

Behold the King, the Son of David (Matthew 1:1-17)**Caleb Collins****November 27, 2022**

““They say Aslan is on the move - perhaps has already landed.”

And now a very curious thing happened. None of the children knew who Aslan was any more than you do; but the moment the Beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different. Perhaps it has sometimes happened to you in a dream that someone says something which you don't understand but in the dream it feels as if it has some enormous meaning- either a terrifying one which turns the whole dream into a nightmare or else a lovely meaning too lovely to put into words, which makes the dream so beautiful that you remember it all your life and are always wishing you could get into that dream again. It was like that now. At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer.” – The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe, Lewis

Much like the children in this beloved CS Lewis story, Christmas is approaching and with it comes a variety of responses, just like the children. “Christ is born” is something we will be saying as a church in a short couple of weeks. A statement similar to the one the beaver said, which has enormous meaning. For some, Christmas is a season where you are leaning in, already provoked to happiness. For others, it is a season of sadness, and speaking of Christmas joy agitates feelings of being downcast, being alone. Others, this is a painful season, being yet another reminder of loss or the state of relationships that are no longer what they should be.

But brothers and sisters, the gospel to which Christmas points is the good news that in any and every season, Jesus can offer hope.

Today marks the first Sunday of Advent. And if you are new here or new to this term, Advent is the four Sundays preceding Christmas Day when the church has historically taken the time to prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ, his first coming 2000 years ago and his future return.

Advent simply means “coming.” It is a time for us as a local church, as individuals and families to be stirred with joy by the good news of Jesus having come to save us but also being stirred with joy at his coming again when he will save his people finally from the suffering and sin of this world, where he will right every wrong, and we will live in eternity in joyful fellowship with our Creator and king.



The Christmas season is such a joyous time because it reminds us of the depth of our need and the extent of God's love to send the Son into this world as a babe swaddled in a manger to live to die on a cross for our sin.

That he who sustains every molecule of this universe as the King of Kings, would become man, being born of a virgin. That God would be a child,

and all of us as we read the Christmas story know two things abundantly clear: this child is innocent, and yet this child will one day die because of me.

How much does God love the world? So much that *he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

That is the joy of Christmas. That's the news of "Christ is born." Aslan is on the move, the children pick up that there is something afoot, something big, terrifying, wonderful, inspiring, life-giving. Much more with what Lewis was pointing to: "Christ the King, the son of David, the Messiah is born."

We are lifting our gaze to Christmas morning over the next few weeks because of the weight of what that day represents.

But we also are lifting our eyes not only to when he came, making our salvation possible, but we are lifting our eyes to the future day when he will return, when our salvation will be complete.

That's why we are studying the first two chapters of the Gospel of Matthew. These chapters speak of King Jesus, the Messiah.

This morning as you have just heard being read, we are going to be studying Matthew's genealogy. This text is not just a list of names, but an artistic and theologically robust retelling of Israel's story in light of Jesus. This isn't a history lesson of facts, this is a redemptive history.

If we could summarize the text that we are studying this morning, it is this:

That we would rejoice in the fulfillment of all of God's promises in the coming of King Jesus

The way that we're going to see this play out is in three points:

1. the **GENESIS** of the King
2. The **NEED** for the King
3. The **ARRIVAL** of the King

The GENESIS of the King (v.1)

The Title of Matthew's Gospel Defined

The first place we need to stop and look is v.1. This first verse of Matthew's Gospel should be taken as the title of his work.

This verse is queueing readers into Matthew's explicit intentions for the work: that you might know that Jesus is the son of David and the son of Abraham.

The ESV has "Book of the genealogy." Some translations have the word for "book" here to be record or ancestry, but book is the best word, especially if Matthew is referencing the whole of the Gospel. The phrase "book of genealogy" is often taken in a limited sense to be speaking of just verses 2-17. Of course, it includes it, but it's a bit broader than just a list of ancestors.

The original word for genealogy is the same word for "genesis." That word is used in verse 18, speaking of Jesus' birth "Now the **birth** of Jesus Christ took place in this way." It doesn't have to just apply to a record of ancestry, but of a beginning, in Matthew's case: a new beginning.

And Matthew is saying: "the book of genesis, the new genesis of Jesus Christ" What Matthew is communicating in his gospel is that the coming of Jesus is ushering in the new creation, the Kingdom of God, that the salvation the Jews were looking for is found not in the end, but an end through a new beginning.

