

Who do you say that I am?

Stories of the Kingdom (2b): Invitation, Welcome, Challenge
and Summons

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Challenge: The Call to Live as the New Covenant People

Introduction: Community and Praxis

- Review: Invitation and Welcome
- What was Jesus' view of the people who gave him their allegiance: the community?
- What were Jesus' intentions for their "praxis" or behavior?

New Covenant, New Community

- Did Jesus intend to found a “Church”?
 - Yes and No.
- What did Jesus intend to do?
 1. Offer a new individualistic form of religion
 2. Offer individuals a new way of salvation
 3. Establish a community that was quite different than Israel
 4. To reform Israel: Jesus did NOT intend to found a church because there already was one: the people of Israel!
- Did Jesus intend to bring the whole of Israel – all the Jews living in Galilee and Judea in 20 AD – into his following?
- Was he intending to mount a renewal movement that would sweep the board and, propelling him into a position of undisputed national leadership?

A group (sect) within National Israel

- Cells of followers, mostly continuing to live within their towns and villages, who by their adoption of his praxis, his way of being Israel, would be distinctive within their local communities.

Mark 2:18-20

- ¹⁸ Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. ²⁰ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

Jesus describes his followers as:

- His “little flock” (Luke 12:32)
- The “Bridegroom’s bride” (Mk 2:19/Mt 9:15/ Lk 5:34)
- His Disciples
- His Family (Mk 3:31-35)

Mark 3:31-35

³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." ³³ "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

New Covenant, New Practice

- How did Jesus expect this community to behave?
- Was Jesus just a moral teacher teaching timeless moral truths?
- Was he an eschatological prophet providing a contextual ethic for the interim prior to the end of the world?
- Eschatology means: “not the end of the world, but the rescue and renewal of Israel and hence the World.”
- Ethics means: the God-given way of life for those caught up in this renewal.

What sort of instructions would Jesus contemporaries have been expecting from someone who was announcing the inauguration of YHWH's kingdom?

- Take up arms and march on Jerusalem
- Abandon the half-committed life with a foot in the nationalist camp and a foot in Greek culture or Roman collaboration.
- Intensify observance to Torah, so that holiness will guarantee the victory of YHWH.
- Certainly there would be a demand, a summons.
- It would describe appropriate behavior for the people of God—purposes of covenant loyalty.

Jesus Challenge and Summons

- “If I by the finger of God, cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is upon you.” (Mt 12:28/ Lk 11:20)
- “...If I command you to behave as those with renewed hearts, then the kingdom of God has come upon you...”

The Renewed Heart

- “One of the great scriptural promises of restoration, of return of exile, concerned the renewed heart.” JVG p. 282.

Deuteronomy 30:6-10

⁶ The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.... ⁸ You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today.... The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, ¹⁰ if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Jeremiah 31:33

³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel

after that time,” declares the LORD.

“I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

Jeremiah 32:38-40

³⁸ They will be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹ I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰ I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Mark 10:1-12

- ¹ Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them. ² Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”
- ³ “What did Moses command you?” he replied.
- ⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”
- ⁵ “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. ⁶ “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ⁷ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, ⁸ and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Mark 7 (A new heart, not more taboos)

- ¹ The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and ² saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed. ³ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) ⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with ‘unclean’ hands?”
- ⁶ He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:
- “These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
⁷ They worship me in vain;
their teachings are but rules taught by men.’
- ⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.”
- ⁹ And he said to them: “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!
¹⁰ For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’ ¹¹ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”
- ¹⁴ Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵ Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean.’”
- ¹⁷ After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. ¹⁸ “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? ¹⁹ For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”)
- ²⁰ He went on: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ ²¹ For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”

Is it impossible?

Matt: 19: ¹⁰ The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.”

The Sermon on the Mount

- Not a miscellany of ethical instructions
- Not a set of suggestions or even commands on how to be a 'good person'.
- Not a guide map on how to get to heaven after death.
- It IS a challenge to Israel to *be* Israel.
- The Beatitudes reflect the longings of Israel, but identify to whom they belong.
- Israel is the Salt and Light
- Israel needs to fulfill the Law, "but I say"...with a renewed heart!
- See Matthew 5-7

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15)

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’

Jubilee: Forgiveness of Debts

- **Luke 4:16-30 (New International Version 1984)**

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”^[a]

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Acts 4:32-37

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. ³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Revolution, Politics, Community and Theology

- Jesus was creating a theological, social and political movement.
- Because he was explicitly opposing armed resistance, he would be doubly opposed by:
 - The Occupying Forces
 - Those supporting the armed resistance movement—hard-line Pharisees

Stories of the Kingdom (2): Invitation, Welcome, Challenge and Summons

Summons: The Call to be Jesus' Helpers and Associates



The Summons to Follow Jesus

Mt 9:9

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.



