

The Impressive Lineage

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[0 : 0 0] All right, do keep your Bibles open to Matthew chapter 1, even though I'm not going to go through those names one by one tonight. That should be an outline as well, and we're going to probably take it a bit more thematically in terms of working out what the genealogy is doing there tonight.

There's a lot of talk about the royal family at the moment. Maybe you've got a Netflix account and you've been binging on some, I don't know, three episodes of I don't know what, but anyway.

But let's not focus on that particular royal, but on the king instead. And you all know that from the day that Charles was born, he was destined to rule.

His mom, Queen Elizabeth, ascended to the throne before he even turned four. Some pretty pictures of him there. And by becoming king at 73, he's actually the oldest British monarch to come to the throne.

But was King Charles always destined to rule? After all, if you look at the history of kings and queens in general, it shows, doesn't it, that the way to the throne is littered with rebellion and treason, conquests and abdications.

[1 : 2 8] Now, Queen Elizabeth herself only came to the throne because her uncle Edward wanted to marry an American divorcee and so had to abdicate the throne.

Now, if not for that, King Charles would now only be a minor royal. Now, here's a picture of a minor royal. Anyone know who he is?

No? Okay. I think he's David Armstrong Jones. Does that ring a bell? No? Okay. He's Princess Margaret's son. Does that ring a bell?

See what I mean? It doesn't take long, does it, for someone who is destined to be king to then turn out to be just another minor royal. And before you know it, no one remembers them.

And so many of the famous kings and queens are really only accidental rulers, aren't they? They're by chance, it seems, or a twist of fate in history.

[2 : 3 6] Now, Jesus Christ, on the other hand, was the exact opposite. At his birth, there was actually very little indication that he was born to rule. He was a child to humble parents, Mary and Joseph, born in a little town called Bethlehem.

Then he grew up in Nazareth, in Galilee, far away from Jerusalem, the city of Israel's kings. And yet, here at the start, Matthew reveals Jesus to be God's chosen Messiah.

From the very beginning, the one whom God destined to rule, to save the world. Hence, we have this genealogy at the start of Matthew's Gospel.

This is an important piece of information. And we're given Jesus' lineage, not primarily because he needed to be of royal blood, but more importantly because he is the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, and in particular, the promises God makes to the patriarchs, namely Abraham and David.

Thus, the genealogy we have here is actually stylistic. Fourteen generations, it says in verse 17. Firstly, between Abraham and David, then David to the exile, and then finally from the exile to Jesus the Messiah.

[3 : 59] Now, we'll come back to the significance of the exile in a moment, but at each juncture, God makes key promises to Abraham, David, and those in exile, the fulfillment of which culminates in Jesus coming in the role of God's Messiah.

Now, the fact that Jesus had to be from the line of David and Abraham is only important because of the promises God makes to each of them.

Those promises are of blessing, and in each case, God promises that this blessing will come through the seed or offspring. It's a promise not just of a king to rule, but of a Messiah, someone who brings blessing to save God's people.

And so, in your outline, you will see those key Old Testament readings that Nat read for us today. Each of them relates to a promise made to Abraham, then to David, and then to those in exile.

So, let's look at each of them in turn. First, to Abraham, God promised in Genesis 12, verse 1, So, from the very beginning, God's purpose in choosing Abraham for blessing was that he would, in turn, be a blessing to the nations.

[5 : 34] So, God wasn't showing favoritism to the Jews. But, as always, God chooses an agent so that they can be a blessing to all.

And this will come eventually through Abraham's offspring. Now, the word offspring isn't mentioned here in these verses, but it appears later on in verse 7, where it says on the slide, The Lord appeared to Abraham and said, To your offspring, or seed, I will give this land.

It's important to realize that this word offspring, or seed, is actually always in the singular, meaning it's a reference to one person coming from the line of Abraham.

And so, when Jesus ultimately comes to this world, he is God's chosen Messiah, the offspring of Abraham. But he's to be a blessing, not just to the Jews, but to all nations.

And so, today, you and I, even though you're not Jewish, Josh and Enoch as well, we're all blessed through him, without needing to be Jewish, but because he came to bless all peoples on earth.

[6 : 46] Now, fast forward now to the time of David. David, he himself is an offspring of Abraham. So, you see God has already begun to fulfill his promises to Abraham, giving to David, the offspring, the promised land.

Now, David was also a powerful king, and during his reign, he too brought blessing to the nations around him. Again, a partial fulfillment of God's promises.

And yet, David isn't the offspring that God ultimately has in mind. But rather, he is yet another recipient of God's promises.

At this time, in that second Old Testament reading, from 2 Samuel chapter 7. You see, right at the height of his reign, David wanted to do the right thing by God.

