

Sunday School Lesson December 6, 2020

Good morning, I hope you are well and feel blessed.

Lesson for December 6, 2020, "Called Through Heritage"

Background Scripture from Matthew 1:1-17 and Hebrew 1

The Gospels are about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Savior. The Old Testament in its entirety lays the groundwork for the birth of the Messiah. It is a bridge connecting the humanness of Jesus, the son of Mary and step-son of Joseph, to the supernatural Christ the King, the Son of God. Delving into the human genealogy of Christ far surpasses the mystery of uncovering our family ancestry. As we search name by name, from Abraham, to Boaz, to Solomon, we realize that all the pieces fit together and give us a perfect picture of Christ.

The original readers of the Letter to the Hebrews faced a dilemma. As Jews, they practiced Judaism all their lives. When the apostles and other Christian believers presented the Good News of salvation to them, many turned to Christ as Lord and Savior. However, some were beginning to wonder how an unknown son of a carpenter from an obscure village called Nazareth could be greater than their forefathers and prophets like Moses. These harried believers needed to be reminded of the essential truth of their new faith. The writer of Hebrews demonstrated that Jesus Christ is superior to all others because He was born of God.

More than 400 years had passed since the last Old Testament prophecies, and faithful Jews all over the world were still waiting for the Messiah (Luke 3:15). Matthew wrote this book to Jews to present Jesus as King and Messiah, the promised descendant of David who would reign forever. The Gospel of Matthew links the Old and New Testament and contains many references that show how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.

While Joseph was the man who reared Jesus, he is not Jesus' true father. Jesus was heir to all the genealogical history of earthly ancestry. Despite what we might see as family baggage, He "grew in wisdom and in stature" (Luke 2:52). Through the list of his earthly heritage, Matthew grounds Jesus in Jewish history. Abraham was the Father of the Faith. David was the king of the Promise. The period of the Babylonian exile saw the vast loss of life and the loss of God's presence in the Temple. Just as fourteen generations passed between each of these major events in Jewish history,

now fourteen more generations have passed since the exile. In this presentation of lineage, Matthew shows the progression of God's plan in salvation history.

From the test section, Stepping into the World. Our call is related to our heritage, just as we have seen in Jesus' life. We have a human heritage that goes back generations, and we are influenced by the people who raised us. As Christians, we have a faith based heritage that shapes us as we seek to live as Christ's disciples. Our call as Christians is rooted in Jesus, the one who reflects the very image of God to us.

Jesus speaks God's truth to us through the Holy Spirit and through the Bible. We experience challenges as we listen to his voice and try to follow him. We must make space in our lives to hear God's voice, and we can't do it alone. We need the support of the other Christians as we try to listen and obey.

Jesus our redeemer, the one who purifies us from sin, invites us to view him as our only redeemer. God calls us to place our identity in Jesus and look for redemption only in Christ.

Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen. God watch over us and take care of us.

Next week's lesson December 13, 2020, "Called Before Birth"

Background Scripture Matthews 1:18-25.

Sources for this lesson: The Bible, International Sunday School Lesson and Commentary, and The Present Word Adult Bible Lessons.