**MATTHEW’S REVELATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS - MATTHEW 1:17-21**

In my Bible the Page between Old and New Testaments is a blank white page. But this blank page has a secret – its secret is that the blank is exactly what happened for 400 years – nothing! There was no message or Word from God. For five generations – the heavens were silent. No prophets, no message, nothing. The longest silence in the Bible record. The last recorded word from God was of a day coming when God would revisit this world and bring a restoring fire that would turn the hearts of children to fathers. Then silence reigned for 400 years. If you were living during those five generations…..you would surely have asked the question – where has God gone? Doesn’t he see what we are facing? Why are the heavens silent?

The NT opens with this chapter, it reads like telephone book. 42 generations of families and we go, why is this here? What is so special about a list like this? What a waste of space…God say something important! Especially if you have been absent for 400 years is a list the best you can come up with? And there are some serious closets in the family. This list include an amazing mixture of people…. There are adulterers, murderers, manipulators, schemers, dreamers, and also passionate worshippers, lovers of God, followers of Yahweh….people who hungered after more, and who found faith and walking with God an adventure, people like you and me. This list showed the need for a Saviour, a Messiah a long awaited Deliverer who could come and usher in a kingdom. This expectation was about the time when Jesus came into the world. The common thread was that God had a connected plan to intervene in this world – he would send his Son Jesus Christ to be that Saviour. For 400 years God sat on his hands and did nothing. Then God sneaks into the world in a kind of underhanded way no one suspects… through a baby born to a young engaged couple, from a town no one ever heard of, and in a back street animal shelter. The Saviour of the World was born.

There are 3 clusters of 14 generations each with a unique story to tell

1. **The first 14 generations was Abram to David were**

**14 generations of GREATNESS who searched for a LAND**

Abram – God said leave your country and to a new land where I will show you. You read their stories in the first 6 books of the Bible, up to Judges. Stories of faith venture and failure. Patriarchs of faith. They looked for a land God would give them. The land was their dream and their possession. And once found they had to conquer it by the square kilometer, it wouldn’t be given to them without effort, enterprise, faith and struggle.

Like Abram - *I’m still longing for a land* – which is yet to come…..

Not the physical land Abram longed for but a *land more like a kingdom*, or a city (1 Peter) where people speak of a kingdom coming and to come.

Signs of it appearing now. It was said of these early patriarch that they saw this land from afar, some of them died still longing for its coming. They saw it from a distance but died in faith, knowing that one day what they longed for would come. And here is the challenge for us today – to long for something that looks like it’s a long way off and not become discouraged or disillusioned.

1. **The second 14 generations was from David to Babylonian Exile…**

**14 generations of LOSTNESS who wanted a KING**

Give us a ruler, a leader. Give us someone who we can see to lead us.

This faith thing is too hard. And God gave them King David and then followed a succession of kings many of whom were dismal failures to lead the people until they finally were overrun by their enemies and taken into captivity in Babylon. These 14 generations told a story of *decline and desertion* of faith. Sometimes we don’t listen until we too become overrun by life’s events and we call out to God. Give us a king was a solution the people wanted but it bought no lasting change in their hearts!

Like David and the 14 generations following him - *I’m still captivated by a King* – his name is Jesus – his teachings are found in this book and he is the king – Jesus. I want to expand his reign in the hearts of people today, worshipping him as Lord of all, I want to come let us adore him…. In his risen power and might. This king leads my life, helps me make daily choices, keeps me focused and motivated with his priorities.

1. **The third 14 generations *from Babylon to Jesus***

**14 generations of RESTORATION waiting for a PROMISE**

These generations longed for a promised deliverer. A day when God would restore the fortunes of his people. And the Promise of a Saviour who would come and bring deliverance from their enemies who had ravaged them and lead the nation back into a period of prosperity and glory. It was into this *expectation* that the baby Jesus was born.

Do you see now how the journey of 42 generations and their story build towards the advent? How delighted must everyone be when this promised Messiah was born….No wonder the heavens broke into praise! Emmanuel – God is with us again! He has come…peace on earth. And while he lived here for those few short years the Son of God spoke of a new kingdom, a new way, a new future, a new reign that would never end.

The Messiah has arrived – God has spoken again! The silence has ended!!!

Crowds flocked to him, his popularity soared, expectations rose of a new day.

We are back on track again with this remarkable Messiah – the sick are healed, the blind see, and even the dead are raised. How devastated then when this Saviour was strung up on a Roman cross. We thought he was the one! He spoke about a kingdom to come, he healed the sick, and now all is lost. But Gods story has the surprising finale…. God has the last say and Jesus rose triumphant, the grave could not hold him.

Like the early followers of Jesus - *I’m still captivated by a Promise* – And what is his promise to me? I am with you to the end of the world. Jesus sent his Spirit, and he will live in you and empower you to do kingdom stuff, and you will see the kingdom coming in your lives. And no experience you face will be faced alone. But *I’m also awaiting his promised return…* not unlike those who waited for the Messiah to come….

Can I ask you this morning?

Are you still longing for a land? Which is yet to come - a new heavenly City.

Are you still longing for a King? To lead your life and be captivated by his purposes?

Are you still longing for his promised return? And the abiding presence of Holy Spirit now?

I’ve taken a lot of funerals in my time as pastor over forty years. Funerals always get me thinking – because they awaken me with a start. Often they are people who I’ve known closely and one day they are here and the next they are gone….and we learn to do life without them. I’ve shared with you that my brother in law in Taranaki got some bad news of terminal cancer in his lungs…. He been a strong believer all his life, a prayer, giver, elder, youth worker, counsellor… and once again this last week I had this kind of argument with God. Lord this is not the way to treat one of your best! I rang him this week and heard over the phone him struggling for air…. Then God just said a few words once again – ***Remember Lloyd This life here which we live is curtain raiser – the main event is yet to come.*** Whether we live or die now or later – we all await Jesus’ return – the return of the King.

It was the three kings who Matthew records visited Jesus

Matthew gospel is about Jesus the King… and we are his kingdom.

Last week we reflected on Jesus the Word as John gospel records….

This week Jesus the King who captivates our hearts and make us *long for his reign in our lives and his return.* All this pivots on Matthew 1 – **You are to call his name JESUS for he will save his people from their sins.**