

# Convergence – Missed Connections Series

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## MAIN VERSES

[John 1:1](#) • [John 1:14](#) • [John 2:13](#) • [John 2:17](#) • [John 3:29](#) • [John 3:30](#) • [John 4:6](#) • [John 4:11](#) • [John 4:34-41](#) • [John 6](#) • [John 7](#) • [John 7:40-44](#) • [John 7:41](#) • [John 8](#) • [John 8:56](#) • [John 8:58](#) • [John 9](#) • [John 12:39](#) • [John 12:41](#) • [Matthew 1](#) • [Matthew 2](#) • [Matthew 21](#) • [Mark 11](#) • [Luke 1-3](#) • [Luke 19](#) • [Psalm 69:9](#) • [Micah 5:2](#) • [Genesis 18](#) • [Genesis 29](#) • [Isaiah 6:1](#) • [2 Corinthians 5:9](#) • [2 Corinthians 5:20](#)

Shabbat Shalom everybody. Welcome to Founding Truth Fellowship. We're so excited to be back together this week for worship and fellowship and to dive into God's Word once again. If you're joining us online today for the first time or if you're joining us in person today for the very first time, we are a Messianic Fellowship, which is a fancy way of saying that we absolutely are sold out in love with Jesus as our Savior and our King. We also love exploring the Word of God and celebrating the blessings and the commitments within it, such as the weekly Sabbath day, as well as the biblical festivals in the Bible. So if that's you today, it's your first time being with us for services, thank you for joining us today. This is great.

## Missed Connections in the Gospel of John

Today we're going to jump straight into the gospel according to John as we continue our Missed Connections series. And I hope this series has been kind of a blessing to you guys. I wanted to kind of wrap it up soon to jump on to the next thing. We've been exploring a lot of the hyperlinks found in the New Testament, scriptures that link us back to the Hebrew Bible and the story of Israel in the Old Testament. And we're looking at some of the connections that sometimes we tend to miss, hence the Missed Connections series. I thought it was a clever title. And we're going to jump back into John because John is just so full of amazing artistry and how the evangelist just lays out the story in his accounts of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. And before we jump in, I would love to recommend two fantastic, very nerdy books that I found very edifying. One is by Dr. Richard Hayes. It's titled The Echoes of the Scriptures in the Gospels. The second is by G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, titled Commentary on the New Testament, Use of the Old Testament. So awesome reference books, a bit dense, but will definitely make you feel nerdy.

## How John Tells the Story Differently

So as we've discussed before, John is very unique compared to the other three Gospels, the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And they're known as the Synoptic Gospels because they have the same synopsis, a lot of similarities between them. And John, what makes it so unique and special is it tends to portray the story of Yeshua and his ministry almost intentionally different. The chronology of some of the events are actually very different. He has a different record and it's intentional. For example, the event where Yeshua runs into the temple and overturns the tables and makes a whip and just has this outburst of passion and zeal. Well, Matthew places Jesus cleansing the temple near the end of his ministry in chapter 21. Luke doing the same in chapter 19. Mark doing the same in chapter 11. But John, John does not hesitate to draw the reader into the prophetic fulfillment of the event listed in [Psalm 69:9](#), placing this account of Jesus going into the temple, flipping over the tables, not at the end of his ministry like the other gospel accounts, but in the very beginning. I mean, this is how John starts. This is chapter 2 of John.

## The Temple Cleansing at the Beginning

So if you turn with me to [John 2](#), verse 13. Jason, I think I have it on two slides there. Starting in verse 13, [John 2](#). The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those... Verse 1. So the Jews said to him, what sign do you show us for doing these things? Jesus answered him, destroy this temple in three days and I will raise it up. The Jews then said, it has taken 46 years to build this temple and you will raise it up in three days? But he was speaking about the temple of his body, where therefore he was raised from the dead. His disciples remembered that he had said this and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

So why does John place this account at the very beginning of Yeshua's ministry and not near the end like the rest of the gospel accounts in the New Testament? John does not seem, when you read the gospel account of John, he doesn't seem too concerned with giving security camera footage of Yeshua's ministry. At least as much as he's concerned about telling a narrative with a point, creating, directing this film to take you along the journey for an ultimate point. And just within the first chapter of John's account, he's already readied the reader with so many grand pillars that the other gospel accounts wait till the end, the assertion that Jesus is the Son of God. A name attributing kingship. He is divine. He has launched new creation. Not only that, he preexisted before all created things. And here, John wants the reader to know before the reader goes any further into the story of how John is portraying it, that Yeshua is the true

fulfillment of the temple of God, the place where heaven and earth collide as one. John wants to make clear that Yeshua is that place from the very beginning of his narrative, just like he is divine from the very beginning of his narrative, just like new creation, the Isaac prophecies are fulfilled in him from the very beginning, just like he is king from the very beginning of his account.

