

Kingdom: A Journey Through Matthew

The King and His Kingdom

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THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM Matthew 1:1-17

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to Matthew chapter one. And pull out those notes that are in your worship guide. The good news is I studied for and wrote the manuscript for this week's sermon before I left to go to China. Knowing that we wouldn't be getting in until late Friday night, I wanted to be prepared. So I planned ahead. So that's the good news. The bad news is I was up all night last night, pacing back and forth across the room with a little 16-month old little girl in my arms, trying to coax her to go to sleep when she was wide-eyed and not wanting to go to sleep. And I had not planned for that. So I've got the sermon, but I'm praying for grace and strength to stay awake tonight to deliver this sermon. We've made it through two so far, so hopefully we'll make it through the third.

But I am really, really, really excited about where we are headed starting tonight on a journey over the next six-or-so months. So let me give you a little preview of where we're going from here in the Word. We're going to start tonight a series in the Book of Matthew. And the goal here is to start here in the first book of the New Testament and to walk through the life, and teachings, death, resurrection of Christ, from Christmas to Easter. Walk through the book of Matthew. So basically to journey from Christmas, starting here in December through the beginning of April and walk through the life of Christ in the book of Matthew—the very beginning of the New Testament. And then the goal is, Lord willing, after we finish up in Matthew right around Easter, right after Easter, then we will jump to the end of the New Testament and walk through the Book of Revelation. A lot of people have questions about End Times and that sort of thing. What I want us to do is, I want us to see beginning of the New Testament, portrait of the King Who has come for us. And then jump to the end of the New Testament and see the King Who is coming back for us. Sound good? That's the plan over the next six months.

The Gospel of the Kingdom...

So tonight we start in the very first chapter, very first verses of the New Testament, Matthew 1. I put some notes there, kind of a few introductory notes for you to kind of set the stage for the journey we're going to walk through the Book of Matthew. So we'll start here. The book of Matthew is a Gospel.

The book of Matthew is a Gospel.

A Gospel. And some have said, the book of Matthew, the single-most important book in all the New Testament simply because it gives the most systematic, detailed account of Jesus' life, teaching, death and resurrection. And when I say it's a Gospel, obviously the word Gospel means "good news." And so Matthew has written for this purpose—to give us an account of what Jesus did, what Jesus said, what Jesus accomplished, how Jesus came, and how all of this changes our lives and how all of this changes the world.

Now this is important. I've put a few things here that are kind of obvious and may seem a little basic but are very important to remember. First, this is not a congregational letter. We just finished studying 1 Timothy which is Paul's letter to Timothy and the church at Ephesus which is written in a certain way. Gospel is written in a very different way. And so the way we read the book of Matthew is very different from the way we read 1 Timothy. It's not a congregational letter.

It's also not a comprehensive biography. Matthew didn't sit down and say, "Okay, I want to write about every detail in Jesus' life." The reality is there are many, many, many, many details in Jesus' life that are not included here. Matthew has chosen various stories and abbreviated various teachings from Jesus' life to accomplish a specific purpose. It's deeper than just a comprehensive biography. And this is not even (the book of Matthew), not even a chronological history. Meaning Matthew doesn't set out to say, "Okay, here's what happened first, and here's what happened next and then next." Instead, Matthew has arranged this whole book, not around time, but around certain emphases.

Let me show this to you. Turn with me real quick to the end of Matthew 7. What I want to show you...Maybe you underline some different verses here in Matthew because this will help you understand the way we're going to walk through Matthew from now until Easter. But I want you to see that in the book of Matthew which has 28 chapters, there are five distinct teaching blocks that Matthew gives us from Jesus. A block of teaching here from Jesus, a block of teaching here, block of teaching. Five of those. And in between these teaching blocks, what he gives is stories that help us understand different things that are being highlighted in those teaching blocks. After each one of those blocks of teaching, what he does is he gives us a transition statement that looks very, very similar after every single one of them. So let me show them to you real quick. There's five of them.

Matthew chapters... First four chapters of Matthew are basically introductory material. Then you come to the first block of teaching which is Matthew 5, 6 and 7—the Sermon on the Mount. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, look at Matthew 7:28. Matthew writes, "*When Jesus...*" You might underline this verse because this is going to be key transition statements in the book of Matthew. "*And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.*" So that kind of signals the end of... Okay, there's the teaching section.

