

SERMON INTRODUCTION

We are about to enter campaign season for our State representatives, U.S. Senators, U.S. Congressional representatives and Governor. There will be all sorts of money spent on ads, trying to show the virtues of each candidate's values and the evils of their opponents. But in the end, often the only thing people care about is their political lineage: i.e., what party they belong to.

What if we had a "character X-Ray" machine for each of the candidates? Each candidate could walk in, like at the airport security, stand on the yellow footprints, lift their arms and swish, the character x-ray is complete.

And what if there was an even more powerful machine that viewed the actual results of the person if they were elected. We could call it the "Result-u-lator."

They step in, shut the door, the machine rumbles and lights up and the results are displayed. No more promises, just what they actually did and accomplished; that's it.

Wouldn't that be nice if we could do that and save all of those political ads? As important as that might be for evaluating a political candidate, God wants us to evaluate his son Jesus Christ. What are his qualifications to be King?

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

As we start into this first chapter of the book of Matthew, we should recognize that we have crossed a boundary. Not only is it a new book, but we are now in the first book of the New Testament. The placement of the books in the Bible is ordered by men but the book is here at the beginning for a reason.

MATTHEW CHAPTER 1 "THE KING HAS COME"

The book of Matthew is a sort of bridge between the testaments. It starts with a genealogy and the word genealogy has a root word of "Genesis" or beginning.

The New Testament marks a new covenant. This means that God is changing the way that people relate to him and come to him. It changes the ways they he will bless them and judge them.

God is doing something new, and he is completing the old covenant by fulfilling the prophecies with in it.

Isaiah 43:18–19a (ESV)

¹⁸ "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. ¹⁹ Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

Let's read the passage for this week.

READING VERSES MATTHEW 1:1-17

Matthew 1:1–17 (ESV)

¹The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

²Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

³and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by **Tamar**, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram,

⁴and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon,

⁵and Salmon the father of Boaz by **Rahab**, and Boaz the father of Obed by **Ruth**, and Obed the father of Jesse,

⁶and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by **the wife of Uriah**,

⁷and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph,

⁸and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah,

⁹and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

¹⁰and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah,

¹¹and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹²And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

¹³and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob,

¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

¹⁷So 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.

OUR CONDITION

We have to ask, why do we need genealogies? Is it not just a list of names that we have no idea who they were and are also difficult to pronounce?

But God has put every part of scripture together for a reason. If it is there it is because we need it. Now sometimes we need to stop and think a bit about why is it there. But the Bible says that,

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

It has a purpose and like that "Character x-ray machine" and the "Resultulator" this passage **is designed to give us confidence in the person of Jesus Christ** by showing where he came from, who he is, and what he is going to accomplish. It will show that Jesus is the King that is prophesied in the Old Testament and has come to fulfill his mission. Here are just a few verses from the Old Testament about God sending a King.

Jeremiah 23:5–6 (ESV)

⁵ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, [*like a branch of a genealogy*] and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

2 Samuel 7:11b–13 (ESV) [*speaking to King David when he wanted to build a Temple for the Lord*]

^{11b} ... Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹² 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. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

The fact is that we don't easily give anyone the right to rule over us. We need to be convinced of their right and the results of their rule.

This is what the passage offers us.

The scripture shows that Jesus has the right to rule and it also shows the results of his rule.

JESUS HAS A RIGHT TO RULE

Jesus has a right to rule.

Genealogies were important to the Jewish people. First of all, they had an expectation that the Messiah would come. They kept records of the sons of David because they expected at some point the Messiah would come. It took much longer than expected and the generations ticked by.

Also, they used the Genealogy to show they were true Jews and had the right to worship in the temple. It was a sort of passport or document to show their citizenship.

This genealogy is unusual in that it also includes four women; usually the genealogies followed the fathers. It shows that God chooses to use people whom the strictly orthodox would deem unworthy for various reasons. The women are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba.

Tamar acted as a prostitute in order to gain a child from Judah a son of Jacob. Rahab (a Gentile or non-Jew) was a prostitute that believed in the God of Jacob and helped the Hebrew spies entering Jericho. Ruth (also a Gentile) was from Moab and thus under a curse not to be able to enter the temple worship. Bathsheba sinned with David the King as she was a wife of Uriah.

These women were not more unworthy than the men, but **why would Matthew choose to highlight these in the genealogy of Jesus?**

James Boice writes this,

"Since Matthew's genealogy contains names of women, Gentiles and even noted sinners, the book shows that barriers between (1) men women (2) Jews and Gentiles (3) saints and sinners are falling through the work of Jesus Christ."

