

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

1. Introduction to Matthew Study:

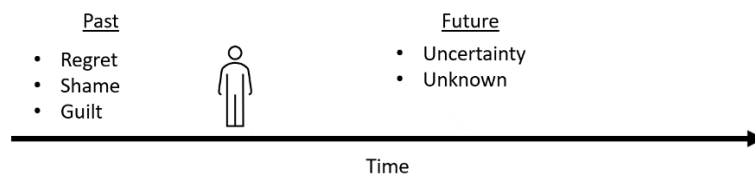
- Ten weeks / 3 chapters each week.
 - Next week: Read Matthew 1-3; next week's topic will be Matt. 1 – the genealogy.
- Cover one topic from the reading that will have broad implications for reading the Bible.

2. Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew) or Kingdom of God (Mark and Luke):

- "Heaven" is a circumlocution for the word God – pious Jews did not use the name of God.
- Jesus presents the kingdom of Heaven in Matthew more often as a present reality.
- A condition – not a place or time.
 - We tend to think of "Heaven" as a place in time over there.
- Full acknowledgment of the Rulership of God.¹
- A recognition by humanity of the reality of God and God's creation.
- God's promises of redemption and restoration break into the present.
 - Both a present and future reality.²
- How do we manifest the reign of God – moment by moment - here on earth?
 - Not only belief but action (Matt. 7:24) that ushers in the reality of God's reign.

3. The Issue of Being – how do we function as limited beings in God's Kingdom?

- We are bounded by limitation -
 - Limits in knowing, understanding the reality of God's creation and our physical limitations.
- Our limitations exist across time:

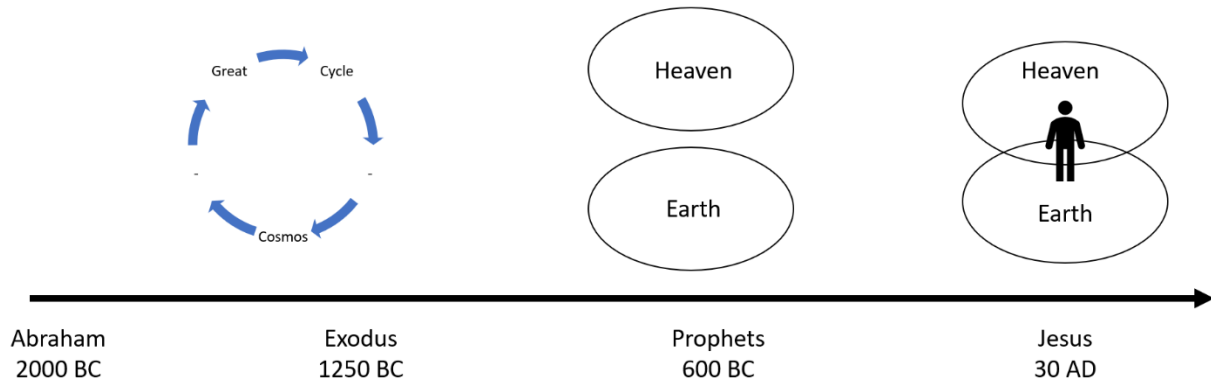


- Humanity is plagued by our tremendous capacity for **self-deception** and **delusion**.
 - **Foolishness**
- We have the spiritual capacity for regeneration and renewal to see the reality of God and His creation.
 - **Wisdom**
- **Prov. 9:10** – "The fear (recognize the reality) of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**."
- **Psalms 14:1** – "A **fool** says in his heart, "There is no God."

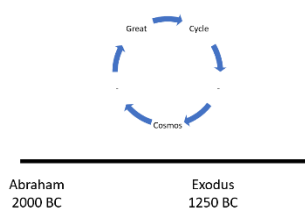
¹ Stern, David. *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, (p. 16), 1992.

² Ladd, G.E. *The Presence of the Future*, 1974.

