

The King Has Come (Matthew 1:1-17)

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Date: 30 November 2025

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[0 : 00] But this morning, as we think about Christmas, and we think about Advent, and we think about all of those things that go along with this time of the year, We're going to do something a little bit different this year as we work our way through Scripture.

For the past few years, we've basically taken Matthew and Luke's Gospel accounts, and we've kind of ping-ponged back and forth a little bit as we've worked our way through these Christmas stories, these Christmas passages, that we oftentimes think of, and much of what we've done is kind of like skipping a rock across a pond, where you're going pretty fast in a great distance, but not going very deep into the passages.

And I think there's benefit to that. I think there's something to be said because you get to see the overarching picture, the big picture of what is going on in the passage, But I believe there's also some benefit of slowing down and taking our time and going through some of these passages in greater depth.

And that's what we're going to be doing today. We're going to, over the next four weeks, be looking at Matthew's account specifically in the birth narrative and taking those passages in smaller bite-sized chunks and working our way through it.

And today, we're going to be focusing on the genealogy section of Matthew 1. Now, how many in, well, we won't make you raise your hand for that, but many of you in here have started Bible reading plans and have worked your way through reading through Scripture.

[1 : 34] And if you've ever done that, when you get to a genealogy section, what do you typically do? By your laughter, it kind of tells me what you typically do.

You skim through it as quick as you possibly can just so you can check off that box and say, all right, I read today's passage. Or you get to that section, you're like, oh, my goodness. Here we go. All of these names.

This person had this son. This person had this son. You just go over and over and over again as you read through it. But today, I want us to look at this passage because this passage is in here for a reason.

This passage tells us something incredible about who Christ is and what he came to do. And so if you have a copy of God's word, I want to invite you to open with me this morning to Matthew chapter 1.

And we're going to be reading verses 1 through 17. And this is what the word of the Lord says. It says this. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

[2 : 36] Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. And Judah the father of Perez, and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nashon, and Nashon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah.

And Uzziah was the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jeconiah, and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiod, and Abiod the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Akim, and Akim the father of Eliud.

Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matin, and Matin the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. [4 : 24] And so all the generations, from Abraham to David, were 14 generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations.

Whew! And so when you get to a passage like this, many of you are probably thinking, I'm glad we didn't have a prayer prompt, where somebody had to read all of these this morning, but when you get to a passage like this, it's oftentimes really easy to just skip over it.

And again, you may be thinking, what in the world? This just sounds like a big list of names. Why are we focusing on this passage today? Well, for one, there is a reason that these names were included in Scripture.

It wasn't just a filler. In fact, it helps us see one of the dominant themes throughout the book of Matthew, and that one of those dominant themes said that Jesus is the long-awaited, much-anticipated King who was coming.

Several have simplified the different gospel themes of Matthew, Martin, Luke, and John, and simplified those down to some basic themes, and sometimes probably a little oversimplification.

[5 : 38] But when you look at the different gospel accounts, you'll see these themes begin to play out. For example, the gospel according to Mark, the theme of this is Jesus is the suffering servant.

You know, Mark doesn't include a genealogy or a birth narrative, but goes right into Jesus ministering to people, goes right into him serving people and loving people in some really powerful ways.

Then you get to the gospel according to Luke, and Dr. Luke, he emphasizes the humanity of Jesus, and there's a large emphasis on the humanity of Jesus in Luke.

The gospel according to John, Jesus is the Son of God. It starts, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And so you have this big emphasis on Jesus being the Son of God, and then you get to Matthew's account here, which we're looking at this morning, and we clearly see what is going to be the first evidence of hope in this passage, and that is this.

And this is one of the dominant themes throughout the book of Matthew, and it is this. The King has come. The King has come.

[6 : 55] It says, So all the generations, from Abraham to David, were 14 generations. And from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations.

And from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations. Now, other than making it difficult for future pastors to read this portion of Scripture, Matthew has a reason for including these names in his gospel.

And before you get too bent out of shape, if you've been reading the Old Testament or an Old Testament scholar, yes, this does not include every single person in those lineages.

There's names that are omitted here, and I think Matthew does this for a reason. And so you look at these 14 generations through each of these sections that he breaks it down to, and he does this for a reason.

He does this to clearly put an emphasis on Jesus, to clearly draw a circle around Jesus and say, This is the long-awaited King.

[7 : 58] This is the one that we've been waiting for. And many scholars have different opinions on why it is that he included 14 generations. Several have noted that it could be because of King David's name.

A lot of times in Hebrew culture, in Jewish culture, they would assign numbers to go along with letters. And so that when those numbers were associated with the alphabet, you could add up those.

