

MATTHEW, THE GOSPEL OF THE KING

Matthew 1:1-25

Intro: At our Annual Meeting last Friday night, Dr. Lockwood mentioned that the only book of the NT that I had not taught was the Gospel of Matthew. I expect to meet Matthew some day in heaven, and I don't want to have to answer him when he asked me why I would skip over the first book of the NT and then do all of the others.

One person actually asked me afterwards why not teach Matthew. I had been thinking about a series on the life of Abraham, but the more I thought about Matthew, the more it appealed to me. My purpose in teaching has always been not only to get the doctrine of the Word correct, but to point out from whatever text I was using, the practical applications that were suggested by the text. It has always been easy to teach the Word here at Trinity because you dear people have loved to hear the Word regardless of who was speaking. We have a lot of good Bible teachers in our church family, and the Lord has brought to us some of the most godly and gifted Bible teachers that are alive today. And we have all profited greatly from their teaching.

I would like to encourage you all to be reading in the Gospel of Matthew as much as you can. It is a long Gospel of twenty-eight chapters so it is difficult to read it all at one sitting. But read and reread it in small sections. I have just finished reading a book on the spiritual life which Spurgeon recommended in one of his sermons, so this man must have lived back at least in the 1800's. But he said in this little book that none of us reads the Bible as much as we could, and none of us prays as much as we could. Today we have so many distractions with the pace of life, television and computers, the making of books of which there is no end, some good and many bad. But we all need to redeem our time for the Lord. The more we prayerfully and thoughtfully read the Bible, the greater will our understanding be of the Bible, our joy in the Word, and the blessing in our lives. I know I could read more, and I intend by God's grace to do just that.

But we need to read the Bible knowing that it is all given to us by God – all of it, even genealogies like the first sixteen verses of Matthew 1. Don't read the Bible to find out if it is true; read it knowing that it is true. Read it and believe it. If you believe it, you will enjoy it. It is the one Book in all of the world that you can read knowing that it is true. In addi-

tion to Paul's words about the Bible in the last part of 2 Timothy 3 and the first part of 2 Timothy 4, we have words which Paul wrote to the believers in Thessalonica and recorded for us in 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

Listen to what he wrote to them:

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe (1 Thess. 2:13).

That is the way we need to read our Bibles. You will always find people who think that they have found errors in the Bible, but that is not true. When the Lord prayed that great prayer in John 17 just hours before He was led out to be crucified, He said to the Father about those who believed in Him, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). The word "sanctify" speaks of all that the Lord does in us from the time we are saved until we get to heaven. The Lord was leaving them, but He had full confidence in what God would do in their hearts after He left them if they would only read the Word, believe it, and obey it.

There are professing Christians today who think that we are still discovering the truth. Actually we haven't discovered any truth; God has revealed it to us or we would not know it. Don't judge the Word by what people say about it, but just what people say by what you are learning from the Word. But you have to read it!

Now as we pick up our Bibles to read the New Testament, what do we find? We find a genealogy. Is that a good way to start a book? The Holy Spirit thought so. That is why Matthew began as he did. What was he doing? He was tying the NT together with the OT. He was saying that the NT was a continuation and a fulfillment of all that took place in OT days.

You don't even have some of these names in the OT, but they belong in this genealogy. Matthew was telling us all through OT history God was thinking of the time when His Son would come to earth as a Man. When you read the OT you have to be amazed that anything turned out the way God intended for it to turn out. But it did!

There is overwhelming conviction over many years that this Gospel was written by Matthew, an apostle of the Lord Jesus, who wrote particularly

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for Jewish people, both for Jews who knew the Lord, but also for Jews who did not know the Lord that they might be convinced of the truth of the Gospel. But having said that, it is for believer of all races that the unique character and work of the Lord Jesus Christ might be better known.

But why did Matthew just go back to Abraham? The answer to that question is found in the words recorded in Genesis 12 where the history of Abraham begins in detail with God's promise to him. It was a promise of salvation from sin through the Seed, or a descendant of Abraham. (Read Gen. 12:1-3). And the first seventeen verses of Matthew 1 show that the Seed was the Son of David, who was Israel's first King, and also a descendant of Abraham.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis cover as much time as the rest of the OT put together – two thousand years. And in round number Jesus Christ was born approximately two thousand years before Christ. And we are now a little over two thousand years since Christ was on earth. So the Bible covers all of humanity history up to almost the end of the first century A.D.