And we have a missed connection right here in this section. And likely your English Bibles actually translate it. It's found in verse 17 where John quotes [Psalm 69:9](#). In [John 2:17](#) he says, John here is referencing back to a Psalm of King David. Again, a reference to Yeshua being the fulfillment of the new David, the new son of David, the new prophetic king of God's kingdom.

## John's Subtle Artistry

But here in [Psalm 69:9](#), it says something a little bit different. I hope I put a slide in there for [Psalm 69](#). There we go. The bottom there. It says something different. In the Greek Septuagint, it says the same thing. In the Greek Old Testament, the word used here, has consumed me or devours me, is ketephagan. And you see how Psalms has it as, or has consumed me. It's a present. But look at John. John puts it in a futuristic sense. He changes the tense of the word. The Greek word John uses is future. Why does he do this? Well, I quote G.K. Beale here to help explain it. I think it's a fascinating little nugget here. And here's a quote from Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament. The change of verb tense likely serves to shine the spotlight prophetically on Jesus' cross death as it is narrated later in the gospel. Otherwise, the quotation in John is identical in the wording to the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, which in turn closely resembles the Masoretic text, the Hebrew text that we have today. Heavy nerd atmosphere, but I love how John is painting this picture. He's making a movie for us. He's directly, intentionally directing a film. And in this moment, he's hoping that you're gonna notice this subtle change of tense from Psalm to point and to portray Yeshua as the new David that has this zeal for his father's house being manifest for all people to engage in.

## Zeal for Heaven and Earth

That's why he was so upset with the money changers. This zeal for heaven to be connected to all of earth. The money changers at the temple during this time were intentionally attempting to profit off the people wanting to draw close to God's presence, to God's house. People wanting to draw close to heaven as they knew it. They were wanting to exploit that. And Yeshua won't have it. All have an invitation into the arms of heaven. And John confirms this with the discourse of Yeshua stating he will manifest the true temple. Right after this. And this true

temple is only found in him. The zeal for heaven and earth colliding in such a way that all humanity would be able to reconcile themselves with the peace and the justice and the mercy of God's kingdom. All humanity would be brought into the fullness of heaven and earth. Will consume me, he says. This is speaking of his exaltation as king, a crown on his head, the banner of proclamation above it exalted on the cross. This is where he was exalted as king over creation. And John wants to take us on a journey.

## John's Perceived Absence from Israel's Story

And now the thing about John, for those of you who've studied, you likely get this hint. It's a bit controversial. John often gets a bad reputation. And it's likely due to its lack of explicit Old Testament references to the story of Israel. He doesn't spend a lot of time and details explaining and narrating the story. He only drops sprinkles of it here and there. It has long been a suggestion that John simply has a lack of interest in the Old Testament or Israel's past, whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke all seem to be focusing on a continuation of the story of Israel. John seems to be absent in this pursuit. For example, in John, you will find no genealogical trajectory as Matthew and Luke offer, showing a pathway from Abraham to David to the exile into Babylon and then to the king, the Messiah, Yeshua, as [Matthew 1](#) starts out. There's also no celebratory acclamation of a God who has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy according to the promise he made to our ancestors, as in the latter part of [Luke 1-3](#). Many end up reading John and come to the conclusion that he simply has no interest in connecting Jesus to the story of Israel. Furthermore, the Jews, as he often references in the narrative, seem to be depicted as the villains of the story. Almost can't blame some people for thinking that John has this anti-Jewish construct within it. I read one commentary that suggested that John has forms of ahistorical spirituality. In other words, John is absent from the history of the people of God, of Israel.

## A Different Vision: John's Gospel Approach

And if there are any hints in the story, they simply play little role. With that said, I hope that we can dive into John today and take a look at the film that John is directing for Yeshua. And I hope to show that he has a much larger vision than Matthew, Mark, and Luke had. Instead of taking a step back and looking at the complete picture of the narrative of the Bible, John tends to step inward. Not at the whole story, but he tends to take the camera lens and zoom it all the way in. So Yeshua is always at the front and center. The story plays behind him as a scene, as we've discussed in the past. And I hope that we can show that John truly does care about the story of

Israel, that he's not simply ignoring the Old Testament, but that he's simply being intentional for how he writes. Something about John that I find fascinating is he tends to be indifferent about the concept of linear time when he speaks about history.

## Jesus Before Abraham Was

In [John 8:58](#), he records Jesus saying, "Before Abraham was, I am." This bold proclamation that at minimum claims Yeshua to pre-exist time itself and at most claiming himself to be the deity revealed to all mankind. Remember when his audience heard this, they became shocked and very upset. But the reader was already ready because John had already prepared you as the reader back in [John 1](#), right? The Word became flesh. The Word was with God. The Word was God. You see how John is playing with this pattern. You have an inside scoop of who Yeshua is, and now you get to see how other people are expressing their response to it.

