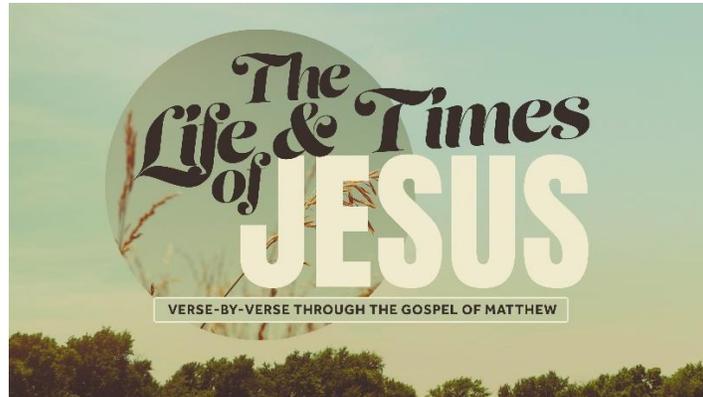


FELLOWSHIP NOTES – September 22nd, 2022



Part 1: “The King is Coming” – Matthew 1:1-17

Biblical Setting:

Church history and Christian tradition have always placed the gospel of Matthew first in the four gospel accounts of Jesus because Matthew forms the bridge that links all the elements of the Old Testament – the origin of everything including sin, the promise of a Savior the answer for sin, the Jews as the chosen people, God’s heart for Gentiles (all people), and the prophecies of the Old Testament about the promised Messiah with Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all those prophecies as the coming King.

Historical Setting:

The birth of Jesus came at a time when the land of Israel had been under the empirical rule of Rome for 70 years. Rome was just the latest in a line of conquering nations who controlled Israel even before her last king ended his reign in 686 B.C. God’s people were downtrodden and yearned for a return of the “glory days” when she was a world power under Kings like David and Solomon. It had been 400 years since God had sent a prophet to Israel – Malachi – and they were anxious to welcome their Messiah whom they believed would rid the Jews of their Roman occupiers and restore the former glory to Israel once again. But they didn’t understand that the promised Messiah would first come to free them spiritually long before he would free them nationally. They didn’t understand that he came to die and that only through his death would he one day come to rule and reign over the whole earth in their capital city of Jerusalem. That reality of a thousand-year reign has yet to be fulfilled.

Spiritual Setting: (See The 400 Silent Years between Malachi and Matthew attached)

We can sum up the 400 years between Malachi and Matthew as a time of spiritual dryness and deadness. The spiritual leaders of Israel were religiously zealous, but spiritually lifeless and the setting was ripe for the promised Messiah to arrive and call His people back to focus on the kingdom of God again.



Theme:

The gospel of Matthew was written first for a Jewish audience, to unequivocally prove to them that Jesus is the promised Messiah. It is saturated with 130 references to the Old Testament Scriptures. Throughout the gospel Jesus' kingship is the central theme of Matthew.

The Author:

Matthew, also called Levi, was a Jewish tax collector when Jesus called him to follow Him as one of His disciples (Matt. 9:9). Jewish tax collectors were considered traitors to their own people because they represented the Roman Empire in collecting taxes. In addition, tax collectors routinely collected more than what they needed to hand over to Rome thus padding their pockets by pilfering their own people. This allowed them to live much more lavishly than most people in Jewish society. Tax collectors were considered by the general populous in Israel as the "worst of sinners" equal with harlots, heathens, robbers and murderers. Matthew however turned his back on his wealth and power and dedicated his heart and life to following Jesus. Church tradition holds that Matthew died a martyr's death for his Savior.

The Ancestral Qualifications of Jesus as King – Matt. 1:1-17

Fact #1. Jesus has the necessary _____ to be King and is therefore the promised Messiah and King – 1:1c

Fact #2. Jesus's qualifications include being of the royal line of _____ – 1:1b (2 Samuel 7:12-13)

Fact #3. Jesus' qualifications also include being of the line of the father of the Jews, _____, and that He fulfills God's covenant promise to him as well – 1:1c

PERIOD:

Abraham the patriarch to King David
King David to Deportation to Babylon
Deportation to Babylon to the Time of Christ

DATES:

2000 – 1000 B.C.
1000 – 605 B.C.
605 – 5 B.C.

The Grace of God in the Genealogy of Jesus

1. _____ (Matt. 1:3) – Genesis 38
2. _____ (Matt. 1:5) – Joshua 2 – 6
3. _____ (Matt. 1:5) – Ruth 1-4
4. _____ (Matt. 1:6) – 2 Samuel 11-12

Next Sunday: "The King is Here!"

Growth Group Study Guide for September 25th – October 2nd

Getting Started

Group Discussion:

When you were young what is one thing you like best or remember most about your grandparents?

What do you know about your family's genealogy?

