

Matthew – The Life of a King¹
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
February 7, 2021

Diaspora XLVII – The Scattered Church – Forty-seventh
Sunday

Text: Matthew 1:1-17

Purpose: We open Matthew with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. We see in the family tree of Jesus, a summary of the Old Testament story. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of both the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants God gave to the nation Israel. Today, we are recipients of grace because we have been invited to participate and receive the promises of God through our Savior Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

Over the years, I have covered various sermon topics. Since I have been at Spilman, we have examined the “Book of Hebrews,” “Four Fragile Freedoms,” “Why are we Here?,” “The Seven Churches of Revelation,” “Ten Steps to Spiritual Renewal,” “Investing for Eternity,” and during this past year, we focused on “Creation to Christ,” which was an overview of the whole Old Testament.

Today I want to begin a series based upon the Book of Matthew.

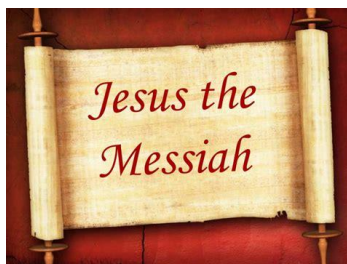
¹ Commentary Notes drawn from Holman New Testament Commentary, Matthew, by Stuart K. Weber

Matthew presents to us the life of a man called Jesus. We have just finished celebrating the birthday of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have heard over and over how Mary and Joseph found out, even though Mary was a virgin; she was pregnant with the One that was to save the world from their sins. We have heard of Jesus laying in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, shepherds coming to see what the angels spoke of, wise men from the east bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, fit for a king.



We have become so accustomed to the story, now that Christmas is over, we are ready to move on to another topic, another story. Now that we have turned a new year, we are ready to set some new resolutions, turn over a new leaf, enter into the Land of New Beginnings. Don't we all want a place to start over, forget the past, move forward with a better future?

God's chosen people felt the same way. They were anticipating a new beginning with the advent of the Messiah. This King of Israel would come again, reestablish David's Kingdom on earth, and the glory they once had, would be restored again. The people were ripe with anticipation. The King was coming and they were excited.



Herod was NOT pleased with the news of a coming King of the Jews. He was jealous and did not want to share any sliver of his kingdom with another.

According to Matthew, once Jesus was born, King Herod decreed that every child under the age of two be killed in and around Bethlehem. Before that decree was executed, Joseph was divinely warned and left in the middle of the night and escaped to Egypt where Jesus would be safe. They would not return until after the death of Herod.

The Book of Matthew is one of four books called the gospels. It is the first book in the New Testament. It is the ideal bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament – the Old Covenant with God and the New Covenant with God.

If you look on the back of your bulletin, you will find a brief overview of the four gospels. You will see Matthew was written primarily to a Jewish audience. Matthew presents Jesus as a King. The approach Matthew uses is a synthetic – blended view of Jesus' life. Matthew uses a lot of Old Testament scripture to demonstrate to his Jewish audience that Jesus was the fulfillment of their hoped-for Messiah. Matthew uses the various teachings, or discourses, of Jesus to present Jesus' life to his readers.

Writer	Written to Whom	About Jesus As	Method or Approach	Featuring
Matthew	Jews	King	Synthetic	Discourses
Mark	Romans	Servant	Chronological	Miracles
Luke	Greeks	Son of Man	Historical	Parables
John	All Mankind	Son of God	Theological	Personal Interviews

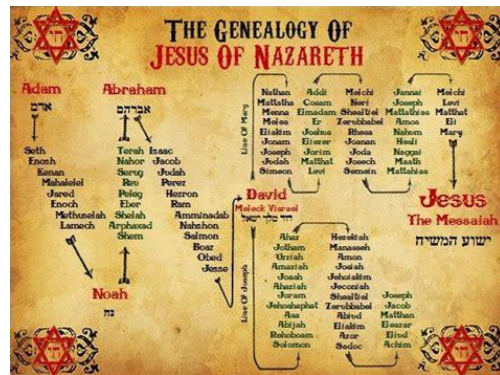
Matthew's focus is different than the other gospels. While Matthew appeals to a Jewish audience, Mark appeals to a Roman mindset, Luke to the Greeks, and John is for all of mankind.

Over the next few months as we examine the Book of Matthew, I want to invite you to open your bibles and read through this book with me. Some may have decided to make reading the entire Bible through this year as their goal. If that is not your goal, at least set aside time to read a couple of chapters of Matthew each week. I believe all of us could do that easily.

Matthew was a Jew writing to a Jewish nation about thirty years after the death of Jesus. The earliest title given to this book was “*Kata Matthaion*” or According to Matthew. Later the word “Gospel” was added to “Matthew” – or the Good News – a Gift of the Lord. In other places in the New Testament, Matthew is called Levi (Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27).

The Genealogy of Jesus

The opening verses of Matthew begin in a strange way – at least strange for us. It begins with the genealogy of Jesus. There are two genealogies listed in the New Testament – the one in Matthew traces the family tree from Abraham to David to Jesus, and the one in Luke goes all the way back through Abraham to Adam. Today we are doing good if we are able to trace our families back five or six generations. During Jesus’ day, all of the family records were kept in the Temple in Jerusalem. If you wanted to verify a person’s family claim, you could go there because that is where they kept the genealogy records. Once Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, all of those records were lost for eternity.



