

IV. Advent in Biblical Perspective
The Kings of Christmas
“Jesus Christ—The King of Kings”
Matthew 1:1–17
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December 27, 2020 • Sunday Sermon

Let’s look at God’s Word that is true, inerrant, infallible, inspired and sufficient. Matthew 1:1–17 says [1] *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

[2] *Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, [3] and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, [4] and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, [5] and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, [6] and Jesse the father of David the king.*

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, [7] and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, [8] and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, [9] and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, [10] and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, [11] and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

[12] *And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, [13] and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, [14] and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, [15] and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, [16] and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.*

[17] *So 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.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Whenever I read this text I’m reminded of two things. One, is that whenever I do a study on a genealogy I feel the need to give II Timothy 3:16–17 which says [16] ***All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*** So this includes genealogies and they are there for a reason. I know they can get boring when read but all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable. The second thing it reminds me of is the early part of my training in the ministry. I had the blessing of having R.C. Sproul as a mentor in life and ministry but that relationship started off formally as he was one of my professors in seminary. I was a good friend of R.C. but I was a better friend to Vesta, his wife because I knew Vesta graded all his papers and I wanted to be her best friend for at least some glimmer of mercy during the grading.

The class I took from R.C was on the importance of Scripture reading and preaching. He really emphasized the importance of the reading of Scripture because he was say that everything else I would say after the reading people have to figure out if it's faithful to God's Word or not, but when you're reading Scripture it doesn't have to be figured out because that is the Word of God. That's why reading it is crucial. In one of our classes he asked me to come to the front and asked me to read aloud the text we just read for this study as if I was about to preach it. So I did and when I finished he put his arm around me and said "You may be seated." The way he said that I wasn't quite sure what was going to come next. I sat down and he said 'Gentlemen that is the way you read the Scripture before you preach, even if you, like Mr. Reeder pronounced half of the names wrong. Read it boldly.' That didn't sound like a compliment to me at all.

I actually delight in preaching through genealogies and I could be preaching for months on this particular genealogy due to the way it's constructed, the individual parts, who is there and how it's put together. It has an unbelievable estimable depth, depth, breath and height in terms of Biblical insights but for this study I will only give a couple of insights. This is our concluding study in our Advent series, the Kings of Christmas. We have looked at three that are mentioned in the Bible up to this point – Caesar Augustus, the Magi and Herod the Great. I want to briefly remind you of the ones we have looked at already but before I do there are two things I want to mention about them.

One is the kings of the earth, while varying in popularity, power and possessions, there is a clear lesson that keeps coming through here and that is that God is sovereign over the kings. There is a decree from Caesar Augustus that includes taxation, administration, information and it will be a regular decree every 14 years. Everyone responds including Joseph and Mary and that accomplishes the fulfillment of Micah 5:2 that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. The Bible says that God is sovereign over even evil kings like Herod the Great and because of Herod's fulfillment of wanting to destroy Jesus the King we get the fulfillment of two more prophecies. We see the Bible being fulfilled at point after point through the decrees of kings who don't even know the Lord. We also see a king from the East who send his Magi over that fulfills Numbers 24:17. Proverbs 21:1 says *[1] The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever He will.* We see the sovereign Lord, the King of Kings at work through kings.

To know God is sovereign is encouraging to me. Have you ever had someone in authority over you that you didn't vote for? Recently? Here is what I know. I think it's right for every believer to be engaged passionately and thoughtfully but I know that no one is in authority that God hasn't appointed and God will accomplish His purposes no matter if that one in authority declares their allegiance to Him or not. God is sovereign over the rulers of this earth and He works through them to accomplish His purposes so I can live not carelessly but confidently in the truth of a sovereign God.

Secondly, have you ever wondered why the writers of the Gospels were moved to include these three kings we have already studied? As we studied them I tried to give some basic big reasons for why that would be true. The first one we studied was Caesar Augustus, known also as Gaius Octavius, and through him we get the decree, taxation, registration that becomes a regular occurring event. There's an unmistakable message. These are real people, in real history and real events. The birth of Christ is 'real history' and 'real history' is really "His Story." There are extra Biblical books that affirm everything we read in this narrative. Christ is writing history and is writing it through the affairs of men and women. Christianity is historically rooted.

