

Biblical Theology: Session V

Review Homework:

- Questions from the reading?
- OT references in Matthew. What stood out?

Intro:

- Let's get started. Open your Bibles to the gospel of Luke, chapter 4. Luke chapter 4. At this point in Luke's gospel, Jesus has been baptized by John the Baptizer and the Holy Spirit led the Lord into the wilderness where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. He returns from the wilderness and enters Nazareth, His hometown. As was His custom He went to synagogue on the Sabbath day. During the service, Jesus stood up to read.
- Let's pick up in verse 17. **“And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’”**
- Don't you love that Luke writes, **“And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.”** That phrase is pregnant with meaning. This whole passage is. These are amazing times.

Intertestamental Period

- The Old Testament ends with God's people returning to Jerusalem from Babylon under the ministry of Nehemiah and the spiritual leadership of Ezra.
- You'll remember from last time, the kingdom of Israel had divided. In the North, ten tribes, and in the South, two. The Northern Kingdom (called Israel) cycled through 19 different kings, all wicked. In 722 BC, the Assyrians invaded and conquered Israel. The Southern kingdom (Judah) fared only slightly better. They had 20 kings, only 11 of them were wicked.
- The Assyrians were eventually conquered by the Babylonians and in 586 BC, the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem. In 587 Solomon's temple is destroyed. Judah is carried off into Babylon. The Babylonians are eventually conquered by the Medes and Persians. The Persians allowed some folks to return to the Land to rebuild Jerusalem. Sometime around 520-515 BC, the Temple is rebuilt. The book of Esther takes place around 483-473 BC. That's where the Old Testament timeline ends.



- We enter a time called the intertestamental period, between the testaments. The Persian Empire falls to the Greeks under Alexander the Great and Hellenistic (or Greek) culture abounds. Alexander the Great permitted religious freedom among his empire, however he strongly promoted Greek culture. The Old Testament Scriptures are translated into Greek, the Septuagint, around 250 BC.
- After Alexander the Great died, a succession of rulers ruled Judea. One such ruler, Antiochus Epiphanies, refused to allow the Jews to worship Yahweh. When the Jews revolted, he responded in force. In 168 BC he killed thousands of Jews, overthrew the priesthood, setup an altar to Zeus in the Temple, and apparently offered a pig on the altar.
- This spurred another revolt, led by Judas Maccabeus. The Maccabees, as they are called, drove Antiochus out of Jerusalem, and rededicated the Temple to God. The Lampstand, Menorah, was relit. According to the Talmud, they had only enough oil for one day, but miraculously the menorah burned for 8 days, allowing them to resupply. This miracle is commemorated during Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights (which Jesus observed).
- Eventually the Greeks were conquered by the Romans. And in 63 BC, the Romans took control of Judea. The Romans setup local kings to rule and collect taxes for Caesar. These are the Herods. Herod the Great was sympathetic to the Jews and spent a great deal of money rebuilding the Temple. It was under the rule of Herod the Great that the Lord Jesus was born.
- During the time of the Greeks and Romans certain scribes were zealous to preserve God's law and keep God's people separate from the surrounding cultures. These folks preserved the oral traditions believed to be given to Moses by God, ways to observe Torah and keep God's law. These scribes eventually became known as the Pharisees. "Pharisee" probably means "to separate" or "to detach".
- The intertestamental period was an important era. Rome brought a time of relative peace and prosperity. But for the Jews it was a time that fostered zeal for the Messiah. They were a conquered people. They had been under foreign rule for nearly 600 years. God had not spoken by the mouth of a prophet for 400 years.
- All that ended in Herod's Temple when an angel appeared to an old childless priest named Zechariah. He and his wife Elizabeth would give birth to a son, John, who would be the last Old Testament prophet, the one foretold by Isaiah, who would prepare the way for Messiah.
- So you can see why, after Jesus had been baptized by John, and stood up in the Temple to read the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 61, every eye was on Him, when he said, "**Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.**" The Old Testament had testified and He was it's Testimony. On that day, the New Testament was born.

The New Testament

- The New Testament consists of 27 books written by 8 or 9 authors. (What's the one book we don't know the authorship?) Matthew wrote Matthew. Mark wrote Mark. Luke wrote Luke. John wrote John. Who wrote