READ MATTHEW 1:1-12

As you read over the names listed in Matthew, which is a summary of the Old Testament story, you recall God's promise to Abraham to be a blessing to all the nations. You think about Isaac and how he obtained his wife, Rachel. You think of Jacob and Esau how they struggled in the womb. You recall how Jacob was tricked and ended up with two wives and two handmaids resulting in twelve sons that became the founding families for the nation Israel.

In this genealogy listing, you see four women listed. This is rare since the family tree usually only listed the men. Tamar is the first woman listed. She tricked Judah to give her a son to continue the family line of her husband. Next, we find Ruth, the Moabite listed in Jesus' genealogy. The Book of Ruth is one of the sixty-six books in the Bible. We see Rahab listed in the family tree of Jesus. She was the one that welcomed the spies into Jericho and hid them. It is said she was a prostitute. God uses many people, with varied pasts and histories, to accomplish His will.

The fourth woman listed was Bathsheba, who was bathing on the roof of her home when King David was enticed by her beauty, committed adultery with her since she was married to Uriah, which caused David to allow Uriah to be murdered on the battlefield.

Genealogy of Jesus

The Women in the Genealogy

- The fourth woman is **Bathsheba**, the victim of David's lust, and wife of Uriah the Hittite, who was then murdered by David.
 - Bathsheba lost her first son through David, but was enterprising enough to make sure her second son, Solomon, succeeded David to the throne.
- All these women had marital histories tainted by human scandal or scorn, yet they are part of the sacred line leading to Jesus.

We see the good and the bad listed in the family tree of Jesus. We see Jesus' distant relative was David and we are reminded that Solomon was the son that came from Bathsheba who was married to Uriah the Hittite. After Solomon you see the kingdom split and many good and bad kings listed until the Babylonian captivity. When you start digging into your family history, you never know what you will find!

One of those kings was Hezekiah who built an underground water tunnel to provide water to the city of Jerusalem during a siege of the city. While in Jerusalem several years ago, I had the opportunity to walk in Hezekiah's Tunnel. It is only two feet wide in places and about 5 to 6 feet high. These people listed in Matthew's genealogy were real people.

It was fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the Babylonian captivity, and fourteen generations from their captivity to the birth of Jesus there in Bethlehem – the home town of King David. Jesus was born of an earthly royal blood line – and a Holy Heavenly Father by way of the Holy Spirit. (The picture is from the birthplace of Jesus, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. A silver 14-point star is placed where Jesus was supposedly born.)



What an introduction of the Messiah – the hoped for one of Israel, the one that would be a blessing to the entire world. The one that would give His life as a ransom for you and for me! This King of the Jews was not simply born for the Jews, He came unto His own and they did not receive Him.

But as many as receive Him, He gave them the right to become the Sons of God. You and I are invited into the family of God if we only believe and accept Him as our Savior.

Matthew the Writer

From the earliest writings of the church, the writer of this book has been attributed to Matthew the Publican (tax collector). Jesus called him to be one of his disciples in Matthew 9:9-13. Matthew was a Jew who had been hired by the Roman government to extract taxes from the citizens of the area. He was considered lower than the gentiles because he had betrayed his own people and robbed them. Many tax collectors were given a quota to collect. Any taxes collected above the quota could be kept by the tax collector. If you remember, Zacchaeus was also a tax collector in Jericho. But Jesus knew who he was calling to follow Him; he wanted Matthew to be one of His disciples.



As you read through the Book of Matthew, you get the sense you are reading someone's mail. While it may not have been written to you, it definitely was written for you and me. Many of the references throughout the Book of Matthew are intended to show Jesus as the culmination of God's salvation plan for humanity and a fulfillment of the Old Testament covenant.

Over and over in Matthew, you will hear the phrase, "The Kingdom of Heaven" (32 times) and the "Kingdom of God. (4 times)" This was used to demonstrate



that Jesus was acting on the authority of God in all that He did.

A key verse in Matthew is found posted over the cross of Jesus at Calvary. It says, *“This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”* Matthew presents the life of King Jesus – the King of the Jews. He was born in obscurity in a small village, to poor parents, lived most of his life in Nazareth as a carpenter. Around the age of 30, Jesus entered into what is called His public ministry. For three years, Jesus moved quickly into the public arena and was admired and followed by thousands but hated by the ruling religious leaders. It is an epic story told for us to understand, receive, and believe.

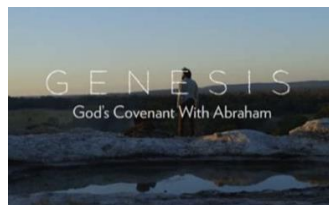
Mankind has been on a collision course with sin ever since the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve chose to reject God’s clear command and from that day forward, sin entered our world and unleashed in every person’s heart. That was the day Paradise was Lost. Mankind is in need of a redeemer and Matthew presents Jesus as the culmination of God’s plan of salvation for all who receive His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Fulfillment of Two Old Testament Covenants

Matthew brings together two of the major covenants found in the Old Testament – God’s covenant with Abraham and David. Matthew brings this out in the genealogy of Jesus.