## Isaiah's Vision of Jesus' Glory

You also have John stating in [John 12:41](#) that Isaiah witnessed Jesus' glory and even spoke about him. Here's what John says in [John 12:39](#). For this reason, they could not believe because as Isaiah says elsewhere, he has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so they can neither see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts nor turn, and I would heal them. Verse 41, Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. John here is recording Yeshua quoting from [Isaiah 6](#). And what's neat is many times we take this verse and isolate it and make up a context for it. And we think that Isaiah saw some future vision of Jesus because he was a prophet and he's looking into the future and his glory. And I would say, no, that's not at all what John is portraying here in the narrative. The section of Isaiah is speaking specifically of his vision of Isaiah getting a glimpse into God's throne room in that moment. [Isaiah 6:1](#), here's how that chapter starts out. [Isaiah 6:1](#), Above him were seraphim, each with six wings and with two wings. They covered their feet in two weeks. Two, they were flying. And they were calling to one another, holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory. Then God tells Isaiah in the context of God's glory shining forth from his throne room right then and there and how his people are blinded and their hearts have no recognition to such glory that Isaiah is witnessing.

## Transcending Time

John is not using linear time in this account. He's not saying Isaiah saw the day that Yeshua... No, he transcends time and is present throughout all of Israel's past as well as the present time

of the narrative with Yeshua. And if you can grasp hold of that concept, that answers the question why we don't see a linear timeline of the story of Israel or the genealogy of Yeshua in the Gospel according to John. In John's story, Yeshua has always been present in it all.

## Writing to Show, Not to Prove

Notice that John is not writing to you as a people, as an audience, to show you how Jesus has fulfilled or has become some type of futuristic promise of these stories in Israel's scriptures like Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Instead, John has taken a very unique approach in portraying Israel's scriptures and their story as being one in real time with the presence of Yeshua. The figure that steps onto the center stage in John is always Yeshua. And so while John does show little effort in re-narrating the scriptural stories found in the Old Testament, he does regularly make passing allusions to it. I love that so much. In John's eyes, he never felt the need to try to prove that Jesus was the promised king in the future. In John's eyes, it's obvious he always has been the king. From verse 1, the word was with God, the word was God. And if you can see that diversity apart from the other gospel accounts, I think it gives us a very beautiful angle into the heart of John and what got John so excited about this Christ, this Messiah, this Mashiach.

## Knowing the References

Lots of allusions in John to the Old Testament. The text we have just made reference to, when it mentions Abraham and, of course, the prophet of Isaiah, John assumes that you already know who these figures are. He's not trying to educate you on the stories of the Old Testament and why they're significant. And he goes on to list many more. Abraham is mentioned as an Old Testament figure that John references more than once. Remember in [John 8](#) when Yeshua has a kind of bitter argument with the Jewish religious authorities because that never happens, especially in John. Yeshua responds reiterating that he is the one that gives true freedom and that he knows they're Abraham's descendants. But they also want to kill him, which is significant. And then they go back and forth because Yeshua tells them, you know what? As a matter of fact, you're not actually a follower of God because you don't have room for my words. So bold and audacious whenever Yeshua spoke. He cuts to the chase with a sword. Obviously, you're not a follower of God because you're not believing what I'm saying. Gosh, these are the people that have scrutinized the very words of the Torah and felt like they were so profoundly to the point of being casual in the stories and every letter of the Torah. And Yeshua was saying, you know what? You don't know. You've misread the entire thing because you don't believe my words. Can you imagine the instant tension?

## When Truth Stirs Resistance

Anybody ever get triggered in here, right? I bet. There's something unique. They call it the reptilian stem or something like that in your brain. It's the flight or fight stem. Whenever you get triggered, right, it's like, oh, I got to run or I got to fight. And if you guys don't know what I'm talking about, Joe Biden, Donald Trump, the most qualified candidate that ran for president was the only one with a gospel album, Kanye West. Maybe some of you are restraining, but I bet some of you, you had to just fight an animalistic reptilian urge to... There are some things that trigger us, right? Yeshua triggered folk. All of your education and all of your years memorizing the Torah and studying Hebrew and discussing this all the time, hours a day, y'all don't know nothing because you are not believing the few words that I've said to you in this conversation. I love Yeshua so much. I love it.

