

# The Generation of Jesus Christ

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## Grace Protestant Reformed Church

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Turn with me in the holy scriptures tonight to the first chapter of the gospel according to Matthew. Matthew 1. We'll read the entire chapter. My text tonight is the genealogy that makes up the first 17 verses of the chapter. The word of God at Matthew 1:1.

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; 3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; 4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; 5 And Salmon begat Booz [that's Boza] of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; 6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; 7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; 8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; 9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; 10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; 11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; 13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; 14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; 15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; 16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. 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. 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy

wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

There ends our reading of the word of God tonight.

"The book of the generations of Jesus Christ," that is how the New Testament scripture begins. The first book of the Old Testament early on has this notice, "This is the book of the generations of Adam," Genesis 5:1. It is fitting that the first book of the New Testament should begin, "This is the generations of Jesus Christ." The generations, that is, the human race. We're plunged into ruin on account of the sin of the first Adam, the generations, the new humanity are saved in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, our Savior Jesus Christ.

But all these names, are they really of any great importance? Does not scripture itself warn against giving heed to endless genealogies, 1 Timothy 1:4? And does not the same apostle call us to avoid foolish questions and genealogies in Titus 3:9? Does it really matter that we know the physical ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ? Isn't it enough that we know and believe that Jesus is the Son of God and our Savior? Can anything of value be learned from the genealogies of Jesus, this one in Matthew 1, the other one in Luke 3? Is it worthwhile to bother our heads about them, worthwhile that a whole sermon would be devoted to these names? I assure you that the genealogies of Jesus are of tremendous significance. They are full of instruction. There are important things, gospel things in these genealogies of Jesus. If the genealogies were not of importance, they would not have been included by the Holy Spirit when he inspired the holy scriptures. These genealogies are quite different from the genealogies against which the apostle warns in 1 Timothy and in Titus. Like all of scripture, the genealogies too are profitable for doctrine, for instruction, for correction, that the man of God and the woman of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The New Testament, as I said, contains two genealogies of Jesus. It's no coincidence that those two genealogies are found in the two gospel accounts that record the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew and Luke. In order for Christ to be acknowledged as the great King, that's the purpose of the gospel according to Matthew. In order that Christ may be acknowledged as the great King, the King of the Jews, the Son of David, his ancestry must be traced back to David, the great king of Israel, and to Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, and that's what we read in Matthew 1:1, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." That's the introduction to the genealogy, basic to our understanding of who Jesus is, basic to our understanding of the

reason on account of which he came into our world, born as the babe in Bethlehem, is a proper understanding of his genealogy.

I want tonight to focus with you on the genealogy of Matthew. I call your attention to the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Let's notice three things together. First of all, that Jesus is David's son. Let's notice, secondly, that he is God's Son. And let's notice, finally, that he is our King.

A few things about the two genealogies of Jesus, this one in Matthew 1, the other in Luke 3. In the first place, whereas Luke's genealogy moves from the present backward, the genealogy of Matthew is just the opposite, the genealogy in Matthew moves forward from the past to the present. Luke's genealogy consistently uses the language, "was the son of," as it moves backward. A was the son of B. B was the son of C and so forth. Matthew's genealogy uses the language, "begat," as it moves forward. A begat B. B begat C. That first.

In the second place, Matthew's genealogy begins with Abraham regarded both in scripture and by the Jews as the father of the Jewish nation. The Jews prided themselves in being the children of Abraham. They often referred to Abraham as "our father Abraham," and that's where Matthew's genealogy begins. From Abraham, Matthew's genealogy moves forward until Jesus Christ is born in Bethlehem. It traces Christ's, rather Abraham's descendants in three groups of 14 names, 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 generations from David's descendants to the Babylonian captivity, and then 14 more generations from the time of the captivity until the birth of Jesus. The genealogy ends in verse 16, "Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

The three groups of 14 generations in Matthew's genealogy are quite naturally divided. The first group of 14 generations covers the entire patriarchal period: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jacob's 12 sons, the tribes of Israel. The second group of 14 generations covers the period of the monarchy when Israel was an independent nation established by God in the land of Palestine, the time when King David ruled over Israel as a nation until their life as an independent nation ended with the Babylonian captivity. The third and the last group of 14 generations covers the time from the return from the Babylonian captivity up to the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Luke, on the other hand, moves backward in his genealogy beginning with Joseph, Jesus' legal, we might say, adopted father, going backward through David to Abraham, and then going farther back yet from Abraham all the way back to Adam. Luke 3:38 says, "Adam, which was the son of God." That's the last entry in Luke's genealogy.

