

Genesis 12:1-5, Matthew 2:1-12 – A king for all nations (5th January 2014)

(Happy new year – hope had good Christmas period). Saw film last week – new Disney ‘Frozen’ (anyone else seen it?)

Describe (CGI, old school Disney – songs, princesses etc)

Like so many Disney films – retelling of an old story. Hans Christian Andersen – The Snow Queen.

Adapted (EXPAND FOR MAIN) – same idea – love melts the frozen heart – not boy/girl, but between 2 sisters. Disney true love = service (first time).

Story re-told but new twist, new fulfilment of idea.

Same idea with first few chapters of Matthew. Telling an old story – but this time with new characters, and a new ending. What is the story? Story of Israel, God’s chosen people. Story goes back to Genesis 12 – God calls Abraham, and what say: bless you, make you into a great nation, give you a land (all yes), and all peoples will be blessed through you.

Last bit was problem – in fact, rest of story quite up and down, Israel had failed to live up to their billing as God’s people. Problem of sin – all way through OT:

- Red Sea ‘die in the desert’
- Desert – no food or water, then the temptations to idols (Golden Calf at Sinai), not trusting God to take promised land
- Not obeying law – Sabbath, oppressing poor

God merciful – still a nation, and though judged and lost control of land, still blessed in many ways. But not the light to the nations that God intended.

What was God going to do about it? New Israel – Jesus – true son in whom all God’s promises will be fulfilled. Next few weeks look in detail, and see how fulfils God’s plans perfectly – let’s go back to things I’ve just mentioned:

- Goes through waters himself – but faithful to baptism even that JtB initially says no – covenant righteousness and faithfulness
- Went into desert and overcame temptation, proving himself faithful and worthy
- Went up hill and taught law – it was God’s law, but re-imagined to get to the heart of it – law that God had always intended but which his people had lost sight of. Not a new law, but the eternal law taught in a new and deeper way.

Echoes of it already in Matthew:

READ 1:1 – why genealogy – fulfilment of God’s promises to his people – true king and true people of God – ‘Son of Abraham’ – all promises to Abraham being fulfilled

Who was custodian of God’s people in OT when went to Egypt? Joseph – who is Jesus’ earthly father? And how does God speak to him – Joseph and dreams – sound familiar?

(Some scholars say that made up details – I disagree, I think God is perfectly able to give Jesus a human father called Joseph and give him dreams – fulfilling all promises even more perfectly. Like so many theological debates, very simple question – is God God? And therefore able to do God things?)

Today’s passage – notice how story starts: spiritual seekers called from East to go to promised land to find answer to God’s promise. Abraham in Genesis 12 – here it’s the Wise Men. And God answers their prayer and they see the new king. It’s the famous old story re-told – but there’s a new twist, isn’t there? Who is this king for?

Magi are not Jews – yet God reveals himself to them. King for all nations. Final part of Gen 12 finally being fulfilled. What Paul picks up on in Ephesians 3 – glorious ‘mystery’ – God for Gentiles too – v6 ‘heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus’.

Next few weeks – see what else fulfilled but for today, 3 reflections:

- Last few minutes – vision of bible expanding. Reason why putting a sermon series together. Passion to teach bible, but particularly to open it out so people can see the big picture, to see how it fits together. Teach systematically, focusing on one chunk for a couple of months, get into it.

Thought for 2014 – is this a year when God is calling you to get into the bible in a new way, when your vision of who He is and what He’s done expands? Sermons. Study notes. Books (happily lend). COMPASS COURSES.

- Think about your 2014 – will it be the same story retold, or will there be a new twist for you – what is God doing in you now? Humans are creatures of habit – patterns repeat. Often good – sometimes bad. Is there a new twist for you this year – especially in relation to your spiritual life. What would you like it to be?
- Is God at work in surprising people? He spoke to Wise Men – who would you like him to speak to? Who will this king for all nations reveal himself to? Will you pray for it, and trust God for the rest.

New hunger for God’s word, a new twist in your story, a new work of God in surprising people. What is God prompting you about today? PRAY.