

## King of All

Matthew 1:1-17

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I want to take this Sunday to examine Mat 1: 1-17 because these verses will help us reflect on the identity of this babe born to Mary and Joseph. Next Sunday, for our Christmas service, we are going to study verses 18-25 of Matt. 1, which is the story of his birth.

Here at Sovereign Grace Church, we want to engage the Christmas season in a distinctively Christ-centered, Christ-exalting way. We want to take the cultural merriment surrounding December 25<sup>th</sup> – which for many folks has little or nothing to do with the incarnation of the Son of God – and reclaim it, in our church, and in our hearts, for the glory of the One whose birth we remember at Christmas.

Now, I think it's safe to say that for most people are not trying to do that. They're not trying to reclaim Christmas for the glory of God. I don't want to be misunderstood. There's much to be commended in the family traditions and festivities our culture has embraced. I trust you know, I'm not trying to put any kind of warning label on getting a Christmas tree or yard decorating, or baking Christmas cookies, or giving gifts to loved ones, or exchanging gifts...and that kind of thing.

However, for Christians, Christmas is much more than a winter holiday; it's a celebration of the Incarnation—of God becoming a man and dwelling among us. It is important for us to keep this in sharp focus during these because as Christians, we don't ever want to empty Christmas of its depth of its true meaning or fail to think about, and worship and praise the One who

*"did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing,*

Instead, we want to remember this Christmas that the Eternal Son of God took

*"the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men*

We want to remember also that the Son of God

*"being found in human form,  
humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death  
even death on a cross (Phil 2:68)."*

We don't want to forget because we don't want to miss the wonderful opportunity this season provides us with for both worship and witness. Given the unique nature of this season, In the days ahead we will have opportunity to bear testimony to people around us about who Jesus is and about the dramatic difference He has made in our lives. However, if that is going to happen we must remain focused on Jesus, otherwise I fear divine appointments will become missed opportunities that we will regret later. So for the purpose of both our worship and our witness, I offer you two sermons – one this week and another next week from Matthew chapter 1.

Now, with all of that in mind, let's turn our attention to contemplating the passage before us – which is a *genealogy* of our Savior. At first glance, the obvious question someone might think to ask is : "Chris, why are we spending an entire sermon on a genealogy? Isn't that a little boring?" Well, that's a good question! Here's the answer: These verses are far more than a genealogy; they are designed to teach us something important about Jesus. And that "something" is indicated in chapter 1 verse 1 in what becomes Matthew's launching pad into the genealogy. In that verse we read (you can look there):

**1:1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew indicates that his goal in giving us this genealogy—it's that we might be convinced that:

Jesus is the Messiah  
The rightful heir to the throne of David  
who brings divine blessing to the nations.

So yes this is a genealogy, but it is a genealogy that sings! It's a genealogy with a purpose. It is a genealogy that God intends to have a faith-inspiring, faith-strengthening effect in our hearts. I will also add that it is a genealogy that should help us to rejoice with greater zeal and greater passion in the truth that we celebrate this Christmas; that the One who was born of the virgin Mary IS the Messiah, the perfect King of all who invites all people everywhere – including you and me to believe in Him and embrace His good, gracious and merciful reign.

If anyone here has not yet submitted their life to Jesus,— I pray that this sermon gets you one step closer to doing just that.

Now listen: you'll notice the genealogy has a lot of names. There are interesting stories behind many of the names. However, for the sake of time, we aren't going to be able to retell them. Instead we are going to stick to getting the main thrust of the text – which is encapsulated in two phrases that I've borrowed from Dr. DA Carson: *First*: Jesus is truly in the kingly line of David and *Secondly*: He brings divine blessings to all nations.

### **1. Jesus is truly in the kingly line of David**

In a day and age when many Messianic pretenders claimed the right to David's throne, Matthew (the tax collector turned apostle) wanted to prove to his fellow countrymen from their own OT Scriptures that Jesus was the real deal -- that He was their long awaited King.

His purpose is to inspire new faith and to strengthen already present faith in Jesus. This is why his Gospel has more than double the quotations from the OT than any of the other Gospels (Hagner).

Matthew wanted to show his fellow Israelites that the promises made in the OT regarding a coming King and Savior were promises kept in the NT that were fulfilled in Jesus.

This is also why Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy. He knows that if the Jewish people are to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, he can't only talk about Jesus' miracles and Jesus' teaching, but he must also labor to show that this Jesus, born to Mary and Joseph, has a bona fide, certifiable, legitimate claim to the throne of David by virtue of His ancestry.

You see, If Jesus cannot be shown to be truly connected to the line of King David –then the countless OT promises regarding a coming eternal king – a coming Messiah from the line of David – cannot apply to Jesus. To believe the Gospel and to submit one's entire life to His kingship as the book commands would be nothing less than foolish because it would be based on a invalid claim. It would be based on a lie.

However, if Jesus can be shown to be in the kingly line of David – then that changes things! It gives all that Matthew says in the rest of his Gospel significance – because from the vantage point of the original readers, this Jesus really could potentially be the One who fulfills the OT prophetic hopes – which if he was, would have vast implications for Matthews original audience. And those implications reach us as well.

Matthew In verse 1, right out of the gate, begins to make the connection between Jesus and King David when he refers to Jesus as "Jesus Christ, Son of David". Now you need to know that the word Christ is significant because it is a term in Greek that is roughly equivalent to "Messiah" or "Anointed." So this Jesus is "the Christ," He's "the Messiah" – and Matthew also says He is the Son of David. By using those

two terms, Matthew cannot be misunderstood. He is claiming essentially that Jesus is the one who fulfills all of the messianic promises found in the OT...such as the one we find in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 where the prophet Nathan prophesies to King David :

*When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.*

God goes on in that same passage to declare of this coming king things like:

*I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.  
my steadfast love will not depart from him  
and  
Your throne shall be established forever.”*

So when Matthew claims that Jesus is the Christ, the son of David, what He is saying is that this prophecy and others like them were fulfilled in Jesus. He then goes on to show the connection, between Jesus and king David through Joseph's line [because Joseph was Jesus' legal parent].

