

The Genealogy of the King

Matthew

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Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, what a humbling thought that pile of crowns. Lord, we know from your word that there is coming a day where this mortal body will expire and we will stand before you and you alone. Lord, you've made it very clear in your word that all that which we have aspired for and desired in this very temporal earthly place will expire in the flames of fire but that which is done on your behalf, that which is honoring to you and glorifying to you shall remain. Lord, may tonight's study in your word not only be fruitful in your eyes but, Lord, may it prepare us to be even more fruitful tomorrow when we arise. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

This evening, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the gospel of Matthew 1 and if by chance you were not with us last week, we are beginning a journey through the gospel of Matthew that will do multiple things in our lives. First and foremost, it will help us, it will assist us not just in learning the gospel of Matthew, not just in learning the first part of what you know as your New Testament, but it will allow us to take all of scripture and essentially what we're doing is learning the totality of the Bible by simply walking through the gospel of Matthew. I realize that it is 28 chapters in length, I realize that we're going to get at what we might call a snail's pace but as I said last week, I promise if you will just "hang in there with me," whenever this journey ends you're going to look back and not just have learned the gospel of Matthew, we will have learned the entirety of scripture, we will have kind of created that biblical jigsaw puzzle where all the pieces come together.

Tonight, we come to probably one of the most exciting passages in all of your Bible. Matthew 1, the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Now for the sake of your sanity and mine, I'm not going to read verses 1 through 17, however, I am going to read verses 1 and 2 and then fast forward to verse 17. It says,

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

Fast forward to verse 17,

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

As you will see tonight, this section of scripture contains the famous begats. This is the genealogy, this is the historical ancestry.com of Jesus Christ and often this is one of those sections I must confess that when you're in any type of Bible reading plan, we either, A: skim over it, or B: just skip this section because it's a bunch of names that honestly we have difficulty pronouncing, and at the same time we really want to get to the next story. The next story is Christmas, and the next story is the birth of the Savior and we know he got here, we know about all these names. So tonight for the sake of just a continuance of our study, I want to walk through this genealogy to see the significance of what is laid out before us, but to begin with somewhat of a replay of last week but really just an introductory matter, let us remember that what we know as the gospel of Matthew contains a very unique perspective. The Lord utilized a tax collector, a publican, a modern-day tax official, someone who would have been very interested in the specific names that were involved in the process of the coming of the Messiah.

Allow me to illustrate. Imagine this spring as you're doing that glorious endeavor of filing your taxes, and it asks you on your taxes because it is critical to the equation, "How many dependents do you have?" And you just said, "A whole bunch." How would that go with an IRS auditor? Not very well, in fact, they want the names of the dependents, they want the Social Security numbers of the names, the ages, etc. Why? Because you're not able to cross claim and all those different accounting terms. The reason this is so important is from the perspective that the Lord used through a modern-day accountant today, a publican in his day, is that there's probably no chapter that we find less palatable but yet is more specific. It doesn't say a certain place, at a certain time there was a certain person born. We are given names. We are given details. We are given the very specifics. But what does this do? It transitions us. You realize the first 17 verses of Matthew cover almost 2,000 years of human history with all of these names. It's almost as if everything from Genesis 12 with the call of Abram until the birth of the Messiah is summed up in these simple lists of names.

Three things that Matthew "transitions" for us. It takes us from the Old Testament to the New. Remember last week we discussed 430 years of silence, that blank page in your Bible, and now that which has been expected, that which has been desired, that which has been prophesied is about to be revealed unto us. It's also going to transition us from Judaism to what we know as the church and the body of Christ. Every name we're about to read with the exception of a few, we'll discuss that in a moment, are from Abraham's lineage. They are Jewish yet what do we discover? By the time you get to the letters of the Apostle Paul, the majority of the places he wrote to, the majority of the people who heard him had a Gentile background for their specific genealogy. So Matthew is not just taking us from the Old Testament to the New, it's not only taking us from Judaism unto

the church, but it is taking us from the Jews to the Gentiles. What we're going to discover in the book of Matthew, not just the lists of these names but throughout the entire text, is that the overwhelming majority of every miracle Jesus performed, every message he spoke, was rejected by the Jewish people. He did not look the way they wanted him to look. He did not act the way they wanted him to act. And so therefore who was it that was so receptive to him? Those that society had pushed to the outer skirts, those that were the Samaritans, those that were the Gentiles.