- Acts? Luke. (Actually in terms of content, Luke wrote more of the NT than Paul.) Paul wrote 13 epistles. Peter wrote 1&2 Peter. James wrote James. Jude wrote Jude. John wrote 3 epistles, one gospel, and Revelation.
- The first four books of the New Testament are called gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called synoptic gospels, they basically follow the same timeline. John has his own timeline.
 - The gospels are not biographies in the modern sense. They aren't necessarily chronological. Two passages are placed next to one another which may or may not have happened chronologically. For example, the gospel of Matthew follows a pattern of Narrative-Discourse, Narrative-Discourse, 5x.
 - Matthew's concerned less with giving us the day-to-day events in Jesus' life and more with proving that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. You would have noticed in your reading the "fulfill" refrain, "all this happened to fulfill". Fulfill appears 16x in Matthew. He is showing us that Jesus is the Messiah, the One Promised by God to deliver God's people.
 - Matthew's gospel presents Jesus as the True Israel. Matthew starts with a genealogy, 1:1, "**The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.**" As the Son of God, Jesus goes down into Egypt. He is tested in the wilderness 40 days, like Israel's 40 years. You read in the Goldsworthy book how the Lord quotes from the testing narrative in the Old Testament. But unlike Israel, Jesus never sinned. All the promises that God made to His covenant people are fulfilled in His Son. Isn't that what Paul wrote in 2Corinthians 1? "**For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.**"
 - Matthew shows thematically how Jesus is the Son of David. Matthew writes much of Kings and Kingdoms in his gospel. He shows that Jesus is the embodiment of the Temple that stood in Israel. His body is the sacrifice offered once for all.
 - Interestingly, the Passover Lamb was brought into Jerusalem a week before Passover. Since the Lamb was to be spotless and without blemish, it was observed for a full week before it was sacrificed. When Jesus enters the city on Palm Sunday, His authority and teaching is tested by the Pharisees and religious leaders for a full week. Matthew is showing us that Jesus is the Passover Lamb. And like Israel was exiled from the Land, Jesus was exiled on the cross.
 - Turn to Matthew 17. The Mount of Transfiguration gives us a glimpse of what Matthew is showing us about Jesus. "**And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.**"



- What do you think Matthew is wanting us to know about Jesus? [DISCUSSION] Moses was the representative of the Law. Elijah was representing the Prophets. The Law and the Prophets and Jesus. Moses and Elijah and Jesus. In Luke's account, he adds that they "**spoke with Him about his exodus**" (Lk 12:31). The Father speaks, affirming His pleasure in His Son, and when they looked up, they saw no one but Jesus only. Clearly Matthew wants us to see that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.
- Jesus lived for 33 years, His ministry lasted 3 1/2 years. And the last week of Jesus' life encompasses more of the gospels than any. Matthew devotes 7 of 28 chapters to Passion Week. Mark, 5 of 16 (almost 1/3). Luke 4 of 24, and John 7 1/2 out of 21. Why do you suppose this is?
- The cross was the reason Jesus came. Matthew 20:28, "**the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" On the cross, the wrath of God for sin was laid on Jesus. Without sin Himself, He endured the penalty of sin deserved by sinners. He was cut off from the living so that the dead would be brought into the Land of the Living.
- On the cross, He suffered and died. His body was taken down from the cross and hastily laid in a rich man's tomb, in accordance with Scripture. On the third day, the grave stone was rolled back and Jesus raised from the dead in accordance with the Scriptures.
- The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ secured salvation for all God's people. Jesus not only took the penalty of sin, He also secured the righteousness of God. 2Corinthians 5:21, "**For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**" Our sin was counted to Christ and His righteousness counted to us.
- We broke the Law of God. He kept the Law of God. We lost the righteousness of God; He earned the righteousness of God. Our sin was lifted from us and placed on Him; His righteousness counted as ours. It has been said, God treated Jesus the way we deserved to be treated so that He could treat us the way He deserved to be treated.
- We are right with God not so much because we have faith in Christ. We are right we God because we have been united to Christ by faith.

Acts

- The book of Acts opens on the ascension of the resurrected Jesus into heaven. The disciples, having witnessed his death and resurrection are convinced that now is the time He will bring the kingdom to earth. However, Jesus explains that's not how it's going to happen. Turn to Acts chapter 1. READ 6-9...
- Acts 1:7 and 8, "**It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**" Jesus had promised them in the Upper Room that when He returns to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit. The Holy



Spirit would indwell them convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. The Spirit will guide them into all truth, He will glorify Jesus and will take what is of Jesus and declare it to them.