## Acting Like Your Father

So how did they respond? They responded in a very calm fashion, just like we all would when we disagree with someone, right? Very calm, peace and mercy first, love, grace. They wanted to kill him. Abraham is our father. And Yeshua tells them, quote, if you were Abraham's children, then you would actually be doing what Abraham did. I mean, am I right? You're looking for a way to kill me. Abraham did not do such things as that. You are doing your works of your own father, not of Abraham. He's making the case against Jewish opposition that if they were truly the seed of Abraham, they would act like it. And John is drawing us back, right? If you guys can see the story, John doesn't spell it out in his fashion. It would make it easier for us. He doesn't spell it out. He's drawing us back to [Genesis 18](#), at minimum, where Abraham's hospitality is shown forth to the divine visitors who were sent with God's word, right? Abraham accepts them. He listens to their word, the divine word, through the messengers of God. But these people are wanting to kill the messenger from God, speaking the word of God, who is Yeshua. This is the vague overtone. If you were like Abraham, you'd accept my word like Abraham did with the messengers that God sent with the prophetic word to them. But no, you're not Abraham's seed. You're not the descendants of Abraham or else you'd act like them.

## Abraham Rejoiced at My Day

Oh yeah, John also records that Abraham saw Yeshua. In John chapter 8 verse 56, Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day. He saw it and he was glad. John records Yeshua making this statement that even Abraham experienced the presence of Christ. Abraham did not have a vague promise, like, "This king would come in the future." Abraham did not look

forward to some type of prophecy about the day the Lord is coming and making all the wrongs right and what that would look like, trying to figure that out like the prophets do. John does not record Abraham seeing an ill-lit tapestry of God's future work, no. John records Abraham experiencing and meditating on the day that Yeshua would proclaim God's kingdom, a clear vision of the presence of Yeshua. So bold of John.

## Jacob's Well and Other Signposts

Jacob is another heavy figure of the Old Testament that John mentions. Remember the story of Yeshua encountering the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4? Incredible story. Where does he meet her? At a well, right? We spoke about this, I think, a few months ago. And just in case you didn't recognize the hyperlink, back to the stories of Genesis, John leaves a blatant signpost. He actually helps us out here so we don't miss it. John chapter 4, verse 6.

Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from his journey, sat down at the well. It was about noon. Verse 11: "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with you, and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water that you just told me about? Are you greater than our father Jacob?" So we have two signposts, two pointers in this story of Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock. They're talking about Jacob's well. They're hanging out at Jacob's well. They've mentioned Jacob twice. She even talks about Jacob drinking water from here.

Jacob's well is referenced in [Genesis 29](#) where Jacob meets Rachel for the first time. And he has this awkward moment where he begins crying and screaming because he just falls in love with her. It's really a romantic story. He sees Rachel coming with her flock. He rolls away the stone and draws water for her. We're familiar with this. John is drawing that story into the story of Yeshua meeting the Samaritan woman at the well.

There is only one problem. This is not that well. The well in [Genesis 29](#) wasn't even in the land of Canaan. It wasn't in Israel. It was in Mesopotamia in a section called Haran. But John doesn't care about that. That doesn't matter. Why not? Because he's intentionally directing this film to point to something greater than the details. And recounting the story of Yeshua and the woman at the well and the claim of Jacob's well was a good way to get your attention because you already knew where Jacob's well was, knowing the readers would catch it. John doesn't care if this is the historical well exactly of Jacob or not.

## Echo of Jacob

John wants you as the reader to hear the echoes of Genesis without spelling it out like the other gospel accounts try to do. And the echoes of the story that he wants you to hear—he wants you to hear Yeshua sitting across from the Samaritan woman, the dirtiest half-breed borderline traitor of the Jewish people. The enemies of the Jews in the first century—oh sure, the Romans—the Samaritans were like the terrorists, the insurgents in first century Judaism. There's an account of Josephus where the Samaritans were at war with the Jews and one Passover, one week of unleavened bread, they brought bags of body parts and started going through the temple complex, sneaking in like little Assassin's Creed or whatever, going in there and throwing bones everywhere in the porticos of the temple, throwing dead body parts around the temple to make it unclean for the Judeans to celebrate Passover. The Samaritans also celebrated Passover. They also kept the Torah. It was just a little bit different. They were like the—talk about sibling rivalry.

So these were enemies. This was not—the good Samaritan is not just about helping someone by the side of the road. It's the fact that when God's love is poured out, it doesn't matter who you think your enemy is. God's love erases that line. And so the enemies of the Jews were the Samaritans in this story. And in this story, you see the themes of a metaphorical bridegroom, just as [John 3:29-30](#) sets. And here he has his encounter with the woman at the well, symbolically inviting her into this marriage, if you will.

He's wanting to marry Samaria into this reconstituted new humanity, this reconstituted Israel, this new kingdom of God that's being birthed here through him. And there's also this scene of him giving the living waters, similar to how Jacob did for Rachel. But these waters will never leave you thirsty again, as long as you believe in him as king and pledge your allegiance to him. And what's the result? Well, verses 34 through 41 say that because of her engagement with Yeshua, she ran back to her people and because of his words, they pledged their allegiance to the kingdom of God. They became believers. They believed in him.

