May 3, 2015

“Matthew: The Genealogy of Jesus”

Matthew 1:1-17

**FCF**: Aimless and adrift, without meaning or purpose

**PROPOSITION**: (anchor) Jesus has been clearly revealed to us

(magnet) We need to take heed and hear this.

**SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:**

There was a bit of news in the world of aerospace last week. NASA’s *Messenger* probe finally ran out of fuel and crashed into Mercury. *Messenger* was a success – 11 years orbiting Mercury and mapping its surface. But the Russian cargo ship sent to resupply the International Space Station was hardly a success. It is set to crash to the Earth. The Russians aren’t sure what went wrong but we do know it’s in a decaying orbit, spinning aimlessly in the void of space.

Which is a tragic image of those here on the Earth outside of a relationship with the living God. Aimless and adrift – without meaning, purpose, or direction. Our text, the first in a new series on the Gospel of Matthew, shows us how that can be found. And through whom.

**SCRIPTURE READING**: Matthew 1:1-17

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

The story is told of a man at a family reunion who met a woman there, a guest of one of his relatives. He is smitten and wants to meet her. Not really thinking, he walks up and asks, “*Could you tell me what kind of men you like?*” She is taken aback by his directness but replies, “*I love American-Indian men. They are mysterious. I love their lineage, their bond to nature. They are majestic with such history. But*, *as I think about it, I also deeply appreciate those of the Jewish heritage. They have left an enormous legacy of endurance under trial, tradition and courage. And you know, being from the South, I like the southern redneck. He’s so basic, and not complex. So gutsy and direct*.” And then she says, “*By the way, what’s your name?*” Thinking quickly on his feet, he replied, “*Tonto Rosenberg, but my friends call me Bubba Joe*.”

Funny as that story is, Bubba Joe is not to be trusted. But introductions are important. To make sense of events, we need to know who the players are – their origin, their character, their motives. Which brings us to this genealogy. Our initial impression might be to skip it. But to a 1st century Jewish audience, this would mean something. Such lists could show purity of lineage. Knowing that, Matthew is tracing Jesus’ lineage, showing who He is and why He came.

Matthew is showing us who Jesus is and why He came. Jesus has been clearly revealed here to us. We need to take heed and hear this, to learn then who we are and why we need Him.

As a quick overview, we’re going to see three things that will come out repeatedly in this Gospel. Jesus is the Son of David. Jesus is the Son of Abraham. And Jesus is God in the flesh.

1. **SON OF DAVID**

First, from the outset of the Gospel of Matthew, we see Jesus is the Son of David.

1. *What That Means*
2. Who this was

David was the great warrior king of Israel, the preeminent ruler of Israel’s eventful history.

1. God’s covenant with him

And chiefly what we need to know here is the covenant God made with David, as recorded in 2 Samuel 7. There God promised to establish David’s throne, that his line would endure forever.

1. *How Set Forth*

That’s the backdrop. But this is more than just a passing mentioning of David here.

1. Definitive reference

There is a definitive reference made of him (READ Matthew 1:6a). Note he is not just “a king” like all the others listed. David is described as “the king” amidst and over all the others.

1. Intentional structure

So there’s a definitive reference and then intentional structure. It’s three groups of 14 names. It’s a selective list, drawing attention to David. The first readers would have known the numeric values of the letters. “David” equals 14. Three groups of 14. And David is the 14th in the list.

Jesus is “the son of David” – a fulfillment, not just born of his line but a new David.

*Application:*

For centuries, God’s people had yearned for One to come, an heir of David, who would restore Israel, driving their enemies away. Coupled with this – and we see it reflected throughout this Gospel – was an expectation that the Son of David would come with hands of healing.

Matthew is saying, “*He has come*.” How then should we respond? Jesus is the King. We should bow before Him. But then also turn to Him with all our concerns and troubles.

1. **SON OF ABRAHAM**

For He is the Son of David. But also the Son of Abraham. Again, real significance here.

1. *What That Means*
2. Who this was

Abraham was the first and preeminent of the Jewish patriarchs, the father of the Jewish people.

1. God’s covenant with him

And chiefly what we need to keep in mind here was the covenant God made with him (READ Genesis 12:1-3). God would bless him that, through his line, the whole world would be blessed.

1. *How Set Forth*

That’s the backdrop. But this is more than just a passing mentioning of Abraham here.

1. Primacy of place

Abraham has primacy of place in the list – the first name, setting the whole genealogy in motion.

1. Inclusion of the women

So primacy of place but also the inclusion of women. How is this tied to Abraham? This was an unusual thing in such ancient lists. But each one of these women was a Gentile, a non-Jew. Matthew includes these women to draw attention to the promise of blessing for the nations.

Jesus is “the son of Abraham” – a fulfillment, not just born of him but a new Abraham.

*Application:*

All this being a reminder of God’s unconditional grace in election – His sovereign love. How should we respond to that? Humility – we have no claim, just privilege. Gratitude – we are in awe that he would include us. Security – we are sure nothing can shake us loose. Welcome – to any God would bring into the family. And longing – that others might be brought in as well.

1. **GOD IN THE FLESH**

For Jesus is the Son of David and of Abraham. And, beyond even that, God in the flesh.

1. *A Stunning Assertion*
2. For us

The Incarnation – fully God, fully man. Come and stand amazed. This is a stunning assertion.

1. For Matthew

But no less so for Matthew. Think here. He is a 1st century Jewish man, deeply committed to Judaism. How could he believe this man was also Yahweh? It was blasphemous unless true.

1. *How Set Forth*

And while not explicit here, it’s clearly implied in how Matthew sets this up for us.

1. His generation

Look at where Jesus appears (READ Matthew 1:16). The cadence has been broken. We read here of a biological mother but there is no biological father. Clearly, a special birth is alluded to.

1. A new genesis

But then how it starts (READ Matthew 1:1). The first readers would have heard echoes Genesis. Literally, this is “the book of beginnings” meaning a new beginning. A new genesis has come.

For Jesus is the Son of David and of Abraham. And, beyond even that, God in the flesh.

*Application:*

I mentioned earlier the longings of the Jewish people for the fulfillment of these long held promises. But there are also the longings of all people because of the long felt ache within.

As we look around, we ache for a renewed world. As we look within, we ache for renewed selves. And this is what Jesus, God in the flesh, has come to bring – a new beginning.

**CONCLUSION:**

Back to where we started. Jesus has been clearly revealed to us – who He is and why He came. We need to take heed and hear this. For it all points to who we are and our need of Him.

Now that’s really an outlandish claim. Unless, of course, Jesus is who Matthew says He is. The thing is that some introductions are so significant, so dramatic, they demand attention. They make us do a double take – stop us in our tracks, make us turn our heads, and say, “*Wait. You’re who?*” And that’s because of the real impact this person stands to make on us.

Reports are coming from Nepal not just of the damage and casualties but the earthquake itself. Scientists tell us that Mt. Everest dropped an inch. And that an area 75 by 30 miles, not far from Kathmandu, was lifted about three feet. Which explains the damage and casualties.

Yellowstone Park was also in the news this week. We’ve known about the super-volcano in that area for some time. But now reports are coming of a magma chamber beneath so large it could fill the Grand Canyon 11 times. It’s not showing signs of blowing but can you imagine?

My point? All these are images of dramatic shaking beneath that undoes everything. But Matthew is speaking here of a dramatic shaking that re-makes everything and re-frames our way of seeing. Jesus, this One come into the flow of history, is the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, and God in the flesh. And Matthew wants us to know this, think on it, and embrace it.

**PROPOSITION**: (anchor) Jesus has been clearly revealed to us

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