And so David's name, King David's name, it would have been, if you added up the numeric value of all of those letters, it would be 14. And so people are, some people really emphasize that. He's showing that Jesus is from the royal lineage, the king's lineage.

He is from, he is the king. Others, and I think probably more accurately, have stated the fact that 14 would be a sign of double perfection, of double completion, where seven would be the complete number, seven days in creation, and many other examples of seven being this perfect complete number.

And so what they're showing is with two sevens that you see this, this complete completion or perfect perfection, or maybe even like this complete perfection that is placed in Jesus.

[9 : 13] And so whatever the case may be, Matthew is clearly showing us that all of this is focused on Jesus as the coming king.

Matthew is clearly showing us that Jesus is the focus of all history. And it is vital to our satisfaction in life, to our purpose, to our salvation, to the way that we interact with our families, that we set our eyes on him to make sure that he is the hope that we cling to in this life.

He is the one that we build our lives on, just like Matthew is showing that everything revolves around Jesus here. We too must make sure that is evident in our lives.

See, Paul in Colossians, after telling us who Christ is, telling us what Christ has done for us, he makes this emphasis in Colossians 3 to make sure that we focus on the things of God.

He says, if then you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

[10 : 29] Paul is making sure that we know that what we set our minds on, that what we give our attention to, what our gaze is fixed on, will be the direction that we go with our lives.

He's letting us know very clearly, whatever it is that we focus our attention on is the direction that we will go with our lives. If we set our minds on the things of God, then our lives will be spent living for him.

If he becomes the focus of our lives, then our lives will be spent, will be given living for him. If we set our minds on the things of this world and what it values, then our lives will be spent elsewhere.

And if you've ever had the opportunity to teach a child how to ride a bicycle, then you will probably understand this idea very well. What you set your focus on, what you set your mind on, where you focus your attention on, will be the direction that you go.

I'm convinced that one of the hardest things to do with teaching a kid to ride a bike is telling them to look where they're going. You know, to begin with, they're trying to get this whole concept of pedaling the bicycle.

[11 : 45] And so to begin with, their eyes are fixed downward, where they're just looking at their legs. It's kind of hard to illustrate pedaling a bicycle standing, but they're looking down at their legs, trying to pedal this bicycle, trying to keep up with the spinning gears and all of those things.

And so all of their attention is focused down and you keep telling them, look up, look up, look where you're going, see where you're going. And then all of a sudden, they get this pedaling down, they figure this out, and then they start looking up.

But as most kids do, their attention goes all over the place. Whatever shiny thing or moving thing gets their attention, and all of a sudden, they're pedaling and looking at something, and guess what happens?

They start going wherever it is that they're looking. And what makes it really dangerous when you have other kids who are riding bicycles out there because they're wanting to look at them and let's say there's some really close encounters that happen when you're learning to ride a bicycle because you always go where you're looking.

And like kids riding bikes, we as adults often find ourselves going in the direction of our focus. We oftentimes find ourselves going in the direction of whatever our attention is on, whatever we see is most important, whatever we see is most valuable.

[13 : 04] All of a sudden, where our focus is, that's where our lives begin to go. And Matthew, by giving us the genealogy, is making sure we know that Jesus is the right focus to set our eyes on.

Beyond the numerical or mnemonic value, Matthew's structure has a theological value with it. He has intentionally selected names, real historical people who are really part of Joseph and Mary's line, and arranged them to make the same theological point that Paul made in Galatians, which is honestly one of my favorite Christmas passages, where he says, but when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son.

In other words, God has designed all of history around the birth of Jesus. All of history is focused on the coming of the king.

You see, God was designing all of history for this moment when he would most fully display his love for humanity by sending his son to ultimately die to give us the greatest gift of all, salvation.

So as we anticipate with great excitement Christmas Day, let it be because of what a baby born 2,000 years ago did for us on a cross because he loves us.

[14 : 32] This message of Jesus being the focus of our lives and the focus of all of history is for the believer, is for us to praise God, is to set our aim, to set our eyes, to set our focus on following Jesus.

And so if you came here today unsure or skeptical of your faith in Christ, then I want to encourage you to give your life to him. You may think, Brad, you don't know the sins that I've committed.

You don't know how far and how long I have been running from God. You don't know what I have done with my life. And you're right. I don't know all the things that you've done just like you don't know all the things that I've done.

But I do know that this king, the one true king, came for all of us. And that's what I want us to see next in this passage.

The next example of hope I want us to clearly see in this passage is this, that the king that has come is a king who restores.