All of this is wrapped up in this thin echo of Jacob at the well meeting Rachel and this launch of this new family of God, this reconstituted family of God.

## Moses Throughout John's Gospel

How about Moses? There's a few drops in here of the narrative that review the stories of Moses. John never goes into detail, of course, with Moses. John references Moses in John chapter 3 when he vaguely mentions, oh yeah, he lifted up the bronze snake in the pole to ward off the lethal effects of the poisonous snakes that bit Israel. He mentions it in John chapter 6 and his

declaration that the Israelites would receive manna from heaven. And of course, in John chapter 1 where he mentions Moses as the giver of the Torah, including the practice of circumcision later in [John 7](#). In John chapter 9, though, Moses is depicted as the recipient of revelation, the one to whom God spoke directly.

In none of these dimensions, though, as we discussed, does John ever give enough details or references for clarity to anyone who is unfamiliar with these stories. And we hope you've read the stories. Just a bunch of one-liners. I love that. Readers who are intimately familiar with these stories of the Old Testament already know. These brief allusions explode in their minds and they invoke the memory of what story? The Exodus.

One neat thing John does differently than the other gospel accounts is that Yeshua is not portrayed by John, unlike Matthew, as the new Moses. He's not portrayed even as the prophet likened unto Moses. Instead, John chooses to portray him as someone who is far greater than Moses, not even to be compared. Even in these figurative invocations of the Moses story, Jesus himself is metaphorically equated with the bronze serpents or with the bread from heaven, not with Moses. Moses simply plays a more instrumental role in John's heart. Or as precisely as John describes it, Moses is simply a witness that yields to bear forth witness to the coming king.

## David and Bethlehem

John also makes references to David, but only in one singular instance in John's account. That instance, of course, is in chapter 7, verses 40 through 44. And John here narrates a scene in which members of a crowd are arguing with Yeshua about and wondering if he's like either the prophet or the divine king, the Messiah. Which one is he? And in John chapter 7, verse 41, it clearly states.

So this is a reference. There's a prophecy in [Micah 5:2](#) that the Messiah will come from the town of Bethlehem, which came true, right? Matthew cites this prophecy explicitly about the birth of Yeshua in [Matthew 2](#). But John, once again, presupposes this bit of Messianic tradition as something that they're already casually familiar with. In fact, the only verbal link between [John 7](#) and the prophecy of [Micah 5](#) is the name and the place Bethlehem. Another instance of John minimizing the scriptural allusions about having faith that we're going to connect them.

## The Hidden Pattern

Now, I know, guys, all of this seems dense. I'm getting real—I love this stuff. Remember how I said John does not like to portray a linear timeline when it comes to Yeshua? He seeks to

portray Yeshua present throughout all of time, not at the tail end of the story of Israel, but present with it. The hidden gem here, the missed connection right here in this reference to John that we may have to dig a little bit more is—it's not hidden in what John tells us. It's hidden in what John leaves out.

John's vague reference to Micah chapter 5 includes details that are fully in line with the rest of the pattern that John has already painted. That is the ever-presence of Yeshua throughout creation and time. So Micah chapter 5:2 says this: "...but you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be a ruler over Israel." There's going to be a coming king whose origins are from old, behind us, ancient times. The origins of this messianic figure are from old, ancient. This king is timeless in [Micah 5:2](#), much in line with the already laid out Christology found in John's first chapter.

Wouldn't it be cool just to sit around and nerd out with the gospel account authors? Why did you say that and not that? And I think we would be amazed because we always have this assumption about the biblical authors specifically, and the gospel, and even Paul's letters. We always have this account like, okay, they just sat down one day, they got their coffee, woke up real early in the morning because the Holy Spirit prompted them to write this account, brewed their coffee, went down, sat down at their desk, said a prayer, and began writing. Just in one fell swoop, this is what happened. And we never take into account that maybe they were a little bit more intentional than that. Maybe they spent a long time focusing on every line, every word, everything. Maybe they wanted to construct a grand narrative, knowing that possibly their letter wouldn't simply be read. It would be read aloud. It would be acted out in the early church home fellowships.

Can you imagine entering into the movie, the film of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, where the details, everything is intentional and laid out on purpose? A lot of people take some of the things that don't line up in the Synoptic Gospels or John, and they're like, oh, look, no one knew, had a clue what was going on. They were not stupid. Everything is intentional for the heart that they wanted to give to you and what they wanted to tell you about their experience with the king. And that gets me so excited.

Now, I say all that because it's very possible this is why John does not include a nativity scene. Not because it didn't happen. Some people use that as it didn't happen. No, not because it didn't happen. John wants to hammer his objective without a shadow of a doubt in his narrative.