Then you got chapter 8 and chapter 9 and they're stories. And then you come to chapter 10. And in chapter 10, Jesus does some specific teaching with His disciples. You get to the end of that, chapter 11 verse 1, this is how Matthew concludes that teaching section. "*When Jesus...*" You might underline it here. "*When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.*" And so you've got chapter 11, chapter 12, you've got stories, and obviously Jesus is still talking in these stories and He's teaching different things, but they're not major teaching times like you see when you get to chapter 13.

In chapter 13, Jesus teaches in a multitude of different parables. And at the end of that, go to Matthew 13:53. Matthew says, "*And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there.*" So it's the same phrase. When Jesus is finished with these sayings, when Jesus is finished instructing these disciples, when Jesus had finished these parables. And then you've got chapter 14, 15, 16, 17—all stories. Then you get to chapter 18. You've got the fourth teaching section. You get to chapter 19, verse 1 at the end of that teaching section, Matthew says, "*Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.*" So that signals the end of the fourth teaching section. And then you've got chapters 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, all leading to last

teaching section, chapter 24 and 25, where Jesus talks about the end of the age and what will happen when He comes and before He returns. And at the end of that, you look at chapter 26, verse 1. This is the last statement that Matthew gives us to signal the end of this teaching section. "*When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples...*"

So hopefully you're kind of getting a picture here. This is not an accident. Matthew is intentionally organizing his material around these teaching sections and then these stories. And he's going back and forth between them. So he's not organizing things chronologically. Instead, he's intentionally arranging them. And quite beautifully arranging them around these teaching and stories sections in order to give us a portrait of Jesus in both word and deed. In teaching and in life. This is the portrait that he's giving us. So this is not congregational letter, not comprehensive biography, not chronologically history. Above all, this is a Gospel—a carefully arranged account of good news of the life, death, resurrection of Christ.

The book of Matthew, is one of four Gospels

Second note there, and we know this, is the book of Matthew, is one of four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And this is important to realize because you've got three other writers who give us different accounts of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Obviously the same life, death and resurrection, but they're looking at Jesus' life from different perspectives. It's like the Gospel is a diamond—an exquisite, beautiful diamond. And you look at it from one angle and you see the light reflecting off and you see all these marvelous colors in this diamond from this angle. Then you come around here to this angle and you see a whole different picture. And you come around to this angle and you see a whole different picture.

What we've got in the Bible, we've got four different perspectives on the beauty of Christ—birth, and life, and death, and resurrection. And all of them help us to understand Jesus in different ways. What I've got here in your notes is admittedly an oversimplification but hopefully will help us see some of the differences. In John, you see Jesus presented as the Son of God. And all this is evident in the way these guys start their Gospels. John doesn't include a genealogy like Matthew does. Instead John starts by saying, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" John's point from the very beginning is to show that Jesus is God. That's his whole purpose. So he doesn't start with the genealogy. He starts by pointing to the divinity of Christ.

Then you get to Luke and you see an emphasis on Jesus as the Son of Man. You see His humanity emphasized from the very beginning. Luke does start with the genealogy. It's actually in chapter 3 of the book of Luke. But when you look at that genealogy you'll notice it's different from Matthew's genealogy. And Luke, in ascending order, Luke traces the physical lineage of Jesus to Adam. So you're going to notice here in Matthew chapter 1 when we read it in a second, what Matthew does is he starts with Abraham and he goes all the way to Jesus. What Luke does is he starts with Jesus and he goes all the way back to Adam, tying Jesus to the garden in Genesis one through three to show us the humanity of Christ.

Then you got Mark portraying Jesus as the suffering servant. No genealogy in the book of Mark. Instead from the very beginning, you've got Mark focusing on how Jesus "*...came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" And you see a focus on the sufferings that Jesus went through and how suffering is attached to all those who will follow Jesus. And that was important because Mark was writing to a group of Christians that were being persecuted in the First Century. And so he emphasizes Jesus as the Suffering Servant.