God’s Covenant with Abraham

Around 2000 B.C., God chose one man, Abraham, with which he would enter into a covenant. We read in Genesis chapters 12-17,

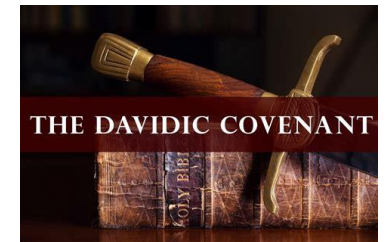


how God unconditionally promised Abraham three things. The first promise was (1) a people – his offspring would be as numerous as the sands of the seashore. Secondly, Abraham was promised (2) a place – his people would occupy the land of Canaan. Lastly, he would be (3) a blessing to all – all nations would be blessed through Abraham.

In Genesis 22, we see Abraham being asked by God to willingly lay down Isaac’s life as a sacrifice. At this point in Abraham’s life, Isaac is his only son of promise and laying him down as a sacrifice on Mount Mariah must have been the most difficult thing God asked Abraham to do. Just before the knife came down on Isaac, the Angel of the Lord called out from Heaven and stopped him. A substitutionary sacrifice was nearby and was offered in place of Isaac. This principle of a substitutionary sacrifice was demonstrated clearly that day. As Abraham said, God Himself would provide His own sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins.

God’s Covenant with David

The second primary covenant we find in the Old Testament was the one given to David around 1000 B.C. In 2 Samuel



7:1-16, we see God unconditionally promised David that one of David’s descendants would be on the throne of David forever. I believe David understood this clearly when he said in Psalm 110:1, *“The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”* According to Jesus in Matthew 22:45, David understood that his son was also his Lord. The only way

that could be is if David's descendent was also the Son of God.

Jesus' First Advent – Son of David – Son of Abraham

We find in Matthew's opening verse (1:1) an explosive statement: *"The Book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:"*

Jesus Christ is the sovereign Son of David, the sacrificial Son of Abraham, the Lion of Judah, the Lamb of God! Did you notice how Matthew reversed the chronological order in history of David and Abraham? Stuart K. Weber has noticed this order of names can be a clue as an outline for the Book of Matthew. Chapters 1-12 deals with Jesus as the sovereign Son of David, our reclaiming King and Lion of Judah. Chapters 13-28 presents Jesus as the sacrificial Son of Abraham, the redeeming Savior and Lamb of God.

Only Jesus could have fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies. Only Jesus could have come in the *"fullness of time"* from the line and lineage of David. Only Jesus, of all of David's descendents had the authority of God to bring about the Kingdom of God to reclaim lost humanity. The paradise that was lost there in the Garden of Eden could only be regained by the sacrificial substitutionary death of Jesus at Calvary.

Jesus' Second Advent – A Reversal of Order From Lamb of God to Eternal Reigning Son of David

Jesus came the first time as the sacrificial Lamb of God as illustrated as a Son of Abraham. The second time, Jesus will come

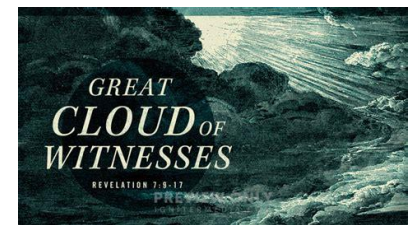


as the Ruling, Reigning, Son of God as fulfillment of a Son of David.

This New Covenant found only in Jesus Christ, provides us promises as well. We have been adopted into the family of God. We are a part of a covenant group of people called the church. Many bible teachers want to apply all of the promises in the Bible that are given to Israel and apply them to the church. We need to be careful and understand that the promises given to Israel belong to Israel. We do not need to try and apply all of the promises in the Bible given to Israel and transfer them to the church.

Just as God gave Abraham a people, a place, and a blessing, we as God's people have been recipients of God's provision as well. We, who were not chosen by God to be his chosen nation, are now invited to be a people identified with Jesus Christ as our Savior. The Bible calls us a special royal priesthood, a part of the redeemed people of God, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. We are a special priesthood chosen by God.

We have been promised a place – a place of rest. We will be a part of that great cloud of witnesses spoken of in the Book of Revelation.



Jesus promised his disciples that he was going away to prepare them a place. And if He goes away, He will come again and take us to be with Him one day. We will have all of eternity to enjoy a new heaven and new earth as mentioned in Revelation 21.

Most importantly, we are a recipient of the blessing of a restored relationship with our Lord and Savior. Whereas

we were once estranged, separated from God by our sin, we are now redeemed and regenerated. Our sins are forgiven and a new life is ours – through Jesus Christ.

The Book of Matthew opens for us a new covenant. We are chosen people in Jesus Christ. We have a special home prepared for us once our life here on earth is over. We can experience a new, clean life, if we repent of our sins, and receive Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Over the next few months, as we travel through the Book of Matthew, may you and I draw closer to our God and our King!

LET US PRAY