So just as an introduction, Matthew again serves as an incredible transition. Here we have almost 2,000 years of history wrapped up in 17 verses. Pretty interesting statistics, at least I consider them interesting here in chapter 1. 1. There are 45 names that are listed in this genealogy. I jokingly say there are those of a royal background, there are those that we would call the relatives of Jesus, and then there's what I like to call the renegades. We'll discuss that in a moment, you kind of wonder how did they get in the list? There are 42 generations.

Now verse 17 it makes it very clear that there are 14 generations from Abraham to David, from David to the carrying away to Babylon, from Babylon into the time of Christ. You're probably most likely familiar with this but if you go home tonight and you try to reconcile chronologically those three sets of 14 generations, you will not sleep and you will wake up mad is what you will do, and when I say mad, you're either going to be frustrated or you're not going to be thinking properly. When you go back, what you'll discover is that oftentimes in the biblical record even if you're a great grandson of somebody, the Bible will refer to you as a son of. So oftentimes the chronological generations may be skipped over but the fact that that name is listed is still a direct connection between the original ancestor and the one that is mentioned, and we'll see later there's a specific reason that the Lord laid it out in these three triads, there's a specific reason there is 14 generations in totality.

There are 40 what I call begats. Those of you like myself who are a fan of what we know as the old King James Version, "So-and-so begat So-and-so that begat So-and so." Here's why that is fascinating to me. You recognize that nobody in Matthew 1 in the genealogy, nobody dies. Now we all know that over time their earthly lives expired but there are nine genealogies in your Old Testament beginning in Genesis 5. We have the lineage of Adam. We have the descendants of Cain. We have the descendants of Seth. Then we make our way through the Jewish people all the way through the Old Testament. Here's what you would typically see in an Old Testament genealogy, "So-and-so lived such amount of years, after that amount of years, they gave birth to a child, and 100 and X number of years later they died." I mean, every genealogy, they died. They died. They died. They died. They died. You've got 42 generations, 45 names, and nobody is mentioned as dying. Now we know that from an earthly perspective they did physically expire but what we have from the very beginning of Matthew is this very subtle communication that Jesus Christ has come to give us life. Death is not even mentioned in the very genealogy that introduces his life and his ministry.

The next little statistic is there are two kingdoms that are represented in the gospel of Matthew. As we progress, we will spend more time on these but allow me just a few brief moments, two phrases that you will see in the gospel of Matthew that you will not see in any of the other three gospels together. There is what we know as the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. Now the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2 that we should study to show our approval unto God, rightly dividing the word of God. One of our problems in our culture and our society is we like to take two things that are incompatible and smash them together and force them to work. We use it all the time in a simple analogy, okay, that we're comparing apples to oranges, right? We would never say that an orange is an apple, we'd never say an apple is an orange. Two different colors, two different textures, two different tastes etc., correct?

Well, when you come to the gospel of Matthew, 33 times the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" is going to be utilized. Now tonight we not only sang but we heard about the glories of heaven, illustrations of mansions, streets of gold, etc., crowns in piles. All of that is material in the sense of you can see it, you can touch it, but then there's this phrase "the kingdom of God." In John 4:24 it says God is spirit and we must worship him in truth and in spirit. Remember last week we talked about the Abrahamic covenant, that it was twofold, there was this physical aspect of the ground, the land, the covenant of that which he had given them to dwell in, and there was also the covenant of the heart, the relationship that they would be his people and he would be their God. In a very simplistic fashion, the kingdom of God is our relationship to the Lord and the kingdom of heaven is his reigning upon the land that he covenanted with Abraham, David, etc.