And then you get to Matthew and you see a portrait of Jesus as the Sovereign King. From the very beginning—as we’re going to see in just a minute—Matthew is making it very clear that Jesus is the King, coming from the line of David, the Promised Messiah from the line of Abraham.

Now come back to Matthew chapter one here. And I want to give you just a couple of notes before we read through this genealogy. We need to realize that this is not a comprehensive genealogy, meaning not every descendent in the family tree is included here. You know there’s always a part or two of all of our family trees we’d kind of like to leave out at some point. And we’re going to see...It’s interesting that parts of the family tree that Matthew decided to include here. But what we need to realize is not... There are cases in which entire generations are skipped for a purpose. Go ahead and jump down to Matthew 1:17 where Matthew points this out. He says, *"So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations."*

So you’ve got this emphasis on the number "14." And Matthew has arranged this genealogy that way for a purpose. I’m going to give you a little bit of Hebrew historical information that will feel like meaningless historical information, but it will hopefully help you understand what Matthew’s doing here. There’s a term called, "gematria" which is basically a term used to describe how a Hebrew name would have a number attached to it, based upon numbers that were associated with each of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet in that name. So in your name...you’ve got certain letters in your name. In the Hebrew, you would have different numbers attached, associated with each letter in your name. And so you add them all together and that’s the number that would be associated with your name.

The reason that’s important is because King David, the name "David" in the Hebrew, the number attached with David was 14. And what we’re going to see...and we’re going to see this all throughout the book of Matthew, is Matthew constantly pointing us to the fact that Jesus came from the line of King David. We’re going to see blind men crying out, "Son of David." That’s purposeful. And then right here from the very beginning, this emphasis on the 14, what Matthew’s doing is he’s making it clear from the start that Jesus is associated with a line—kingly line—of David.

So when you look at all the generations, you try to add them up in Old Testament history, what you’ll find, not everybody is mentioned here. Instead you’ve got this emphasis on 14 for a purpose. So with that kind of set up, what I want us to do is I want us to read through this genealogy. You know, the part... This is one of those parts of the Bible where you think, "Well, I’m just going to skip over this to get to the good stuff." And I want to show up that there is really, really, really, really good stuff in Matthew 1:1-17. So let’s read through it together. I’m going to pause at a few different points along the way just to give you a couple notes, but then, we’re going to read through it pretty quickly and then I want us to think about why it’s important. All right. Here we go. Matthew 1:1: *"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac..."*

Okay. Let’s pause real quick here. Side note here. Remember that Isaac was a miracle baby born to a mother who was pretty shocked to find out that she was pregnant. Remember Sarah, close to 100 years old, shocked to find out that she was pregnant with a baby boy. The stage is set from verse two for what’s going to happen in verse 16 when we’re introduced to another woman who was pretty shocked to find out that she was going to have a baby boy as well, for different reasons. But Mary would be shocked to find out that she would be having, quite literally, a miracle baby. So you got... *"Abraham was the father*

of Isaac and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar."

Let's pause here for a second. Tamar is the first woman mentioned here. If you remember, Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law. And in Genesis chapter 38, we saw...we saw this last year when we were reading through Scripture, reading through the Bible. We saw sinful incest between Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. And from that incest came these two twins, Perez and Zerah. So keep that in mind.

"...and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab..."

Second woman mentioned: Rahab a prostitute, spared when the people of God entered into the Promised Land. *"...and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth."* Third woman mentioned. Ruth, a Moabitess, a people known for their sexual immorality who at one point were practically totally left out of any interaction with the people of God. *"...and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king."* Again, that's not every single generation in the line, but that's 14 generations tracing from Abraham to David.

Now from David. *"And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah..."* Fourth woman mentioned, the wife of Uriah—Bathsheba, brought into this whole picture through adultery and murder.

"...And Solomon the father of Rehoboam, [and thus begins the list of kings leading up to the exile] and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon."

This is just dripping with Old Testament history. For Jewish leaders who know the Old Testament, when they hear these...When you and I hear these names, you're just thinking, "I wonder if he's pronouncing them right." That's what you're thinking. And that's what I'm thinking too. But when these original leaders were hearing this, you think about it... Those who knew the Old Testament, every single one of these names is triggering images and stories. Most of these people were evil kings who led the people of God astray into destruction. And so every single one of these names is just inciting emotion in people who know the Old Testament who were hearing this. So feel the weight of this list. It's not just a boring list of names. Every single one of these names has stories behind them to people who know the Old Testament well would be familiar with. That would trigger and incite feeling in them.