## The Word Was Ever-Present

There is not a time when Yeshua was not present. Not a time. The synoptic gospels, with the story of the nativity, would never suggest that, but instead of starting out with the story of the child king being born into creation and all of heaven breaking forth to celebrate, John simply says: before creation, this Yeshua was ever present. The word was with God, the word was God, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us. Taken together, all of the hints, all of the allusions to these major characters that are found within Israel's story can be placed as evidence that John is in no way attempting to diminish the story of Israel. He's in no way anti-Jewish. In no way is he intentionally attempting to change the history or the story of Israel. Rather, the scriptural figures to whom John's gospel account alludes stand as authentic witnesses of what he is trying to preach, especially the figures of Abraham and Moses as the true harbingers of the gospel.

I kind of thought that was a neat journey through John with a specific set of lenses on. But the thing I would really love to point out for you is the fact that John wanted you as the reader today to know something very special about what he thought about you. Even when he references Abraham and Moses and Isaiah and David, he wants you to know he's referencing Yeshua as well. The power and the faith and the might of this King Jesus is not limited. John wanted to make sure that you knew that this power of Yeshua, this power of God, was not limited to reach into the story of Israel only at certain moments. This power has always been ever-present, timeless, and John is portraying the story of Israel as not something that is apart from the person of Yeshua. He's not simply looking back at a story of Israel as a separate story from the person of Yeshua. He's not simply looking back to review, to try to get hints about the future story and the future coming king and the being of power and greatness of Yeshua. John is intentionally blending the two stories together, like those old projectors we used to have in elementary school — the transparency papers. John isn't setting Yeshua beside the story of Israel. He's putting them on top of each other, which is something Matthew, Mark, and Luke don't typically do, for other reasons.

## Convergence Between Israel and Yeshua

Convergence between the story of Israel and Yeshua. The message I would like for you to take away from John today is not all of the neat little nuggets of how John built his account of Yeshua with such intentionality — though I think it's important to remember them. The thing I would like for you to walk away from today is the reality of Yeshua being ever-present, with the same might and power and identity of who he is still not having changed. It was a real shock to the first readers of John's account when he made the divine logos — often translated as "word"

in [John 1](#), but in reality meaning the ever-present, infinite, divine logic or divine wisdom that manifests the blueprints of all creation. What? It shocked the first readers of John when he made Yeshua synonymous with that. What? It shocked the first readers of John when he said that even while Abraham was alive, Yeshua was there and present. It shocked the first readers of John when he equated the messianic prophecy of [Micah 5](#) — that this king has ever been. Can you imagine being there and trying to wrap your mind around this king being ever present throughout history? You'd twitch a little bit, wouldn't you?

Do you believe that today? Do you believe what John wrote? Do you believe that the same presence of the king that we have pledged our allegiance to has always been, even in conjunction with the story of Israel? Do we believe that? Can we make that proclamation — that before Abraham was, Yeshua was? Can we make that proclamation that the word was with God and the word was God, as John says? Do we believe that today? And if we believe that, he has been in this converged presence of time and space forever — all the way since the beginning, all the way before the beginning. Do we still believe that he is still in that converged place of space and time now? Do we? So why don't we act like it?

## A Self-Audit of Allegiance

I feel like sometimes some of us might need to revisit our level of loyalty and allegiance. I do self-audits all the time — our level of faithfulness to what we supposedly believe about the king who defeated death and sin once and for all. Because I wonder sometimes if we are so wrapped up in the world around us — the world that does not want to acknowledge that there is an ever presence of God, the world around us that has no sense of encouraging us to be more righteous and more faithful in the covenants of God, except to exploit it whenever it deems beneficial for them for us to become good Christians all of a sudden. Sometimes I wonder if we're so wrapped up in the world around us that we forget our place to be the world to come, in the present.

Guys, you hear me talk about the mission of the Bible a lot. That's your purpose. That's your purpose as an image bearer of God — to bear the image of his reign on earth. It sounds so simple, doesn't it? Paul says it several different ways. He speaks about us being an ambassador of the king — 2 Corinthians. So I have you here, let's talk about it for just a second. [2 Corinthians 5:9](#) — the most convicting and compelling and encouraging and hopeful and sometimes damning verse, I think, in the Bible. Here's what Paul says: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. Verse 20: we are therefore Christ's ambassadors — Christ

being another way of saying the king, or Mashiach. The king's ambassadors. As though God were making his appeal through us, we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

## Ambassadors of the King

Do we have any idea what an ambassador is? Like truly? No. An ambassador is someone that represents someone else, or a nation. And it seems so shallow when you put it that way. So I guess today we have different ambassadors from different nations, and whenever there's a conflict or we want to have a summit, all of the ambassadors come together in a big room with a round table, right? And they all talk about the world that they live in. And when that ambassador shows up for a meeting, he is no longer just representing himself. If I am an ambassador of the USA and I sit down at the chair with the little translator microphones and everything, I am no longer Matthew Vander Els. I am fully in that moment representing the entire kingdom of the United States of America and the leadership thereof. I am there representing the entire kingdom.