Why is this critical? The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is not found in the gospel of Mark, Luke and/or John. It's not there. In fact, those gospels contain an abundance of the phrase "the kingdom of God." In the gospel of Matthew, we do have five references to the kingdom of God but as we walk through Matthew, we'll spend more time kind of differentiating this but what I want you to see statistically is there's an overwhelming emphasis on the physical kingship of Jesus Christ, an overwhelming emphasis of that which he prophesied, that which he promised, and one day in his return he will fulfill.

Last but not least when it comes to statistics, there is only one king. There can only be one king and we see the gospel of Matthew as demonstrating the path, the pathway by which he is incarnated and born, he lives, he dies, he raises from the dead, and yes, returns. In fact, the gospel of Matthew will spend two entire chapters on what we collectively call the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. There is more in Matthew about his Second Coming than the famous Christmas story that is contained therein.

So when we start looking at these statistics, what we see is there's an overwhelming evidence that the gospel of Matthew is showing itself to be the fulfillment of, the manifestation of all these Old Testament prophecies that had been spoken throughout the years.

Now let's get to the specific names. This is where, in my opinion, it gets pretty intriguing when you begin to look at who is not in the list versus who is in the list. Let's begin with

royalty. There are three individuals that are mentioned in this list that we must address. They are just commonplace names within our faith. We must begin with Abraham. Obviously it states in verse 1 that he came from Abraham. Verse 2 mentions him again. This is the initiation of what we might call the seed. Back in Genesis 3:15, we call this verse the very first gospel, or the protoevangelium. Remember, humanity has fallen into sin, we're trying to hide ourselves from God, we're trying our best with fig leaves, things aren't working out. Finally with an audience in the Lord he begins to lay out the consequences of our rebellion. There in verse 15 of Genesis 3, he says, "Behold, the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent." That is, by not only my observation but many, the very first mention of this concept of this idea that a messianic figure, a Messiah, a Redeemer, will come from humanity to save us from our sins. In fact, I find it intriguing that the very next chapter when Adam and Eve give birth to their first child, interesting what Eve refers to him, she says, "I have received a man-child of the Lord." Can you go back and just almost wonder if they were thinking would he be the one? Would the very first human being born out of natural process be the one? And yet he would be the antithesis of the one, the one whom we know as Cain.

We fast forward to chapter 12 of Genesis. The Lord comes to Abraham and he says, "I know you and your wife are well past the childbearing age but if you believe me and you're willing to go to a land you've never seen and you're willing according to the book of Romans to perform as I ask you to, then you will have a child of promise." That child would be whom we know as Isaac. Isaac is also mentioned in this list. Why is he so critical? You know, Isaac, if you think about it, really is just kind of the peanut butter and jelly between the two loaves of Abraham and Jacob. I mean, Abraham is whom he started the covenant with, Jacob is who he would rename Israel, and then there's Isaac. The only thing he's really known for is the fact that he should have died, didn't die, but Abraham believed he could come back from the dead. It was the picture of his potential death that gives us the picture of what the Messiah's ultimate mission would be. It's there on the mountain of Genesis 22 when him being placed upon that altar, Abraham raising his hand, the angel of the Lord intervening, the ram coming out of the thicket, that connects the Abrahamic covenant to whom we know as Jacob that would be renamed Israel who would have a tribe named Judah whom Jesus Christ would descend from.

Then, of course, there is David. Notice I called Abraham the calling, Isaac the connection, but David was a contract. We looked at this last week in 2 Samuel 7 that the Lord made a covenant about his kingdom, made a covenant about the throne, made a covenant that is called everlasting regarding his reign. And so here we have this significant group of people that are mentioned in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

Now that's interesting because you've got 45 names but very few of them are what we might call of great prominence. Now let's address that aspect not just of Jesus' lineage but our own. Let's talk about the relatives. You know, that's always an interesting conversation to have with someone when it comes to the relatives. I know that people will come to me oftentimes, I find it humorous, they'll say, "Pastor, can I talk to you about kind of my family issues? I know that you don't have any of this in your family." Which is ironic because what do we discover? That we've all got the same issues,

correct? We've all got the crazy uncle. We've all got that cousin. We've all got that "person" in our lives. I think it's interesting that of the 45 names there are three very specific people that are mentioned in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

