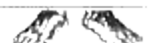


The Gentiles in Prophecy

	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Daniel 2)	Daniel's Dream (Daniel 7)	The Kingdoms Prophesied
	Gold (Head)	Lion	Babylonian
	Silver (Breast & Arms)	Bear	Medo-Persian
	Brass (Belly & Thighs)	Leopard	Greek
	Iron (Legs)	Beast with Iron Teeth	Roman
P R O P H E T I C G A P			
	Iron & Clay (Feet)	Ten Horns	Antichrist
	Stone	Son of Man	Jesus Christ

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH WEEK 2 - THE WORLD INTO WHICH JESUS WAS BORN

Daniel 2 tells us that “The Gentiles are coming!”

The book of Daniel begins in 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar is the King of Babylon. He had a dream and Daniel interpreted that dream.

Luke 21:24 gives us an explanation of Daniel 2 – *“And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”*

We see in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream - The Time of the Gentiles – which speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem. The times of the Gentiles began with Babylon and will continue through the Tribulation (Rev. 11:1-2). We see the Gentile empires laid out for us in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

In the book of Daniel, God has laid out for the world the flow of the Gentile empires: Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome. . . . And those empires rose and fell! It HAPPENED! NOTE: Dan. 2:4b through Dan. 7:28 was written in Aramaic which was “the contemporary language of international business.” John MacArthur.

This happened. Nebuchadnezzar’s image has been historically documented – we find an historical record of these empires - through to the legs of iron which depict the Roman Empire. Rome had armies clad in IRON armor known as the “Iron Legions of Rome.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s image - we see the empires noted in Daniel 2 and in Daniel 7:
Babylon – head of gold (Dan. 2); lion (Dan. 7) – 612 BC

Medo-Persia (Medes – old Persia) – chest & arms of silver; bear raised up on one
- 538 BC

Greece – belly & thighs of bronze; leopard (swift) – 330 BC

Rome – 2 legs of iron; Eastern Roman Empire (Constantine) and the Western Roman Empire; beast with iron teeth – 63 BC

PROPHETIC GAP – before the empire surfaces which will produce the antichrist! We’re in that gap in history. It’s NOW!

Revived Roman Empire - feet partly of iron and partly of clay; ten horns – future revived Roman Empire from which the antichrist comes.

In Daniel 2:34-35 - we read of a stone that was cut out that struck the feet – *“You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”*

That stone – the Kingdom of God. This is FUTURE! This is speaking of the Millennial Kingdom – a physical, literal kingdom on this earth!

Continuing in Daniel 2:44 – *“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to*

other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

All the other kingdoms – broken in pieces. God’s Kingdom will stand forever!

Because the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires did indeed come to power – they literally happened in history, we know that the rest of Daniel 2 – the rest of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream - will be fulfilled! The stage is being set today for the fulfillment of the toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image - partly of clay and iron. The stage is being set today for the stone that will crush all world empires. The stone speaks to the Kingdom of God on earth. That will occur!! God’s kingdom that He promised to Israel is a physical literal kingdom and God will deliver it. Jesus will physically reign from Jerusalem, sitting on King David’s throne. Believers will rule and reign with Jesus during the thousand year Millennial Kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is an example of God’s unfolding His plan. The book of Daniel tells us when the Messiah would come (Dan. 9:24-27) – before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. The book of Daniel addresses the times of the Messiah. Dan. 9:25 – we see the triumphal entry of Jesus – He presents Himself as “prince/King”; Dan. 9:26 we read that the Messiah will be cut off but not for Himself – we see His crucifixion.

Last week as we looked at Luke 24 and read about Cleopas and his friend returning to their home ON the day of Jesus’ resurrection, Jesus preached to them about Himself from the entire OT. Jesus is in every book in the OT! God gave the Jewish people the Mosaic Covenant which included the Law (613 commandments) to show them that they could NEVER keep the law. He told them that if they broke one commandment they would be guilty of all (Dt. 27:26; James 2:10). Psa. 19:7 – the law is perfect – it restores the soul. BUT – mankind cannot keep the law (Rom. 8:3). What we have in the OT is inspired by God. The teaching of the OT is NOT to be discarded! The 613 commandments were given to the Jewish people to show them their NEED of a Savior, a Deliverer, a Messiah! NOTE: the Law only condemns; it cannot save – because we cannot keep the law (II Cor. 3:7ff).

