

## **The Son of David**

(Matthew 1:1-17 – December 6, 2020)

Well, hello and welcome to *Voice of the Church*. I'm Pastor Ryan Swale, and I hope, over the next few weeks, to consider the opening verses of Matthew's Gospel, where he gives us Jesus' genealogy... Like a multi-faceted diamond, it shows us many different aspects of who Christ is, and what he's come to do. And, so, we'll consider those over the next 4 weeks, but first we'll read Matthew's genealogy of Christ, beginning at Matthew 1:1. These are the very first words of the NT:

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, & Isaac the father of Jacob, & Jacob the father of Judah & his brothers, & Judah the father of Perez & Zerah by Tamar, & Perez the father of Hezron, & Hezron the father of Ram, & Ram the father of Amminadab, & Amminadab the father of Nahshon, & Nahshon the father of Salmon, & Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, & Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, & Obed the father of Jesse, & Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, & Solomon the father of Rehoboam, & Rehoboam the father of Abijah, & Abijah the father of Asaph, & Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, & Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, & Joram the father of Uzziah, & Uzziah the father of Jotham, & Jotham the father of Ahaz, & Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, & Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, & Manasseh the father of Amos, & Amos the father of Josiah, & Josiah the father of Jechoniah & his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, & Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, & Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, & Abiud the father of Eliakim, & Eliakim the father of Azor, & Azor the father of Zadok, & Zadok the father of Achim, & Achim the father of Eliud, & Eliud the father of Eleazar, & Eleazar the father of Matthan, & Matthan the father of Jacob, & Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

So, all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations, & from David to the deportation to Babylon 14 generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ 14 generations.”

As I said, we could consider this passage from many different angles. And *one* of those is the kingship of Christ as the “Son of David...” It’s interesting how Matthew begins his Gospel by identifying Christ as “the Son of David,” since *chronologically*, it would make sense to identify Christ *first* as the Son of *Abraham* who comes 1000 years earlier, & is listed first in the genealogy. But he doesn’t do that; he calls him the Son of David... Which is something of a *theme* in Matthew’s gospel, where David’s name is mentioned more than any other gospel; Christ is called the “Son of David” more than all the other gospels combined; & his kingship is proclaimed from the very outset of his ministry: Matthew 4:17, “Repent, for the *kingdom* of heaven is at hand!” Matthew 4:23, “Christ went about preaching the gospel of the *kingdom!*” And this kingdom-theme runs all throughout the gospel – from the Magi who come & proclaim him KING of the Jews, to the crucifixion with a mock scepter in his hand, to the *very last words* of Jesus where he proclaims that “all authority” has been given to him!

With Christ, the promised kingdom of the OT has come. The promise that David’s Son will sit on his throne is at last realized! And Matthew emphasizes this not just in the fact that, even though David comes 1000yrs *after* Abraham, he’s listed *first*... But David’s name is mentioned 5 more times in this opening chapter... Matthew is very concerned that we, as the readers, understand *Christ is the Son of David!* (He says his name *twice* in verse 6, twice more in v. 17, again in v. 20... In fact, when David is mentioned in v. 6, he is referred to as David “the King,” with a *definite* article! Not so with any other *king* in this genealogy; but Matthew is setting David apart.)

And he does so further with his use of numbers, as he divides this genealogy into three groups of fourteen. And it’s not that Christ’s ancestry just *conveniently* works out that way, but we know from other genealogies in the OT Matthew even *omits* certain names to *get* 3 groups of 14. And, so, he obviously has a theological agenda. Which has been explained by many through something called “gematria,” based on the assigning of a numerical value to each of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet...

The Hebrew alphabet consisted of just consonants (each one was given a number), & the 3 consonants in David’s name equal **four**, **six**, & **four**, giving a total of 14... David is also 14<sup>th</sup> in the list, giving a sort of interpretive “nudge” in that direction, that fourteen has something to with David. That Matthew’s grand point in this genealogy is that Jesus is the SON of David who was promised in 2 Samuel 7; he is the legal heir to the throne of David!

And, though Matthew traces Christ's genealogy through *Joseph* who was not his father by *blood*, that's insignificant in regard to Matthew's point. Because he wasn't thinking according to modern DNA tests, but is making the point that Christ's legal ancestry *legitimately* makes him the successor to David's throne! Which is why the chapter ends with the adoption of Christ by Joseph, who takes Mary as his wife & names her child, bestowing upon Jesus the legal status of a descendant of David! Matthew is making the point in these opening verses that the king has come! "Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her king!"

Matthew is setting the stage for the rest of the gospel, showing us that Christ is *King*. Which means that you & I must respond to him by giving our allegiance. He's worthy of our worship. He's worthy of our allegiance; he's not the kind of king you want to disregard, but is a *good* king! His kingdom is a *heavenly* kingdom, which means its ruled by an entirely different set of standards. The ethics of his kingdom are an "upside-down ethic" in which meekness & turning the other cheek are what's valued, b/c *that's who Christ is!* He's the kind of king who eats with tax-collectors & sinners; the kind who says, "Come to me all who are weary, & I'll give you rest! For I'm gentle & lowly in heart!" He's the kind who goes to the Cross to die for your sins! Who promises to usher in an eternal kingdom where all things will be made new; & he gives us previews of that with the healings he performs... Matthew is just beginning to unfold this theme of the kingdom of Jesus, & it is a kingdom for sinners, it is a kingdom of joy, it is a kingdom of rest. It is a kingdom where this gentle & lowly king lays down his life for his people.

And Matthew would have us to respond *not* like the Jewish leaders who in the next chapter reject him... Not like the Herod's, who are threatened by him... Or the Pharisees who think they don't need him. But like the Magi, who come from afar to worship. Like the sick who know he's their only hope; like the weary who know he gives rest; like the sinners who come to have their sins forgiven by this one who is called "friend of sinners." The king that Matthew is presenting is the king of an entirely different kind of kingdom; he'll be crowned with a crown of thorns! And he's urging us to respond to this king in worship. He calls him at the end of Matt. 1, "God with Us." And, so, I urge you to respond to this king *not* in disinterest; *not* in a mere sentimentality that lasts through December; *not* in using him for what you might get out of him; but in confessing your allegiance to him, saying, "I want to be part of this kingdom, b/c this king is worthy of my worship." May that be true of *all of us* this season... Thank you for listening, and may God bless you.