

## **Section One: Kingdom of God on Earth (Past)**

### **Category C: Israel – Kingdom Intelligence Report #5**

Topic: Fresh Start 4.0

Some commentators have described the period between the return from the Babylonian Captivity to the arrival of Messiah as Israel's Dark Ages. If that is true, then it is also true that it is always darkest before the dawn. And the dawning of a fresh start for the Kingdom of God on earth would begin with the birth of a child, to a poor and obscure couple named Joseph and Mary, in the tiny village of Bethlehem. His life was immediately placed in danger by King Herod; requiring a period of exile in Egypt until Herod's death. Scripture reveals very little about the early years of His childhood and young adulthood. But when the time came for His revealing as Israel's promised Messiah and the commencement of His public ministry, Adam 2.0 submitted to both the baptism of John and the temptation of the devil. In submitting to the baptism of John, He identified with those whom He came to save. In His encounter with the devil, He succeeded where the first Adam failed. All of which is recorded for us in Matthew 1:18-4:11.

However, for our purposes, the furtherance of God's Plan B in restoring Plan A, reaches a point of critical mass in the Messianic proclamation recorded in Matthew 4:17 –

**“From that time Jesus began to preach and say,  
‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”**

From this initial declaration by Jesus Christ as Israel's Messiah, followed by yet another in Luke 4:16-21, we see Him engaging in a ministry of teaching, discipleship and miracle working; designed to convince the people that their promised Messiah had arrived and that He would be able, if received, to establish the Kingdom of God on earth in a manner that would begin the restoration of Plan A. But the “if received” aspect of Jesus' Messianic ministry was always the big “if” that was never fulfilled at His first advent. The initial indicators of His ultimate rejection are characterized by resistance rather than reception. In Luke 4:22, when Jesus presents Himself as the Messiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, doubt is expressed by the people in asking: “Is this not Joseph's son?” That question and Jesus' response (vv23-27), causes the interaction to escalate to the point where the congregation seeks to take His life (vv28-29). This event would prove to be both a precursor and microcosm for the remaining earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. He would present Himself as Israel's Messiah and be rejected, resulting in the offer of God's plan of salvation to the entire Gentile world. Did not God anticipate this resistance which would ultimately result in Christ's rejection? Of course He did. The most powerful passage in all of the Old Testament, predicting such resistance and rejection is found in Isaiah 53:1-3 –

**“Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”**