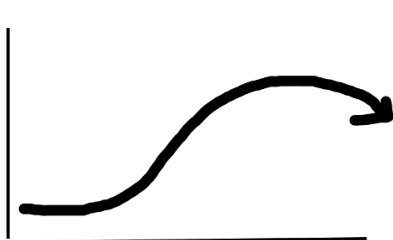
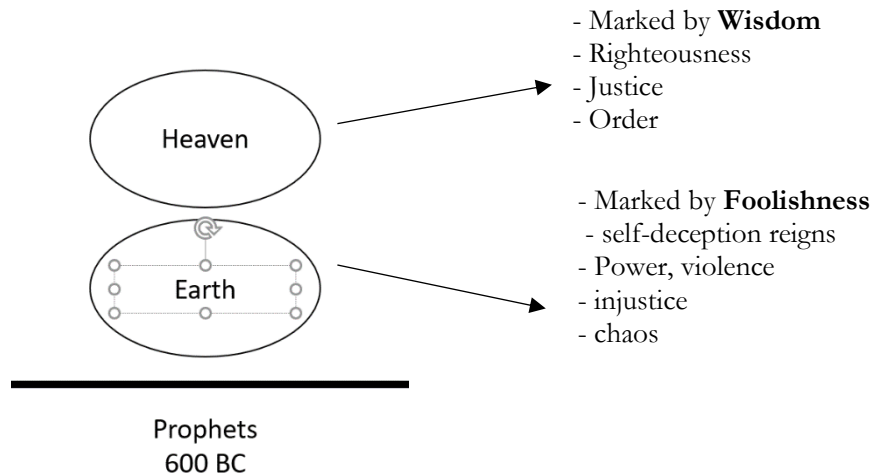
4. A progression toward the kingdom of Heaven: ^{3 4}



Cosmos/Time rotates in a continuous cycle



- Goal of wisdom is power
- Not morally responsible for violence and chaos – just part of the cycle.
- Egypt is the epitome in the ancient world
- Exodus - battle between God and Pharaoh is all about a show of Power
- Exodus – is a story of God redeeming Israel out of that mindset.



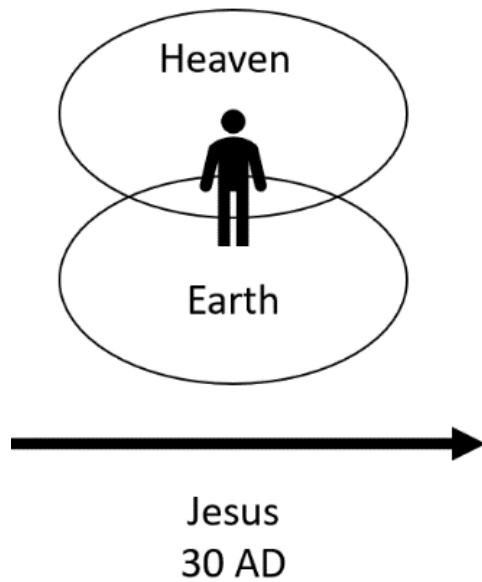
Time

- No longer viewed as a continuous cycle
- Time is now like a story with a beginning, middle, and conclusion
- We are able to reflect on our past and make adjustments in the future.
 - we have agency to change
- **Conclusion of Time** = righteousness, justice, reduced suffering, peace.

³ Vervaeke, John. YouTube: *Ep. 3 - Awakening from the Meaning Crisis - Continuous Cosmos and Modern World Grammar*. Feb. 1, 2019.

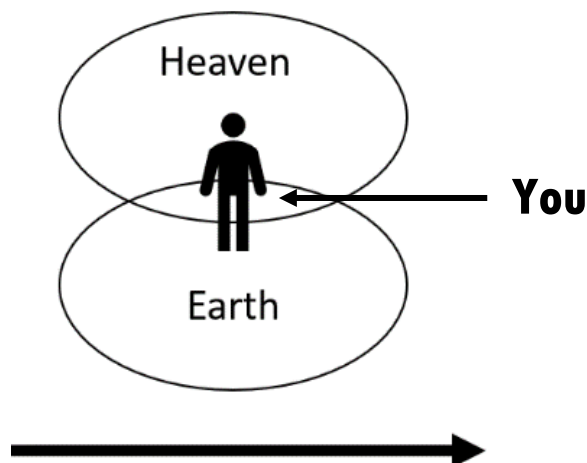
⁴ Eliade, Mircea, 1954. *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History* (2005 second paperback edition).

5. Jesus -



- The rule of Heaven is breaking through to Earth (Matt. 11:12)
- When “Heaven” breaks through to “Earth” –
 - Evil is pushed back (Matt. 8:16)
 - Restoration and healing (Matt. 8:16-17)
- Jesus is fulfilling what the nation of Israel couldn’t.
- Shift from Israel – as a nation being responsible for the kingdom of God – to the **individual**.
- Shift in NT away from Israel/Jerusalem and toward the individual believer from any nation.

6. You -



- The rule of Heaven is breaking through to Earth (Matt. 11:12)
- Shift from Israel – as a nation being responsible for the kingdom of God – to the **individual**.
- All human beings – not just Jews - are able to expand the reign of God by transcending this world (Jn 17:14).
- Every individual has the responsibility to seek the kingdom and manifest it here on earth (Matt. 6:33).
- We become co-builders with Jesus in bringing about the kingdom.