The first one I want to deal with is what I call the relative of open sin. There in verse 5 it says that Rahab. Do you find that intriguing that Rahab made the genealogy of Jesus Christ? Here is this woman, remember the famous spies of the Old Testament hid themselves in her house? Remember her request? She said, "Please when you come, when you destroy, rescue me." And remember what was to be outside of her window? It was a scarlet thread. Rahab, an individual that was known as a woman of ill repute and less than stellar reputation actually makes the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Not only does she make the genealogy but I referenced for you Hebrews 11, you know the famous Hall of Fame of Faith? In the Hall of Fame of Faith, Rahab gets her own verse. I mean, David doesn't even get a verse. In chapter 11 she gets her own verse. Why is this so important? Because not only is the genealogy of Jesus Christ connecting us from that Abrahamic covenant and to that manger scene that we celebrate at Christmas, it's also showing us that there are those who openly defied and rebelled against God and it did not stop his plan and he was willing to include them if they were willing to repent of their sin.

Rahab had open, blatant, every knew about it sin, and then there's also hidden sin. Bathsheba. Now she makes the lineage, the genealogy but in a very subtle way. Notice verse 6, it says, "And Jesse begat David the king, and David the king begat Solomon of her who had been the wife of Uriah." She doesn't make it by "name" but I think every single one of us knows exactly who she is. She was that woman in 2 Samuel 3 when the Bible says that when kings went out to war, David stayed home. He saw her in the moonlight that evening. He so desired her personally, physically, was willing to have her husband killed to lie, to cheat, to steal, and eventually the child would die an early untimely death. When Nathan the prophet led by God confronted him regarding his hidden sin, what we know as Psalm 51 was inspired by God and written by the hand of David where he spoke of over 30 times about his personal sin against God.

Bathsheba, I mean, the lineage of Jesus Christ? Not only is this the first lineage not to mention death, it's also the first lineage to mention women and if you included Rahab's beginning, it's the first one to have a Gentile of all the genealogies. We see that Jesus' genealogy is not just for a specific group, specific section, but for all of humanity and our ills, open sin, hidden sin and then what I want to refer to tonight as permanent sin. You know, one of the things that not only do I share in a context like this but my wife and I regularly with our own children, is that we get the privilege of choosing our sin, we don't get the privilege of choosing the consequences. We can choose what to do and how to rebel against God but we don't get the privilege of delegating the consequences.

One of the things that I do within my own home, you may or may not appreciate or approve of this but it's my house, is I have a very simple rule. By the way, this is a blessing of God. You know, when I was younger, all I prayed for is that my boys could go to the bathroom, feed themselves, and dress themselves I'd be happy. As they got older, I was like, "Please, God, let them pass their driving test. Please." Now that I have

all drivers, it's a wonderful wonderful day in the Meyers' house but one of the things that I've shared with them is if they decide to be reckless, if they decide to not pay attention or to work in somewhat of an unsavory fashion, we have an agreement on the gas and the insurance and such but I've told them, "Here's the consequence, that if you do something stupid enough to increase the rate of your insurance, you are paying the difference." That is the consequence. But I've also told them this that, "If you do something so stupid that it goes beyond even an insurance rise, you can't get it back."

We all know that there are some actions that are done that the consequences are so literally grave you don't get a do-over, you don't get a second chance, it's a permanent consequence which is why I bring up Jeconiah. Verse 11 of Matthew 1, it says, "And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon." Now it seems like a pretty innocent verse, it's not a good verse or a happy verse but it just talks about this guy begat this guy and it is what it is. Jeconiah is mentioned back in the book of Jeremiah. Jeconiah was such a wicked man, the Lord had had enough and here's what he said about Jeconiah's rebellion, he said, "Render this man childless so nobody from his genealogy will sit on the throne of David." Speaking of that messianic throne, and yet when you read verse 11, we've got six verses left. We've got a bunch of more names that are coming up and so not only do we have Rahab who had some pretty open sin, not only do we have Bathsheba who had some hidden sin on David's part, we've got a guy where God basically says, "I'm wiping my hands and I am done."

