

Who is the Promised King?

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- [0 : 0 0] They told us this place had the best roast duck in all of London. Crispy skin, succulent meat, a special sauce to die for.
- Oh, and the chili oil wasn't too bad either. And did I mention it was super cheap? But there was a problem. The restaurant doesn't take bookings.
- You had to turn up, put your name down and wait your turn. And so we did. But the lady at the door told us rudely, two hours, you want to wait? Yes or no?
- Well, we were too afraid to say no. And so we waited on the pavement outside because the restaurant foyer was too small. And so we waited with the 20 or 30 people around us, before us actually, in the cold English winter.
- And as I waited, I noticed another restaurant a few doors down selling roast duck as well. And they had empty inviting tables.
- [1 : 1 3] But with my tummy growling, I said to myself, this roast duck had better be good. In fact, it better be the best roast duck in the world.
- And as I waited, I looked into the restaurant and saw the other patrons having such a good time. But they were taking too long with their meal. And why can't they hurry up and finish?
- Hey, they finished. Stop talking. Give us your table. Well, finally, the two-hour wait was over. And yes, it was the best roast duck ever.
- Now, if you're interested where this restaurant is, you can come and ask me afterwards. But I do have another suggestion for you. Just one word. Take away.
- Well, that's how life is, isn't it? The longer we wait for something like summer, the bigger our expectations are. And the bigger your disappointment if it fails to live up to your expectations.
- [2 : 2 0] It happens all the time, right? Your dream job, the dream holiday that you've been planning all the time, the life partner you always wanted, or the course you worked so hard to get into.
- And it was the same with Israel. By the time Jesus came along, they had waited a long time for their king or Messiah. They had great expectations because God had promised a great Messiah for them.
- God had promised in the Holy Scriptures. And that's why Matthew begins his gospel with this genealogy, because God's promises had related to this offspring or seed.
- So Matthew 1, verse 1, it says, this is the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Messiah or Christ simply means God's chosen one.
- But then two key names, David and Abraham. Abraham, because he was to be the father of the chosen one. God had promised on the slide in Genesis chapter 12, verse 2, I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you.

[3 : 26] I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. How was this to occur? Genesis chapter 12, verse 7. Next slide. Through Abraham's offspring or seed. To your offspring, God says, I will give this land, the promised land.

But the Messiah will also be a son of David, because again, God made a promise to King David. This time, 2 Samuel chapter 7, verse 11 to 13. Again on the slide, which I will read.

The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you. When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring or seed 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 a throne of his kingdom forever. And so Israel knew what to expect of their king, a son of David, a seed of Abraham.

Now, if you're a school student, you have clear expectations of school, don't you? There are seven years of primary school, beginning in prep. And then when you graduate from primary school, another six years of high school.

[4 : 38] And then you expect to finish your VCE, and then your parents will insist on putting your graduation photo on their wall. But imagine if you get to the end of year 11, and you were told to repeat, not just year 11, but all the way back to year 7 again, all of high school.

You dread that thought, wouldn't you? But this was how Israel must have felt. Because we have 14 generations from Abraham to David.

That's from verse 2 to 6. And Steph did such a good job with the names, I'm not going to read any of them again. But Israel would have expected that if they kept following on that trajectory, they would find after the next 14 generations or so, after David, that God's Messiah would come.

Except what we find after another 14 generations, five verses on in verse 11, is Jeconiah. He was a son of David, yes, he was a seed of Abraham. But his reign, if you read in 2 Chronicles, lasted only for three months and ten days.

This son of David, this seed of Abraham, spent the rest of his life with the remnant of Israel in captivity and exile in Babylon. They did return after 70 years, but there was no king.

[6 : 06] Life back in the land was actually tough. And so if their hopes had been raised by God's promises, then they would have been dashed by what happened in reality.

Now, of course, we know that God had not failed in his promises. Rather, just as he promised, and for those of us who had been studying Deuteronomy, God had promised that he would punish them for their disobedience as well, and in particular, for worshipping idols.

God said he would scatter them from the promised land. So, just a verse in Deuteronomy 28, verse 64, and a slide. The Lord promised then, the Lord will scatter you among all nations from one end of the earth to the other.

There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known. Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot.

And so God was good for his word, good to his word, good to bless his people as he promised, but also good to punish when they sin. But also God was good to restore them when they repented, just as he promised.