In the third place, comparing the two genealogies, there are some significant differences, such great differences that it is simply not possible to come to the conclusion that the two genealogies are genealogies of the same person. That simply cannot be. Some have contended that that is the case. Some have contended that both genealogies are the genealogies of Joseph who is mentioned in them both. Others hold that both genealogies

are the genealogies of Mary, Jesus' mother. Neither of those positions in the end is tenable. There are so great differences in the genealogies.

Luke's final section from Abraham all the way back to Adam presents no difficulties at all because that period isn't included in the genealogy in Matthew. No difficulty in that last part of Luke's genealogy. Luke's second section, the section from David back to Abraham also presents no problems. As far as that part of the genealogy is concerned, there is perfect agreement, a very strong proof of the doctrine of divine inspiration. They're identical in that part of their genealogies, David to Abraham, or looking at it from the other way, Abraham to David, but it is in the third section, what is Luke's first section, that the significant differences occur. The differences are due to the fact that Luke traces Joseph's ancestors back to David through the son of David, Nathan, one of many of David's sons. That's Luke 3:31. Luke 3:31 says, "Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David." Nathan, the son of David.

We know from the Old Testament that this was, in fact, one of David's sons, from a number of Old Testament passages, one of which is 1 Chronicles 3:5. It's another genealogy, the first six chapters of 1 Chronicles contain genealogies, all of which in the end culminate in King David and in the royal line of King David. In 1 Chronicles 3:5 we read, "And these were born unto him," unto David, "in Jerusalem; Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four, of Bathshua," that's Bathsheba, "the daughter of Ammiel." Not only was Nathan another of the sons of David but he was also a son of David through Bathsheba along with Solomon. They were not only brothers because they had David as their father, but they were also brothers because they shared the same mother, Bathsheba.

That's Luke. Matthew, on the other hand, traces the descent from David through another of David's sons, his son Solomon. That's Matthew 1:6, "And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias." It was through Solomon that the royal line of David proceeded, the one son of David who sat on the throne of David after David, and then one of his sons, Rehoboam, who sat on David's throne after his father Solomon had died. The royal line. Because Matthew traces the royal line of David, the line from which the kings came, that's the explanation for the differences between the genealogy in Matthew and the genealogy in Luke. Whereas Luke does not trace the royal line of David but the line through Nathan, Matthew traces the royal line, the line of David that extended through his son Solomon. Two different lines. Both from David but only one of them, the royal line, the line from whom the kings came, the line through Solomon, that's Matthew 1.

The great difficulty is that both Matthew and Luke speak of Joseph, Joseph as a descendant in each of their genealogies. How, then, can they be two different genealogies if both genealogies refer to Joseph, Jesus' legal adopted father? Luke says that Joseph was the son of Heli, or Eli, Luke 3:23. Matthew says that Joseph was the son of Jacob, that's verse 16, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Both cannot be true. Joseph cannot be both the son of Heli and the son of

Jacob. How is this apparent contradiction to be explained? Part of the explanation is that both Joseph and Mary were descended from David. We know that. We know that from the gospel accounts. We know that that was true of Joseph. That's why Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth in Galilee down to Bethlehem to register for the taxation because that was where Joseph's family's records were kept, and that record in Bethlehem was the record of the great son of Bethlehem who was King David himself. That's Matthew 1:20, "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David." Joseph is called there a son of David. That's what the angel was sent by God also to say to Mary as Luke 1:27 indicates. Luke 1:27, "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph," now back to the virgin, who was "of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."

Both Joseph and Mary were descendants of King David. They were from the house of David. But although they were both descended from David, only Mary, Jesus' mother, was of the royal line of David, not just of the family of David but from the royal line of David, the line that descended from David through the royal son Solomon. Mary was descended from David through Solomon. She was a son of David, of the royal family. Through Solomon the royal line was continued. All through the Old Testament God preserved the royal line. Even though there was great apostasy, even through the Babylonian captivity and the days that followed the Babylonian captivity, even through the dark days between the testaments, the 400 years of silence, God maintained the royal line of David. That line ended in the virgin, in Mary. Joseph, however, was also descended from David but descended from David through that other son of David, Nathan. Not a royal son but nonetheless a son of David. What this means is that Joseph, who was Jesus' father legally but not physically, was also of the line of David but it was Mary, Mary, Jesus' real and physical mother, Jesus' organically and naturally connected to Mary, the one from whom he derived his humanity, was of the royal line of David, and therefore Jesus himself was of the royal line of David, in the line that produced the kings that sat on David's throne.