So what are some of the lessons that we are to learn from this genealogy at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel.

So what do those first 17 verses of Matthew 1 tell us about God. They tell us that He exercised sovereign power throughout the OT. It tells us that which men were unfaithful to God, He was always faithful to His promises and His purposes. It tells us that history is His story. A genealogy like this should increase our faith in God. This is proof of what I read in Psalm 97 just this past week: "The Lord reigneth." Some day the Lord Jesus Christ is going to reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, but the sovereign, triune God has always been reigning throughout human history. They are in control today.

This genealogy also tells us about the supreme importance in the Gospel of Matthew, and for all of the NT for that matter, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the Key to understanding the OT, and He is the Key to understanding the NT. So the genealogy teaches us to key our minds and heart focused upon Christ. Although it is not thought that Matthew was the first Gospel written, it may have been placed for that purpose. Our Lord emphasized this in John 5:39 when He was speaking to a group of antagonistic Jews who wanted to kill Him. Another very significant passage is

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in Luke 24 following the resurrection of the Lord Jesus where beginning in verse 13 we have the record our Lord's ministry to two disciples who were returning to their home in Emmaus. Read in Luke 24:25-27 what the Lord did with them. Then notice the reaction of the disciples in verses 31 and 32 when the Lord was suddenly taken away from them.

So the genealogy in Matthew 1 prepares us to read the NT to learn about Christ.

The genealogy is not complete, but it covers all of the time from Abraham to the birth and life and ministry of Jesus Christ to show that He is the One we need be thinking about and learning about as we read the NT. And we must realize that we learn about Jesus Christ, we are learning about God, and we are also learning about the Holy Spirit. They are Three Persons, but one in nature, in essence. The Lord Jesus said in His ministry to Philip in the Upper Room, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Now, going on to the latter part of Matthew 1, verses 18-25 we have Matthew's account of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. There never had been such a birth as this before, and there has never been a birth like it since. Let us read it although this part of the chapter is probably familiar to all of us. (Read Matt. 1:18-25.)

(Explain the passage.)

Now these two divisions of chapter 1 are laying the foundation for us to see that our Lord Jesus Christ has the royal right to the throne of David, who also was a descendant of Abraham.

The genealogy in the first seventeen verses of Matthew 1 give us the genealogy of Joseph. Why is that so important for us to understand. Because although Joseph was not the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was what we could call our Lord's foster father, and through our Lord's relationship to Joseph by Joseph's marriage to Mary, it was through Joseph that our Lord had the legal right to the throne of Israel.

Now there is a lot of controversy over the genealogy in Luke 3. Many claim it to be the genealogy of Mary. But this is not perfectly clear. We need, however, for Mary to be related to David to give our Lord the blood right to the throne of Israel. If someone has solved the mystery surround-

ing Luke 3 and its relationship to Mary, I have not heard it. But in my study for tonight I came across two other passages which link Mary to the royal family of David. I would not be surprised to find that there are others, but I was very happy to find these. I have never doubted but that Mary was royalty as well as Joseph, but I was happy to find these verses that I am giving you tonight.

The first is Luke 1:26-33.

Now we know that God can do anything He wants to do, or needs to do. But the normal way for God to give the Lord Jesus “the throne of his father David” would be for the Lord Jesus to be born of a mother who was a member of David’s family. So both Joseph and Mary were members of the royal family of David, making our Lord eligible to become the Heir of David’s throne.

Now look with me at Romans 1:3.

Now I think that you can see the point. The normal way for the Lord Jesus Christ to be made, or born, of the seed of David according to the flesh, was for His mother to be a member of David’s family, and thus to be in line to become the King with the blood of King David in His veins..

Concl: Just think about how low things had gotten in Israel under Roman rule. Joseph and Mary were both members of the royal family, and yet when they went to Bethlehem to be taxed, *there was no room for them in the Inn? What a time for the Lord Jesus to be born!!!*

All through His life He was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. In fact, this issue became prominent in the trial of the Lord Jesus in which the Roman soldier made a crown of thorns to mock Him for claiming to be a king.

Please turn with me to John 18:33 and follow in your Bibles as I read about our Lord’s trial before Pilate. (Read John 18:33-19:22.)