This book of genesis, therefore, references this record of the lineage that we are studying, the narrative of Christ's birth which is our advent series, but it also references the whole of Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew begins his story of this new genesis by giving us the story not only of Jesus' lineage but the story of God's people to this point. Matthew tells us through this list the story of how God has always been working towards the coming of King Jesus. **A culmination and the climax of God's plan to save a people.**

Transition to Genealogy

Which leads us to this genealogy. Genealogies have a simple and rather effective purpose in Scripture. They function as dividers. They break up the story, they help you stay on track with the purpose of each narrative and section.

Take the book of Genesis for example. After Creation, the Fall and Cain and Able in Gen 1-4, what comes next before the story of Noah? A genealogy. After Noah before Babel, what follows? A genealogy. What separates Babel and the story of Abraham in Gen 12? A genealogy.

Matthew, right from the start, is making a statement about this Genesis, this new creation ushered in by Jesus the son of David, the son of Abraham. This is something new and different than what has come before it. This isn't a story that moves naturally one character to another. Like from Abraham to Isaac and then to Jacob, or like Saul to David, or like the mantle being passed on from Elijah to Elisha.

*This is God's revelation of salvation **that was promised** to God's revelation of salvation **that is fulfilled** in the person and work of Jesus Christ.*

Now, I want you to catch a couple things from the get-go. Matthew gives the Cliff Notes in verse one: Jesus the son of David, the son of Abraham. And then he's going to mention Abraham and David. And then he's going to mention David and Abraham again. Jesus, Abraham, David. Jesus, Abraham, David. It's like he got this script from the department of redundancy department.

Matthew has a clear point, and in Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, English...its all the same: the Bible shows priority and importance through repetition.

In this genealogy, there are three main characters in a list of many names, there are three sets of 14 and thus a repetition of numbers, we see unique authorial flares of detail given to particular persons and to women. This genealogy has a location mentioned in it.

Some might be thinking, what on earth is this trying to communicate? Is this according to Hebrew MLA formatting? Is this even a legit genealogy? Isn't this through Joseph's line? Don't we believe in a virgin birth? So, what is Joseph's genealogy doing here? Luke's genealogy goes back to Adam. Why did Matthew start with Abraham? Why didn't Matthew just finish the list?

First off, this genealogy isn't just your maw and paw's ancestry.com, run-of-the-mill genealogy. It is an artistic, theological exhortation to inform, convict, and comfort its readers. Just as the children in the lion, witch, and the wardrobe had different feelings about Aslan coming, *so we* should have various feelings when we read the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

The 1st and 2nd section starts with somebody who is the head of a biblical covenant. The place found in the third section is because of a lack of covenant faithfulness. Matthew didn't just pick the top three Hebrew comic book characters and say let me look at their lineage and how it's tied to Jesus. Matthew is making a point.

That being said, let us dive into this wonderful Christmas text. Bringing us to point 2: The NEED for a King (v.2-15)

The NEED for a King (v.2-15)

Abraham, the Father of God's People

This first section, v.2-6, starts with Abraham and ends with David. This is from the book of Genesis all the way up to the second chapter of 1 Kings.

Like I just said this section starts with a significant covenant head. He starts with father Abraham, where God makes a unilateral promise to save a people to himself all the way back in Genesis 12.

So why are we starting with Genesis 12 and with Abraham? Why wouldn't we start with Genesis 1? To answer that question, the simplest outline I can give you of your Bible is this: Genesis 1- 11, Genesis 12 through Revelation 22.

Genesis 1 through 11 is really the prologue in many ways for the rest of the Bible. It sets up creation and God's ideal and of sin. It shows how sin entered the world to the depth that sin goes through the story of Cain and Abel where it sits at the door and it seeks to master you. Well, to what extent does it go? Then comes Noah's story, the next narrative of Genesis, that Sin extends to all persons without exception. All fall short of the glory of God. The final story of the prologue of the Bible Genesis 1-11 is the story of Babel, and we see that sin stirs us to make a great name for ourselves rather than God's. That's the MO of sin. It takes us to the darkest depths. It is the problem of every person, and it looks to make a great name for ourselves rather than our Creator.

Genesis 12 is where God makes a promise to one man who used to worship the moon and says that "I will give you land, I will make you a great nation, I will make you a blessing to the nations."

We see over and over in Abraham's story of God repeating, "I will, I will, I will." Out of God's grace, he calls one man and says that he will save a people from their sin he will deal with the Genesis 1 through 11 problem through his steadfast love and faithfulness, not Abraham's.

When you read Abraham, you ought to think of God saving a people. You should think "blessing to the nations."

