rome, Judah/Jerusalem, Christ’s entrance onto the scene….

*Matt 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea* ***in the days of Herod the king****, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,*

 Wise men was the proper title of Parthian Megistanes

 Greek word translated “wise men” is “magian”, literally means “Persian astronomer or priest”

 Parthia governed Persia at the time, so the wise men were Parthian nobles &/or priests

Parthian Megistanes did not travel lightly. They would have traveled with an entourage of servants, family, animal handlers, etc. under a company of troops. Because they were traveling with so much wealth, they would have had an impressive infantry around them. Josephus and other historians record such caravans into the tens of thousands. At the very least it would have been a company of a couple thousand, but more likely 20,000 or more.

*Matt 2:3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*

Jerusalem is a trading city that would receive caravans regularly. Three travelers would not have caused the alarm of the entire city. But a massive military escort from their enemies under a peace treaty entering their territory inquiring of a King would greatly alarm both Herod and the city.

The Parthian Megistanes had an immediate audience with King Herod and an inquiry was made. Herod feigned compliance, but it was probably more because he didn’t have the troops to defend should the Parthians have an aggressive intent. [less troops under peace treaty]

Herod conferred with Jewish hierarchy about their prophecies to ascertain Bethlehem from Micah 5:2. The Jews and/or even wise men would have been familiar with Daniel’s prophecy (9:25-26) and known the timing was upon them for the Messiah…

*Matt 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*

Joseph and Mary had rented a house and were staying there until they felt they should return. Jesus would have been anywhere from a few weeks to a year or two old here.

*Matt 2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.*

This was quite simply no small thing. A Parthian garrisoned entourage, the enemy of Rome [think US/Russia] entered their territory with pomp and circumstance, wealth and declaration under heavy guard, inquiring of the “king of the Jews”. Remember Mark Antony had beheaded the former Jewish prince Antigomus because of the revolt of it. This could be seen as an act of war.

*Matt 2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.*

Why was God intricately interested in the Parthians if it wasn’t because they were HIS children Israel? And why would they be interested in a Jewish King born, or any king of another nation, if it wasn’t of personal consequence??

*Matt 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.*

Again, this has to look like a breach of treaty to Herod and Rome. The wise men were supposed to go back to Herod and report what they found, but instead left his country by a different route. [again think US/Russia]

**4 B.C.** King Herod dies

***History has been taught almost exclusively from a Greco-Roman perspective.***

1 A.D. *“…there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers.” Flavius Josephus, Jewish military commander, Pharisee and historian*

*Matt 10:5-6 (NASU) These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather* ***go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.***

*Peter wrote his first letter from Babylon, a prominent city in the Parthian Empire. Eusebius (early church historian) records the apostle Thomas as traveling to Parthia to evangelize, and the apostle Andrew was sent to Scythia. The apostle Thomas was also linked to the Parthian-Saka King Gondophares, reigning in India.*

**1 A.D.** Rome invasion averted by “summit conference”. Parthia gave Armenia to Rome.

THE LIFE OF JESUS

*Matt 2:19-23 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.*

Archelaus reigned 4-6 B.C.

Joseph, Mary and Jesus would have returned very soon after Herod’s death and Jesus would have still been a very young child, maybe 4-6. Jesus was raised in Nazareth, Galilee according to law and tradition, as attested by their trips to the temple. Several sources (including the Jewish Talmud) record Joseph of Arimathea as Jesus’ great-uncle.

The next record we have of Jesus is in the Temple, which indicates a transitioning from His home life and teaching to the ministry to God. The Gospels are eyewitness accounts of Jesus’ life which clearly indicate the disciples did not know Jesus before His adulthood.

*Matt 13:54-57 (NASU) He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at Him.*

 Clear implication his hometown was unfamiliar with Him. Implies He was not raised with them.

~Scriptures imply Joseph (Mary’s husband) died sometime before Jesus’ adulthood. A safe assumption would be Jesus was placed under the guardianship of Joseph of Arimathea.

~Matthew 17:24-27 indicates Jesus was being asked to pay a foreigner or stranger tax. This has such strong implications that Jesus was unknown in this region, which shows He was absent for enough years to be considered a stranger.