And so, within Israel’s history, the people disobeyed God’s law. AND, they worshipped other God’s – breaking the first commandment – you shall have no other gods before Me! God sent the prophets to warn them of their sin! GOD’S GRACE! Did you ever consider that God’s warnings through the Prophets were because of GOD’S GRACE? God told them if they didn’t obey – He would scatter them from their land.

GOD UNFOLDS HIS PLAN through the pages of Scripture. What we have is a progressive revelation of God’s plan for the WORLD! As we see so clearly in the image of Nebuchadnezzar – nations rising and falling; we see the nations CHANGING. GOD, of course, does NOT change! God’s plan always focuses on redemption/salvation through the Messiah.

JESUS was not born into the world of Judaism that Abraham, and Moses, and King David knew. Another Judaism had developed when the Jewish people were in Babylon – in exile. The beginnings of Rabbinic Judaism (opinions/teachings of the Rabbis – NOT inspired by God). The Rabbis began embellishing on the 613 commandments that God had given Israel. The Rabbis added legalistic, external, manmade rulings that would be impossible to obey! While idol worship caused the Jewish people to be scattered from their land and driven into exile, when they returned to Israel, the “religion” of self-righteousness plagued Israel.

AND Judaism in Jesus’ day was impacted by Hellenistic thought – Greek philosophy which places man at the center of the universe – not God! HOW did that happen?

Let’s look at Malachi 4:5-6 – the last book of the OT – *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”*

What a way to end a book. What a way to end the 39 books of the OT!

Flip over to Matthew 1:1 – here’s the answer – the solution regarding the curse – THE MESSIAH! BUT, Matthew wasn’t written directly following Malachi. In fact, 430 years transpired between Malachi and the birth of Jesus! (Malachi was written in 430 BC)

The years between Malachi and Matthew have been called. . .

- “The intertestamental period” – the time between the testaments – OT and NT – the time between the end of Malachi (430 BC) and the beginning of the events recorded in Matthew which include the end of the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire and the beginning of the Roman Empire.
- “The silent years” – God was silent? Or so the people thought. During this time He did not send a prophet to Israel to warn the people!
- During those 430 years – there was no revelation from God!
- Was God there during those 430 years? Most assuredly! He’s always there. He’s eternal. God is working ALWAYS!

Was God silent? NO! God is never silent. He has communicated to mankind from the beginning (Heb. 1:1-2).

Gal. 4:4 – “in the fullness of time” – what God, Who is above time and space, has been orchestrating on this earth. At THE RIGHT TIME, God sent forth His Son. Everything was lined up by God. God had set the stage. God prepared the world for the first coming of the Messiah. Is He preparing the world NOW for Jesus’ Second Coming?

The Jews were to be God's missionaries to the world – to tell the world of the one true God. The Jewish people were failing in their service to God of spreading His word. BUT GOD's will is NEVER thwarted! So, in scattering the Jews – guess what? God took them to the world. Faithful Daniel and his three friends were taken to Babylon and they were truly a testimony to the glory of God. Babylon hears about the one true God through Daniel and his faithful friends!

While the Jewish people were in their scattered state - exiled in Babylon – they did not have access to the Temple in Jerusalem. There was no Temple in Jerusalem; it had been destroyed! Synagogues (schools) were established. No Temple – no sacrifices – no priests. Rabbis replaced priests as there were no sacrifices to offer! “Priest” means bridge builder. Another Judaism began to develop – Rabbinic Judaism.

God carries out judgment against Babylon. Babylon is conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire. God used Persia to bring the Jews back into the land after their captivity (Ezra 1:22-23). WHY would Persia allow the Jews to return to the land?

- The Jewish people had been in exile for 70 years in Babylon. Jeremiah had prophesied a 70-year exile (Jer. 25:11-12; Jer. 29:10); and we read about the 70-year exile in II Chron. 36:21.
- Persia implemented the repatriation of conquered peoples – sending them back to their own lands. That's how they governed! GOD orchestrated the conquering of Babylon by Persia so that Israel would be returned to their land.

God orchestrated Greece to conquer Persia – along with most of the known world. Alexander the Great appeared on the scene.

- He commissioned Rabbis (legend – 70) to translate the Hebrew OT into Greek – the language of the nations! The world was able to understand the OT!
- Aside from the Greek translation of the OT, Greece attempted to bring Greek philosophy to the world. Greece Hellenized the world.
- Greek philosophy taught:
 - Man is the center of the universe, not God!
 - Piety is in external actions and reality is based on human logic.
 - Traditions are more important than any word of God.