So in Matthew's genealogy, when he says that Jesus is related to Abraham, he is related to Abraham but he is also so much more: he is himself the promised offspring of Abraham and

it is Christ himself who is the possession which God promised and he is the blessing to all nations. Not a political blessing, a financial blessing, a comfortable living blessing, a popularity blessing, but the blessing that your sins can be forgiven based on the merit of the lamb of God and not your works.

Abraham and the Gospel Today

- God committed himself to saving a people from their sin.
 - Our greatest need today, whether we recognize it or not, is that our sin be dealt with
 - Sin removed us from the communion with God we were made for
 - Sin removes our humanity. It makes us act in ways that are inhumane
 - Sinfulness corrodes us: our consciences, our thinking, our perception of life, our interactions with people
 - Paul describes this state in Eph2:
 - **2** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world,

We were dead in sin. When did that start? Gen 3. When did God first promise to save a people? Gen 12.

- The relevance of Abraham is that in Christ, we become a people for God's own possession (1 Pe 2:9-10)
 - ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Section 1 of this genealogy ends with the second most important person in this genealogy. David the king. He is the only king mentioned in this genealogy with the title. This is speaking of David the king.

David, the King of God's People

The second set of 14 generations in Matthew's genealogy starts another covenant head: David the son of Jesse. King David is a towering figure in the Old Testament and represented not only the best leader for Israel, ushering in the golden age of Israel's history, but he also represented ideal humanity. Scripture describes David not a perfect man, and not a man without severe sin, but a man after God's own heart. He had small beginnings, he was talented in combat and military strategy, the arts, and Torah; and profoundly aware of his needs.

The Davidic covenant can be found in 2 Samuel 7, and in it, God promises that it will be through David's lineage and through the role of king that God will fulfill Abraham's covenant. Abraham's lines, to Judah's line in the end of Genesis, now David's line.

The Davidic covenant promises an everlasting Kingdom and blessing to the nation through God's man, his king which will be found in David's line.

When we think of David, we ought to think of Salvation through God's Rule under God's King

Psalm 72 – The Promised Descendent of David

Psalm 72 informs us that this future king of David has four qualities worth noting. (Wellum and Trent Hunter: Christ from Beginning to End)

Firstly, this Davidic king and descendant will be **righteous** and will be known for his righteousness. This leader of God's people will typify the righteousness that God requires. He is God's man.

Secondly, this Davidic king will inherit an **eternal** Kingdom without end. No fear of rival nations or term limits or frailty of the human condition. This future Davidic king will reign forever.

Thirdly, this Davidic king will have a **universal** Kingdom.

v.11 "May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!"

And fourthly, this Davidic king's rule will be defined by **compassion**:

Ps. 72:12-14

- 12 For he delivers the needy when he calls,
the poor and him who has no helper.
- 13 He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.
- 14 From oppression and violence he redeems their life,
and precious is their blood in his sight.

What a great Savior we serve, what a great King we serve.

Christian, that is why we anticipate Jesus Christ. Because in our weakness and end our neediness when we had no helper, God himself became man to do what we couldn't do, and he showed us compassion and he saved us from our sin and he rules over us as a righteous king who can sympathize with us as our great high priest and who loves us and meets our needs because he rules with compassion.

The rest of the lineage that we find in this second section is king after king after king after king that did not come close to the legacy or character of David. And this lineage of unfaithful kings led to the very last line of this section in verse 11: the deportation to Babylon.

Babylon, the Unfaithfulness of God's People

The reason why Babylon is mentioned as the start of the third section of this genealogy is that it's tied to the covenants. In 587 BC, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was taken away into Babylon, and the prophets make it explicitly clear that it is because of their covenant unfaithfulness.

When we read this third section and we see Babylon, we should be sad. We should be having sympathy pain. Judah was unfaithful, like us...

How can we be a blessing to the nation when we're enslaved to another nation? How will we be ruled by God's man when we're not in the land? How can you be a king without a land possessed and a unified nation? How will God save us if we've been delivered to Babylon? My sin caused the temple to be destroyed. God's presence doesn't seem to be with me, or with us. Has this just been a big religious Ponzi scheme? Have we been lied to this whole time? Didn't God say that he was saving a people? Me and my family had ginormous fishhooks in our mouths tied to ropes and we were lined up and we hiked for hundreds of miles...

The nation of Israel is, at this point, under the rule of the Roman Empire, no king, a province of someone else's godless nation, and not much blessing going on.

When we read Babylon, church, what we should be thinking of is a people in exile due to their sin, waiting for God's promise of a Messiah.