And then you've got after that, from exile in Babylon back to Jerusalem.

"And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and

Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ."

Ladies and gentlemen, that is one crooked family tree. And this is the family tree through which the Son of God stepped in to the pages of human history. So why is that important? Why was it so important for Matthew to start this way? Why was that important for original hearers in the First Century who read this or heard this? And why is that important for you and I sitting in this room in the 21st Century? Well, let's start with those who are hearing this in the First Century.

Most of Matthew's readers were either Jewish people who had placed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Promised King, or Jewish people who were considering placing their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, as the Promised King. And so that's why Matthew includes this list. He's writing to Jewish people in a way that Mark doesn't have a list like this because Mark is writing to a predominantly Gentile audience, so there's no need to go through this Old Testament, Hebrew history. But Matthew does do that. Think about it. For men and women who had placed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah and had lost their families, their possessions and were facing the prospect of losing their lives, Matthew is encouraging them to say, "You have lost your life. You have lost your possessions. You've lost your family for the sake of the Messiah." Or for men and women who were considering placing their faith in Jesus as the Messiah and losing everything they have, he's showing them why He's worthy of that kind of devotion and admiration.

Introduction of the King...

That's where he's starting here. You just go back up to verse one. This one verse is loaded. "*The book of the genealogy of Jesus...*" Let's stop there. You've got this in your notes.

He is the Savior!

First thing Matthew is saying here. He is the Savior! "*The book of the genealogy of Jesus.*" Jesus is the Greek term, Greek form of the name "Joshua," which means, "Yahweh saves," or "the Lord is Salvation." You go down to verse 21, which we'll study next week, and you see the promise to Joseph about Mary. "*She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*" The Lord will save through Him.

Remember Joshua in the Old Testament. The Lord saves. Yahweh saves. That's what his name means. And Joshua was the appointed leader who would lead the people into the Promised Land. Now you've got Jesus in the New Testament, Yeshuah, the Lord Saves, appointed by the Father to lead sinful men and women into eternal life. He is the Savior. He will lead them to salvation. He is the Savior.

He is the Messiah.

"*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.*" Christ is not His last name. Christ literally means Messiah, or the Anointed One. All throughout the Old Testament there were promises of a coming Anointed One—a Messiah—Who would deliver God's people in power. And Matthew's saying, "This is Him! It's the One we've waited for—we've looked forward to—to deliver the people of God. He's here! Jesus Christ, the Savior, the Messiah."

He is the Son of David.

Do you remember this when we walked through the Bible? Let's take a couple of Old Testament tours. Go back to 2 Samuel 7 with me—2 Samuel 7. All the way back, near the

beginning of the Old Testament, right after 1 Samuel. 2 Samuel 7:12. You remember when King David wanted to build a temple to the Lord and the Lord said, "No. Solomon is going to do that. You're not going to do that. Solomon is." But what God did, it's here in 2 Samuel chapter 7, He basically entered into covenant with David. And He promised David a variety of different things. Listen to what He promised. 2 Samuel 7:12, "*When your days...*" (This is God speaking to 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. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*" Now two promises here. You've got them in your notes there.

One: "David, from your life, a continual seed will endure to the end." Now there's a sense in which this promise is directly relating or directly referring to Solomon, David's son whom God was going to raise up; God was going to bless. But we know that this is much deeper than just about Solomon because you get to the end of verse 13 and it says, "*He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*" And that word "forever" just leaps off the page. God's saying, "David, your seed will endure forever." When you see that word "forever," you don't even need to sit up and realize in the 21st Century that God was making a promise here in 2 Samuel chapter 7 that is still in effect today. These words here in 2 Samuel chapter 7 are literally shaping eternity. Forever. A continual seed will endure forever. A continual seed will endure to the end and an honored son will reign on the throne.

Now obviously this is a reference, like I mentioned, to Solomon. But as we've seen, his throne will be established forever. You look down in verse 16. And God says, "*And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.*" David, your throne will continue forever.

