

The Beginning and the End or The Origin and Destiny of the Son of David

Matthew 1.1-6 & The Revelation 22.16-21

Christmas Day, 2022

Matthew 1.1-6 *The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham: ² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram. ⁴ Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. ⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. ⁶ Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.*

Revelation 22.16ff *"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. ¹⁸ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

Reader: The Word of the LORD

People: Thanks Be to God!

Here's a profound quote: "He's making a list and checking it twice..."

Christmas seems to be a lot about lists: shopping lists, lists of friends to whom we send cards, lists of foods to be served, of people to be invited. Lists are NOT the highest form of literature... but, like it or not, we can't live without them; lists of errands to run, people to call, tasks to be completed, prayer-lists. Lists may not be high literature (at least to US!) but lists are our lives (when you come to think of it) and lists were very important in the ancient world. (see Eugene Peterson's *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, pp. 148-153)

Through this Fall we've been looking at the life of King David (c. 1,000BC) AND THEN we looked at the rest the Hebrew Bible focusing on how the Prophets understood the Covenant God made with David being fulfilled...especially the promise of an eternal reign. How would God KEEP that promise

when David clearly DIED? What is meant by the eternal “son of David” a king who would rule forever?

Today, on Christmas Morning, we read the beginning and the end of the New Testament ... the first and last paragraphs, BOTH of which include the name, David.

The first reference to David is part of a list which, let’s be honest, most people skip over in their reading of the Bible. The NT opens with a genealogy and it turns out there are A LOT of these lists in the Bible. And when people DO take the time and effort to read and understand these lists or genealogies, they find them to be elaborately crafted and highly significant often employing the symbolic use of numbers and numerical patterns that lead us to unexpected discoveries.

This opening paragraph of the NT works on the pattern of three fourteens.

The second passage, the final paragraph of the Bible, ALSO references David but is NOT the kind of paragraph we skip-over or ignore. In fact, it’s enthralling ... *It’s a reiteration of an invitation we considered a few weeks ago from the Prophet Isaiah, “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.”* (55.1)

A seemingly tedious and unimportant list AND the most captivating invitation ever issued: the paragraphs beginning and ending the NT... and BOTH include this flawed king – who “didn’t always obey God but always dealt with God” (Eugene Peterson). So, let’s look at the origin and destiny of the Son of David:

1. The Covenant Made and Fulfilled
2. The Covenant’s Meaning for Daily Life

Three titles are given to the Holy Infant in the opening sentence of the NT: *Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham...* The genealogy (3 sets of 14 – and fascinating if we could fully analyze it!) the list goes on to prove that Jesus is “*the Christ*” (first title).

But why, of ALL the people in the Hebrew Bible, why these other two titles: son of David and son of Abraham? David’s name occurs over 1,000 times in the Bible and Abraham’s over 300 times. There’s *something* special about these guys...BUT WHAT?

Abraham was minding his own business, living among idol-worshippers in (what would later be called Babylon) when God took the initiative and called him and made promises to him and to his wife Sarah.

And do you know WHY God chose Abraham/Sarah?

ANSWER: because God wanted to (Ps 115.1-2). He showed them grace because grace is so beautiful that God wanted the world to see it – to share in its beauty. Mercy is the attribute God most admires about Himself (when He looks in the mirror – Heb 1.1-3) and His mercy begs to be shared and admired by ALL.

This Covenant of Grace made with Abraham has a lot of components to it and a lot of implications ... but it appears that the facet that's highlighted and the reason Jesus is called "son of Abraham" is that Jesus the Messiah will be the blessing to the nations that God promised to Abraham.

The original Covenant often repeated to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and many others is: *"And I will make you (Abraham) a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;... And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."* (Gen. 12.2-3)

Jesus Christ IS the fulfillment of that promise in the Covenant of Grace. It's why the Apostle Paul would write to the Galatians: "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to One, 'And to your seed,' that is, Christ." (Gal. 3.16) It's NOT only that the whole people of Abraham would be a blessing to all the gentile nations but that One in particular would bless the nations – the (singular) Seed or Descendant or Son of Abraham.