That's the genealogy of Matthew 1. That's the genealogy of Jesus, the great son of David. Through Mary, Jesus is David's son. Through Mary, he is in the royal line. Through Mary, he has his claim to the throne of David. The royal line ends not in Mary but in Jesus Christ, the great son of David.

There's strong evidence to support the claim that the genealogy in Matthew is Mary's genealogy, and that Luke's genealogy is the genealogy of Joseph. First of all, that evidence is the fact that Luke makes absolutely no mention whatsoever of Mary that would indicate that his genealogy is not of Mary. Luke passes Mary by in total silence, whereas Mary is referred to in Matthew's genealogy. That's Matthew 1:16. We've already read it, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

In the second place, it is striking that of the two genealogies, it is the genealogy in Matthew that includes women. That's exceptional. Look at all the genealogies in the Old Testament. Women were not included in the genealogies. It's exceptional that a woman

would be mentioned and then not merely one woman but several women in the line of Jesus according to Matthew. Besides Mary, there's Tamar mentioned in verse 3. There's Rahab, the harlot, mentioned at the beginning of verse 5. There's Ruth, the Moabitess mentioned in the last part of verse 5. And there's mention of Bathsheba, who although she is not referred to by name, is definitely referred to in verse 6 as "that had been the wife of Urias." It makes sense that the genealogy that includes the names of other women should also be the genealogy of Mary, the great mother of Christ.

Third, it is especially Matthew's genealogy that emphasizes physical descent. This is implied in the word "begat," which is used throughout the genealogy. That's also the significance of the opening verse of the chapter, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ." The word for "generation" is a word that means "genesis or origin." In this genealogy we have the genesis, the origin of Jesus. The emphasis in this genealogy is on physical descent. The genealogy sets forth the organic line of Jesus Christ, not merely the legal line but the organic line, in effect so it cannot be the line of Joseph. Joseph had no organic connection to Jesus. It was only Mary through the wonder of the virgin birth, it was only Mary who was organically connected to her real and her true son, the son begotten in her, the Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph was not the father of Jesus as Mary was Jesus' mother. Jesus had no earthly father. That's the wonder of the virgin birth. But he did have a real mother and that real mother was Mary.

Matthew presents the lineage of Mary despite what we read in verse 16, "Jacob begat Joseph." If Matthew's genealogy is the genealogy of Mary, how can that be true? How is that to be explained? Joseph is mentioned at that point in the genealogy. Jacob actually begat Mary but Joseph is inserted in the genealogy exactly because he is the husband of Mary and that's what the verse says. That's why the verse mentions him as husband of Mary, pulls Mary in at that point in the genealogy, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary." As her husband and as her head he's mentioned. She is too, but he's mentioned because he is her husband and her head.

Since Mary is not only a descendant of David but of the royal line of David, Jesus himself stands in the royal line of David and that's important, that is critically important. It is not enough that Jesus would be a son of David but it was exactly necessary that he be a royal son of David, standing in the royal line, the line from David through Solomon. This is the important issue with regard to the right that Jesus has to the throne of David. If Jesus was not descended from David through the royal line, if he is only in the family of David, proceeding out of David through another son than through Solomon, the royal son, he has no right to the throne of David, not more right to the throne of David than any other Israelite. The right to kingship in Israel, the right to David's throne, to David's scepter, to David's kingdom belong to those who descended from David in the royal line.

The genealogy of Matthew makes very plain that Jesus is the great King and son of David. He's the heir to the throne. He is the ruler over God's kingdom. He is the great King, the King whose kingdom is everlasting, whose kingdom knows no end. But not only is Jesus David's son, the gospel truth of the genealogy in Matthew is that Jesus is

God's Son. God's Son. Matthew's genealogy is a powerful testimony to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, the powerful testimony that it gives to the virgin birth.

Already the first promise of the gospel in Genesis 3:15 was a promise and a prophecy of the virgin birth. Already the mother promise in Genesis 3:15. You children here tonight know that first gospel promise. Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." You say to me, "Where's the virgin birth in Genesis 3:15?" It's there. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed." Not the seed of her and of Adam, but her seed, uniquely her seed in as much as he descends from her, the virgin birth.