Can I go back to Genesis 3:15, "For the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent." I was not a biology major, I had a football coach that taught me biology, but he knew enough to teach me this, that when it comes to the normal genealogies of life, the seed of the woman is not how it naturally works. What the Lord was saying is this would be a supernatural birth. We refer to it obviously as the virgin birth, that it would not be a physical blood lineage of Jeconiah who would be qualified to be the Messiah, it would be the Lord himself incarnated supernaturally.

Then finally the reason. Have you ever wondered why do we have this chapter? I mean, yeah, there's some interesting names, some interesting scenarios here, but at the end of the day it's just kind of a list of names that, yeah, there's stories behind all of them but why did the Lord see fit to give us 17 verses of names? First and foremost, it's a picture. It's a picture of God's plan through time. One of the things that I love about Old Testament prophecy, one of the things I love about Matthew 1 is the Lord stated in the beginning how it was going to go and no deed of man was going to thwart his plan. I mean, think about it, who is the first guy he called in the equation? Abraham. You do remember that the first child that he had was not a part of the plan. In fact, you could from our perspective, we look at God's plan and go, wow, we have derailed quickly. But God said, "No, I put a plan in place and, Abraham, even if you and Sarah concoct this plan with Hagar, it will not deter Isaac being the child of promise. And Jacob, even though you're a momma's boy and you and your brother have all kinds of issues, it is still not going to deter my plan. And David, even though you are at the wrong place, at the wrong time, doing the wrong thing, with the wrong person, it is not going to deter my

plan. And Solomon, even though you started out good but you decided you needed all those women and all their idols, it will not deter my plan. And Jeconiah, even though your wickedness was so bad that I refuse to let anybody sit on the throne from your little genealogy, it will not stop my plan." The testimony of Matthew 1 is that our sin is not big enough to stop God's plan to save us, that no matter if it's open, if it's hidden, if it's permanent, he says, "I started it. I'm going to finish it."

Secondly, it's a prophecy. I know you expect to hear that particularly in light of all the Old Testament statements that were made through the lives of Abraham and David and such, but in the book of Matthew there are going to be so many references to the temple, the temple where sacrifices are offered, the temple where the celebrations, where the Passover and all these significant events are going to take place, but what do we see? That by the time we get to the end of the gospel of Matthew, the temple that is of the greatest significance is not that building on a mount in Jerusalem, it is the temple of the Holy Ghost that becomes available through the resurrection of the Messiah Jesus Christ and our belief upon him.

You see, as we walk through the gospel of Matthew, one of the things that we discover from the very beginning is that God had a plan that he was going to fulfill and no scheme of hell or plan of man was ever going to deter it, and it ends with one solitary person, Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all things. One of the statements, one of the phrases that we see over and over and over and over in the gospel of Matthew is "as it was written." As it was written, and when you begin to go back in the Old Testament and you begin to look at that which was written, it actually helps us understand why the Pharisees and the scribes and all these guys got so sideways. Now don't get me wrong, they had taken scripture and they had twisted it and turned it to propagate their own personal agendas, we know that, but I know you've asked this question: how is it that a group of Jewish people that according to the book of Romans had grown up with the scriptures their whole life, how is it that these men and even these women who had grown up in the synagogue hearing these scriptures time and time and time again, when the Bible said he'd be born in Bethlehem and Jesus was born in Bethlehem, when the Bible says he'd come out of Egypt and Jesus came out of Egypt, when the Bible said he would be a Nazarene and he came out of Nazareth, when the Bible said all these things, how did they miss it? It's because when you go back in the Old Testament and you start looking at those Old Testament prophecies, oh yes, there is the passage about being born in Bethlehem, there is the passage about coming out of Egypt, there is the passage in Zechariah that he will come in on that famous colt at what we know as Palm Sunday, there's all those passages but do you know how many there are? Forty-eight. There are 48 of those passages that regard his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection. Significant number but do you know how many we have in the Old Testament about him coming back as a king? Conservatively 300. If you want to be a little more open-minded, up to 800. So if you do the math and you just keep it real simple and vague, for every passage that says that Jesus is going to come and live and die and "raise from the dead," we've got at least 10 that say he's going to come sit on the throne until those that are his enemies are placed under his feet.

