

### **Advent Reflections for 2025: Week 3.**

#### **Genealogy of Christ**

From the well-known figures of last week's study, we jump several generations to the lesser-known kings, Uzziah and Josiah.

Also called Azariah, **Uzziah** was King of Judah around 786-758BC.

In his early days, Uzziah was a great conqueror who secured Judah's southern borders. Later, however, he became arrogant, usurping the functions of the priests in the Temple, and for this he was smitten with leprosy.

**Josiah** ruled in Judah from (approximately) 640-609BC. During Josiah's reign, repairs were carried out on the Temple and a book of Jewish Law - believed to be the Book of Deuteronomy - was discovered. *Read the account of this and Josiah's faithful and enthusiastic response, in 2 Kings 22 and 23.*

Josiah's kingdom was caught between the two more powerful ones of Egypt and Assyria. His attempts to save his kingdom from Assyria by forming an alliance with Egypt failed and he was killed in battle against Egypt.

According to Matthew's genealogy, Josiah was the last King of Judah before the people went into exile in Babylon.

#### **Material unique to Matthew's Gospel: healing of two blind men. (9,27-31)**

This healing miracle has much to teach us about the importance of faith. The two blind men called out to Jesus, addressing him as "Son of David." Clearly they recognised in him someone great, but recognition alone wasn't enough. Even Satan recognised Jesus, but he received nothing from him! Before giving them what they wanted, Jesus asked the men:

"Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Having been answered in the affirmative, Jesus touched the men's eyes and said: "According to your faith, let it be done to you."

Whether our supplications are made on our own behalf, or for the benefit of others, we must have faith and trust in God. Our requests - our prayers - offered with faith, will not always be answered in the way we expect or want, but they will always be answered.

#### **Reflection based on Stephen Cottrell's "Do nothing. Christmas is Coming."**

This week, much of Cottrell's focus is on gratitude.

Have you noticed how "Thank you" seems to have gone out of fashion? Holding a door for someone, making room for them on the pavement, handing them something; little things that used to prompt a smile and a word of thanks now go unacknowledged. And don't get me started on thank you letters .....

So this week, be trend-setters! Remember to say thank you to anyone and everyone who does anything for you. Whilst you're doing that, don't forget to include God in those you thank. Thank him for the gift of Jesus, but also for all those smaller gifts he

gives you every day, the things we all tend to take for granted. Take pleasure in feeling air fill your lungs, seeing water flow from a tap or the glitter of frost on a spider's web. Give thanks for the little things.

**Final thought**

"I come in the little things, saith the Lord."  
(Evelyn Underhill: "Immanence.").