Now David died. Solomon died. And what happened is, in the rest of the Old Testament, you see the people of God clinging to this promise in 2 Samuel chapter 7. The line of King David—kingly line, —ill continue, and His throne will be established forever. An honored Son will reign on the throne. And this is what we see in the rest of the Old Testament.

Turn over to the prophets. Go to Isaiah. Go to Isaiah chapter 9. Go to Isaiah chapter 9. What I want you to see is the prophets would continually go back to these promises that were given from God to David. Look at Isaiah chapter 9. When you get to verse six, you're going to recognize these verses, and make the tie here. Connect the dots with what we've just seen promised to David. Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6:

*"For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of [who?] David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."*

The throne of David, established, upheld. Go two chapters later. Chapter 11. Isaiah 11:1-3:

*"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, [that's the line of David]
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD."*

It gives a whole explanation—a description of it. Then you jump down to verse ten and listen to what it says. *"In that day the root of Jesse..."* (From the line of David here). *"...The root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious."* So that's all based on a promise that had been given to David in 2 Samuel 7. Go to the next prophet to the right. Jeremiah chapter 23. Take a right. Go to Jeremiah chapter 23. Now if you think about it, these prophets, they were speaking in dark days among the people of Israel. The Northern Kingdom being destroyed. The Southern Kingdom, under attack. Jerusalem in jeopardy. And the people of God wondering, "Has God's promise failed?" And these prophets come on the scene and say, "No, God's promise has not failed."

So God says through Jeremiah...Jeremiah 23:5, *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch..."* That's someone from the line of David. *"...And he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'"* This is a promise that is continuing.

Let me show you one more. Ezekiel. So go two books to the right. Ezekiel chapter 37. One more. You think about this one. Ezekiel. This was in the middle of exile. So the people of God have experienced total tragedy. Jerusalem has been destroyed. The temple has been annihilated. They have been scattered apart from their homeland. They are in exile—darkest of days among the people of Israel, wondering, "Are we ever even going to be back together? Will we ever be restored? Will Jerusalem with the temple ever be restored?" And Ezekiel comes on the scene and God says through Ezekiel, "Absolutely. My promise still stands." Ezekiel chapter 37 verse:

"My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever."

David's dead! But God had made a promise that through the line of David God's Kingdom would be established forever! An everlasting covenant and you keep going in this passage in Ezekiel 37... See an everlasting covenant with a king for the nations. So to a people, don't miss it, who have longed for generations for the coming King from the line of David, a promised Messiah... Matthew is not just giving a list of names here. He's shouting in Matthew one loud and clear. The Son of David, the honored Son, the continual Seed—He's here! He's come! Jesus is the Son of David and He's the Son of Abraham.

He's the Son of Abraham.

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham."

Okay. One more Old Testament tour. I promise this is the last one. Go back to Genesis chapter 12. Genesis chapter 12. You see, Matthew 1:1 is just loaded, isn't it? What a way to start the New Testament! Let's just summarize the whole Old Testament in a verse. *"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham."* Abraham—the father of the people of Israel. Do you remember God's promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12? I've preached... When we walked through the story of redemption last year, I preached from this text from India via video. Remember, there were like birds and monkeys and stuff in the background? So think about that when you think Genesis chapter 12. God's promise to Abraham. Remember what he said. "...The Lord said to Abraham" Genesis 12:1:

"Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So here was the promise. We're going to fly through this in your notes. Through Abraham, God promises to form a covenant people. "I will make of you a great nation. I will form you as a people." God will form a covenant people. God will give them a promised inheritance on earth. "I will bless you. I will give you the land that I show you." What would become known as the Promised Land in the Old Testament. God will form them as His people, in His place, for His purpose. Form a covenant people, give them a promised inheritance on earth, and God will use them to accomplish a global purpose. "You will be a blessing. In you all the families of the earth will be blessed." This promise is reiterated in Genesis chapter 15. And then you get over to Genesis chapter 17. God says the same thing in Genesis chapter 17 verse 4: *"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.* And then listen to this. Genesis chapter 17 verse 6: *"I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you."*

Did you hear that? Through Abraham's line, God says He will send a King. You get down to verse 15 and 16 and God says the same thing to Sarah, Abraham's wife. *"Kings of people shall come from her."* God will send a King through Abraham's line and His Kingdom will one day expand to all people groups.

