

## **WEDNESDAY EVENING (December 25<sup>th</sup>) • Prayer & Providence**

### **Christ's Rule in National and Spiritual Kingdoms**

For over 400 years the voice of prophecy remained silent, but God had not been inactive. He had been preparing both the Jewish and heathen nations for the coming of the Christ. During the period between the testaments, the Jews passed through many trials; they suffered from both within and without. The high priesthood had become a political football to be kicked back and forth in the conflict between Syria and Egypt; it was no longer what God intended it to be. Sects had arisen within the Jewish religion, corrupting the religious life of the nation. Rome now dominated the world, calling the plays in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. The people were looking for a Messiah, one after their own preconceived ideas, not after God's.

#### **The Fullness of Time**

In fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah (40:3) and Malachi (3:1; 4:5-6), John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the way for the Lord, heralding the arrival of the Christ and the approach of the kingdom of Old Testament hope (Mark 1:14-15). Paul summarizes the period like this: "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal 4:4-5). What stands out to you about Mark 1:14-15 and Galatians 4:4-5?

After his resurrection Jesus proclaimed, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt 28:18-20). His apostles made clear that Jesus' death and resurrection were no accident (Acts 2:22-24, 33, 36). Carefully read the following passages. What can we learn from:

- Ephesians 1:20-23 –
- 1 Peter 3:22 –
- Revelation 1:5 –
- Revelation 19:12, 15-16 –

Take the time to enhance your understanding of what God was planning all along. What do we learn about the purposes and providence of God from:

- Psalm 2 –
- Psalm 45 –
- Psalm 110 –
- Isaiah 11 –

The Messiah's judgment and destruction of wicked nations could be demonstrated in the New Testament by two examples: Jerusalem (and the rebellious nation of the Jews), and Rome (and the Roman Empire). What can we learn from passages like Matthew 24 and Revelation 13 and 19?