Christmas and Our Sin

Babylon raised a question: Maybe the Serpent won? Maybe Sin is too much for God's plans.

Could I sin in such a way that God can't deliver me? Is there a point at which my need is too great?

Does anyone get beyond shame and guilt of in life? Is life a bunch of pain with a couple seasons of things going ok?

For some today, to borrow from Lewis' story once more, it always feels like winter but never Christmas.

As a Christian, is there a point in which God's discipline turns to embittered hate for my perpetual spiritual neediness? Never.

When Christ came on Christmas morning, what did the angels say to the shepherds? *“Fear not! I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”* And that is the message of Christmas to us, in the face of our sin, in the face of our Babylon: fear not, Christ has come! The greatest of news is coming Christmas morning.

There is no power greater, no enemy who can overcome the King of Kings. Blessed is the one who trusts in this King. For the Christian, this is your good news:

Rom 8:31-37

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christmas turns **weeping** and **sorrow** and **dismay** and **waiting** into **joy**. The sins of God’s people are dealt with on the Cross. Our King died to turn our darkness to light. Our winter has turned to Christmas in the coming of Christ.

What a King we serve, and he has come!

The ARRIVAL of the King (v.16-17)

Matthew completes this list of generations with the main character of his Gospel: Jesus the Christ, the anointed one.

But notice how Matthew gets there... Look with me at v. 16.

One thing that I love about this genealogy is that it moves from the 30,000-foot story of Israel to the neighborhood block, if you will, in verse 16. It becomes very personal. We read about Abraham and the patriarchs and David and the list of the kings from Judah, and then

there's this list of the generations from Babylon, and then all of the sudden, Joseph and Mary appear. We read those, and we go, wait a minute, we know those people. That's what the story is about. That's what the next episode is covering. We love these people!

We will learn about Joseph in the next verses of this chapter, where we see him described as a righteous man, but Mary, we get prepared for her to take the stage through the verses we are studying.

Matthew has been preparing his readers for the entrance of Mary through the references to the women we find in this genealogy. **The reason why the women are mentioned in this genealogy is not that Matthew has some social agenda, as if he is some progressive of his time to stick it to the patriarchy if you will.**

Contrary to popular opinion about Jewish genealogies, it wasn't totally uncommon or unheard of to have genealogies mentioning women. But Matthew's mention of women is theologically informed and serves as an interpretive lens for the story of Mary.

The Women of Mt. 1:1-17

The four women mentioned in Matthew's genealogy (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba) have two prominent distinctions: they had scandalous and/or irregular marital unions, and they were gentile. Tamar and Rahab were Canaanites, Ruth was a Moabite, and Bathsheba is referenced by her husband: the wife of Uriah, the Hittite.

Why is Matthew mentioning this? Two reasons: **To defend Mary** amidst her scandalous pregnancy and her foundational position in the redemptive plan of God.

And second, to show **the gospel includes the nations**. God's promise to Abraham is seen in sparks in the story of Israel. These gentile women were central and included in God's people. Jesus is the son of David, the Son of Abraham...the blessing to the nations.

So this Mary, the Mary who is the talk of the town, saying she is pregnant though not married to Joseph yet: she is highly favored by God. She is right in the middle of God's redemptive plan of salvation.

This child she bears is the Christ, the fulfillment of God's promise to save a people. He is what God's people have longed for all this time...since Abraham.

The Seed of David, the Seed of Abraham: the Christ

Christ isn't a part of Israel's history; he is the culmination of it. This masterful genealogy proves the title of verse 1.

Literally meaning “anointed one,” Jesus came with a specific role: to save his people.

But think about the story of Old Testament Kings. When Saul or David was chosen, what did Samuel do? Anoint them with Oil. Jesus is God’s anointed to save a people through his reign as King. A king who, as we pointed out in Ps72, is righteous, eternal, and compassionate.

But what does this King mean for us as we anticipate Christmas? How does this inform anticipating his birth and future coming?

Rejoice, for the King has Come to Save Sinners

- The good news of this text, if it is not apparent already, is that Jesus is the answer to humanity’s problem. The Genesis 1-11 problem? God saved us from that through the coming of Jesus.
- The good news of Christmas is that Jesus *is the blessing to the nations* and people groups, to which everyone in this room goes, “Amen!”
- The good news of Christmas is that we need God’s rule in our life, and he has provided an even better king than David.
 - o One that will hold the throne for eternity, for all people, as a righteous king, who rules with an abundance of compassion for a needy people.
- And we are that needy people. We are like Babylon. That is us in this text. We are faithless Judah, who stand condemned for our sin and do not deserve salvation. BUT GOD.
 - o ⁴ But God, being rich in **mercy**, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—
- *That is what Christmas is about. God’s grace, mercy, and love lavished on an undeserving people; God receiving glory through the salvation of sinners from every nation.*

Yet, there is also a profound response needed in light of today’s “what you feel makes it real” culture.

