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God at Work

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

bimonthly (interim) schedule
1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month

TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2022

12 NOON IN 318 CLOB (& ZOOM)

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Studies are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. The *bimonthly Bible studies* are *nonpartisan* and *non-denominational*, in addition to being *open-to-all*. The current study is the beginning of an exposition in the Gospel of Matthew.

We have an in-person Bible study in 318 CLOB (Senate Committee Room) *and* also use Zoom. Scripture is taught verse-by-verse with everyone having the opportunity to comment or ask a question.

For archives of past Bible studies (dating from 2010), please visit <http://www.capitolcom.org/georgia/studies>. *Capitol Commission's prayer is that this study will be edifying to you.* The sole intent of this ministry is to serve you, as a resource for pastoral attention, counsel, and prayer. *The present Bible study is just one aspect of that desire.*

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Study

is

Tuesday, 6 December 2022

Matthew 1—2 – “God at Work”

What kind of person would you want to lead you into victory? Speaking to an embarrassed and isolated woman, these authoritative words were spoken: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:10). Would not such an individual be precisely the One to devote one’s life entirely? Jesus the Messiah is that person indeed. He is the One worthy to follow anywhere. Napoleon once remarked concerning Him:

“I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That

resemblance does not exist. . . . Everything in Him astonishes me. . . . He is truly a being of Himself. . . . I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the Gospel” [Richmond Sheffield Dement, *Napoleon: A Drama* (Chicago: Knight, Leonard & Co., 1893) 174, 176, 178].

The primary intent of Matthew 1:1—4:11 is not only to introduce the reader to Jesus but also to make a contrast with the religious leaders. The opening chapters of Matthew’s Gospel prepare one for Jesus’ ministry, and thus serve as a prologue. Matthew began his gospel with a genealogy of Jesus because He will be revealed as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. Genealogies were vital in biblical times because they validated one’s lineage. Ancient Israel did not have any problems identifying their ancestry because every Jewish citizen had access to scrupulous records that were stored in the Jerusalem Temple.

People who were determined to maintain their unique identity greatly esteemed meticulous accounts of their lineage. Genealogical records were especially important for identifying the royal lineage of the ancient Hebrew kings. The Gospel of Matthew begins with a royal genealogy that identifies Jesus the Messiah as King of Israel for he is “the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

Matthew was concerned to prove Jesus’ lineage because that genealogy validated Jesus as the son of Abraham and David, which proved his legal ancestry by which He was the legitimate successor to the throne of David. What relevancy does Jesus’ genealogy have for the individual believer? December is the month that Christians (particularly) celebrate the coming Messiah-King. The New Testament teaches that Christians are fellow heirs with Christ, and will reign with Him in his coming kingdom.

Newly elected officials (in addition to their support staff) are provided information and training to help them serve effectively. Similarly, the Christian is to heed the information and training that God’s Word – the Holy Bible – provides, and to do so with a life devotion that seeks to glory the Lord and receive his blessing. With that thought in mind, the Christian should read Matthew 1—2, and ask, “Am I living a life of righteousness befitting of a fellow heir?” During the Christmas season, in addition to each and every day, “let us reason together” (Isa 1:18) and praise God for his righteousness which is only received by grace through faith, and also obtain his wisdom that is received “in faith without any doubting” (Jas 1:6).

BORN THE PROMISED KING

(*Matt 1*) Matthew prioritized the sayings and works of Jesus during his 3½ years of ministry. The four Gospels of the New Testament are selective in what they included (cf. John 21:25). With the exception of Luke 2:41-50, the evangelists do not consider the so-called “silent years” of Jesus because they were more concerned with his public ministry. While there are not any particular details regarding Jesus’ infancy, there is a detailed genealogy, which is structured in three groups of fourteen generations (Matt 1:1-17), which may have been arranged as such because 14 is the numerical equivalent of the Hebrew consonants in David’s name.



Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Study

Tuesday (6th of December) from 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 318 CLOB (& Zoom)



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Just as the first sentence of Matthew 1 is a title for verses 1-17, so is the beginning of verse 18. Matthew already provided Jesus' legal line of descent from David (whereas Luke 3:23-38 reveals the actual descendants of David in the branch of his family to which Joseph belonged). Matthew also recorded Joseph's perspective regarding Jesus' birth whereas Luke provided those events from Mary's perspective. Matthew was unequivocal in asserting the validity of Jesus' messiahship (Matt 1:16, 18).

. . . THE LORD GOD FULFILLS HIS PURPOSES BY USING ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO ARE OF INDISPUTABLE FAITHFULNESS AND RESOLUTE CHARACTER.