Now, can you imagine — and maybe this is a poor example — but can you imagine across the room two other ambassadors start bickering with one another? I'm sure this never happens, but they start bickering with one another. They start screaming at one another. They start telling, oh, you, this, this, this, this, and they make a big scene, and everybody turns their head, and it has everybody's attention. Everybody's throwing up arms. Every nation now has to consider this conflict, whatever they're doing over there. How does this affect the kingdom that I represent? Because if I even respond to that, then I'm responding with my kingdom representation. It's not about me. If I get mad and say, "You guys knock it off," and I throw a microphone at one of them and it knocks one in the head, Matthew Vander Els didn't do that. The United States of America did, in that moment. He represents the king there, his king. His king is fully embodied. His presence is right there.

## Whose Kingdom Do You Represent

All this distraction, all the arguments, all the loud noises happening in this fight on the other side of the room — it has everyone's attention, and everyone's getting upset. Everyone's getting emotional, and all these other nations are really getting impacted by these decisions. Like, what's going on? And they're starting to stand up and they're starting to scream back, and they're trying to intervene to maybe break up the fight. And before you know it, alliances have been formed in this sheer moment. Then war breaks out. An ambassador has to sit there and determine whether it is in the best interest of his nation to get involved in this conflict, or how

to be involved in this conflict. Why? Because his sole focus is the kingdom he belongs to. How do I reflect, represent, and show honor to the kingdom that I have pledged allegiance to? Because you can only give allegiance to one, right? If he loses focus on his job to reflect on his nation and gets involved in a big distraction of nonsense, bickering over someone else's nation or someone else's agenda — or the whole thing could just be a coup, a distraction — he's failed his role as an ambassador. Maybe that's not the best example, but take it for what it is.

You are an ambassador of Christ. Paul is saying — listen — when people see you at the grocery store, when people see you at your job, when people see you when they come over to your house and hang out, when people see you on social media, Facebook or Parler or whatever — Paul is saying that the expectation of you as a believer is that when these people see you, in any of the situations, they see nothing more than Christ himself. Bible's hard sometimes.

When you speak to them, they should feel the voice of Jesus hitting their ears. When you reach out to touch them, they should feel the gentleness and the mercy of Yeshua reaching out. When you show love and kindness and mercy, they should feel the love and the mercy. They should feel the overabundance of love, mercy, grace, kindness overflowing from you, already a vessel of God's kingdom. If John is trying to tell us one thing about this Christ, this king, this Mashiach, Yeshua, it is that his authority and his presence has been infused not only with the past stories of Israel — they are infused with your story today.

## **The Presence of Yeshua**

Matthew even agrees with that and how he ends his gospel account. Go, teach everybody everything I've taught you. That means represent everything I've been to you to the world. And behold, I am with you always. We love that last part. We play that token. We put that token in the machine every time we need encouragement. Oh, Jesus is still with me. No, it's the ever-presence. We hear these words, Yeshua is with us always, but sometimes we don't believe them, if we can be honest. Because if we believe those words, then we would live out his presence that is with us. That's the challenge. That's the pursuit that we fall forward in. Have you been living out the presence of Yeshua in the world today? Or have you been so distracted by other kingdoms and other ambassadors of kingdoms trying to make you become distracted to sympathize with whatever their goals are?

## **Distracted by the World**

The stocks in the past week have been quite fun. Anybody been paying attention to that? A couple of you. To the moon, right? It's been fun. I love some AMC theaters. It's been neat, right? I found myself yesterday feeling a little bit of FOMO. Anybody get FOMO sometimes? Fear of missing out, right? Yeah. And so you want to jump into a decision real quick because you get really filled with this, like, false hope or excitement or encouragement. I'm going to do this. It's going to be great. So I'm over here like, yeah, I got enough in my account. I'm going to buy like three AMC stocks. I'm going to join the revolution. Here we go. Yeah. Might buy some gas or something with it.

I found myself at a place where I was so excited that nothing could talk me out of it. I was so excited in such a short amount of time that I jumped on and bought some stocks. I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know what these stocks are, but everyone else is doing it, and I want to be part of that, and I'm so excited. Bam! Trade. I wasn't on Robinhood, so I was able to do it.

And it hit me yesterday afternoon. I was on this high, like checking my little account. Like, look, I'm up five cents. This is great. I was so excited to jump in with both feet into this thing that just appeared out of nowhere, this circumstance. Why am I not more excited to jump in to the possibility and the excitement and the hope that is found in God's kingdom overtaking the earth? Why have I never been FOMO about that? That was some self-reflecting with me yesterday. The stocks have been up and down as a result of all of that. If you don't know what's going on, just don't look at your 401k right now. But you play the arena, it's fun.

