

WEEK 1: GREAT EXPECTATIONS

“For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendour with our own eyes...because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place – until the Day dawns and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. Above all, you must realise that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding or from human initiative. No these prophets were move by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.”

2 Peter 1:16, 19-20

“The pre-Christian history of redemption is a ‘history of Christ’ before he came” Erich Sauer!!

- i. Our first Messianic prophecy is found in the Garden of Eden just after the fall when judgment is pronounced by God over Satan (the snake in the garden). *“I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike you head and you will strike his heel” Genesis 3:15***
 - We learn that the world’s Redeemer descends from mankind. There are surprises in store, but this piece of**

information is vital for understanding who this Redeemer is!! However, if Satan is Ruler of this world (John 12:31) what son of Adam could possibly defeat him? The defeat in the Garden leaves us with great expectations (Gen 3:15) but somewhat of an insolvable puzzle!

- ii. Out of all the races of mankind, Noah prophesied that that the Redeemer would come out of Shem's family (Genesis 9:26) and out of all the Semitic races, the descendants of Abraham: *"All the families on earth will be blessed through you."*
 - From this we learn that the Gospel is made available out of Israel, through the work of the Redeemer, and is open to the whole wide world!
- iii. From all the tribes of Israel, we now learn that the world's Redeemer will arise out of Judah: *"The sceptre will not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from his descendants, until the coming of the one to whom it belongs, the one whom all nations will honour"*
Gen.49:10 (a prophecy given by Jacob in Egypt shortly before he died).
 - Note also the phrases "ruler's staff" and "the one whom all nations will honour": truly the King of Kings!
- iv. Our previous prophecy is backed up by a false prophet, but then, if God can speak through a donkey....

Balaam's final message contains this amazing verse: "*I see him, but not here and now. I perceive him, but far in the distant future. A star will arise in Jacob; a sceptre will emerge from Israel.*" (Balaam was Moses' contemporary)

The prophecy of a king was often understood in political terms: great David's greater son. A king could be a Messiah, since a king was anointed when he came to the throne and Messiah simply means "anointed one". In Matthew 22:41-45, Jesus referred to a prophecy by David in Psalm 110:1 "*The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit in the place of honour at my right hand until I humble your enemies beneath your feet' ". Jesus commented, "Since David called the Messiah 'My Lord' how can the Messiah be his son?"*

- **So, no conquering David's greater son who would restore the lost sovereignty and territory of Israel. Something far greater??**
- v. **Moses himself also prophesied about Jesus (John 5:46 Jesus said "*Moses wrote about me*") Deuteronomy 18:15: "*Moses continued, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you fellow Israelites. You must listen to him'*"**
- vi. **Looking back at David's prophecy in Psalm 110 (section iv), we come across a remarkable verse "*The Lord has***

taken an oath and will not break his vow; 'You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek' " v.4

Wow! The promised Redeemer of the World will be prophet, priest and king. These three key roles in Israel could not be held by any one individual. When King Uzziah offered incense in the sanctuary of the Lord's Temple he sinned against the Lord his God (2 Chronicles 26:16) and he became a leper until the day he died. (You might also like to read Hebrews 7:1-8:13)

➤ Hopefully now you are beginning some really Great Expectations, but I promise you, you ain't seen nothing yet!!!

vii. We now turn to the New Testament to look at two different genealogies: Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. Which of them is correct? The strange answer is that both are, although both claim they are Joseph's genealogies. The first genealogy is that of Joseph; note that in verse 12 Jehoiachin and his son, Shealtiel are mentioned. Jeremiah 22:30 says very clearly "none of his children (Jehoiachin) will succeed him on the throne of David to rule over Judah"; Jeremiah spoke from God and God does not change His word!! However, the genealogy does make Joseph a *legal* descendent from David which does affect where Jesus was born!! Luke's version follows Jewish custom in v23 in two respects: Jesus was "known"

as the son of Joseph (even though he was the foster father of Jesus) which would be appropriate if Mary had no brothers (Numbers 27:1-11), and the mechanism of identifying the husband of Mary with Heli's family ("son" of) preserves the name and land rights of Heli; Mary was the daughter of Heli! If all that sounds too complicated: in simple terms Matthew gives Joseph's family tree and Luke, Mary's family tree! I need to move on now, because my brain hurts!!

viii. We now reach the prophecy of the place of Jesus' birth. Micah 5:2 *"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah (House of Bread, the fruitful) are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past"*

- Notice that this ruler is much older than his birth date. Interesting! If by this distant past, we're implying a descendant of Eve, then that's true of us also. So the timescale implies an origin before the creation of the earth. Human yet also something else!! John's opening to his gospel reveals another astounding fact: this son is unique because he is the same age as his father : *"In the beginning the Word already existed."* John 1:1
- Bethlehem's previous mentions are not good: death and mourning (Gen.35:19,20) idolatry (Judges 17:7ff) immorality and fratricidal strife (Judges 19-21) and

famine (Ruth 1:1) It's time has come, so glorious that its past is now remembered no more!

- We have an intriguing prophecy from Jeremiah: ***"For a time is coming," says the Lord "when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will be a king who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. And this will be his name; "the Lord is Our Righteousness." In that day Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety" Jeremiah 23:5,6 . Just who is this righteous descendant going to be? Is this salvation simply freedom from foreign rule, or, as Genesis 3:15 implies, freedom from satan's rule? We end this session with a comment from Peter 1:10 "This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you."***