Now do you see why it would be difficult? Now do you see why even though they grew up going to the synagogue they're going, "What about the other hundreds of prophetic statements?" I want to reread what I put on the screen tonight, Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all things. Not just the throne, not just the kingship which is most assuredly true, but as it has been said by those that are wiser than I, that you cannot put the crown of King of kings on Jesus' brow until he has worn the crown of thorns and they, like we, have this often propensity to "skip to the good stuff." You know, one of the blessed curses of today's technology, and I don't know if this is a part of your life, I know it's a part of my home, is that whatever "television program" we may or may not be watching, that thanks to technology today, most of it is what we call streamed which allows you to do, what? Fast forward. I'm telling you, I can get through an hour show in six minutes. I can do it because, and by the way and please, ladies, do not get upset with me, I don't even have to watch the Hallmark movie, I know the story. It's real simple. But what do you do? You have this propensity to skip through the details, skip through the stuff that you know has to be a part of the dialog and story and let's get to how it ends.

You realize that's what the "enemies of Jesus" did. They skipped all the way to the Second Coming prophecies and said, "All right, here's the place. Here's the throne." But Jesus said, "No, you don't understand. I've got to go through the crown of thorns first. I've got to go to the cross first. And by the way, do you see these names? All these names represent someone who struggled with sin, some was open, some was hidden, some was permanent, and if I don't come and offer myself for the sins of humanity, then it doesn't matter if I come and sit upon a throne for your sake for all of eternity."

The gospel of Matthew though primarily about the kingdom of heaven, though primarily about Jesus as King, though primarily as him coming to reign, even in the first chapter does not leave out the fact that sinful humanity both male and female, both Jewish and Gentile, were a part and the reason for his coming. We cannot bypass the fact that he wasn't just the fulfillment of the Second Coming prophecies but he was the fulfillment of all things. Every one of these names represents a story. Every one of these names represents a struggle with humanity. Every one of these names represents the human sin condition that Jesus Christ came to be willing to give his life and a sacrifice for and ultimately one day come and reign over.

So list of names, there's 45. Generations, 42. And 40 begats. But there is one Messiah, one King Jesus who not only sits on the throne for all of eternity but offered himself to sit on the throne of our hearts.

Let us pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. Maybe tonight even though it's Sunday evening, even though it's one of the those inclement weather nights, maybe tonight is that night here in person or maybe online where the Spirit of God got ahold of the word of God even through a list of names, and maybe the Spirit communicated to you that you're one with open sin, hidden sin, or maybe from a human perspective permanent sin, and maybe tonight the Lord has said, "You know, I can take care of that though you can't fix it." And maybe you'd be willing to admit, "You know, I've tried to manage my sin. I've tried to somehow disguise it. I've tried to pretty it up. I've tried to make it not as

bad as it really is. And maybe tonight the word of God showed you real clearly through these individual names that only Jesus Christ can take care of this. Maybe tonight is the night where you call it what it is and you cry out to be saved. Maybe tonight you say, "I'm already saved," but maybe tonight is about restoring that fellowship and coming clean before the Lord. All I know is that tonight our name may not be in that list but there is a name in that list that represents who we are. Jesus Christ came on behalf of all of us, for all of us, in spite of us. May tonight be that night that we render whatever decision necessary on his behalf.

Heavenly Father, tonight, God, even though the stories are difficult at times to recount, God, thank you, thank you that you worked in people's lives to show us that you'll work in ours. God, thank you that humanity's best efforts at thwarting your plan, Lord, weren't going to manifest themselves, God, that you came, you conquered death so that we could be in a right relationship with you. God, help us tonight, Lord, if not there help us, Lord, to call upon you, for those of us who have called upon you, help us to walk out of here in the power of your Spirit believing in the truth of your word. Help us, O God, tonight just to be where we need to be in relationship to You. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.