## The Danger of Competing Distractions

A lot of people have become distracted because it's scary to see your retirement or your savings go up or down, right? There's been a lot of anxiety over the past year because of this dang pandemic, right? It's not fun having your routine stripped from you. It's uncomfortable. It makes you grumpy, some of you. Every four years, people get upset because of a presidential election in this nation. Four years ago, a lot of people became very upset. This past month, a lot of people became very upset.

These are all things to give concern about, but none of these things should be as big as focusing on what you're here for. None of these things should be a big enough reason for you to misrepresent the ever-presence of Yeshua, your king, within you. None of them. Matt, you don't understand. I understand what the Bible says about our king. There are important things in the world. Give weight to them. Yes, do your part. Yes. But make sure that these aren't a distraction

from your mission and what you're to be an ambassador of. Don't use other things as an excuse to fill that vocation.

None of these things are weighty enough to distract you from the eternal mission that will still be in place after. The eternal mission that will still be in place no matter what the stock market's doing. The eternal mission that will still be in place every single time the old presidential election comes along. We were redeemed at too great a price to be distracted from the focus and the loyalty and the faithfulness of our king so easily.

## The Eternal Nature of Yeshua's Kingdom

And I believe that was part of what John was trying to portray and how he crafted his gospel. This guy, Yeshua, was not simply a blip on the radar of time, a blip on the radar of history. He did not simply do something 2,000 years ago. This person of Yeshua transcends time and creation itself in such a way that he has always been ever present in the lives of everyone in Israel's story, just as he is present in your life today.

## Prayer and Faithfulness

Have you prayed for God to give you the strength to continue to focus on your mission? That's what the Lord's Prayer is. Prepare me to focus on your kingdom coming and your will being done on earth as it is in heaven because you're the ambassador of that. Have you prayed for God to give you the strength and the focus to pray and bless your enemies? Matt, that's easy for you to say. No, it's not. Praying for your enemy stinks because it's everything the world tells us not to do. Whoever says pray for your enemies is upside down. Yeah, yeah, the upside-down kingdom of Christ compared to this world.

Have we continued praying for our leaders in government that God would use them not to simply make our country better, but remember, different vocation for a believer, but to pray for the leaders in government that God would use them in a mighty way, that he would give them an anointing that would further his kingdom. Would we dare pray that for government leaders that we may or may not disagree with? That's the calling of an ambassador of Yeshua, the king, the kingdom that we are citizens of. Not to be a broken record of Lashon Hara every time something happens that scares us.

Our faithfulness to that king shows forth the substance, the tangible reality of things hoped for. The fullness of God's kingdom exploding on earth. Our faithfulness should be the substance of

things hoped for for the world around us and the evidence of things not yet seen. That should be an active pursuit on a daily basis. The evidence that it's here despite the world not seeing it.

## Called as Ambassadors

And so worship team, you guys can come. And prayer team, I'm so excited to have you guys back after 10 months. That's our calling as a community of faith here at Founded in Truth. And I hope that you will join me in making that vocation, that calling, a priority in your life and this community. We have launched services in this building today, not to simply have a place where we can come and just sing with each other together. God has opened the doors for us to be an embassy of his kingdom here and no other.

Will you foster that type of environment in this community? Will you foster that environment of love and grace when people are broken here? Will you foster that atmosphere of forgiveness and mercy when people visit that may have a broken past or a broken present? That is what God is doing here today. And it's an honor to serve in that capacity with you as fellow believers.

So I don't know where you're at today, but I'd invite you to please stand for a time of worship and meditation of what it looks like to be an ambassador of Yeshua to your social circles now that you find yourself in, to your community, to your job, to the world around you in the present. And I know we have not had it in a while, but we have a theme off to the sides here. And so if you are prompted by the Spirit or if you're at a place in your life that you would like some type of support, like prayer, if you would like someone to join you and lift you up to pray for you today, I would invite you to take advantage of these prayer warriors during this time.

Guys, it's good to be back, but there's work to be done in the world. And this is only the beginning.

## Prayer of Commitment

Alvina Malchenu, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this time together. We thank you for this blessing of a day, this day of rest, that though temporal in time, we know it is a pointer to the ultimate rest that is only found in your kingdom and in the name of your Son, Yeshua. I ask that your spirit within us today would continue to mold us, that although this past year our routine has been taken from us, that that would not be an excuse not to continue walking forward, to continue imaging ourselves after Yeshua and presenting his image to the world, that we would not stop for distractions, but that we would look past them to see the people in the world that need to see you, feel you, and hear you. Give us that strength today

that You promised, Father, to give us the spirit that would do that. Give us that strength. Give us that opportunity that we would have the strength to walk it out. In the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen.

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