

Christmas: The Fulfillment of History

Matthew 1:20-21 – Galatians 3:14

Message Discussion Guide

Connect

- What's the best movie sequel you have seen?

Discover

- Which statement or experience stood out to you from the worship service?
- Read Romans 4:1-5.
 - The passage tells us that Abraham was not justified by works. What does that mean? Why would "justified by works" give Abraham something he could have boasted about?
 - This passage quotes Genesis 15:6 when it says Abraham believed and it was credited to him for righteousness. What does that mean? How does a person obtain righteousness (a right standing with God)?
- Read Romans 4:13-16.
 - What is the role of the law (keeping the law) in obtaining righteousness?
 - What is the guarantee that Paul speaks of in Romans 4:16?
 - What does it mean that Abraham is the father of us all? In what way is this true?
- Read Genesis 21:12-18.
 - What religious movement was established (directly or indirectly) through the events of these verses?
 - What does this teach us today about the interconnectivity of history?
- Read Genesis 22:2, 10-18.
 - How does God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son point forward to Christ's death on the cross?
 - In Genesis 22:12, God stops Abraham's sacrifice. What was the reason God gave? What is the connection between fearing God and having faith in God?
 - What does the substitute sacrifice found in verse 13 and the name Abraham gave to that place say about how we are saved?
- Read Galatians 3:14.
 - What was the "blessing of Abraham?"
 - What does it mean that the blessing would come to the Gentiles?

Respond

- How are the Old and New Testaments connected? How does the promise given to Abraham find fulfillment in the birth of Christ?
- What does it teach us about the character of God when we learn how he had this grand plan that he worked to unfold over thousands of years all to make it possible that we might be right with him?

Bonus for Thinkers

- Why did God send Jesus when he did? Why not after the people returned to the promised land under Joshua? Why not during the reign of David? Why not wait until after the Dark Ages?

First Baptist Nacogdoches Bible Reading Plan

Day	Scripture
Monday (12/23)	Romans 4:1-16
Tuesday (12/24)	1 Corinthians 15:1-34
Wednesday (12/25)	1 Corinthians 15:35-58
Thursday (12/26)	1 Corinthians 16:1-24
Friday (12/27)	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Daily Devotion Questions

Monday (12/23) — Romans 4:1-16

- Review the “Respond” questions on the reverse side of this devotion guide.

Tuesday (12/24) — 1 Corinthians 15:1-34

- Paul gives a list of many of those who saw the resurrected Jesus (Cephas, the twelve disciples, a group of 500 people, James, all the apostles, Paul). How does this strengthen your faith in the resurrection?
- According to 15:17-20, how important is the resurrection to the Christian faith? Why would it not be enough to have the crucifixion without the resurrection?
- Rewrite 15:33 in your own words. What specific situations in your own life does this warn against?
- What is the converse of 15:14? Since Christ has been raised, our preaching is ??? and your faith is ???.

Wednesday (12/25) — 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

- In 15:42-44, Paul is showing the great contrast that will exist between our earthly bodies and our heavenly bodies. While we do not know the exact nature of our heavenly bodies, we know they will be much different and better. What changes are you looking forward to or hoping for with your heavenly body? Thank the Lord for those pending changes.
- 15:52 speaks of the day the Lord will remove his children from the world and take them to heaven in dramatic fashion. No one knows when this day will come. But perhaps it will be this week, or maybe even today. If you knew it was going to happen later this week, what are some things you would want to do to prepare yourself and others for that event? Write those down. Talk with the Lord about why you aren't doing those things anyway.
- Because of the resurrection and the promise of new bodies in heaven, we should not fear death. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you fear dying? Ask the Lord to increase your faith, confidence and boldness because of the promises we read in 15:54-57.

Thursday (12/26) — 1 Corinthians 16:1-24

- Paul gives three principles for how we should give in 16:2. See if you can find them. Look at your own practice of giving and see how it matches the answers to these three questions:
 - Our giving should be done before or after meeting our other obligations?
 - Our giving should be occasionally (when there is a big need) or regularly (every week)?
 - Everyone should give the same amount or we should give a percentage based on how we prosper?
- In 16:13, Paul gives four short commands. Write each of these in your own words. Then use your version to evaluate your week so far.
- Re-read 16:14. Write down any harshness, selfishness, and greediness that others may have seen in you in the past seven days. What is one thing you could change to be more obedient to 16:14?

Friday (12/27) — 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

- According to 1:2ff, how often does Paul pray for and give thanks for those in the church at Thessalonica? Are there a dozen or so people you should be praying for with the same fervency Paul prayed for those in that church? Write down their names. How can you be more faithful to pray often for these and others?
- At the end of 1:5, Paul says that his own character and lifestyle added credibility to the gospel. Paul preached the gospel with his lips, but he demonstrated the power of the gospel with his character and lifestyle. How does your character add credibility to the message of the gospel? Are there parts of your life that detract from the gospel?
- The believers in Thessalonica experienced both suffering and joy at the same time (1:6). Write down how you think that is possible. In 1:7 Paul says they had both suffering and joy so that they would be examples so other believers could learn from this. Ask the Lord what you can learn from their experience and your explanation.