The Summons to Follow Jesus

Luke 5:10 Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.”¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

The Summons

- “Leave the dead to bury the dead”
- Offered nothing.... “Foxes have holes, birds have nests but the son of man has no where to lay his head.” (Mk 18-22)
- Promise long term reward (Mark 10:28-31)
- The Twelve Disciples: The Twelve Tribes of Israel

The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-29)

- ¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”
- ²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”
- ²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”
- ²² At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.
- ²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”
- ²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”
- ²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”
- ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”
- ²⁸ Peter said to him, “We have left everything to follow you!”
- ²⁹ “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Summons to assist in the Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

- Organized Groups to go out (12 and 70) Mt 10:1-42/ Lk 9:1-6; Mk 6:7-13; Lk 10:1-16
- Organized for a task: “The harvest was plentiful...”
- “...but the workers few.” They were to mobilize more people for the task.
- Travel Light: literally and metaphorically Matt 10:9
- Expect opposition Matt 10:16-22
- Hard to finish: Matt 10:23 I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

The Great Commandment and The Parable of the Good Samaritan

- ²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”
- ²⁷ He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”
- ²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”
- ²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”
- ³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins^[1] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’
- ³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”
- ³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”
- Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Many will come from the East and West

- “The fate of the nations is bound up with the fate of Israel...” NTPG p. 268:
 - What YHWH intended to do for the Gentiles, he would do *through* Israel.
 - When YHWH did for Israel, then the Gentiles would share in the results.
 - Judgment for renegade and Blessings for faithful Jews and Gentiles
 - If Israel’s God is at last becoming King, his kingdom would spread to the ends of the earth and include the subjugation of the Gentiles under the one head.

Isaiah 2:2-5

² In the last days

the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established
as chief among the mountains;
it will be raised above the hills,
and all nations will stream to it.

³ Many peoples will come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths.”

The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴ He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.

They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.

⁵ Come, O house of Jacob,
let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Zechariah 14:9

⁹ The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.

Isaiah 49:1-6

The Servant of the LORD

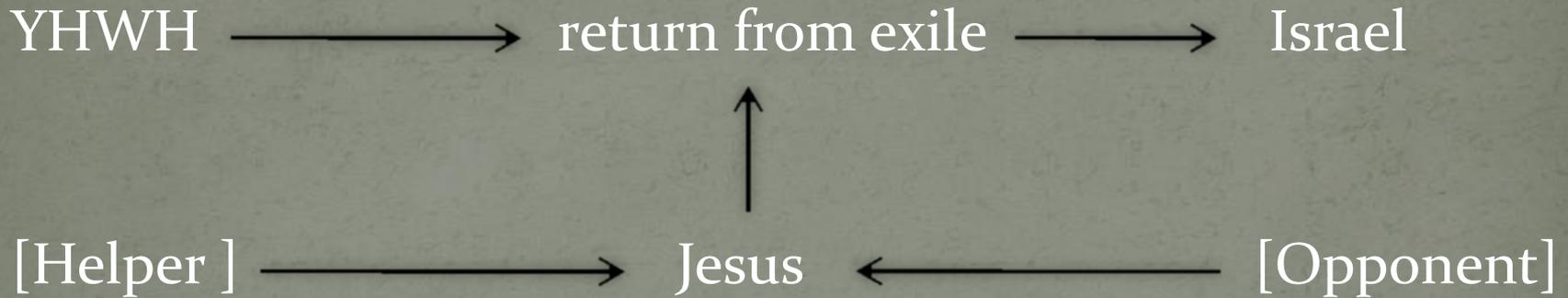
- ¹ Listen to me, you islands;
hear this, you distant nations:
Before I was born the LORD called me;
from my birth he has made mention of
my name.
- ² He made my mouth like a sharpened
sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me into a polished arrow
and concealed me in his quiver.
- ³ He said to me, “You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will display my
splendor.”

- ⁴ But I said, “I have labored to no purpose;
I have spent my strength in vain and for
nothing.
Yet what is due me is in the LORD’s hand,
and my reward is with my God.” ⁵ And
now the LORD says—
he who formed me in the womb to be his
servant
to bring Jacob back to him
and gather Israel to himself,
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD
and my God has been my strength—
- ⁶ he says:
“It is too small a thing for you to be my
servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring my salvation to the
ends of the earth.”