[7 : 16] And so when the prophet Isaiah asked in Isaiah chapter 6, how long Israel will remain under God's judgment, God's reply in verse 11 on the slide was, until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken.

And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be late waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed, that's word again, or offspring will be the stump in the land.

And so if you look at that third part of the genealogy, the last third, you will see that that was exactly how it was between Jeconiah and Jesus. The holy seed at that point was a stump.

There was no king. In fact, they had even stopped tracing the lineage of who should rightly be the king. And yet, when Jesus finally appears, his genealogy shows us that he is, humanly speaking, qualified to be the Messiah, the chosen one.

He is a son of David. He is an offspring of Abraham. Abraham. And yet, Jesus is not the king that people expected. You see, his birth is quite unlike, say, for example, Prince George of Cambridge.

[8 : 42] Remember when Prince George was born? It was plastered over the press, wasn't it? On the left-hand side there. There he was, a few days after his birth, at the doors of the hospital with mom and dad, Prince William and Kate.

And ever since then, his every development has been closely watched, hasn't it? His first day out with mom, you know, first day at playgroup, first day on the swing at Kensington Gardens, and then here, first day of school with dad.

It's the thing that all dads need to do nowadays, take their children to their first day of school. By contrast, Jesus arrived unrecognized. No one knew him as the rightful king of the Jews.

Well, some did, like the shepherds and the magi, but even they didn't know what kind of king he was going to be. And throughout his life, he had no earthly title, no throne, no palace. Instead, his crowning glory would occur on the cross in a cruel and humiliating death.

But this is still the king we celebrate each year, isn't it? This is God's promised king. not only for the Jews, but for all of us, for all humanity. And yet, if we go into Christmas this season not understanding God's way, if we don't get our expectations of God right, then we'll come away really not recognizing who Jesus really is and what he's really come to do.

[10 : 15] And so, we will be disappointed, wouldn't we? You see, even in Matthew, in this genealogy, he gives us a clue as to the unexpectedness of God's king.

First, take a look at Jesus' mother. Verse 16, she's a humble virgin, isn't she? A lady without power or clout.

Not a princess in waiting, not a daughter of a rich ruler. Just a simple girl. Totally undeserving by human standards. And look who she's compared to.

Four. There are only four other women in the genealogy. And take a look who they are. Verse 3, we have Tamar, who's disguised as a, who had to disguise herself as a prostitute in order to produce offspring for Judah.

And yet, it's to that very offspring that Jesus comes. Likewise, verse 5, Rahab, another prostitute, not a Jew. But she was someone whose faith led her to shelter the spies.

[11 : 22] And of all the people in Jericho, she was the only one that was saved. But she wasn't a Jew. Same again in verse 5, was Ruth the Moabite. Again, her faith led her to abandon the gods of her ancestors to follow the true God instead.

And she became the great grandmother of King David. And then finally, in verse 6, we have Uriah's wife. Her name is Bathsheba, whom David committed adultery with.

And you know, of all the children that David had, it was through her that God chose for the Messiah to come. But this is not a sanitized genealogy, is it?

Not pure bloodlines that, you know, only chooses the very best of Israel. Rather, God is unafraid to get in and amongst the grotteness of human history, of our history, to use people we would have otherwise overlooked to bring His promises to pass.

And so, we mustn't despair with the messiness of life, because it is through these humbling circumstances that God's plan comes to pass. That's just God's unexpected pattern of working in the world.

[12 : 41] Of course, the other detail in the genealogy is the fact of the 14 generations. So, we have three lots of 14 or six lots of seven. Seven, if you know, is the symbolic number for perfection in the Bible, just like the seven days of creation.

And again, Matthew's point is that although God's ways are unexpected, it is also perfect. And in this case, perfect in its timing. Jesus' coming may have seemed like such a long wait, but God sends Him in the fullness of time and not before.

He comes at the start of the seventh seven to begin the new creation. All of this is the signal to us that God's plan is not often our idea of His plan.

We want immediate fulfillment of our desires, don't we? We want instant relief from our pain. But God has other plans for us. Have we not often despaired in waiting?

Perhaps we think we deserve better in life. We've had to wait so long for it. Perhaps we've been searching for direction and we've been waiting so long for answers that haven't come.