Hellenism massively seeped into Judaism.

- External purification commandments spoke to purification of the heart – cleansing of the heart through the Messiah!
- Hab. 2:4 – the just shall live by faith.
- Deut. 6:30 – *“And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”*
- NOTE: circumcision (cutting away the male foreskin), which is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant, speaks of the need to cut away sin and be cleansed. MacArthur – “It is the male organ that most clearly demonstrates the depth of depravity because it carries the seed that produces depraved sinners.”
- In speaking to Moses of the children of Israel, we read God’s heartfelt words in Deut. 5:29 – *“Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”*

As Hellenism/Greek philosophy infiltrated Judaism – many of the Jews departed from the Biblical Judaism that God gave to Abraham, Moses, and David. As we read the Gospels, Jesus contends constantly with exterior rules – with the letter of the law – upon which the Rabbis embellished.

Babylon took Judah into captivity. Persia returned Israel to the land of Israel. Through Greece the world understood the OT. . .

Rome conquered Greece. God used Rome to build a system of roads that linked the world under Roman rule and enhanced the spread of the Gospel. God used Rome to bring peace to the world (pax Romana). That peace made travel and the exchange of ideas possible on a broader scale. Pax Romana led to the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, to the uttermost part of the world!

To reiterate, the Jewish world that Jesus entered at His first coming was not the same Jewish world that Abraham, Moses, and King David knew. The world had changed. Judaism had changed. As we read the Gospels, we need to know that Jesus is not railing against what God gave to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David. He's railing against self-righteousness that had come to fruition in exile and following exile.

The world with its bent on man as the center of the universe, had infiltrated Judaism!

As already discussed, Luke 21:24 speaks of the TIME OF THE GENTILES. Babylon was the beginning of the “time of the Gentiles” – when the nations – Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome and the revived Roman Empire (Rev. 11:2) – would trample Jerusalem. And so, there was an air of frustration among the Jewish people prior to

Jesus' first coming. They had been promised a kingdom and Gentile kingdoms had been trampling over them and setting up their own governments. BUT GOD promised that the government would be upon the shoulders of the Messiah (Isa. 9:6) and God's will is never thwarted. This is the Messiah that the Jewish people expected in Jesus' day!

As we flip over to Matthew from Malachi – we are in the age of heightened MESSIANIC FERVOR. “In the fullness of time God sent His Son. . .” (Gal. 4:4).

And so, we turn the page from the end of Malachi to the beginning of Matthew – with all this knowledge in mind – and we read - “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.”

This is how Matthew begins? This is how the NEW TESTAMENT begins? Is this a grabber? NO – this is CRUCIAL to our understanding of Jesus. It's in NEON – due to this genealogy – that the NT is a continuation of the OT. God's account of His plan didn't end with the warning from the prophet Malachi. The unfolding of His plan continues. And, here we have that proof with the genealogy of the Messiah.

Firstly, “genealogy” means origin. Very important to the Jewish people. Genealogies proved that a person was indeed a descendant of Abraham, Isaac (through whom the promise would come (Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7), and Jacob (father of the 12 tribes of Israel). Genealogies recorded tribal lineage. Your genealogy determined what land you rec'd based on ones tribe. Genealogy was also crucial in determining the priesthood. The law specified that the priests must come from the tribe of Levi. Genealogy also helped determine who would be king - only those who were of the tribe of Judah. That helps explain why Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 contain lengthy listings of the various people returning from captivity. As the Jews re-established themselves in Israel, it was crucial that they know which families had historically held which positions in the nation.

Kings of Israel (northern Kingdom) were not from the tribe of Judah. The first King of the Israel (after Solomon; in the Divided Kingdom time) – Jeroboam who was an Ephramite (I Kings 11:26); his son Nadab succeeded him (Ephramite) (I Kings 15:25); then Baasha of Issachar (I Kings 15:27; I Kings 16:33); then Zimri who was a servant of Baasha; then Omri who was the commander of the army; then Ahab of Jezreel, the son of Omri; Jezreel falls under Issachar; then Ahab's son, Ahaziah.

