

Sent: Thu, Sep 26, 2019 12:41 pm
Subject: Tuesday Nite's MOB Study on Matthew 1

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons!" (Galatians 4:4-5)

You've all heard the old adage: "Timing is everything!" Certainly, for us! And for all mankind! We have history (a long history) of time! And sometimes we look back on our own lives--and it all seems to pass so quickly! But is our eternal God ever limited, or strapped for time? Obviously not! And yet at some point (in time?) He created time and space, and this is a great mystery! The Bible says "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (and everything in it) and (on the sixth day) He created man in His own image... and it was all very good!" (Genesis 1) There was actually a time, according to Genesis 3, when God apparently used to "walk" with Adam and Eve "in the garden (a very special place), in the cool of the evening" (a designated time of day)! Life was very good (the "really good times")! Until that day--a very bad day--when Adam and Eve--listened to the voice of Satan, "sinned"-- were thrown out of the garden, and separated from God! (You know the rest of the story!)

But God had a plan, from all eternity, to somehow, at some point in time, restore man to relationship with Himself! We know it as God's "plan of redemption"! And, according to Genesis 3:15, it was going to come about through the "seed of a woman"! It would take some time! A nation! A people! A covenant! A "king"! An exile! Many "generations"! The sinfulness of man was great!

Then it happened! The time had come for God to send forth His Son! Matthew captures the astounding story: the "record of the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham!" And some amazing details of the "birth of Christ"! (Genealogies were common in the Old Testament, so Matthew's inclusion of one here "introduces a Jewish flavor to Matthew's gospel immediately," writes Dr. Constable! And so, does the reference to Abraham and to David! Reminding them of the promise for a Messiah, who they thought of as a "king" who would come to deliver them from their bondage under Roman rule!)

Noted theologian Matthew Henry (another "Matthew"!) once wrote: "The Old Testament begins with the book of the generations of the world...but the beauty of the New Testament is that it begins with the generation of Him who made the world!" Someone else has noted: "The Old Testament begins with manmade in the image of God; the New Testament with God made in the image of man!"

Matthew identifies Jesus (in Hebrew meaning "the Lord saves") as "the Messiah (or "Christ, the Anointed One"), the son of David, the son of Abraham"! And why did he include David before "father" Abraham? As every good Jew knew, God had made a covenant with David that guaranteed that a descendant of his would rule over the kingdom of Israel forever! (2 Samuel 7:12-13) While God had promised Abraham, among other things, that a descendant of his would "bring blessings to all the families of the world" (Genesis 12:1-3), Dr. Constable notes that "as

the Gospel unfold, it becomes clear that the Jews needed to accept Jesus as the promised son of David (and sovereign King) before He would (could?) bring blessings to the whole world"!

Matthew's genealogy, however, is particularly interesting and significant--while contrary to Jewish tradition--in that it includes five women--including those one might not expect in the lineage of Jesus (unless one understands the depravity of man and the amazing grace of God)! Tamar, a Canaanite woman and Judah's daughter-in-law, who played the part of a prostitute to gain Judah's attention (after the death of her husbands) and as an act of incest gave birth to twins, including Perez in the line Christ (Genesis 38:13-30); Rahab, the harlot in Jericho, who hid (and saved) two Israeli spies and was later rescued at the "battle of Jericho," after hanging out the "scarlet cord"--eventually becoming the great, great grandmother of David! (Joshua 2 and 6). Ruth, the Moabite woman and once a worshiper of idols, who chose to stay with Naomi when she left Moab to return to the land of Judah and ended up marrying Boaz, the son of Rahab, and becoming the great grandmother of David (and even has a book in the Bible telling all about her story)! And then there was Bathsheba, who Matthew goes out of his way to call the "former wife of Uriah"! (The horrible truth is that David, the king, had Uriah murdered after his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, eventually giving birth to Solomon, continuing the line of Jesus! (More on David and Bathsheba, and Uriah, in 2 Samuel 11)!

John MacArthur notes that each of the women is an "object lesson about the workings of God's divine grace"! And it surely is, but sinfulness of both the men and the women included in the genealogy--as we can read about in the Word--is more than enough evidence of the depravity of all mankind and of the need for a Savior who "came not to call the righteous but sinners--like Matthew himself (Matthew 9:9-13), and each of us!

All of this, of course, sets the scene for the story of Mary who was "found to be with child...while betrothed to Joseph, before they came together"! Seemingly scandalous--until "an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream" and announced that the "Child who had been conceived in her was of the Holy Spirit"! (Matthew 1:18-20)

But there's so much more to this astounding story! The angel made it clear that Mary would "bear a Son" and that Joseph should ("shall!") call His name Jesus for (and here it is!) "He will save His people from their sins!" And there's more! "Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet (Isaiah): "Behold! the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, "God with us"! (Matthew 1:21-23)

Interestingly, going back to the genealogy, Matthew (under inspiration by the Holy Spirit) made it clear not to call Joseph "the father"! The exact words in vs. 16 say: "Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah"! Legally, he would be the father, and thus tied to the line of David as the royal son! But, physically, He was Mary's Son!

Even more significantly, when God "sent forth His Son" (Jesus, "born of a woman" but conceived of the Holy Spirit), He was both fully God and fully man! And this raises what David Platt, pastor/teacher at McLain Bible Church, calls "the most extraordinary miracle in the whole Bible, and the most remarkable mystery in the whole universe"! Speaking of the doctrine of the

"Incarnation"! God becoming flesh! The Willmington Guide to the Bible puts it this way: "He was not only completely God as though He had never been man; but He was also completely man as though He had never been God!" A mystery too hard for us to fathom! And yet this part of God's redemptive plan!

And, last but not least, He's called "Immanuel," meaning "God with us"! Interesting that Matthew would begin his gospel, in Matthew 1, with this thought about God being with us and, we'll find ending his writing, in Matthew 28:19-20, with the same assurance for those who follow Jesus Christ: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo (short for "Lowell"?) I am with you always, even to the end of the age"!

Well, more next week on the story of birth of Christ, including about the "wise men" as we move on to Matthew 2, and our memory verse from 1 Corinthians 1:20 (see if you can get the connection and the application for our "day" and "generation")!

And so, men, spend some quality time with God, and in His Word, this week and be a blessing!

Lowell