Matthew also explained in greater detail the wording of verse 16 ("Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born"). Jewish law regarded Joseph and Mary as engaged (virtually married) yet not living together as husband and wife. During the typical one-year period of waiting subsequent to betrothal and prior to the consummation of marriage, it was discovered that Mary was pregnant. Under the Mosaic Law, she might have suffered stoning or the shame of divorce (Numb 5:11-31; Deut 22:23-24).

Her conception, however, was not ordinary for "she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit" (Matt 1:18). Mary was a virgin both when she conceived Jesus and gave birth to Him. Matthew attributed her pregnancy to the power of God as opposed to any human agent. Through an angel, God explained the "virgin birth" to Joseph, whereby he accepted his role and did precisely as the Lord instructed. He kept Mary a virgin until Jesus was born (vv. 19-25). The account demonstrates how the Lord God fulfills his purposes by using ordinary people who are of indisputable faithfulness and resolute character.

BORN THE PROMISED SAVIOR

(Matt 2) "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" is an assertion most significant because it was the fulfillment of an eighth century BC prophecy (Mic 5:2). Jesus will fulfill all prophecies concerning the Jewish Messiah! Nothing is said in Matthew 2 that describes Jesus; hence the purpose of the chapter is to emphasize the reaction that He received upon entering the world. The rulers were antagonistic and the religious leaders were apathetic, yet the Gentiles welcomed and worshipped Jesus (Matt 2:1-12). Matthew 2 also reveals God's providential care of his son (vv. 13-23).

Jesus was born safely in the city of David. Probably two years later (not the night of his birth), magi visited the Lord Jesus to present Him with gifts (vv. 1-12). The Greek word *paidion* translated "Child" (v. 9) indicates that Jesus was a young boy at the time. If the Lord was no longer an infant when the wisemen arrived, it would indicate why Herod ordered the slaughter of "all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under" (v. 16).

The magi indicated that Jesus was not born *to become* King of the Jews; rather, he was "born King of the Jews" (v. 2). Jesus' "star" that guided the magi to Bethlehem may have been the Shekinah

glory of God that guided Israel through the wilderness. They likely related Balaam's messianic prophecy of a star arising from Judah with the King of the Jews (Numb 24:17).

God's provision is evident in how He provided for Jesus and his family when they needed to relocate to Egypt for a time. He also protected his Son by preventing the magi from returning to Herod. Not only did the arrival of the magi anticipate the salvation of many Gentiles – when the gospel message of God's saving grace through faith in Jesus Christ was proclaimed – but also their gifts financed the journey to and stay in Egypt (Matt 2:14-21). The presentation of gifts and worship of Jesus prefigures the wealth of the Gentile nations that the Old Testament prophets said would be given to Israel's Messiah (Ps 72:10-13; Isa 60:5, 11; 61:6; 66:20; Zeph 3:10; Hag 2:6-9), which is yet to occur in entirety until Messiah's return.

BELIEVERS SHOULD EXPECT AND SEEK THE LORD'S PROVIDENCE.

When circumstances appear desperate, it is good to remember the Lord's gracious actions toward his people. He often provides in an unexpected manner. God is not absent! Not only does He superintend his creation but also God directs history for his purposes. Humanity and the world are not ruled by chance or fate; rather, it is God who directs creation and history toward his determined and ultimate goal. There is no reason for despair or doubt in regard to God. Believers should expect and seek the Lord's providence.

Matthew 2 shows Gentile converts worshipping the Savior at his birth, while the Jewish religious leaders were indifferent and the rulers were hostile. Regardless of how unlikely he or she may be, God can use anyone for his purposes. Jesus came to his own but his own people did not receive Him (John 1:11), yet to "as many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name" (v. 12), and the same is true today. God protects his own. Respond to the King as the magi did, with great devotion and joy!

Thank you for the privilege in providing you with the Capitol Commission Bible study. If we can serve you in any manner, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission is a charitable and religious nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Capitol Commission is supported by the generous gifts of businesses, churches, and individuals. Capitol Commission is not state funded; rather, those with a heart for the Capitol community fund it.

Capitol Commission exists to minister gospel hope and spiritual strength to legislators, staff, lobbyists, and all who constitute the Capitol community. The focus of our ministry is people as opposed to politics, and thus to be a spiritual resource to the legislature. Our ministry strategy is expressed by pastoral *presence*, the *proclamation* of the Bible, and fervent *prayer* for every legislator.

As the Lord Jesus said, "look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35). If you would like to partner with Capitol Commission, Georgia with your talents, time, or treasure, please contact us by email, mail, or phone; or, visit online at <http://capitolcom.org/georgia/donate>.

Please join us in this ministry!



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NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDY:
Tuesday, 20th of December @ 12 Noon