[15 : 42] The king that has come is a king who restores. And so I want to encourage you, let me encourage you to take a closer look at some of these characters in this lineage, in this story that Matthew chooses to highlight.

what you will find is some very interesting characters that God in his infinite wisdom inspired Matthew to include. To begin with, you have Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Men who in many ways show great faith, but the Bible also doesn't sugarcoat their moments of weakness either. We can go back and look at their stories and realize, yes, they were men of great faith, but they were also men who struggled in some incredible ways as well.

Then, we see Judah and Tamar included in this story. Even briefly mentioned the significance of this last week, but in Genesis 38, there seems to be this random story that's included in the middle of Joseph's story.

You have this story of Joseph where they're following what God is doing in Joseph's life, and then in the middle of this story, in chapter 38 of Genesis, you have this story of Judah and Tamar, and it almost seems out of place as you're reading through it.

[17 : 00] You're reading through this, and all of a sudden, wow, this is a pretty graphic and interesting story that we've chosen to place right here in the midst of this, and it's a story of incest, of Judah having an incestuous relationship with his daughter-in-law, Tamar, and so Matthew decides to include this in the lineage of Jesus.

Jesus. It's pretty remarkable that this is included, and then just skipping over a few, you have Rahab, the prostitute, as mentioned. You have Ruth, the Moabite, as mentioned, and Bathsheba, in a roundabout way, as mentioned.

You notice how it says, how it mentions Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah? It's showing, it's highlighting a pretty dark time in King David's life. It would be easy just to skip through this and say, all right, well, this is a part of King David's lineage as well.

But what you see is a highlight to a difficult time in King David's life, a time where he had an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and then he essentially committed murder by having Uriah sent to the front battle line so that they could then marry Bathsheba and cover up this whole incident that had taken place.

And so he chooses to include this in this story. We could go on and on and on, but what you will find is adulterers, murderers, prostitutes, those involved in incest, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, those who were well thought of and those that would surprise you.

[18 : 36] In other words, when you look at this list, you will find a list that is chock full of sinners, chock full of people who have some interesting past.

And so what this reminds us of is your past does not have to define you. Your sin does not have to become your identity.

We see clearly that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. And this is good news for all of us because apart from Christ, we are all lost.

James Montgomery Boyce also mentions the significance of this when he says, he says, since Matthew's genealogy contains the names of women, Gentiles, and even noted sinners, the book shows us that the barriers between men and women, Jews and Gentiles, saints and sinners were falling through the work of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' ancestry also provides a clue on this matter, showing that God chooses his servants from a wide spectrum of those from who the respectively orthodox would turn away in horror.

[19 : 50] Isn't this wonderful news for us today? This means that Jesus came for all of us. There's no one that's too far gone.

There's no one that has sinned too much or run for too long that Jesus isn't willing to bring them back. Isn't it wonderful to know that our past, that our weakest moments, don't have to define us. Those parts that we're most ashamed of don't have to become who we are. And that as believers, as those who've placed their faith and our trust in Christ, God can still use us in powerful ways. Now yes, there are consequences to past sin. There are things that we've done that may prevent us from doing things in the present, but that doesn't mean that God can't use us in different and powerful ways.

It doesn't mean that our lives are shot. It doesn't mean that our lives are gone, that we can still be used by God in powerful ways. And so if you're here today and you've been letting a past sin become your identity, become what defines you, then let me encourage you, turn to Jesus.

[21 : 03] Turn to Him. Let Him be what becomes our identity, following Him. And also let me encourage you, if somebody has wronged you or you've seen something that somebody's done and you're letting that take control of how you see them and how you view them, then let me encourage you to turn to Jesus.

Let me encourage you to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, to encourage those around us, no matter what it is that we're going through, that God can still use us in powerful ways.

Yes, there are consequences to sin. Yes, it can prevent us from doing certain things in this life that we will have to live with. But that doesn't mean that God doesn't want to continue to use us in powerful ways.

I remember from my days as a youth pastor, walking, I can vividly remember walking around in the yard, talking with a former student on the phone, who had been away from church for a long time and had gotten involved with a lot of things that he shouldn't have been doing.

And I remember telling him, I remember him telling me that he wanted to come back and get involved in church again, but he said, he says, but I've got to get my life in order first. I've got to fix some things in my life before I can come back and I can remember just wanting to scream through the phone, no you don't.

[22 : 31] That's the point of the gospel. That's what makes the good news of the gospel so good is that we can't save ourselves. We can't do this on our own. There's nothing that we can do to get our lives right.

It's impossible and that is quite literally why Jesus came. Because we can't do this on our own. We must turn to him, let Christ be what changes us from the inside and let Christ be what continues to mold us and make us more and more into his image.