[14 : 04] Well, perhaps we're disappointed because our expectations of God and what He's doing hasn't matched with what He has promised to us. You see, we often expect God to make us happy.

That's what we think life is about anyway, don't we? the pursuit of happiness. It's after all the American dream. They seem to export everything, including Black Friday and all that.

So they've exported the American dream of the pursuit of happiness as well. And so if that's what we think a good life is all about, that God is here to make us happy, then that's what we expect from God as well, aren't we?

Except that it will shock us to know that that's not God's priority for us. After all, if you keep reading on in the Gospel of Matthew and you get to the Sermon on the Mount, what are Jesus' very first words?

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. Jesus is not that interested in making you happy, is He? Not at first.

[15 : 12] No, God's priority with our lives and with humanity lies somewhere else. And we will look more in the next passage next week, but it's actually to deal with sin, the very thing that separates us from God.

It's our pride, our selfishness, and our rejection of God's rule over us. And there is no way that we can get rid of that problem ourselves, nor to avoid the punishment of it. And that's why Jesus had to come, not just as the Messiah who is the warrior king, but as a humble servant, servant king who dies on the cross.

But we don't naturally accept that that's what we need, do we? That's not the first thing we go to when we go, what do I really need in life? After all, whenever things go wrong, we never often think that the problem is with us, firstly, is it?

We often think it's other people, it's the circumstances that's causing me to be where I am. When we're dissatisfied in life, might it be that it's because we're envious and jealous instead?

When other people annoy us, could it be that we're the stubborn ones and we're the ones that are inflexible? Ah, but no. It's because others provoke us.

[16 : 31] They made me lose my patience. We could even blame God for that, couldn't we? Well, the good news is that despite our blindness, despite the fact that we can't seem to see all this, God sent Jesus to deal with the root cause of our problems.

He sent his son to die for our sins. He knows that we can't deal with it in our own strength, so he gives us his son freely, which we have to receive, of course, by faith in him.

And so, if you're here tonight and you have not done that in your life just yet, then please, can I encourage you to make Christmas the time when you do, when you give your life to Jesus and put your faith in him, because Jesus is the one that meets your need, what you really need in life.

Now, I'm not suggesting that then when you do that, there's some magic bullet and then all your unhappiness disappears, because that's not God's expectations, as I said. But when we do that, what we can know for sure is that our expectations of God then becomes right, that we see in Jesus, the promised king, what God came to achieve for us.

And then we begin to see and wait for the right things in our lives. And so, we'll see the blessings that God gives us when we are disciples of Jesus.

[17 : 56] Forgiveness of sin, a right relationship with God. It might not sound like much, especially if things are tough for you, but if we're a disciple of Jesus, then really, those are the very most important things in our life, the very best things that we can have.

God is our Father in Christ. All His promises to us in the Bible becomes yes to us in Christ. Do you know, some of you watch Australia's Got Talent?

Yeah? You've heard of the Golden Buzzer? Got a picture of that? Yeah? That's where people audition and if the judges, one of the judges, I think it's just one of the judges who likes you, then all they got to do is press their buzzer and it lights up this huge big cross that says you're in.

Well, if we are in Christ, then it's a bit like that, isn't it? God has pressed the golden buzzer for us and the cross that lights up, it's not those four, you know, like a beer ad kind of thing, four axes.

The cross that lights up is the cross of God's promised king, isn't it? And it lights up not because we've been spectacular in our auditions, no, we haven't done anything to deserve that golden buzzer, no, it lights up because of what Jesus, God's Messiah, has done for us.

[19 : 21] He may not have done it in the way we expected, but he's done it in the exact thing that we need. God has done it in the world. And when this Advent comes along, for those of us who are already in Christ, I want to encourage us actually to just pause and to again remember what Jesus has come to do for us.

He may not have done what we expected of him, but as we see and we will keep seeing over the next couple of weeks, God has done through him what we need most of all.

And he has given us a right relationship with him, God the Father, through whom all blessings flow. Well, let me pray and thank God for that.

Father, thank you for sending your son to be our Savior during this Advent season. Help us to again remember the reason for his coming, to see beyond the baby Jesus to the humble and selfless Jesus, giving his life for us so that we might have a right relationship with you.

Help us to find joy in this so that we might be encouraged even when life is tough. Help us to live in the hope that all of your promises to us find their yes in Jesus.

[20 : 42] We pray this in the name of our promised King, Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.