

Knights Meeting Reflections for **May 2024**

As a follow-up to March where we left off in understanding --- that God's Covenants with Men and Jesus's Covenant with Mankind were part of God's Plan --- as well as the meaning of the differences in Covenants to us. Therefore, tonight, continuing in an understanding of God's Plan.

Historians and Theologians surmise in studying the last few books of the Old Testament, that God spent hundreds or thousands of years in letting mankind prepare for the coming of Jesus. They sight that God's potentially heartbreaking view that God's Plan of having mankind being sort of "self-managed" by Man was not working – triggering many pre-Christian events. Or, putting the same in a "softer" view, that God envisioned that mankind had evolved to a point where they could follow a Church, formed by God through Christ, instead of a central Spiritual Leader (which clearly had not worked).

Possibly, this lament of sorts by God, was in seeing the chosen people that He personally coached for thousands of years --- simply split from Twelve Tribes into separate Kingdoms of ten and two. Then, seeing the ten Northern Tribes going into Assyrian Exile (never to be seen again in faith), followed by, seeing the two Southern Tribes as Judah going into Babylonian Exile for 70 years. Although the Kingdom of Judah returned and restored Jerusalem --- it was now under suppression from not only the Greeks but the entire world which drove them into being a nearly totally introverted people by the year 200 BC. These are the same Jews that Jesus Himself witnessed as almost impossible to be evangelized – let alone -- evangelize anyone else.

Historians, that understand that Jesus existed (whether believing the spiritual side or not), also point to this period in time (about 200 years before Christ) where "worldly things" began to overwhelm all religions including the Israelite Faith - as witnessed by another desecration of the Jewish Temple in the second century BC. These historians point out that the "Known World" had been under Egyptian rule for thousands of years, followed by shorter periods of rule by the

Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks, ending with the last world-domination by the Romans in ruling for over 1,500 years.

These same Historians also note that only the Roman occupation period included a notable peaceful period, called Pax Romania, lasting for nearly 200 years from about 20-30 BC to 170-180 AD. This is why we hear in the first stanza of **“The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ”** at Christmas Eve Mass, as an announcement of the Messiah’s birth, -- the oddly sounding words **“... the whole world being at peace...”**.

So where is this “History” --- going in regard to God’s Plan? Historian writers that also recognize Faithfulness and Faithful writers that also believe in Historical Facts --- agree that, not just the 33 years that Jesus lived; but the hundred years before and after his life on this earth was all by God’s hand; maybe even orchestrated as a part of God’s Plan.

First, they point to the Maccabean Revolt in their 167 BC war against Greek Rule. To wage this war against an Empire, Judas Maccabeus and his sons had to first wage an internal reformation within the Jewish Faith to reform the many Sects again into one Jewish Faith. Why is this important, this re-gathering of a separated Faith was crucial for Jesus to deal with one group (yes there were **Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots**); but one Faith.

Second, was Herod the Great, the Roman conqueror of the Greeks. No matter how terrible he was personally -- he transformed Palestine and the surrounding Countries into the modern world that looked out after their own rather than “warring” against each other as they had for centuries.

Both of these events then brought about the 200 years of peace which not only allowed Jesus to carry his message from the Mediterranean Sea into the now countries of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and what was then Egypt; but allowed the Apostles and Saint Paul to spread that message to all of the “Known World”. Made possible by the world, at least temporarily, **“At Peace”** that God foresaw and made part of His Plan. Mary was not born, Gabreal did come to her, John the Baptist was not born – by any form of happenstance – these events were “Planned” by God for a very specific time in history.

Men, (no matter how clumsily presented) the message tonight is that we must never forget that through the Catholic Church, we are living within Gods Plan and in doing so – we are just as much, Disciples of the Holy Trinity, as if we had lived two thousand years ago. Not forcibly --- but by our own free will.