He wanted to build a house for God in his name, to honor him. But God had other plans. You see, God was not so concerned for a house in his own name, but rather he wanted to see his name proclaimed, so that people can be saved and blessed through knowing him.

[7 : 53] And so, God makes David a counteroffer, which is the promise that we find in 2 Samuel chapter 7. So, verse 12 and 13. When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring, to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.

He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Now, of course, David's immediate successor, King Solomon, did fulfill this promise in part.

He did end up building a temple for God. But the promise itself has a much longer horizon in view, because God says he will establish this offspring's throne forever.

And Jesus, as God's Messiah, is this offspring. And Jesus will do this not by building a house for God with bricks and mortar, but as he says himself, he will build God's house with his own body, as the temple of God.

Now, fast forward another 14 generations, and perhaps if you're reading, you might be expecting that the promised offspring would now finally arrive on the scene. Instead, what we find at the end of the second generation is this, verse 11, that in the genealogy there was Jeshar, the father of Jeconiah, and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

[9 : 24] Exile, that is, sent out, scattered from the promised land. Now, this isn't the trajectory that, you know, anyone would expect, least of all the Jews.

You know, it's a bit like Australia in the World Cup, you know, last time, we didn't make it out of the group stages. This time, we did.

And so, you know, everyone, you know, you watch SBS, and what's their trajectory from here on in? Expectations are high, aren't they? Four years from now, we'll make the quarterfinals.

Then four years after that, the semifinals. And then, the finals. So, by 2038, Australia wins the World Cup, right?

Nah. It doesn't work like this, does it? But we're all hoping. Likewise, the Jews hoped that after David, God's Messiah would come to fulfill all the promises of Abraham and David.

[10 : 24] Except, where does Israel find herself 14 generations later? In exile. in Babylon. Back in slavery. Back in their so-called Egypt.

Now, if you're familiar with the Old Testament at all, then you'll know how Israel got itself in this position. God had rescued them from Egypt, blessed them, put them in the abundance of the promised land, asked them merely to remain faithful to him.

And yet, they failed to trust God, even though he's never failed them. And so, as God promised in warning them, they were scattered, and some were exiled to the land of Babylon.

But even as God was doing this, he still remained faithful to them as a people. After all, he had made promises to Abraham and David, which he was not going to renege.

And so, even in exile, God sent promises to reaffirm these promises. And so, in our third reading, we find one such promise among many in the Old Testament. God spoke through Jeremiah to his people in exile.

[11 : 34] And so, in chapter 23, verse 5 and 6, we read on the screen, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch. That's just another way of saying, this will be another offspring of David.

A king who will reign wisely, and do what is just and right in the land. So, yes, the promise is that they'll be back in the land. In his days, Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called, the Lord, our righteous Savior. And then Jeremiah then goes on to prophesy, in the next verse, So then, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer say, as surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt.

But they will say, as surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north, and out of all the countries where he had banished them.

That's returning from exile. Then they will live in their own land. And of course, as we read in the Old Testament, God did just that.

[12 : 43] But it didn't happen immediately, and the Messiah didn't come immediately either, but they had to wait a further 14 generations. And then, finally, Jesus arrives.

What it says, in verse 16 of Matthew, chapter 1, And so, from the very start, Jesus was destined to come as God's Messiah, according to God's plan.

And when Jesus did arrive, he satisfied, firstly, the requirement that he was an offspring of both Abraham and David. But if you think about it, there are many offspring of Abraham and David.

Right? David had many children. Father Abraham had many children as well, as we all sing. So the Messiah had to be more than just the offspring of David and Abraham.

Right? In fact, Jeremiah 23 tells us what more he had to be to be the Messiah. For it says, he will so act that his name will be called the Lord, our righteous Savior.

[13 : 58] Now, we'll look a bit more at that next week if you come back for our Doncaster carols. But suffice to say, the Messiah had to be both righteous and a Savior.

And if you read the Gospels and you read Matthew in particular, that's what they all seek to show. Page after page, they show that Jesus is righteous in all that he did and said.

And that when he went to the cross, he did it to save his people, to be their Savior. But it's not the kind of Savior, is it, that people normally expect.

Now, all the emperors and kings of the past, when they offer salvation, what they're thinking is that they'll come and they'll conquer the enemies, they'll liberate the people from bondage, you know, riding on horses.

But they themselves wouldn't have to lay down their own lives to save the people, would they? And if you look nowadays at all our self-starred modern-day messiahs, you know, I wouldn't name them, but you know them, they're all leaders who promise to make the lives of people better, right?

[15 : 06] But who among them actually offers to sacrifice themselves to do so? That they would lay down their lives for it? No. They'll get other people to do it. They'll offer solutions and then get other people to sacrifice, isn't it?