There is hope for all of us. Being the first week of that, we have lit the candle of hope to remind us of the hope that can only be found in Jesus.

Not a hope of a good grade, a new job or a better car, but the hope that the great rescuer has come to seek and save those who are created in his image.

And here in this passage, Matthew has masterfully shown us where to look for hope in this life. He has clearly shown us that Jesus is the focal point of all history.

[23 : 39] That history is his story. That all of history is centered around the coming of Christ. For us to be able to experience hope, peace, joy, joy, and love, Jesus must be what we focus our lives on as well.

It must be what we give our lives. Matthew is clearly showing us that Jesus is the king. That he is the king that has come for us.

For those who place their faith and their trust in him, Jesus is the king. So the question we must ask, are you following him today?

Have you given your life to the king? To the one true king? Have you, as Paul clearly states, set your mind on the things that are above and not on the things that are below?

What we must remember is that your direction leads to a destination. Your direction leads to a destination. It always does.

[24 : 43] It always does. What you set your focus on will determine where you go. In other words, your direction, not your intention, determines your destination.

Much of this comes down to the fact that if you don't head in the right direction, you'll never get to where you want to go. You may say, Brett, I want to give my life to Christ.

I want to live a life that points people to faith in Christ. I want to raise my family in a way that shows my children that Christ is the most important thing in my life.

I want to live a life where I'm following God's will and everything that I say and do. And that's all well and good. And I'm thankful that that's your intention, that's your desire.

But your direction is going to have a lot more to do with where you end up than your intention ever does. I've said it this way before, but I think it bears repeating.

[25 : 44] If you're wanting to go to Greenville, South Carolina today, and you head down to Livonia, and you get ready to get on I-85, and you're wanting to go to Greenville, but you get on I-85 South, guess where you're never going to end up?

You're never going to end up in Greenville, South Carolina because you're going in the wrong direction. Now, you may think in your heart, oh, this is taking me to Greenville. I'm going to Greenville.

I've got warm, fuzzy feelings about Greenville. I can't wait to get to Greenville. But if you're headed in the wrong direction, you're never going to reach your desired destination. And so I want to encourage you today to think about your life.

Think about what it is that you're giving your life to. Matthew clearly shows us in this passage that Jesus is the focal point of all history, that Jesus is the focus, of all of history, that it all revolves around him.

But does it all revolve around him in your life? Are you giving your life to him and saying my focus, my desire, everything I have, I want to give to Jesus.

[26 : 53] I want him to be everything. I want to give my life to him. I genuinely want to follow his plan for my life. I genuinely want to raise my children in a way where they look at my life and they see that Jesus is the most important thing to me.

I want to go in that direction. I want that to be where I am headed. So I want to ask you this morning, are you giving your life to Jesus? Have you given your life to the king?

Are you following him in everything in your life? I want you to seriously consider this morning what it is that you're giving your life to. Is the focus of your life Jesus Christ?

Or are you giving your life to the things of this world? Things that will perish, things that have no eternal significance. What is it that you're giving your life to?

Father, thank you so very much for your word, for what it teaches us about you. Lord, I thank you that you've included this genealogy in Matthew's account here, where it clearly shows us that you are the focal point of all of history, where it clearly shows us that you are the one true king.

[28 : 10] And Lord, I thank you for the names that were included on this list. names of people who struggled in some pretty disastrous ways. People who have struggled with sin and corruption, Lord, but that you, as the one true king, can redeem those things.

And so, Lord, I pray that if there's someone here today that maybe has never given their life to you, that you would reveal yourself to them in a powerful way.

Lord, that you would help them to see their sin clearly, that their sin is real, that their sin separates them from you, that there's nothing that we can do about that on our own.

But that is why you came, because we couldn't do anything about it. And so, Lord, I pray that as they see their sin in a clear and powerful way, that they'll see your grace in an even clearer and an even more powerful way.

and give their life to you. And, Lord, I pray that there's someone here today that is struggling to give their life to you because they see their sin is too great, that they see that they've gone too far down a direction away from you, that for too long they've been following the ways of this world, that for too long they have turned their back on you, Lord, that you would help them to clearly see that because of what you accomplished on the cross, none of us are too far gone, that we can give our life to you.

[29 : 46] And so, Lord, I pray that you be with all of us. Help us to clearly see you for who you are. Help us to clearly see that you are worthy of giving our lives to in everything that we say and do.

And so, God, thank you so much for Jesus. Thank you that he is, Emmanuel, God, with us. And so, help us to honor you with our lives.

We ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to invite you to stand. We're going to sing a song of invitation. If God is speaking to you this morning, won't you respond as we stand together and sing?