So we read in verse 6 (look there), "Jesse the father of David" ; and how is David identified? He is "David *the king*" which is significant because from there Matthew works back to Joseph and then to Jesus who Matthew notes end of verse 16

*"is called the Christ [in other words, the Messiah king]."*

So I think you can see, Matthew is making it quite clear: *Jesus fulfills all of the Messianic promises – he is the Davidic heir.* Of course, a few verses later in the same chapter, this Messiah, this King is born to Mary and Joseph. A point of interest is that later on in Matthew's Gospel, nearing the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus Himself openly declares his kingship when he rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. This was an open declaration of his kingship because what he did there Matthew says was in fulfillment of the prophetic word given through Zechariah:

*"Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey..."*

The multitude got the message. You may recall that as Jesus passed by, the crowds shouted with great passion and zeal as they waved palm branches

*"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."*

At that moment, even though they misunderstood the nature of his kingship (they thought he was a political king), they did recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Obviously they did not comprehend – what we know today– and that is that Jesus was and is the "King of kings and Lord of lords".

Now if we just pause for a minute here, what I find so amazing to consider is that the Jesus born to Joseph and Mary in Matthew 1 is the same Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. And as such, He is the one who deserves all of our praise and all of our trust.

### **As Christmas approaches, are you resting in His kingship and trusting in His care?**

The reason I ask this question is because during this time of year, people often take stock of their lives. This is a time of year when we often evaluate how life is going. We can become acutely aware of difficulties, challenges, disappointments, and failures. And we can subtly question God's wisdom and God's goodness.

So, because I love you as your pastor, I want to prepare you for those moments should they come: I want to suggest that as an alternative to questioning God. When I have done that (and I have) it is virtually always an expression of unbelief. If you find yourself in a place where you are tempted to question God's ways, let me encourage you to "talk to yourself" instead of just "listening to yourself". Beckon your soul to once again embrace Jesus as **your** sovereign King. Express to Him **your** confidence and **your** trust in His goodness and in His plan even if you don't understand it.

Listen, Christmas is about a King, a King who came into this world to save you, to redeem you, to make possible your adoption in God's family. He is a sovereign king. He is a good king. He is a kind king who loves you. And as our good, kind and sovereign king as one author has put it, "*he always knows what he is doing and why he is doing it (Tripp).*" And I would add: he always knows what he is doing and why he is doing it even if we have little insight and little clarity as to what he is doing and why he is doing it.

So, with that in mind, let us make it our aim as a local church to this Christmas season, trust God with the challenges and out of that trust sing with joy and full assurance of faith "Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King" because we trust Him.

So, Jesus is the Davidic king. Now lets consider that:

## 2. Jesus brings divine blessings to all nations

When Matthew begins this genealogy, its important that we take note of who he begins with: Abraham. So in verse 2, he tells us: **Abraham** was the father of Isaac. Now we might wonder, why does Matthew begin his genealogy with Abraham? Well it's because Matthew wants to emphasize that Jesus as the Messiah King will bring divine blessing not just to Israel, but to all nations.

You may recall that back in Genesis 12, God made a covenant with Abraham that through his seed, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. So through this genealogy, Matthew is making it unmistakably clear that in Jesus, God was getting a lot done. God was fulfilling centuries old promises that He had made to His people. In fulfilling his covenant promises to David He was also fulfilling his covenant promises to Abraham and the implication is that the kingly reign of the Messiah extends beyond national and ethnic Israel to the entire world!

Matthew not only begins with Abraham, but also includes four women. It was not customary at the time to list women in genealogies, but each one of the women listed was, in some sense, a non-Israelite and therefore helped to make the point that the Messiah's mission was international in scope.

Ruth, Tamar, and Rahab were Gentiles (or non-Jews) and Bathsheba (though she herself was an Israelite) was married to Uriah *the Hittite* – which meant that she was most likely thought of as a Hittite. So given the international nature of Jesus' rule, it's fitting that Matthew begins his Gospel – with Abraham and includes these alien women. It's also fitting because of how all of this anticipates the ending of Matthew's gospel.

Do you remember how Matthew ends? Some of you know the answer with the Great Commission where Jesus declares to his disciples and by extension to all of us:

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples **of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

In the Great Commission, the Gospel is proclaimed to the entire world. As people become disciples of Jesus Christ, the reign of the Davidic Messiah King (the reign of Jesus) spreads and God's promise to Abraham, to bless all nations, is fulfilled.

One implication of this truth is that the evangelism the discipleship that takes place in the local church, week by week, is of paramount importance because its all about Jesus shaping our own lives and extending his blessing out into the community.

### CONCLUSION

There a lot things that make this "a most wonderful time of year." But the MAIN reason this is a most wonderful time of year IS NOT

- that the kids will be jingle belling, and everyone will be telling you to be of good cheer
- And its not that there's going to be parties for hosting and marshmallows for roasting and caroling out in the snow.
- And it's not because for married folks Lord willing there will be much mistletoeing and its not because hearts will be glowing when loved ones are near.

Those things are great. But this is a most wonderful time of year is because the rule and reign of the babe in the Manger, who grew up to die on the Cross for our sins, has come. Even to us. He is **our** good and kind and loving and Sovereign King who reigns supreme over all the affairs of our lives.

The one born on that first Christmas night  
Jesus  
is the Messiah  
the rightful heir to the throne of David  
who brings divine blessing to the nations.

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