Last place to turn here before we go back to Matthew. Look at Genesis chapter 49. Genesis chapter 49 verse 10. Jacob is blessing his sons according to God's providence and he gets to Judah; Judah who is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. And he says in Genesis 49 verse 9, *"Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him."* Now listen to verse 10. *"The scepter [ruling staff] shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."* God says, to Abraham and his sons in the book of Genesis, "I'm forming a covenant people to accomplish a global purpose. And I will send a King through this line Who will come as a blessing to all peoples. And one day all peoples will bow down to Him as King."

Overview of the Kingdom...

Are you seeing this? Nothing in history is accidental. Nothing. It's all intentional. Every single detail in the Old Testament, from the very beginning is pointing to a King Who would come— "...*Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.*" He's at the center of it all.

Oh, you are not at the center of history. And I am not at the center of history. Our generation is not at the center of history. The United States of America is not at the center of history. Throughout history, billions of people have come and billions of people have gone. Empires have come and empires have gone. Nations and countries have come and gone. Rulers and kings and queens and presidents and dictators have come and gone. At the center of history stands one man, and His name is Jesus, the Christ. And all of history points to Him or flows from Him. It all centers around Him.

That's the claim that Matthew's making in Matthew chapter one. This is not just a boring list of names. This is a bold claim that this is the One around Whom everything revolves. He is the King. And if that is true, that has huge implications for every single one of our lives in this room because He has rule and He has reign over your life. And the reason your life is found on the pages of human history is to know and worship and follow this King and to make His Kingdom known among all peoples. That's what Matthew 1:1-17 is about. And that's what sets the stage for the picture of the kingdom that we're going to see in the rest of the book of Matthew.

Gospel: the message of the kingdom

I put there in your notes just a glimpse of what we're going to see. We're going to see the Gospel is the message of the kingdom. The central message in the mouth of Jesus is clear— "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." What does that mean? "The Kingdom of Heaven is near." We're going to look at what that means. We're going to see Jesus calling followers to Himself.

Disciples: citizens of the kingdom.

This is what it means to be a disciple—to be a citizen of the kingdom.

Discipleship: the demands of the kingdom

We're going to see discipleship and the demands of the kingdom, because following this King is costly. As we'll see, following this King may literally cost you your life. This King will say in Matthew chapter 10, "...*Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*"

Church: the outpost of the kingdom.

Jesus will call these followers together into a church as the outpost of the kingdom. Matthew is actually the only Gospel writer who uses the word for "church," *ecclesia*, out of the four Gospel writers. And we're going to see that Jesus has designed His people, under His rule and under His reign, to be a demonstration, an illustration... That's why I use the word "outpost." The design of God for the church is for the church to be a people who are living under the rule and the reign of Christ. Do you want to see what the rule and the reign of Christ look like in action? Look at those people. Look how they live. Look how they love each other. Look how they care for each other.

Mission: The Spread of the Kingdom

This is an outpost of the kingdom—a church on a mission for the spread of the kingdom, proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom. And as the church does this and all nations, the gates of Hell cannot stop it. It will try.

Demons: enemies of the kingdom,

the Gospel of Matthew makes it clear, the devil and all the minions of Hell are absolutely opposed to this King, everyone and everything in His kingdom, including you and me. But we're going to see his power is limited and his destiny is doomed. And in that we will see

Hope: the coming of the kingdom.

You see, there's kind of a two-pronged picture of the King and His Kingdom in the book of Matthew. On one hand, we see the Kingdom is a present reality. In other words, the great announcement in the book of Matthew is the King is here! The King, Jesus Christ is here! He's broken in to a dark and hurting world! He's here to bind up the broken heart and to give sight to the blind and life to the dead, bringing healing and forgiveness with Him. He's here! This is good, good news.

But, at the same time, not just a present reality in the person of Christ Who has come, but Matthew will also give us a picture of the kingdom as a future realization. The King dies on the cross, rises from the grave, then departs from His disciples. But before He does that, He promises them, "I am coming back." And we're going to hear Jesus talk about what will happen when He returns, and what happens before He returns. First, He came as a crying baby. He's coming back a second time as crowned King! This is a little foretaste of what we're going to see about the Kingdom of Jesus in the book of Matthew. That's where we're going.