Luke 2:1, 3 - *“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world ... And everyone went to his own town to register.”* That meant that each man must return to his ancestral hometown—the town from which his family had originally come. But the only way you could be sure about your ancestral hometown was to know your genealogy. This is why Mary and Joseph had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem in the ninth month of her pregnancy. They had to make that long and dangerous journey (about 80 miles; 4 day trip) because Bethlehem was Joseph's

ancestral hometown—a fact they knew from studying their genealogy. The Jewish people knew their lineage!

How do we know that Jesus is the Promised One of Israel – the Messiah? In God’s covenant with Abraham, God promised that through Abraham – through one of his descendants – God would bless all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). God promised that the Messiah would come through Abraham’s line. Here’s the point – in order to qualify as the Jewish Messiah and the Savior of the world, firstly, Jesus had to be Jewish. He had to be a direct descendant of Abraham through Isaac (Gen. 21:12 - in Isaac shall your seed be called; Isaac was the son of promise; Rom. 9:7).

Was He? Check the genealogy. We read of not only Abraham but also Isaac (Matt. 1:1-2). Jesus is Jewish (Rev. 5:5 – and He’s returning as a Jew!).

Through the Davidic covenant, God promised that a King would reign eternally on David’s throne (II Sam. 7:12-16) – the King of Kings – Jesus. In order to qualify as the King of the Jews, Jesus had to be from the tribe of Judah – AND in the kingly line going back to David. Was He? Check the genealogy. It reads, “. . . the son of David.”

AND, Matthew’s genealogy BEGINS with David – which is very odd for a Jewish genealogy. WHY? Genealogies either begin or end with the elder. Abraham precedes David – yet, David is first!! WHY? The people were longing for a KING!!! Messianic fervor! They knew that the Messiah would be the “Son of David”! That’s how they hailed Jesus at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem – “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

Remember, Matthew’s gospel was written to a Jewish audience to prove that Jesus was the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, the King of Israel! Matthew links Jesus with King David at the very outset of his Gospel.

Do you think Matthew grabbed his readers with the first verse? Most definitely!
Matthew was telling them in the first verse that Jesus is the King of the Jews and the Messiah/Deliverer of the world!!!

Matthew records Jesus’ genealogy through Joseph. JOSEPH???? Joseph is NOT Jesus’ biological father.

Jesus’ genealogy in Matthew 1 through Joseph (NOT Jesus’ biological father!):

- Written to a Jewish audience
- Begins with David and ends with Jesus
- Joseph is in King David’s line through Solomon. Those in Solomon’s line had the right to the throne.
- ROADBLOCK: Jeconiah (Matt. 1:11). Jeconiah was such an evil king that God pronounced a curse on Jeconiah (Jer. 27:24-30) “None of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David” (Jer. 27:30).

- From Jeconiah, none of those in Joseph's genealogy took the throne. There was no throne at this time! (Hosea 3:4)
- Jesus is directly related to King David through Jeconiah in the genealogy that is recorded through Joseph. How, then, can Jesus occupy David's throne as the Jewish Messiah when the curse clearly prohibited Jeconiah's offspring from doing just that?
- The virgin birth!!!! AND, this is further evidenced by the fact that Matthew goes right into the virgin birth following the genealogy (Matt. 1:18).

Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3 through Mary:

- Written to a Gentile audience.
- Begins with Jesus and goes back to Adam – and then to GOD!
- Mary is in King David's line through Nathan (not Solomon).
- No roadblock through Jeconiah!
- BUT if Jesus had been conceived in the normal manner, blood from Mary and Joseph's union would have rendered Jesus' sacrifice of no affect! The Messiah had to be 100% man and 100% God! How is that possible?
- The virgin birth!!!!

Matthew is careful not to identify Jesus as the physical son of Joseph. Matthew 1:16 - "And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is call Christ."

The Greek pronoun translated "of whom" is feminine and refers to Mary. He was born of a woman – not of a woman and a man.

- Gen. 3:15 – the Redeemer would come through the seed of a woman.
- Isa. 7:14 – a virgin would conceive and bring forth a Son and His name would be Emmanuel – God with us/God in the flesh.
- Gal. 4:4 – in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman. . . .

The book of Luke, chapter 3, records Jesus' genealogy through Mary. How do we know that this is Mary's genealogy? Answer: you would use the name of her husband - ?? What does that mean? The word "the" is not placed before Joseph's name. Here we have a language issue: In English, it's not grammatically correct to place the word "the" before a proper name. But it is permissible in Greek. So – in Luke's genealogy – in the Greek, every single name has the Greek definite article in front of it – with the exception of one – Joseph – indicating, in rules of Greek that this genealogy in Luke, was not Joseph's genealogy – it was his wife's.