The genealogy of Jesus just shows what the Jews already knew and could stand to be reminded about. That God uses sinful people to bring about his plans. If not, God could not use people at all! The Bible shows human sin front and center. It does not try to make super-heroes out of anyone, like King David for example; Tamar and Judah and Rahab and Ruth are in his genealogy. Bathsheba is the one he sinned over dreadfully. The role of hero is reserved for Jesus.

God is doing a new thing! Jesus was descended from Adam's sinful race. He was the second Adam. But he is a new beginning of humanity. Jesus was unstained by human original sin of Adam and Eve since he was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Now I need to venture into some difficult ground. The fact is that this genealogy is notorious for inconsistencies. But we are going to face them head on to show that seemingly impossible inconsistencies in the Bible have

explanations. But they are not always quick to resolve. But in time they are resolved.

James Boice shares this anecdotal story. An atheist man is travelling with a Bible teacher in the dining car of a train. The atheist was reciting some various difficulties that he perceived in scripture. The Bible teacher continued eating his New England cod, a particularly boney fish. Finally, the man asked, "What do you do with all of the difficulties in the Bible?" The Bible teacher said, the same thing that I do when eating this fish, I eat the meat and put the bones aside."

That is illustrative but a bit dismissive. We don't just dismiss the apparent difficulties; we deal with them. But neither do we let them stop us from having a meal.

When we have difficulties in scripture, we need to understand that they are there, and we don't understand them, and we might never get the answers we are looking for even in our lifetime. Some difficulties have been resolved that took hundreds of years to get to the bottom of. Sometimes we lack historical information that when discovered resolves the problem. Sometimes it is linguistic information that we lack. Other times we lack the back-story of the situation when accounts seem to differ.

But the Bible has some difficulties and God left them there on purpose. Why would he do that?

You can ask the same question of Jesus. Why did he speak in parables that some could not understand? He said this and it is an echo of Isaiah 6,

Matthew 13:13–15a (ESV)

¹³This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "You will indeed

hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." ¹⁵For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed...

If God were to sky write in the clouds every morning, "Good morning! Follow my son Jesus!" People might acknowledge Jesus as the son of God, but would they follow him? No! Because we are sinners and have no capacity to. As Jesus says, we need to be born again and have a new nature created in us, so that we can love and follow Jesus.

When we say that we believe in Jesus, are we saying that we acknowledge that we believe in Jesus (because there is no logical alternative) or do we follow him and obey him and do what he says? It is the question that every Christian needs to ask every day. Do we have ears to hear?

It's not the quality of the communication that is the problem. The problem is entirely on our side. It is the quality of the listening. For some reason, when my wife is talking to me, if I pick up my cell phone to look at it, she gets upset at me! That is because it is rude.

Getting back to the genealogy, the genealogy's of Matthew and Luke are different from each other. How can that be if these are the descendants of Joseph which they claim to be? Matthew traces the lineage of Joseph down through Solomon (David's third son) while Matthew traces it through Nathan, David's older living son. Hmm. What do we make of that? A person cannot have two fathers.

Besides, why do we care about Joseph's lineage anyway if he is not Jesus actual father, but the Holy Spirit is?

The early church held that the lineage in Luke is actually Mary's lineage. Another thing to understand is that Matthew's lineage is of the actual Kings that sat on the throne while Luke's lineage of Mary is through the Kings that

had "rights" to sit on the throne. Nathan the older brother of Solomon actually had the right to sit on the throne, but that is not what actually happened. So, there are explanations to difficulties. We need to be patient and eat the meat and pick out the bones.

So why does God give us difficult or even boring passages? R.C. Sproul shares a story about this passage... There was a Wycliffe Bible translator missionary that was translating the Bible for a group of tribal peoples. The missionary of course had worked years to translate the Bible. But they left off the genealogy in an effort to get something of the Bible to the people; the full translation would come out later. But it was not until the Chief of the tribe read the genealogy that things made sense to him. He asked, "you mean to tell me that this is a real man? Not just a mythical person that you have been telling us about?" **You see, he needed to be convinced of the historical reality of who Jesus was – just like we do.** The Chief came to trust in Christ, he and his whole tribe.

That is why God puts "dry" lists of names in the Bible. God is that personal to know what we need generally and also individually.