He's called Son of Abraham because HE IS THE ONE who was promised to Abraham and who would come from Abraham's descendants who would bless the whole world. The nations/Gentile are included in this genealogy. There were Gentiles in the family tree of Jesus (Tamar the Canaanite, Rahab the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabitess, Bathsheba - married to a Gentile) – Gentile blood was in His lineage. He has the Nations IN Him.

The Son of Abraham to BLESS all nations AND the Son of David to RULE all nations. He is born in Bethlehem where King David also got HIS start; this Son of David will retrace David's steps yet without sin. He'll be that ONE descendant who truly obeyed all the Law and fulfills all the conditions.

He is Abraham's Son to BLESS the nations and David's Son to rule. He will dethrone all the posers-kings, all the "smiling faces, lying to the races", like Herod the tyrant... and Jesus Christ will reign in beauty, in perfect security with NO paranoid power-manipulation (like Herod the baby-killer Mat 2.16ff).

*"He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love"* (Isaac Watts; 1719)

And at the end of Matthew's Gospel, we find Jesus Christ – blessing the nations and ruling the nations calling His disciples "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" (28.18-20)

And at the end of the age...at the end of the Bible, we find Him – the "Tsar Shalom" – the Prince of Peace – blessing (like Abraham) and ruling (like David). He says to all creation: "*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end... I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.*" (Rev. 22.13-16)

He is, in His divine nature, David's *Source* (He was before David and before Abraham – "before Abraham was, 'I AM'" – John 8.58) and in His human nature, David's *Heir* – the root and descendent of David, David's Son and David's Lord.

David's House had collapsed but David's Source and David's Son will raise the Fallen Tent of David (Amos 9.11; Isa 16.5). The Baby will grow in favor with God and man (Lk 2.52). He will obey all the Law of God ON MY BEHALF and HE WILL TAKE THE FALL – He will be blamed for MY SIN AND PAY THE PRICE IN FULL that I could never pay. His dying words from the Cross are, "τετέλεσται - paid in full – it is finished, the Covenant is fulfilled" (Jn. 19.30)

Then the Shining Star of the Morning – will emerge from darkness and death, like the Sun coming forth from its tent, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber (Ps 19.4-5). In His victory, His resurrection, a New Day is dawning. A New Creation is emerging... and nothing can stop it. History's end is written because the agreement, this Covenant between God and humanity is fulfilled.

So then, what remains? What to do with this truth that emerges from a boring old LIST and a red-hot conclusion to the Greatest Story Ever Told?

First: there's an invitation... like the one given to Abraham and repeated to the Patriarchs and Prophets, like Isaiah CH 55, an invitation: "*Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.*" At the end, He says it again: "*Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes TAKE the water of life without cost.*"

The first order of business is take this invitation seriously. Are you thirsty? Are you feeling the ravages of the curse, the futility of making your bed, only to mess it up again. "*A time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. A time to kill and a time to*

heal; a time to tear down and a time to build up.” (Eccl. 3.2-3) All we DO comes undone (everything on your list!)

Do you feel like your list is never complete?

Are you thirsty? Do you remember your own moral failings and guilt. Do you want God to give you what you deserve? Are you afraid to face this holy, holy, holy God who banished Adam after ONE sin? What about serial-sinners like YOU and ME? Are you thirsty for forgiveness and for love and acceptance and peace?

Take His invitation seriously. Stop trusting in your own performance (it's NOT enough!) Trust in the Covenant Keeper.

To trust in your own record and efforts is to add to the Book and whoever does that will be driven from the Garden eternally to live in everlasting regret.

Second (and last): The Church is the Bride. The Church resonates with and is in synch with the Spirit of God – “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come’”

There's been some intermural debate as to whether the church in the US is being too... winsome. Maybe we need more of a backbone and tell the world where to get off!

I hope you know where I am in the debate – I'm all for having a backbone (though... mine has not always served me well) BUT if the Spirit is inviting, alluring the world to put down their weapons and believe – let the Bride be just as winsome as Her Lord. Let's be an inviting church. Emil Bruner's famous words: *“The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning”*

Let's invite THEM to believe... to come among us and see the dynamics of the Kingdom... the way we LOVE one another; the Blessing to the nations – and the King who gave Himself for His unfaithful Bride.

“Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.