That gospel promise of Genesis 3:15 would be repeated and would be added to throughout the Old Testament so that what is by implication the announcement of the virgin birth in Genesis 3:15 becomes abundantly plain as it does, for example, in Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Behold, a virgin shall conceive. That prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, Matthew says was fulfilled in Jesus' birth, verses 22 and 23 of our chapter, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

The genealogies now are a powerful testimony to the virgin birth. The genealogy in Luke is too, Luke 3:23, "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed )," as was supposed, not in reality, not actually, not in fact, but as was supposed "the son of Joseph." Matthew's genealogy underscores the truth of the virgin birth. It teaches the truth of the virgin birth by emphasizing that he was born of Mary, born out of the royal line.

He is the son of Mary, only of Mary, not in the same sense the son of Joseph. That's verse 16, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom," of whom "was born Jesus." The "whom" there is a pronoun. It's a pronoun that's singular. There's only one person that's referred to. Of whom, singular, and it's feminine. In many languages the pronouns have gender. The Greek language too. It's a feminine pronoun. That means it has to refer to a woman, not to a man. Mary, of whom, she alone was born Jesus who is called Christ.

At the same time, in this one instance in verse 16, this one instance in the whole genealogy here in Matthew, Matthew does not say begat. He doesn't say, "And Joseph begat Jesus." Joseph is not referred to in the genealogy as the father, the one who begat Jesus. Mary alone is referred to. That's powerful testimony to the truth of the virgin birth.

Everything depends on the truth of the virgin birth. Absolutely everything. The virgin birth assures us on the one hand that Jesus is a real man, he must be a real man. Mary was Jesus' real mother. Joseph was not his father but Mary was his mother. That means that Jesus was a real man, really the son of Mary. He was a man among men like us. He was born like us. He partakes of flesh and blood. Only if he does can he be the Savior of us

men. God's justice demands that. God simply will not punish another creature for the sin that man committed in order to represent us, in order to stand in our place, on our behalf, as our head, and as our substitute. Jesus must be a real man and he was.

The virgin birth assures us that Jesus was a real man but the virgin birth also assures us that Mary's son was no mere man, not only a man but also the Son of God. He had no human father. Joseph was not the father of Jesus, not even according to the flesh. Even as regards Jesus' human nature, God was the father of Jesus. He was the Son of God, begotten of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, begotten by God in Mary's womb. That's the virgin birth. The truth of the virgin birth is simply the truth that the baby born in Bethlehem, laid in Bethlehem's manger, that baby was the Son of God, the Christ.

That too is necessary, absolutely necessary. Only if he is very God can he sustain the burden of the wrath of God against all our sins and take it away. No mere man can sustain the wrath of God. No mere man can take that wrath of God upon himself and survive. That wrath would consume us in a moment.

Only if Jesus is the Son of God can he also bear the wrath of God for us and at the same time, that also assures us that he was perfect. Perfectly holy. He's not born into this world depraved as we are born into this world. That would have been the case if he had had a human father, but no man is his father. God is his father. At his birth already he is holy. That's what the angel said, didn't he? "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

David's son. God's son. Our King. The Son of God who is the son of David is our great King. That's the message of the genealogy in Matthew. There are other important significances of Matthew's genealogy. First, the genealogy underscores the truth that God is faithful to his word. His promise is sure. His word is reliable. Never does it fail. We can depend on his word. It always comes to pass. All throughout the Old Testament he promised that the Christ would come, promise after promise, and that that Messiah would be the son of David. That promise was reiterated in 2 Samuel 7:12-13, "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever." That's also the promise in Psalm 132:11, "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne."

God now fulfills his word of promise to David, to his Old Testament people in the sending of his Son, Jesus Christ, his birth from the virgin Mary, and so we are assured of the certainty of his word of promise, the certainty of his word of promise also with respect to the second coming of the Savior. The word of promise that all history will come to its climax when the great son of David returns as the King and the clouds of glory proclaim his kingdom, to establish David's throne and kingdom forever and forever. We may be sure that that promise will be fulfilled just as God's promise concerning the first coming of the son of David was fulfilled in Jesus' birth.

Second, the genealogy underscores the truth that God is a faithful covenant God. He's faithful to his covenant, to his covenant promise. He's faithful to his covenant notwithstanding the unfaithfulness of the covenant people. The genealogy underscores, as it were, the unfaithfulness of the covenant people. Time and time again that unfaithfulness is referred to. The very best of them, sinners every one. Think of Abraham in his lies and his running ahead of God. Think of David, adulterer and murderer. But God is a faithful covenant God and that is our comfort. We know ourselves, we know our own unfaithfulness. If God's covenant depended on us, if in reality God's covenant was a conditional covenant, you could have absolutely no assurance that that covenant would be established. It is established because the covenanting God is the God who preserves and who sustains and is faithful to his covenant.