I find that the times I have to struggle with scripture are the things that I learn the best. Maybe I have to struggle with understanding some concepts for a few years even before I can understand them. We need to remember that God's word, like white light is made of many colors. It takes some time see the full spectrum of his truth.

Concerning the genealogy, what we can be sure of is that Jesus was the rightful heir to David's throne and had a drop of David's blood through Mary – he was a descendant according to the flesh and a rightful heir to the throne. And Joseph, the soon to be the "adopted" father was also from the lineage of David, so that he could also be a father according to the line of David.

This passage of scripture shows that Jesus has the right to rule and it also shows the results of his rule.

READING MATTHEW 1:18-25

The Bible also shows the results of Jesus' rule. In this passage in chapter 1:18-25 there is one more thing it shows; the results that he will bring. Remember the Result-u-lator? Let's read verses 18-25.

Matthew 1:18–25 (ESV)

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,

²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

The passage explains the results of Jesus rule. This book of Matthew is the most Jewish in the Bible. It shows an understanding of the customs and sensitivities of the Hebrew culture. One is this idea of Jewish betrothal or engagement. So deep was the commitment in betrothal that a man would have had to issue a "divorce" for his wife to be. Joseph believed Mary, and yet how could it be that his betrothed was pregnant? It had never happened in the history of humanity without a man!

Joseph needed some assurance. The angel had appeared to Mary and Joseph believed her story, yet the Lord knew that Joseph needed a little more. He sent an angel to speak to him in a dream and this was no ordinary dream.

In this dream the Angel affirms that Jesus really was the supernatural son of God, "saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

He also tells him to name him Jesus. Normally, the parents had the right to name their child, but God retained the right to name him Jesus since this was his son too! Name him Jesus. Jesus is the same name as "Jeshua" or "Joshua." Our version is latinized and that is why we call him Jesus.

I think we could call this passage, "The Gospel According to the Angel." The angel says, "He shall save the people from their sin." This is not an idea foreign to the Hebrew people. They knew the prophecy in Psalms 130,

Psalm 130:7-8 (ESV)

⁷O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. ⁸And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

These are the results of Jesus Kingly reign; he will redeem people from their sins. This is something new, the King has come and his work is made clear; **he will save the people from their sins!**

The Hebrew people expected a deliverer to save them from their enemies. Little did they realize that their greatest enemy was themselves! Their own sins had separated them from God!

John 3:16–18 (ESV)

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

The fact is, because of our sin, we stand condemned already. God sent his son to save us from our fate.

There is more that the angel said, quoting Isaiah 7:14, in verse 23, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

The end result of Jesus’ work as the King would be that he would die in order to secure a kingdom with people in it. As it is, no one would be there in the Kingdom with God, because every person has sinned. Heaven would be empty. John said last week, “what is a Kingdom without a King?” It’s just dom (dumb). Likewise, what is a Kingdom without any subjects? It is just a King – alone.

MATTHEW CHAPTER 1 "THE KING HAS COME"

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

The end result of Jesus' work is that he restores a people back to God. Without the work of Christ, God could not "just forgive and forget." Sins have been committed and payment and justice must be enacted. For God to just forgive and forget, it would be unjust. Like many of the crimes that are committed and the unrighteous District Attorney's that are letting them off the hook; like the man that pushed a woman in front of a subway train and killed her got only 8 years in prison! That's unrighteous!

And so God, sent his son to die for us. To pay the penalty of sin for us and bear its' punishment. Then through the strangest transaction in all the universe, God says that if we forsake our sin and turn in faith to Jesus, his righteousness becomes ours. We become justified of life in heaven because of our faith in Jesus.

God did not want an empty heaven. He wants to be Immanuel – God with us.

This is the message of this chapter. That Jesus is the rightful King and one who got results!

CONCLUSION

This passage has shown us many things:

We have seen that all of scripture is useful.

We have seen that God shows the faults of people in scripture. There are no perfect people, yet he still works through us.

We have seen that God leaves difficulties in scripture that we have to work through. Sometimes it takes years or even centuries for theological

problems to be worked through. Case in point. How can God have a Son? It's there in the Old Testament yet it made no sense until Jesus came.

We have seen that even boring parts of scripture can be used to bring people to faith in Christ.

We have seen that God gives us what we need sometimes to believe better – just like Joseph.

We have seen that Jesus not only had a right to rule, but that he got results; He saved people from their sins in order to populate heaven so that God could be "Immanuel."

We can thank God for caring for us so greatly to give us his word.

Please pray with me.