Salvation through the King...

But here's where I want to bring this to a head especially for us in this room. So I hope, I hope that we've seen at this point that this genealogy is so much more than a boring list of names in Matthew 1, especially for original hearers of this message in the First Century. What I want to do is I want to bring this to a head, especially for what we, sitting here in the 21st Century can understand about how God saves us and why God saves us, based on Matthew chapter 1 verse 1 through 17.

God saves only by His sovereign grace

Two things I want to point out to you. One: God saves. This is all over in Matthew 1:1-17, this whole genealogy. God saves only by His sovereign grace. You look at this list and it is full of evil kings and sinful men and women. Even the best people on the list: Abraham—polygamist patriarch who lied about his wife twice; David—adulterer, murderer. This list goes on and on. Men and women who rebelled against the Lord time and time again. This is amazing. You think about it. The great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandparents of Jesus hated God and led other people to hate God. Clearly, Jesus came, not because of Israel's righteousness, but in spite of Israel's sinfulness. And that's what we see all over Scripture.

Don't miss this yet again. See the sinful responsibility of man. Evil kings and evil men living their lives in rebellion against God and they were responsible for that. Yet in the midst of all of that, God is working in and through them. See the supreme will of God. At no point, at absolutely no point are any of these kings, any of these men, any of these families outside of the sovereign control of God. You've got people in this list choosing to disobey God, choosing to run from God, and they're responsible for that. At the same time, you've got God ordaining every single bit of it to bring about the birth of His Son. Sovereign God working through sinful men and women. It's a mystery.

And you think about the women who were mentioned here, okay? Look at this list of women. That's a clear message. Jesus came for and through the morally outcast. Four women—all of them, in some way associated with sexual sin. Tamar—incest. Rahab—a prostitute. Ruth—a pretty shady night at Boaz's feet, in addition to the fact that she was a Moabitess, known for sexual immorality. The wife of Uriah—Matthew doesn't even say Bathsheba. It's like he's cluing and reminding us that she's in here though she belonged to another man. She's in this line because her and David committed adultery.

Adultery, sexual immorality, prostitution and incest. You would think that Matthew would have chosen some different women to include here. Why are these names included in the line that leads to Christ? Why are these names included in the line that leads to Christ? For the exact same reason that your or my name is included in the line that leads from Christ—solely by the sovereign grace of God. Were it not for His grace... Praise be to God that He delights in saving immoral, sinful outcasts.

You think about who's writing this book. This is Matthew, the guy who makes a living ripping off his fellow Jewish people. You get to Matthew chapter 9, he's having a party for Jesus. The only people he knows to invite are a bunch of moral reprobates. Matthew knows he's the least-likely person to be writing this Gospel and that's what makes it Gospel, right? This is good news! God saves not based upon any merit in you or me! God saves based solely upon mercy in Him. Only by His sovereign grace. Praise God that He saves like that because if He didn't, we'd all be damned! And one more thing. You think about all of these women that are mentioned here, what all of them had in common was that they were surrounded by or immersed in sexual scandal.

The stage is set for you to get down to verse 16 and to be introduced to a woman named Mary who was absolutely surrounded by and immersed in sexual scandal. An unwed woman pregnant and she's claiming to be a virgin. Scandal. Do you see all the intricacies here? The casual reader looks at a boring list of names. This is so much more! And, and, and Jesus came for and to the ethnically diverse! All of these women were also Gentiles, not Jewish women. Now Uriah's wife may possibly have been an Israelite, but that's likely another reason why Matthew writes, "The wife of Uriah," instead of Bathsheba. The wife of Uriah the Hittite.

God saves ultimately for His global purpose.