Additionally, check out the wording in Luke 3:23 – "Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli. . . ." Heli was Mary's father!

ALSO – this is HUGE - Matthew's genealogy records a roadblock in Joseph's genealogy.

- In Matthew's genealogy King Jeconiah is mentioned. WHO is King Jeconiah? He was such an evil king that God pronounced a curse on Jeconiah (Jer. 27:24-30) "None of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David" (Jer. 27:30).
- This shows us that Joseph is not Jesus biological father. The right to the throne cannot come through Joseph physically.
- Jesus is directly related to King David through Jeconiah. How, then, can Jesus occupy David's throne as the Jewish Messiah when the curse clearly prohibited Jeconiah's offspring from doing just that?
- The virgin birth!!!! Matthew 1:16 – "And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ."
- AND, this is further evidenced by the fact that Matthew goes right into the virgin birth following the genealogy.
- Mary's genealogy is traced to David through Nathan not Solomon – totally apart from Jeconiah.
 - David had more than one child. The royal line came through both Solomon and Nathan.
 - But the right to the throne came through Solomon.
 - Mary was a descendant of Nathan, thus she carried royal blood – but not the right to the throne.
 - Joseph's lineage carried the right to the throne. But, after Jeconiah and the curse placed on him – all who were Jeconiah's descendants were not kings! Zerubabel wasn't a king, Joseph wasn't a king!!! (Herod set up as King by Rome. One who was not Jewish usurped the throne!) So, how could Jesus then be king? God's will can NEVER be thwarted! The solution: the virgin birth!
 - PLUS – in Psalm 2:6-7, we read the words of God the Father concerning God the Son as King: "*Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son,'*"
 - Isa. 61:1 – God anointed Jesus!
 - We see Jesus as King in Psa. 45:6-7; Psa. 110; Zech. 6:12-13; Zech. 14:9)
- It has been said that Matthew's genealogy records Jesus' right to the throne through King Solomon (through Joseph). Luke's genealogy records Jesus' physical line to royalty - to David (through Mary).

Matthew's genealogy through Joseph:

- Of the line of Judah through Solomon.
- Joseph – not biological father; legal father.
- It is through Solomon that the right to the throne existed.
- HOWEVER, the curse that God placed on Jeconiah's descendants created a roadblock to the throne. Case in point: Joseph should have been a king and he wasn't.
- Jesus was not Joseph's biological son.
- Solution: the virgin birth.

Luke's genealogy through Mary:

- Mary's genealogy is traced to David who was of the tribe of Judah.
- David had more than one child. The royal line came through both Solomon and Nathan.
- But the right to the throne came through Solomon.
- Mary was a descendant of Nathan, thus she carried royal blood – but not the right to the throne.
- Mary's lineage is totally apart from Jeconiah and the curse placed on his offspring re: taking the throne and ruling as king.
- Solution: the virgin birth.

CONSIDER: Within Matthew 1, we have two viewpoints to Jesus' genealogy through Joseph. The Greek word for genealogy in Matthew 1:1 and for birth in Matthew 1:18 – genesis! Same Greek word!

Matthew 1:1-17 gives us the human perspective. Matthew 1:18-25 gives us God's perspective – the virgin birth – something only GOD can perform!

Humanly through the lineage of David, Jesus has the right to rule the world. From God's perspective, Jesus is GOD having been born without a human father through the agency of the Spirit of God.

If Jesus only had the legal right to rule as King, He could never redeem men. He could never conquer death, Satan, and hell. He could never forgive sin. He had to come as Immanuel – God in the flesh – 100% God, 100% man.

When Mary accepted Joseph's offer of marriage she also made good her unborn son's claim to the throne of Israel. Their marriage put Jesus in the royal succession as the legal son of Joseph, as Luke showed in his genealogy (**Luke 3:23**), but allowed Him to escape the curse since He wasn't Joseph's biological son. The solution to Jesus' right to the throne - the virgin birth.

The virgin birth isn't only important, it's crucial! Every aspect of it was prophesied in the OT – so that Jesus as God could come into this earth sinless. His perfect, precious blood satisfied God's just demands for the payment of sin; therefore, He could take His rightful place on the throne of David – in the future – because He did not physically come through Joseph but physically came through Mary but claimed the right to the throne through Joseph.