What is one thing that...

- 1.) You learned about the genealogy of Jesus from the Sunday morning message?
- 2.) Surprised you about the genealogy of Jesus?
- 3.) Makes you thankful about the genealogy of Jesus?

Digging Deeper

1. What makes the birth of Jesus so impactful given the historical setting into which he was born? (See "Historical Setting" on Sunday morning notes)
2. What was the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel when Jesus was born? (See "Spiritual Setting" on Sunday morning notes; READ together the information on the next page – "The 400 "Silent Years")
3. What qualifications did Jesus have that gave Him the right to claim to be the Messiah and King of the Jews? (See Sunday morning notes)
4. Why do you think God included some "shady" people in the genealogy of His Son Jesus?

How does Matthew himself, the author of the gospel, serve as an example of this?

What does this tell us about all of us who know Christ as Savior and are part of His eternal family?
5. Which one of the four women and their story included in Christ's genealogy (See list above) most speaks to your heart?

Conclusion:

Most people might read the opening section of Matthew chapter 1, see the genealogy of Jesus, and instantly conclude that it is boring and not impactful to their lives. Why would you believe this to be a unwise conclusion?

Wrapping Up

Close in prayer thanking God for sending His Son Jesus to fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies and become the King of Kings and Savior of the world.

The 400 “Silent Years” Between Malachi and Matthew

The 400 years of silence refers to the time between the Old Testament and New Testament, during which, so far as we know, God did not speak—no Scripture was written. The 400 years of silence began with the warning that closed the Old Testament: “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5-6) and ended with the coming of John the Baptist, the Messiah’s forerunner.

At the time of Malachi’s warning, about 430 B.C., the Jews had returned to Israel from the Babylonian captivity (as merchants, not shepherds). The Medo-Persian Empire still ruled Israel, and the temple had been rebuilt. Both the Law and the priesthood of Aaron’s line had been restored, and the Jews had given up their worship of idols. Nevertheless, Malachi’s warning was not without cause. The Jewish people were mistreating their wives, marrying pagans and not tithing, and the priests were neglecting the temple and not teaching the people the ways of God. In short, the Jews were not honoring God.

In 333 B.C., Israel fell to the Greeks, and in 323 B.C. it fell to the Egyptians. The Jews generally were treated well throughout those reigns, and they adopted the Greek language and many of the Greek customs and manners, and in Egypt the Old Testament was translated into Greek. That translation, the Septuagint, came into widespread use (and is quoted frequently in the New Testament).

Jewish law and the priesthood remained more or less intact until Antiochus the Great of Syria captured Israel in 204 B.C. He and his successor, Antiochus Epiphanes, persecuted the Jews and sold the priesthood, and in 171 B.C. Epiphanes desecrated the Holy of Holies. This desecration resulted in an uprising by Judas Maccabeus of the priestly line of Aaron, and in 165 B.C. the Jews recaptured Jerusalem and cleansed the temple. However, fighting continued between the Jews and the Syrians until the Romans gained control of Israel in 63 B.C., at which time Pompey walked into the Holy of Holies, once again shocking and embittering the Jews. In 47 B.C., Caesar installed Antipater, a descendant of Esau, as procurator of Judea, and Antipater subsequently appointed his two sons as kings over Galilee and Judea.

As the New Testament opens, Antipater’s son, Herod the Great, a descendant of Esau, was king, and the priesthood was politically motivated and not of the line of Aaron. Politics also resulted in the development of two major factions, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees favored the liberal attitudes and practices of the Greeks. They held to only the Torah as regards religion but like most aristocrats they did not think God should have any part in governing the nation. The Pharisees were conservative zealots who, with the help of the scribes, developed religious law to the point where the concerns and care of people were essentially meaningless. Additionally, synagogues, new places of worship and social activity, had sprouted up all over the country, and religious and civil matters were governed by the lesser and the greater Sanhedrins, the greater Sanhedrin being comprised of a chief priest and seventy other members that handed out justice, sometimes by 39 lashes administered with full force.

Between the time of Malachi and the coming of the Messiah, several prophecies were fulfilled, including the 2,300 days of desecration between 171 and 165 B.C. (Daniel 8:14). However, the people did not put to good use either the fulfilled prophecies nor the 400 years the nation was given to study Scripture, to seek God (Psalm 43-44), and to prepare for the coming Messiah. In fact, those years blinded and deafened the nation to the point where most of the Jews could not even consider the concept of a humble Messiah (Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 6:10; John 12:40).

Almost two millennia have passed since the New Testament canon was completed, and though the Word is full of grace and truth, and though the birth, life, and death of Jesus fulfilled a staggering array of prophecies, the Jews as a people have yet to open their eyes and ears. But Jesus is coming again, and one day a remnant will both see and hear. (From GotQuestions.org)