So that leads to the second picture of how God saves. God saves only by His sovereign grace and God saves ultimately for His global purpose. Remember the promise to Abraham? "I will bless you as my people and through you, you will be a blessing to all peoples." God's promise to bless His people for the sake of all peoples—that's exactly what we're seeing in this list and that's exactly what we're going to see throughout the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus fulfills God's promise to bless His chosen people. The Gospel of Matthew is loaded with Old Testament references where Matthew over and over again, he's connecting the dots. He's saying, "Listen, Old Testament said this. Here's Jesus fulfilling this. Old Testament this. Jesus fulfilling this." It's just filled with illusions and references to the Old Testament. And you see an emphasis in the Gospel of Matthew on Jesus coming specifically for the Jewish people—serving, ministering to Jewish people. Does that mean that He doesn't care about all peoples? Absolutely not. He's doing exactly what we saw promised to Abraham. He's loving, blessing the people of God, people of Israel, for the sake of all peoples.

So He pours His life (this is a great illustration)...He pours His life into 12 Jewish men. And then at the end of His time with them He says to them, "You go and make disciples of all the nations—all the peoples." He says... We've talked about it before in Matthew chapter 24. "The end will not come," Jesus says, "until the Gospel of the kingdom has been proclaimed

to all peoples." I'm telling you, I don't just make up all this missions talk. It's all over the Bible. It's on every page. It's the purpose of God from the very beginning of history, then fulfilled in the Person and work of Christ, and now being accomplished in the church and you and me. A people on a global mission to make this King and His name known among all nations and to advance His Kingdom from Birmingham to the ends of the earth.

So I was in China and I got an email from a team who was in India, and one of the team members wrote this report. Okay? From India: "We were in a remote city in India. Many have referred to this area of India as the graveyard of missions. As we sat at dinner in the ground floor of our hotel, four Americans walked in. They were the first foreigners we'd seen and naturally we introduced ourselves. It turns out one is the IMB leader—International Mission Board leader [we work predominately with the International Mission Board when it comes to unreached areas]. So one is the IMB leader for the area, and the other three are from a church in Louisville, Kentucky. The IMB leader jokingly said to us, 'You guys are totally blowing this for me. I told these guys we were going to one of the most remote, unreached places on earth. And of course, when we get here, who do we run into but Brook Hills!'"

And then this guy is writing the report and says, "Ha." I don't know if he meant that inflection but this is what he writes. "Ha! I'd love for that to be our continuing legacy." Yes! This is it, brothers and sisters! How does God save us? Solely by His sovereign grace. Why does God save us? Ultimately for His global purpose. And that's the point of this genealogy in the book of Matthew.

The Bottom Line...

So here's the bottom line for us, for you and me. As we prepare to study this book over the next four months, we're going to see three distinct groups of people in this book. On the one hand we're going to see religious leaders who deny that Jesus is the King. On another hand, we're going to see crowds who are following Jesus as long as He gives them what they want and entertains them in the moment. But ultimately and eternally, those crowds will fall away. And then we're going to see, third group, a small band of disciples who listen to Jesus, who learn from Jesus and who literally lose their lives for following Him. And so the bottom line for every single one of us who chooses to take this journey over the next four months is which one of those three groups are you going to be?

Like the leaders, will you completely reject Jesus?

We're going to see attacks on Jesus' character, and attacks on Jesus' claims all throughout this Gospel. By people who pridefully rejected Jesus as the King. Is that going to be you?

Like the crowds, will you casually observe Jesus?

Or, Like the crowds will you casually observe Jesus? And this is the place where I am convinced that many church attenders and likely even church members find themselves today. Scores of people who are content to observe Jesus, toy with Jesus, associate with Jesus, do things even in the name of Jesus. Scores of people who Jesus says, "Many will be shocked on that day to say, 'Lord, did we not do all these different things in Your name?' And I will look at them," Jesus says, "and tell them, 'I never knew you.'" This is the largest group of people in the book of Matthew. And I fear that it's a large group of people in what we perceive as the church today. Like the crowds, will you casually observe Jesus?

Like the disciples, will you unconditionally follow Jesus?

Or, third option, like the disciples, will you unconditionally follow Jesus? In a day where nominal Christianity and lazy discipleship are rampant, here in Birmingham and around the world, will you rise and say to Jesus, "You are the King. And because You are the King, there are no conditions on my obedience to You. I will follow wherever You lead me. I will do whatever You ask of me. I will give whatever You tell me to give. I will abandon all that I am and all that I have to follow You, because You are King and You are worthy of nothing less." That is the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, the King, and to be a citizen of the Kingdom.

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