The second king we studied is a king from the East and his Magi. As we studied them we saw the fulfillment of Numbers 24:17 and Micah 5:2 in all the events that took place around them coming to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. I shared that I think the star was a miracle and there are others who believe different yet people wanted me to give a little more on this. Very specifically I believe that star was simply the Shekinah glory of God, just the same of the Shekinah glory that came in the wilderness to the holy of holies that filled the pillar and cloud by night that descended. Notice when it appears – when He was born. It leads the Magi over there and then it appears at the place where the Newborn is. I believe it was the Shekinah glory of God pointing to the Incarnate, Immanuel (God with us) where the Word has become flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld Him – the glory of the Father. We learned from this the unmistakable reality is we who come to Christ are marked by God-centered worship and loving obedience to the King of Kings, who came to save us from our sins by His sovereign and irresistible grace. If there is not within your heart and soul a passion for God-centered, God-pleasing worship then you really have to take a look to see if you really know Jesus. That's why He made you, saves you and sustains you, to the praise of His glorious grace in the midst of the assembly of His people.

The third king we looked at was Herod the Great. Every year there is a war on Christmas and that's not surprising because every Christmas is war. Christmas is the Divine declaration of war. Genesis 3:15 says *[15] I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring (seed) and her offspring (seed); he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.* This is in anticipation of the virgin birth because women don't have seed but this woman, a chosen woman, will have seed and that Seed will crush the head of the serpent and be bruised in His heel. In other words, God has declared war on Satan, sin, darkness, death and the kingdom of darkness and will continue as the defeated evil empire strikes back until it is finally destroyed when Christ returns in glory. The war was won by Jesus and He is coming again to bring to consummation what He has already achieved in the defeat of sin, death, darkness and Satan. In the meantime we have to deal with the evil empire that strikes back against Jesus by striking against His people.

Now we come to the last King – the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That is Jesus. I believe God's Word is truth because it is inspired, God-breathed that means I believe it is inerrant where it has no errors in it. There are some difficult things to understand but it's inerrant. I believe it's infallible, utterly reliable and you can build everything on the truth of God's Word. I also believe God's Word is non-contradictory. God never contradicts Himself. Whenever you read something God says in the present, you can be assured that whatever He said in the past affirms what He says in the present and whatever happens in the future will fulfill whatever He says in the present and in the past. We are about to see this in this Matthew 1 genealogy.

Here are some things we learned about the Messiah in the Old Testament. The Messiah would come from Abraham, even more specifically through the tribe of Judah, even more specifically the family of Jesse, even more specifically the son of David and if God said that in the past it is affirmed in the present. I love the Gospels and how they tackle certain issues. They all have a specific purpose and not the least of which is this genealogy. As I said before we could spend a lot of time in this text but I'm just going to give you five thoughts.

The first one is that this genealogy affirms what God has said in the past about the Messiah. For instance, I know that whoever the Messiah is He has to be a Man for the Bible says in I Corinthians 15:21, *[21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the*

resurrection of the dead. But if He is just a man then He has his own sin problem for He would be a son of Adam. So what do we need? We need a new Adam. In the Gospel of John, his genealogy for Jesus goes back to eternity.

John 1:1–5 and 14 says [1] *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* [2] *He was in the beginning with God.* [3] *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* [4] *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.* [5] *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

[14] *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* He was Son of Man and Son of God, fully God and fully Man. If Jesus is just a man He needs His own Savior but if He's God and becomes a Man, now He is positioned to be my Savior – this sinless Savior, fully God and fully Man.

His full humanity is affirmed in two more genealogies – one is in Luke 3, through the genealogy of Mary and the other in Matthew 1, through the genealogy of Joseph. Jesus, as the Messiah is the Anointed One and there were three anointed offices – prophet, priest and king. The Bible tells us for Jesus to be The Prophet then He has to be greater than the first Prophet Moses and Moses says there is one coming greater than him in Deuteronomy 18:15, in which Jesus is the fulfillment of that. To do away with the Levitical priesthood we have to have a priest from the eternal priesthood, the eternal order of Melchizedek in which Jesus is the fulfillment of that. For today to be King of Kings, Jesus must be from the covenant nation, Israel – Abraham's DNA has to be in Him. More than that He has to be of the tribe of Judah. More than that He has to be of the family of Jesse and the greater Son of David.