No. Jesus is a very different kind of saviour. One who gave his life so that others can have it. And the reason that he does it is because what we really need salvation from is not from the evil and enemies around outside our world, but actually from ourselves.

Because the problem is we're our own worst enemies. If you got rid of us, our lives would actually be much easier. But that doesn't work, does it?

It's an impossible dilemma. And so only Jesus can overcome this because he dies for us, for our wrongdoing. He takes away the punishment, the death that we deserve so that we are free from the bondage to our own selfish desires.

And today we got to hear the testimony of both Josh and Enoch. And they talked about that, didn't they? how they took hold of what Jesus did for them on the cross.

[16 : 24] They put their faith in Jesus and as a result, they've been forgiven of their sins. And God has given them his Holy Spirit to help them overcome their failures. So not that they're now perfect in their character or in everything that they do, but what they have now is a relationship with God through Jesus.

And this is the thing that gives them assurance in life, hope for the future and certainty of their ultimate destiny. And of course, they're not alone today, but even amongst all of us brothers and sisters, all of us have the same experience, don't we?

Even though each of our stories might be slightly different. All of us have put our trust in Jesus and because of that have had our sins forgiven and have an eternal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

And so if you're here today and you don't have that same confidence in your own future, then let me propose to you that Jesus is actually the answer. He's the promised offspring to Abraham, a Messiah not just for the Jews but for all the people.

And so you don't have to be a Jew to benefit from Jesus. In fact, if you look back at the genealogy again, you actually notice, I don't know whether you picked that up as it was being read, that there are the names of four other women besides Mary, isn't there?

[17 : 53] There is Tamar, the mother of Perez, Rahab, the mother of Boaz, Ruth, the mother of Obed, and Bathsheba, although she's not named, she's Uriah's wife, the Hittites, the mother of Solomon.

Now, what do these women have in common? Well, apart from being women, which actually is also significant because of the focus of men in the genealogy, but apart from that, they were also all non-Jews.

They were outsiders to the promises of Abraham and yet, by being included in this genealogy, Matthew is showing how God has included them, even them, into his chosen people.

And so you see, Jesus came for all people, didn't he? He came for the nations across the world, each and every one of us. And so, at the end of the day, whether you are Jewish or not, the question you need to ask yourself is this, who is your Messiah?

That is, who is the one that you can look to to save you in this world? Now, there was a time some 20 years ago when everyone thought that, you know, this world was just getting better and better, maybe longer than 20 years ago now, way before Y2K and things like that.

[19 : 15] Some of you were not even born then, but anyway. There was a time when, you know, with the collapse of communism and the Berlin Wall and all that, that actually people thought this world was going to get better and better and better.

But I have to say, all that view, that sort of view has been dashed somewhat now, hasn't it? There is a war going on in Ukraine, the superpowers are not getting along, politics in the U.S.

is super combative, many minorities in various countries are being oppressed, oppressed. And even here in our own country, we get this news of, you know, cost of living pressures, issues with mental health, the whole health system is under stress, so is the aged care.

Now, I could keep going on, I don't want to paint a doomsday picture, some of it is just the media, I think, being a bit sensational. But, it does prompt you to think, doesn't it?

Where is true salvation for our world coming from? Where is your salvation and security coming from? And it is naive, isn't it, to be putting our hope in man-made solutions.

[20 : 20] As I said, many people are quick to pronounce that this is the way to solve this or that. They seem to have a panacea for everything, but then, it always proves to be illusionary.

Instead, the Bible offers a more sobering analysis. The true cause of our problems lies in the heart of every human. It's the thing that the Bible calls sin.

It's human pride, rebellion against God, denying His existence and therefore His rule over us. But God has already given us the solution.

It was accomplished even before you and I were born. And it came in the person of His chosen Messiah, Jesus Christ. He came in response to His promises to Abraham and David.

What that means is that this solution that God has was already in the making since the beginning of time. It's not something that He's worked out just at the last moment, but that He worked it from the very day that Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden of Eden.

[21 : 30] In fact, He worked at it before even the creation of this world. And so, therefore, to all those who are still searching, I would say this is worth checking out.

I invite you to read the Gospels for yourself or come speak to one of us. Speak to even Josh or Enoch who were baptized today and let us show you from the Bible how Jesus is truly the Messiah for all people including you.

Let's pray. Father, thank you that you've promised to save us and that your promises to David and Abraham and to the people in exile was fulfilled in the person of Jesus. Thank you for all that He's done to be the Lord, our Savior, our righteous Savior.

Give us the faith to submit to Him as Lord and to serve Him as His disciples. In Jesus' name we pray.