- In obedience to their Master, the disciples wait for the Promised Spirit to come. In Acts 2, the Spirit descends upon 120 of them in the Upper Room. They are filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues.
- Goldsworthy explains that Pentecost involves an experience that was unique to the disciples. It marks a point of transition. I bring this up, because it is helpful to understand how we are to read the book of Acts. [Back to the NT book slide.] What genre is Acts? It is narrative. You read narrative differently than you read epistles.
- Narrative is descriptive, epistles are generally prescriptive. So the book of Acts tells us how things went down then, but it does not necessarily prescribe for us how things ought to go down now. It lets us know how the early church operated. But it doesn't necessarily tell us how every church should operate.
- For example. There are plenty of Christians alive today who believe the two-stage experience of the disciples in Acts is normative. They maintain that Christianity is a two stage event. Stage one: come to faith in Jesus Christ. Stage two: get baptized with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. That's what we see in Acts. That should be what we see today. ...But that's not what we see even in the epistles.
- Later in Acts 2 and again in Acts 4 the disciples shared everything in common. They were selling all they had and giving the proceeds to the church. As any had need, the church met the need. I don't know of any modern churches following this practice. And that's not even the pattern we see in the rest of the NT. Paul writes that a collection be taken up on the first day of the week. In 2Corinthians 8 and 9, Paul gives instructions on how to give. Willingly, generously, without compulsion. They gave according to their means. Obviously they weren't giving everything. So Acts is descriptive, not prescriptive. Genre is important in Bible study.
- So the Spirit of the Lord falls on the disciples during Pentecost. It's the time of one of the festivals, Jerusalem is filled with people from all over. The Spirit gives the 120 the ability to speak in languages previously unknown to them. Luke records the unbelievers are hearing them tell of the mighty works of God in their own language and dialect.
- The Apostle Peter gets up and preaches a sermon. The crowd is convicted of sin. "What shall we do?" they ask. Peter said to them, "**Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" 3000 souls were added to the Lord. It's a NT reversal of what happened at Sinai.
- Do you remember what happened at Sinai when Moses received the Law? There was fire and smoke and the sound of thunder. He came down from the Mountain and saw them worshipping the golden calf. Three thousand people died under the judgment of God for their sins. Here at Sinai, the Spirit comes in fire and 3000 people are spared the judgment of God for their sins.
- The book of Acts follows the progression Jesus laid out in chapter 1. Here in chapter 2, the disciples are witness to the resurrection in Jerusalem and Judea. By chapter 8, persecution against the church drives them



further out, and into Samaria. Despite some influence among the Samaritans, the gospel remains fairly centrally located in Israel and Judea.

- In chapter 9, Paul is converted. In chapter 10, Peter receives a vision and clean and unclean animals. His understanding of the vision is explained in chapter 10, verse 34-35, **“Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”** Peter preaches. Skip down to verse 44. Luke records, **“While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.”**
- So the Word of God had spread from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria and now to the Gentiles. Gentiles are being saved by faith in Jesus Christ, apart from the works of the Law. The Spirit is affirming this by granting the gift of tongues to the gentiles. Churches are being started in cities outside of Jerusalem. We have the church in Antioch launched in chapter 11. At Antioch the disciples are first called Christians.
- Antioch sends out her own missionaries in chapter 13. Paul and Barnabas are chosen by the Holy Spirit to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. The word of God multiplied, souls were saved, churches were planted. Many Gentiles received the gospel and believed.
- And this raised questions about the Law of Moses and Gentile believers. There were some who were teaching that unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved. The first church council is held in Jerusalem in Acts 15. After hearing testimony and coming to one accord the council decided to write to the gentile churches. This is Acts 15:28-29, **“For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”**
- The rest of Acts is taken up with Paul’s missionary journeys and his subsequent arrest. Acts ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome.
- Romans to Revelation are epistles. These are letters written either to churches or to individuals about Christian life and church life. From these letters we can learn a lot about what it was like being a Christian in the first century. Christians were a minority, often maligned, enduring persecution nearly everywhere they went.
- They were called Atheists, incestuous, and cannibals by the Roman world, who couldn’t understand monotheism, why we considered one another brothers and sisters, and why we spoke of eating the body and drinking the blood of our God.



- First century churches weren't terribly different than churches today. They needed instruction to keep the main thing the main thing, how to worship, and deal with unrepentant sin in their membership. They needed instruction on how to appoint pastors and leaders, as well as how to honor Christ amid a godless world. The epistles were written to these issues.
- Since many churches faced a rising threat against them in Rome and elsewhere, the Apostle John was given the book of Revelation.

The Book of Revelation

- I won't have time for much discussion on the book of Revelation. Lord willing, we'll have an entire class on this book. There are varied interpretations of this book. Genre is important. As with Acts, how we read this book is helped by how we read this book. It is apocalyptic literature. But the big question of this book is whether the things described are past, or present, or future? My answer: you'll have to wait for the class.
- Suffice it to say, almost everyone agrees that the main point of the book of Revelation is to encourage Christians living in the first century. As they are facing persecution and marginalization, reading about the Conquering Lamb of God, the One Who comes on the clouds to put down the enemies of God is tremendously encouraging. We needn't fear the future, cause we know who wrote it. Revelation ought to be an encouraging read...providing we're reading it well.
- Sara and I are currently reading the book of Daniel. And in the second half, it's the same thing. Apocalyptic. God's people are in exile. The Lord gives them His assurance that the Ancient of Days has got this under control. We needn't fear. The Lord always preserves a remnant for Himself.

Homework:

- Goldsworthy, chapters 26-27
- Read Genesis 15 and 17 along with Romans 4. Follow the Genesis 15 and 17 "river" to Jesus with Romans 4 as your guide. Make notes on how these passages fit together to show the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