The Son of David and the Culture of “You Do You”

- Jesus isn’t saving individuals in one sense, he is saving a people, a nation, he is ushering the kingdom of heaven. Individuals who make up a people.
- And...Nations have culture, they have laws, they have a manner of doing things, there is a corporate identity. That identity is “Christ-likeness.” It’s not some vague, indescribable feeling or a plurality of equally valid lifestyles.
 - o *More often the case, those “equally valid lifestyles” of Christianity are just individuals wanting to be king of their own kingdom.*

- "You do you" doesn't work with the Kingdom of heaven. "You honor Christ" is more fitting for the Christian to say. It's taboo for people to correct or dialogue with others because we are SO individualistic. It's an idol in our culture. "Don't you dare talk about me or dare say what I am doing is wrong. That's my truth. Don't help me nuance my thinking, don't correct my experience, don't speak into my life, Scripture is so unclear..." well let's read it together, "oh no I'm good"...
 - The Son of David has good news for you. Your identity and worth are not found in your expression or autonomy but in the steadfast love and faithfulness of King Jesus' victory on the cross.
 - Christmas, the coming of King Jesus, is a gift being extended to us of true community, of an identity found in God's kingdom, under God's rule through God's king. What unites us this Christmas is that Jesus saved me from my sins into a people that cherish the work of God in my life.
- In a day and age where authority is distrusted, where wolves would say that the gospel is the liberation from empowered communities. That the gospel is libertarian freedom to be an autonomous individual, a king over your own kingdom...
 - *The Christmas message says otherwise: **behold the king, the righteous, eternal, compassionate king of the nations. Serve him, for salvation is found in him alone.***
- Have you ever considered that the OT defines Jesus?
 - The Jesus that we find in the Gospels isn't some fair skinned, soft-spoken man with platitudes and proverbial sayings who heals the sick and performs miracles to show he's a nice guy.
 - Scripture says, Jesus the Christ is the King. He feeds and cares for the needy because his rule is defined by compassion and righteousness.
 - The Jesus of Scripture is the promised son of David. He is an authority. He is THE authority.
- Which means all of life is under his privileged authority.
 - Compare that to other ways of salvation being viewed:
 - Something I sometimes think about.
 - Jesus is my doctor, vending machine for wants; he is the therapist I confess mistakes to
 - We box Jesus in by selecting one of the dozens of pictures the Bible gives us for Jesus. He is a lamb in a meadow, he is a Savior, he is a priest...He is King is quite a different image.
 - To say Christ is King means that I have an authority over me.
 - When King Jesus says to flee temptation, you aren't an advisor of the King. You aren't on the board of directors. You are a subject to the best of kings, but you are still a subject. Your role is to submit.

- When King Jesus says do not forsake the gathering, its your King that is saying that. It ought to cause pause, because our faith isn't a part-time thing, its an all of life thing. All of my everything, at all times under his reign.
 - If I am a citizen of Heaven. If Jesus is my King. Every decision I do should be informed by the undeserved grace of the King of Kings.
 - He loves me, and invites me into his courts, he changed my life.

The Christmas story is that the greatest news is not me being king of the hill or grace empowering me to do whatever I want, but that my needy soul can find refuge in the king of Kings.

Conclusion

For those who know Lewis's story of the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, when Aslan does come, the world of Narnia changed. Winter turned to Christmas.

Matthew gives us a scene at the end of his Gospel of the King of Kings, when he was punished for our sake and rose from the grave.

What did the end of Winter look like?

Mt.28:16-20:

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. **¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.** **¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** **¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,** baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

These broken, doubting 11 men, not twelve, were encouraged with the authority and mission of the king and promised the compassionate presence of the king till the end of the age. This King, Jesus the blessing to the nations, the son of David promises his presence as a comfort, not a terror, or a micromanaging boss, but as a good and kind King who shows compassion.

All authority has been given to Jesus, the blessing is not in a physical state this Christmas but in the blessed state we enjoy through our union with Christ. Our king, as verse 20 says, is with you, Christian, even till the end of the age! One day he will return to save his people finally from this world. Come, Lord Jesus!