MacArthur – “The virgin birth is an underlying assumption of everything the Bible says about Jesus. To throw out the virgin birth is to reject Jesus' deity, the accuracy and authority of Scripture, and a host of other related doctrines that are at the heart of the Christian faith. No issue is more important than the virgin birth to our understanding of Who Jesus is. If we deny Jesus is God, we have denied the very essence of Christianity.” We have denied the message of the Messianic prophecies that proclaimed that the Messiah would be God (Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:2; Jer. 23:5-6. . .)

NOTE: Luke's genealogy displays for us the humanity of Jesus and His identification with all mankind, not just the Jews. We see in Luke's genealogy that Jesus' heritage goes back to Adam – back to GOD!

Matthew's genealogy is most curious. Matthew includes women in Jesus' genealogy. Generally speaking, legal documents of this sort only included men. AND, these women were Gentile women!

Tamar – the Canaanite daughter-in-law of Judah (Gen. 38) turned to prostitution due to frustration over Judah not giving her his third son. And, she conceived – out of wedlock – through Judah, her father-in-law – and gave birth to two sons – Perez and Zerah. Yes – Perez, an illegitimate son, is in Jesus' lineage. Perez means – breach, burst forth, broken wall. He was UNEXPECTED! Consider Jesus. Was He the unexpected Messiah? Perhaps God used Perez as a signpost along the way!

Rahab was a prostitute. Prostitution was her chosen profession. The spies that Joshua sent into Jericho encountered Rahab – “the harlot” – that is her label in Scripture.

Because of this Gentile's faith in the God of Israel, God spared her life and the lives of her family when the walls of Jericho fell FLAT! AND, God enshrined her forever in Jesus' genealogy!

Ruth is the third Gentile woman to be mentioned in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew. Ruth came from Moab, a tribe of people descended from Lot and his incestuous relations with his two unmarried daughters. Moab became one of Israel's enemies. The Moabites refused to give the children of Israel water and food as they wandered in the wilderness and hired Balaam to curse Israel (Deut. 23:3-4). Ruth broke ranks with her people and placed her trust in the God of Israel. She became the great grandmother of King David – thus giving her the honor of being in Jesus' lineage.

Bathsheba – who was married to a Gentile – Uriah, the Hittite – violated her marriage vows by agreeing to have an affair with King David.

Within Matthew's genealogy of Jesus we see something unusual about each woman's background and/or relationship to her husband: either irregular or scandalous. So, here at the outset of Matthew – at the outset of the Gospels – at the beginning of the NT – Matthew begins by illustrating God's grace to four non-Jewish women of the world. We see that God's grace forgives the darkest of sins (noted in the background of three of the four women) and reaches beyond Israel to the world. AND, he ends his Gospel with Jesus' command to take the gospel to all the people of the world! The Jesus of Matthew's Gospel is the King of the Jews and the Savior/Messiah/Deliverer of the world!

Within Matthew's genealogy, there are 3 groups with 14 generations in each group (Matt. 1:17).

- Matthew's genealogy places emphasis on Jesus' royalty – through David.
- In the first group, the Davidic throne is established.
- In the second group, the throne is cast down and deported to Babylon.
- In the third group the throne is confirmed in the coming of the Messiah.

Each letter in the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical equivalent. All the letters in the name "David" equate to 14. All the letters in the word "Messiah/Moshiach" equate to 14!

If Jesus only had the legal right to rule as King – in the flesh – solely in the flesh, He could never redeem men. He could never conquer death, Satan, and hell. He could never forgive sin (Jesus had the authority to forgive sin: Matt. 9:1-8) and we would be eternally separated from God! He had to come as Immanuel – GOD in the flesh – 100% God, 100% man.

Rom. 11:33, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

"In the fullness of time" - God set a fixed time and God is always on time. God never does anything off-schedule; He never hurries because He doesn't have to. He's always on schedule. The time was right. Whatever God is doing in each of our lives – if we belong to Him through Jesus the Messiah – it's on schedule from God's perspective.

As we spend time with Jesus, He opens our eyes and allows us to see and embrace God's perspective!

HOMEWORK

Read Luke 1

Why does Luke speak to both John and Jesus regarding the announcement of their births?

How does God's message to Israel – to repent – help your understanding of the message of both John the Baptist and Jesus at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry?

What were the key points for you from this lesson?

What did you learn that was new to you?

How do you view God from this lesson?