This genealogy is uniquely positioning Jesus to be the Messiah, Prophet, Priest and King. We can also see how this genealogy affirms essential prophecies of the present that were made in the past. Notice this genealogy begins with Abraham and affirms that He comes through the family of Jesse. It affirms that He comes from the line of David and it emphasizes David the King. It also affirms He comes from an adopted father from the line of David who has the legal right of kingship and comes through a virgin mother whereby the substance of David is communicated. When David is set aside by Nathan at Bethlehem in II Samuel 7 to be king and in verse 12 it says from his own body will come a king forever for a forever kingdom. Jesus doesn't get a body from Joseph because that's His adopted father. He does have legal rights from Joseph which include the regal right of kingship but He doesn't have a biological communication through David from Joseph but He does through Mary.

I have received questions from people this past week who have been looking at the two genealogies from Joseph and Mary and they keep telling me they are different. That is correct and the line of departure is at David. In Matthew's genealogy of Joseph, the adopted father comes from David through David's son King Solomon and his son's Rehoboam. Mary also comes from David but through his son Nathan, not Solomon. Our language for II Samuel 7 is that David's DNA will be in Jesus. It is through Mary (Luke 3), through Nathan to David to Jesse to Abraham. All of it is fulfilled – not only the legal line but also the biological fulfillment of the Messiah. There is so much intricacy in this genealogy.

A third thing about the genealogy is that it's unique because it has women. I challenge you to go find a publicized genealogy from the first century in the Middle East which women were documented in. Not only is Mary documented in Joseph's legal line but there are also four other women that are included in this genealogy. They also include the biographical sketches of some of these women. There is Tamar, a woman of promiscuity. There is Rahab who was a

prostitute. Matthew can't come to publish the name of one of the women who he tells us was the wife of Uriah, the adulteress, so we know it was Bathsheba. There is Mary who is the covenant, faithful, Godly woman and Ruth who is a Gentile, brought in from Moab.

In other words, in this genealogy with all the men and women included there are apostates, kings who apostatized introducing pagan worship into the temple which includes Solomon who had even erected Molech – the god of child sacrifices. There are the religious and the irreligious included in this genealogy. There are prostitutes, murderers (David included) and thieves. Have you ever noticed those who run for a political office try to put out their best resume possible? In fact, some of them over doctor it and do that because they want to impress the voters. Yet look at this genealogy. Yes it fulfills prophecy and it is glorious but it contains documented sinners and their sins are documented in the same Bible that records the genealogy so we know who they are and what they have done. So we have the honesty of it, the uniqueness of it, fulfilled prophecy in it and the intentionality of it. It is absolutely astounding.

As I studied this, a question came to my mind – has there ever been a king I have studied who is more marked by humiliation than this King? Humiliation of His birth conditions – betrothal, not even the ceremony of marriage. There is the humiliation of the place of His birth for He was born in a town considered the off-scouring even of the tribe of Judah – Bethlehem. There was no royal bassinet – a trough. There was no palace – a stable. There was no suite of rooms for there is not even room for Him in the place. There is no entourage – just shepherds. There were no famous parents – a couple of descendants in a forgotten line of kings. He'll be raised in Nazareth – can anything good come from Nazareth (John 1:46)? He will be rejected and despised of men in His public ministry. He will die the death of a criminal on a cross. He will be buried in a borrowed tomb. He is marked by humiliation at every single point – His conception, birth, childhood, life, His public ministry, death, and burial.

No wonder Paul says this in Philippians 2:5–11; *[5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Paul is telling us that Christ didn't regard His status, position, rights and privileges as something to hold onto but on the contrary He laid them aside and humbled Himself, humiliated Himself to be born and numbered as a Man. Not only is that the public credentials of this King, who is King of Kings, but the Bible records it, reveals it, announces it and dare I say markets it and boasts about it. Why? I'll reveal this in my takeaway and it's at least one thing you can take away from this study.

