

The Son of Abraham

(Matthew 1:1-17 – December 13, 2020)

Well, hello and welcome to *Voice of the Church*. I'm Ryan Swale, and last week I had the privilege of guiding you through the genealogy of Matthew Chapter 1. I mentioned that it's one of those passages you can consider from many different angles to "mine" its truths. We saw last week how Christ is the "Son of David," meaning he is the promised king of the OT. Matthew emphasizes that by referring to Christ as David's Son & by structuring his genealogy around the numerical value of David's name. He's making the point that, in Christ, the promised kingdom of heaven has come (the eternal kingdom God promised to David's son).

But Matthew not only emphasizes Christ as the Son of David. He also emphasizes that Christ is the Son of *Abraham*... That this promised kingdom from the OT is not only for Israel, but for the *nations*... For God, in the OT, told Abraham that he would bring blessing to "all the families of the earth." And, so, it's that theme we'll consider now. Listen to just v. 1: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of *Abraham*." And then the next verse goes on to describe how Abraham was the father of Isaac, & Isaac the father of Jacob, & so on...

But the point we want to make is that Matthew traces Jesus' genealogy beginning with Abraham... Now, he could've traced it all the way back to *Adam*, as Luke does, but he starts with *Abraham*. Because he wants to make the point that that this kingdom of the Son of David is not just for one people, but is intended for people from every tribe, every tongue, & every nation! In Genesis 12, God told Abraham that through him would come a blessing to all the families of the earth, that every nation would be blessed through Abraham's offspring... And Matthew is signaling that *Christ is that offspring*. Christ is that one who comes to save not only Israelites, but Moabites, & Hittites, & Canaanites... And Matthew makes that point exceedingly clear by including *Moabites, Hittites, & Canaanites* in the genealogy.

In v. 3 of Matthew 1, it says, "Judah fathered Perez by **Tamar**" (who was a Canaanite). Verse 5, "Salmon fathered Boaz by **Rahab**," who was *also* a Canaanite... And, that same verse, "Boaz fathered Obed by **Ruth**," who was a *Moabite*... Verse 6, "David was the father of Solomon by the wife of **Uriah**," who was a Hittite... And regardless of whether Bathsheba was a Hittite by *blood*, she would've been considered one by marriage! And, so, each of these four women who Matthew goes *out of his way* to include in this genealogy are *foreigners*!

Normally, this sort of genealogy would not include women (Luke's did not include women), but Matthew goes out of his way to include them. And what kind of women does he include...? Not Sarah, or Rebekah, or Leah! But Matthew *leaves* out these Jewish matriarchs & includes instead *4 Gentiles*: a subtle allusion to the fact that Christ is the one who'll fulfill God's promise to Abraham, *to bless the Gentiles!* It is an anticipation of the universality of Christ's kingdom!

The Kingdom of the Son of David is also the kingdom of the Son of **Abraham**. This king & his heavenly kingdom have a universal reach! Which is a theme that figures quite prominently in Matthew's gospel. (In fact, when the 1st verse says, "The Son of David, & Son of Abraham," many take that to be a title for the whole book). And, so, the themes we find in the genealogy are prevalent in the rest of the gospel... Matt. 2: who are the first people to worship Christ but Magi from the EAST? *Gentiles*. Matt. 3, John says, "Do not presume just because you have *Abraham* as your father, you are automatically part of the kingdom; for God can raise up children of Abraham from the stones!" Which is exactly what he begins to do, as in Matt. 4, Christ begins his ministry in "Galilee of THE GENTILES," where "Syrians" & those from the *Decapolis* are brought to him!

Matt. 8: A Roman centurion comes to faith, & Christ says: "I've not found such great faith in all Israel. I tell you many will come from East & West to take their seat with Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob in the kingdom of heaven!" Matt. 15: who but a *Canaanite woman* confesses Christ as the Son of David...? She begs for 'crumbs,' & he doesn't just give crumbs, but feeds 4,000 Gentiles in the wilderness, as a preview of the Messianic feast... *Christ has not just come to save Jews, but also Gentiles*. His kingdom is a multi-colored kingdom!

Which is why the Gospel ends with a commission to "Go, therefore, into every nation, & make disciples." A commission that, interestingly, is given from a mountain in *Galilee of the Gentiles* (the same place Christ's ministry began) ... All throughout the gospel, from beginning to end, Christ's heart is for the nations! The heavenly kingdom of grace of this Son of David is all-encompassing! It's not just for Jews; it's for Gentiles; it's for the nations! Christ comes to make his blessings flow "as far as the curse is found!" Yes, he comes first "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But the crumbs of his mercy overflow even to Gentiles & outsiders like Rahab, & Ruth, & Tamar... And all of that is what Matthew is anticipating here in Christ's genealogy... That the kingdom of the Son of David has a universal reach, because he is also the Son of Abraham...

And this is more than just something that's sort of *interesting* for us to reflect on. But it should lead every one of us to gratitude. Because I'm guessing, for most of you who are listening, you're of Jewish ancestry... Like Ruth, Rahab, & Tamar, we're outsiders... Like the Canaanite woman begging for mercy, we're "dogs" at the foot of our Master's table. And yet, he lifts us up to fellowship. His mercy extends even to us! And, so, the fact that Christ is the Son of Abraham ought to move us to heart-felt gratitude...

And, as it does, it should also lead us to participate in Christ's mission to extend the borders of his kingdom to the ends of the earth... Christ's role as the "Son of Abraham" has practical implications for the church. That ancient promise that Abraham's offspring would bless the nations ought to prompt us to zealous service in Christ's kingdom cause. To give sacrificially to the work of missions, to labor in prayer for the coming of his kingdom, and that Christ might raise up more gospel laborers! That we might even seek to reflect the fact that he is not a God just of one race, but has knocked down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile, between black and white. Christ is king of every nation, and thought ought to be reflected in his church. It ought to be reflected in the diversity of his people. It ought to be reflected in the prayers of his people. It ought to be reflected in the missionary efforts of his people...

Of which this radio broadcast is one. Seeking to proclaim the grace and mercy of the Son of Abraham to those of every nation. And, so, if you're listening today to this broadcast & you don't know Jesus, please do not think that Christianity is exclusively for those of a certain ethnic background, or exclusively for one kind of person, that somehow *your* ethnicity means that you have the option to disregard the gospel as irrelevant! The message of Matthew chapter 1 is that the kingdom of the Son of David is universal in its dominion. And, so, he says to you, "Believe on the Lord Jesus who took on human flesh that we might be lifted up to fellowship with him. Who stooped down to us in our need, that we might be exalted. Who sought us when we were far off as *foreigners*, like Rahab, Ruth, and Tamar! Who even left heaven to pursue us! Behold, the grace and mercy of the Son of Abraham, and believe on him... Thank you for joining us today, and may God bless you.