Third, the genealogy is a testimony to grace, to the goodness and the grace of God. It underscores the sinfulness and the inability of man exactly in order to underscore the grace of God. Not only man's inability to bring forth the Christ, but his unworthiness. Look at the genealogy, sinners every one. Some notoriously so. Tamar, who played the harlot, committed incest with her father-in-law. Rahab, the notorious harlot from Jericho. We've already mentioned the grievous sins of David. And think of Manasses, terrible sins from which he repented only after being in prison in Babylon. Somebody said once that the line of Christ was to be compared to someone who paid \$500 to an expert to unearth his family tree, and then when he sat down and that family tree was revealed to him, he paid the same expert \$1,000 to tell no one. That's the line of Christ. That's Jesus' ancestry. But that only underscores the goodness and the grace of God, amazing grace. That's what the genealogy underscores.

Fourth, the genealogy also underscores preserving grace. The genealogy is a monument to God's preservation of the line of David, not only through all the wickedness, rebellion, ungodliness of those in that line. Think of wicked Queen Athaliah who sought to destroy entirely the seed royal during the reign of Manasseh, during the reign of his father Hezekiah when it appeared that he might die, before he was given a son to follow him on the throne. Then during the captivity when all seemed to be lost and the tumultuous days after the return from captivity, the apostasy of the intertestamental period, the 400 years of darkness, through it all God preserved the line of David, through it all he preserved the one who would be born, who was in the womb of the ancestors of Mary until finally Jesus was born in Bethlehem's stable. When the line ended in a virgin and there was no hope that the heir of David would be born, God did the miraculous, God did the humanly impossible, God caused a virgin to be with child. In his sovereign almighty grace, he did the impossible because all things are possible with our God. That's the virgin birth and that's our salvation, from beginning to end our salvation.

Fifth, the genealogy underscores divine election. That too. God chose David, not Saul. God chose David's son Solomon, not Absalom, not Adonijah. All along God's choice of this one, not that one. And then his inclusion of the likes of a Rahab, a Ruth. The rejection of others. Isaac, not Ishmael. Jacob, not Esau. Sovereign electing grace, that's what the genealogy highlights. But the main thing that it highlights is Christ, the King,

our King, sovereign Lord of all, the great Son of King David. That he is the son of David, that means he is the King.

That's the significance of the genealogy, it's the genealogy of the King, the great son of David. He fulfills all the promises and all of the prophecies of the coming of the King and the establishment of David's kingdom. He fulfills it in an altogether different way than the carnal mind of man supposed that it would be fulfilled both in Jesus' day and still today. Not carnal promises of an earthly kingdom, not earthly riches, peace and prosperity. On the contrary, he shows himself to be a spiritual King, his kingdom a spiritual kingdom. The riches and the glory of this kingdom not earthly peace and prosperity but peace with God and the riches of salvation. As the King, he is the mighty Lord fighting on behalf of God and the cause of God in the world. That's what David was. He goes to war. He goes to war with the real and the spiritual enemies of God's people. He tramples upon them all, destroys them and defeats them. He gains the victory, triumphs over them all. Not Moabites and Canaanites but sin and Satan, the devil, and his whole dominion. And now as Lord and King he's seated at God's right hand. He rules. He rules by his grace and spirit and through his word. He exercises sovereign rule over his people, the likes of you and the likes of me. He causes even us to bend our stiff necks to kiss his scepter, to bow before the authority of his word, to yield to him body and soul for time and for eternity. By his Holy Spirit he translates us out of the kingdom of darkness and death into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

As King and Lord he rules over us and over all his enemies. Not only does he defeat them, oh, yes he does, that's the cross, the cross of the one born in Bethlehem, but more than that he uses that to accomplish his purpose to serve us and the establishment of his kingdom. What a King this Jesus is, the King, the son of David, the royal son of David. This is the one who was born in Bethlehem's stable that first Christmas day, the one adored by angels and by men. He is the King. He is our King. What a King Jesus is. Blessed are all they who put their trust in him. Amen.

*Father in heaven, we thank thee for our Lord Jesus Christ, for his kingship and kingdom which knows no end, and for the wonderful goodness of thy grace which has translated us into that kingdom. Forgive our sins, dismiss us with thy blessing for Jesus' sake. Amen.*