**The Birth of Jesus!**

**“The Essence of Christmas”**

**Isaiah 11:1-5 – The Branch from Jesse**

* With Judah cut down, the Messiah is the branch that will rule forever (II Samuel 7:16)
* God will judge with righteousness and justice.
* We don’t like when people form positions without having all of the facts, but do we do the same thing?
* If we let God govern our heart, then we have the beginnings of righteousness and justice in our treatment of others.
* Judah had become corrupt and needed to not only repent and notice injustice but take an active position in offering help to those in need. We must do the same today!

**Jeremiah 23:5-6 – The Righteous Branch**

* Jeremiah foretells of a coming messiah from the lineage of King David
* The distinct difference is between the current corrupt kings and a righteous king to come.

As we go through the study, consider the characters portrayed in the movie and what they were experiencing as the tried to fulfill God’s will for their lives:

* Mary
* Mary’s Parents
* Joseph
* Zechariah
* Elizabeth
* The wise men
* Herod the Great
* Antipas

How do you feel as you are trying to fulfill God’s will?

Luke’s Account

* Luke writes as a physician to the Gentiles that Jesus is the savior of all mankind.

**Luke 1:1-66**

* Zechariah and Elizabeth were respectable couple.
* Zechariah was a priest of the Abijah division. (20K priest broken into 24 divisions ~1K/division)
* The priests would cast lots to see who would serve. On this particular day, Zechariah would serve to offer incense in the temple.
* When the angel speak, Zechariah is fearful.
  + When God speaks to you, are you shocked? Or fearful? Shouldn’t we expect it?
* Zechariah questions the words of Gabriel and his speech is removed [18]
* Elizabeth has the child and names the child as Gabriel instructs despite the traditional questions of the people.
* Zechariah confirms the naming of the child, as John.
* Zechariah’s tongue is loosed after the child is born.

Matthew’s Account

* Matthew writes this book to the Jews to demonstrate that Jesus is the King and true Messiah.

**Matthew 1:1-19**

* Matthew goes through listing the genealogy of Jesus to demonstrate Jesus is a descendant of Abraham and King David.
* Matthew takes this approach to demonstrate that Jesus is God’s chosen person.
* The varied persons listed in Jesus’ lineage demonstrates that God’s work is not limited by human frailties or sinful nature. God uses ordinary people! God uses all kinds of people today to fulfill His will. How are you letting God use you or are you trying to control your use? [LA]
* Both Mary and Joseph were direct descendants of David (Luke 3:23 – 38)
* The three parts of a Jewish marriage:
  + The families agreed to the union
  + A public announcement was made of their pledge to one another (engagement like; could only be broken by death or divorce). This could last a year while the couple lived apart.
  + The couple were officially married and could live together
* Gabriel addresses Mary that she is with child and she asks, How can this be? (Luke 1:34)
  + Should Mary’s question have been considered doubt like Zechariah’s?
* Mary goes to spend 3 months with Elizabeth.
  + What does the visit of Mary to Elizabeth do for Mary?
* Based on Jewish civil law, Mary’s pregnancy permitted him to divorce her and Jewish authorities could have had her stoned: (Deut. 22:23-34)
* Joseph decides to break the engagement quietly – Joseph shows himself to be a man of character as he chooses to demonstrate justice and love.

Notes

Week 1:

* There has been 400 years elapsed since the last prophecy of the Messiah.
* The Messiah comes into the world in a city with strong Roman presence which kept military peace, but also demonstrated oppression, slavery, injustice and immorality
* First 17 verses covers 46 people and 2000 years – with varied backgrounds, experiences and behaviors.
* Matthew traced the lineage back to Abraham – Matthew wrote to the Jews. Luke writes to the Gentiles and traces Jesus lineage back to Adam – He is the savior of ALL people.