~There is substantial evidence Joseph of Arimathea conducted business in Britain. He was known to be an international merchant involved in tin trade in the British Isles.

 Sources for more info: The Traditions of Glastonbury, by E. Raymond Capt

 Gildas Badonicus, 6th century British historian

 Did Our Lord Visit Britain as they say in Cornwall and Somerset?, by Rev. C.C. Dobson

 Hardynge’s Chronicle, 15th Century Source

 The Celtic Church in Britain, by Leslie Hardinge

Evidence is actually overwhelming that Jesus was known in Britain, with a house in Glastonbury, in the first decade of A.D. The Celtic Christian Church in the British Isles flourished for six hundred years after the death of Christ, with startling preserved records from early English historians.

*“…Jesus Christ was not only a* ***real*** *historical figure, but also a* ***prominent*** *personality of His time whose fame extended far beyond the borders of Judea.”* Steve Collins, Parthia p. 223

*Matt 15:24 (NASU) But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

The Gospels record the last few years of Jesus life, spent in Palestine. So He could have easily been traveling those years before to other regions of the children of Israel.

There are enormous records of someone “like” Jesus visiting numerous different nations and people groups throughout the first 2-3 decades of A.D.

*John 10:14-16 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

The Gospels record Jesus’ ministry to the House of Judah, but He also ministered to the House of Israel.

*Luke 3:23 (NASU) When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age…*

Priests begin their ministry work in the temple at age 30. [See Numbers 4, 2 Chron 31:16] Saul and David began their kingship at the age of 30 [See 1 Sam 13:1, 2 Sam 5:4] and Joseph stood before Pharoah at age 30 [See Gen 41:46].

*John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

 There are records of Parthian contact with Jesus during His ministry time. [King Agbar of Edessa]

Jesus was actually known outside the Palestinian borders. He was also known in the Roman official levels. (He was most likely a Roman citizen.)

The Throne of David and the Throne of the Parthian Kings [“king of kings” ] is one and the same.

Now look at Rev 19:16 (NASU): *And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

Luke 1:31-33

“…behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him **Jesus**. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

THE MINISTRY OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

*Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Three slides:

* Eusebius recorded, *“Meanwhile, the holy apostles…were scattered over the whole world. Thomas, tradition tells us, was chosen for Parthia, Andrew for Scythia, John for Asia…”*

The History of the Church III, 1

* Thomas found the Christian Church in Malabar, India
* Peter ministered in Babylon, in Parthia
* Thaddeus, Matthias, Andrew, Bartholomew, and Simon the Canaanite [the Zealot] evangelized and passed through Armenia.
* Simon and Jude ministered in northern Mesopotamia and Persia [also Parthian empire.
* Simon the Zealot missioned through North Africa, including old Punic cities near Carthage and Egypt, on to the British Isles, and landed in Persia where he perished.
* Eusebius records that the “…*Apostles preached in Britain.”*
* Christianity was recorded in the New World (North America) as early as 100-200 A.D.

**35-36 A.D.** Parthia warred against alliance of Iberians & Scythians headed by King Phrasmanes of Iberia. Parthia lost. King Artabanus (Parthian king) fled.

*Note the names of the kings here… the Scythian king PHRS, the Parthian king ARBNS (Arsacid)*

**51 A.D.** Emperor Gotarzes *murdered all close and distant male relatives, Arsacid children and pregnant women in royal families (considered cruel even then).*

 3 brothers eligible for the Parthia throne struck a deal:

Volagases I: Parthian emperor

Pacorus: Vassal-king of Media

Tiridates: King of Armenia

BUT Mithridates, brother of King Pharasmanes of Iberia already ruled Armenia. *But they did this to provoke an external war in lieu of an internal war.*

**51-62 A.D.** PARTHIAN/ROMAN CONFLICT OVER ARMENIA

**62 A.D.** Roman emperor Nero sent army to fight Parthia. Parthia soundly defeated Rome, giving Armenia back to Parthia.