The takeaway is from the manger to the cross and then the tomb, the King of Kings laid aside His robe and His crown to save His people from their sins and give to us His robe of righteousness and His crown of glory to the praise of His glorious grace forever. I realize my inadequacies to try to communicate to you the amazing dynamic of this Matthew 1 genealogy, but if in your mind today there is some longing to fulfill the amazement to why the King of Kings would come for you and come like this, then I would say hear this for He says He has come to save His people from their sins. Christ came not to be exalted but in humiliation that

you might be exalted with salvation. He laid aside His robe to cover you with His robe of righteousness. He laid aside His crown to give you a crown for all of eternity.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He came to save people from their sins and those who are lost in their sins thus His humiliation. Not only should you listen to Him but look at Him in His life, death and burial here on earth. This One humbled Himself to the point of an atoning death so that He might save us from our sins. In other words, His people are sinners and to save us He must come among us. To be among us He must be one of us. To be one of us He must become like us. So this sinless Savior is humbled to being among us, with us and then to taking our sins upon Himself. He has taken my garments of filth to the cross to give me a robe of His righteousness and a crown for glory.

In case you missed it, He not only came to save us in His humiliation but He came through those just like us. I don't know where you are today but are you religious? Your religion is not going to do it. You irreligious? He came to save you. Both the religious and the irreligious are in this genealogy. Men and women are included in it and He wants you to know He saves both. There a bond and free included which He came to save. Jews and Gentiles, up and inners and down and outers are also included in this genealogy. He has come to save sinners period. There is no one who has a sin that He cannot redeem you from, forgive you from if you will say 'yes' to the Holy Spirit and come to Christ to put your trust in Him alone.

Perhaps you're thinking 'Harry, you don't know what I've done and the addictions I have' but see the sexually immoral, the prostitutes, the murderers, apostates, deniers, and those who promoted child sacrifices in this genealogy. They are all there in the genealogy because the legacy of His humiliation is to save sinners just like the sinners He came through to save us. The covenantally faithful are included like Mary but Mary needed a Savior and that's why she says in Luke 1:46–55 that she is giving birth to the King who is her Lord and Savior.

He saves any and all who humble themselves to come to Him, who humbled Himself to exalt you and me at the right time. [7] *Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors that the King of glory may come in* (Psalm 24:7). Open the doors that this King of Kings who set aside His glory in order to save you to bring you to glory, may come in. As the hymn *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* says;

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!

Hail the Sun of righteousness!

Light and life to all He brings,

Ris'n with healing in His wings:

Mild He lays His glory by,

Born that man no more may die;

Born to raise the sons of earth;

Born to give them second birth.

He granted His perfect righteousness and cleanses you by His shed blood and gives you a crown so you can cast it before Him in praise and worship for all eternity. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could spend in Your Word. Father, I would like to ask you for three things as we finish our study of this series and this text. My first request is that there may be some reading this today who have not yet come to this King who came for them so may they come to Him today. You can't be saved without this King who humbled Himself to save you. You're never so far away that you can't be saved and you're sins are never so great

you can't be forgiven and they are never so powerful that He can't break their dominion, but you have to come to Him and call upon Him. If you do you will be saved. Pray this; 'Jesus I'm a sinner, I need You. I see You not only came through people like me but You came for people like me to save people like me, so I come to You.' Father my second request is will You fill this congregation with people who will go tell other people about this Savior and bring them to hear of that Savior and bring that Savior to them that they may hear Him? Please fill us with that passion. Thirdly, will You fill Your people to overflowing that they needed a Savior, King of Kings who would do battle. They needed the Lion of Judah to come and do battle as the Lamb of God. I praise Your Name that You have won the victory and defeated Satan. Come quickly, Savior, and destroy the kingdom of darkness but until then fill our souls with praise, fill Your churches with sinners saved by grace and send us to the world to tell the world, who is no friend to sin, but a Friend to sinners, about our Savior, in whose Name I pray, Amen.

Power Point

"The Kings of Christmas"

1. Caesar Augustus – Gaius Octavius

The Birth of Christ is "real history;" but "real history" is really "His Story."

2: A King from the East and the Magi

The unmistakable reality is we who come to Christ are marked by God-centered worship and loving obedience to the King of kings, who came to save us from our sins by His Sovereign and irresistible grace.

3: King Herod the Great

War on Christmas? Christmas is War! Christmas is the fulfillment of the Divine Declaration of War against Satan, Sin, Darkness and Death and will continue as the Defeated Evil Empire strikes back until it is finally destroyed when Christ returns in glory.

Life Takeaway

From the Manger to the Cross and then the Tomb, the King of Kings laid aside His Robe and His Crown to save His people from their sins and give to us His Robe of Righteousness and His Crown of glory to the praise of His glorious grace forever.