The Faith of the Centurion (Mt 8:5-13)

- ⁵ When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ⁶ “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering.” ⁷ Jesus said to him, “I will go and heal him.”
- ⁸ The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”
- ¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, “I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. ¹¹ I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- ¹³ Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that very hour.

Narrative Story Line



Sender = YHWH

Receiver = Israel

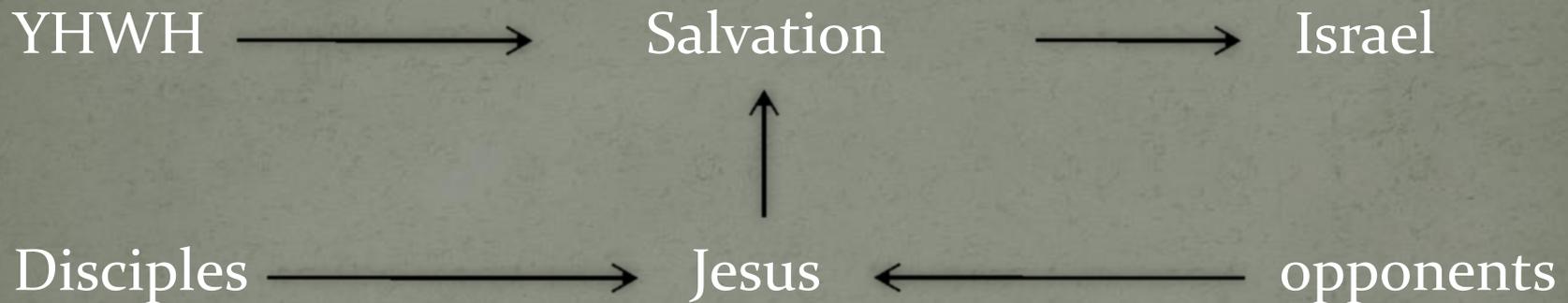
Object = return from exile

Agent = Jesus

Helper = ?

Opponent = ?

Jesus Story Line for Israel



Sender = YHWH

Receiver = Israel

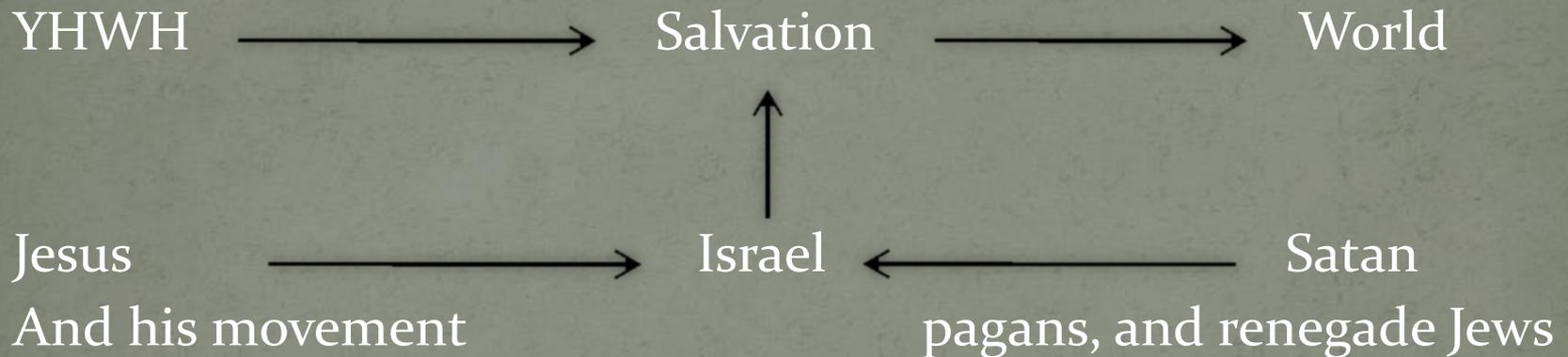
Object = return from exile or Salvation

Agent = Jesus

Helper = Disciples

Opponent = ? (next week)

Jesus' Larger Story Line



Sender = YHWH

Receiver = World

Object = Salvation

Agent = Israel

Helper = Jesus and his movement

Opponent = Satan, pagans and renegade Jews

Jesus True Wisdom

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Conclusion: the Renewed People of God

- The Story Jesus was telling was Israel's story
- The Story of the Kingdom
- Those who responded are true, restored Israel
- Jesus invitation was wide to all repentant and faith-filled in his way.
- Jesus gives his followers a way of life which would characterize them as *his* followers.
- This would be threatening to many in Israel
- His aim was the fulfillment of YHWH's purpose for Israel and Israel's purposes for the world.