**107- 113 A.D.** Mithridates IV king of Parthia

 Made coins with MLK on them

**114 A.D.** Rome broke treaty by killing a visiting Parthian diplomat.

*Roman emperor Trajan moved to take Parthia, yet the provinces fought and instilled heavy battle casualties. Trajan continued on and got caught and almost died in a catastrophic earthquake in Antioch, Syria that killed many of his high officials. He continued on then encountered a plague of flies, heat, violent hail and thunderstorms. Roman army had to retreat without ever engaging in battle with Parthia.*

*Volgases Parthian emperor continued use of Semitic inscriptions on coins.*

**130-149 A.D.** Volgases II Parthian emperor

*Volgases III warred against Rome because Rome reneged on a treaty to return stolen articles. Parthia won and regained Armenia.*

*Avidius Cassius, Roman army leader, won major battle against Parthia, caused Parthia to retreat across river.*

*Cassius came across river, burned Seleucia (400,000 residents), captured Ctesiphon, the western capital of Parthia. Cassisus/Rome were driven to retreat because of a horrible plague that almost destroyed the whole army and half the population of the known world, but NOT Parthia!*

**194-200 A.D.** Parthia in a state of internal decline, lost significant battle. Rome slaughtered the capital of Ctesiphon.

**215 A.D.** Rome’s Emperor Caracallus

*made a fake peace treaty under pretense of wedding and began slaughtering Parthians and did horrible offenses to the Royal cemetery of deceased kings – enraging all of Parthia.*

 *Parthia assembled its army over the winter.*

*Marcinus, emperor of Rome, offered a peace treaty and said would return the Parthian captives. Parthian King Artabanus IV rejected the offer.*

**217 A.D.** EPIC BATTLE OF NISBIS

 *Parthian King Artabanus IV and Roman Emperor Macrinus personally led their armies into battle.*

 *Fighting went on for* ***three full days.***

 *Piles of dead bodies were so high they couldn’t see over them.*

 *Decisive Parthian victory.*

 *Macrinus fled, made to pay 50,000,000 denarii and repatriate all Parthian captives.*

 *Considered by historians one of the greatest events of world history.*

***HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ABOUT IT??????***

**220-227 A.D.** Persia revolted in 3 battles, killed Artabanus IV. PARTHIA EMPIRE FELL.

 *Replaced by Sassanian Persian Empire*

 *Parthians migrated*

**230 A.D.** new “Goth” state established northwest of Black Sea

 Goth = Parthian = Iranian = Persian

 Rome gave them the name “Goth”

 Gothic word for God is “Guth”

 Goth and Guth share same root word of G-TH

 Goth comes from “Gut-thiuda” which means “people of the Goths” or “people of God”

**226-238 A.D.** Rome began paying tribute to the Gothic people (to deter an invasion)

*“When the Israelites fled the Black Sea region from the Assyrians, they took the name ‘Gauthei’ because ‘they were very jealous of the Glory of God’.”* M. Sailman, 1818

From Researches in the East; an Important Account of the Ten Tribes

**248 A.D.** Goths invaded Roman territory and took land

**249-251 A.D.** Roman emperor Decius led Roman army against Goths. Decius was killed (251), his body never recovered [remember 215 a.d., 34 years earlier?], and his army almost totally annihilated

*“During…fifteen years (253-268 A.D.) the history of the Goths is a frightful story of cruel massacres and of the destruction and plunder of wealthy and beautiful* [Roman] *cities.”* The Goths, Henry Bradley

**300 A.D.** Parthian refugees migrate into Europe, known to the Romans as Goths (Getae), Germans, Saxons

After 300 A.D. the terms “Parthian” and “Scythian” disappear in history. Become known as: Goths, Gothic, German, Getae

Parthians and Scythians who poured into Europe over the Caucasus Mountains were labeled as “Caucasians”

Caucasian refugees arrived in Europe right after Parthia’s collapse

**429 A.D.** Arsacid reign in Armenia ends

[Other names the Parthians and Scythians were referred as: Visgoths (sacked Rome 410 A.D.), Ostrogoths, the Huns (think Attila the Hun), Vandals]

Luke 1:31-33

*“…behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him* ***Jesus****. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."*

Dan 2:44 NASU

*"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.”*