

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 1 (PART 1)

THE FIRST VERSE OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL GIVES US A PREVIEW OF MATTHEW'S PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE FOR WRITING. HE WILL REPORT STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS AS WELL AS RECORD A LARGE COLLECTION OF JESUS' TEACHING. THROUGH THESE STORIES AND COMMANDS, MATTHEW IS SHOWING THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH - THE PROMISED DESCENDANT OF ABRAHAM AND DAVID, THE FATHERS OF TWO OF THE GREAT COVENANTS OF SCRIPTURE.

SCHOLARS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT BECAUSE OF HOW FOCUSED MATTHEW IS ON CONNECTING THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS WITH THE EXPECTATIONS AND PROMISES OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES (AKA THE OLD TESTAMENT), IT'S POSSIBLE THAT HIS INITIAL AUDIENCE WAS PRIMARILY JEWISH. BUT, AS WE HIGHLIGHTED LAST TIME, HIS GOSPEL IS NOT JUST FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE, IT IS FOR ALL PEOPLE BECAUSE THE CENTRAL THEME AND FIGURE OF HIS WORK IS JESUS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF ABRAHAM AND DAVID WHO ALMIGHTY GOD HAS SENT TO BE THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL BEGINS WITH A GENEALOGY. A GENEALOGY IS A LISTING OF BIOLOGICAL RELATIVES AND WAS AN IMPORTANT TOOL IN HEBREW CULTURE. YOU COULDN'T BECOME A WORKER IN THE TEMPLE JUST BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO BE OR YOU WERE A HOLY PERSON - IT WAS REQUIRED THAT YOU WERE RELATED TO LEVI. TO BE A PRIEST YOU HAD TO BE RELATED TO AARON. TO BE A KING IN JERUSALEM YOU HAD TO BE RELATED TO DAVID. PROPERTY AND LAND WAS PASSED DOWN GENERATIONALLY AND SO KNOWING YOUR FAMILY TREE WAS IMPORTANT BOTH PRACTICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY.

IN ADDITION, MATTHEW USE OF THE WORD "GENEALOGY" IS WELL PLACED AT THE START OF HIS GOSPEL BECAUSE IT IS THE GREEK WORD "γένεσις" (GEN-E-SIS) - HIS BIOGRAPHY OF JESUS ISN'T JUST STARTING IN A MANGER IN BETHLEHEM OR IN A SYNAGOGUE IN NAZARETH BUT FROM IS ROOTED IN THE ETERNAL REDEMPTION PROMISES OF GOD MADE TO ABRAHAM AND DAVID.

MATTHEW 1:1

JESUS IS THE HEBREW NAME YESHUA WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO JOSHUA - AND THE NAME MEANS "YAHWEH SAVES".

MESSIAH IS AN ENGLISH transliteration of the Hebrew word "*MASHIACH*" which means "anointed". THE ANOINTED ONES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE THE PRIESTS AND KINGS WHO UPON THEIR INAUGURATION WOULD HAVE OIL POURED ON THEIR HEADS SIGNIFYING HOLINESS AND THEM BEING SET APART BY GOD. OVER TIME, AN EXPECTATION GREW THAT THE SAVIOR OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE, ISRAEL, WOULD BE "THE MESSIAH" (HEBREW: *HA MASHIACH*) - THE ANOINTED ONE OF GOD. MATTHEW TELLS US THAT HIS OPENING VERSES ARE TO GIVE THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS THE MESSIAH WHO WAS RELATED TO DAVID AND ABRAHAM.

FOR ANYONE NEW TO THE BIBLE THAT MAY NOT JUMP OUT AS SIGNIFICANT, YET FOR THOSE WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE BIBLICAL STORY THUS FAR, THOSE RELATIVES ARE BOTH SIGNIFICANT AND CRITICAL. ONE CANNOT BE "THE MESSIAH" AND NOT BE A DESCENDANT OF DAVID, NOR CAN ONE BE THE PROMISED SAVIOR OF ISRAEL AND THE WORLD IF NOT A DESCENDANT OF ABRAHAM. JESUS IS BOTH AND MATTHEW IS GOING TO SHOW US HOW WE GOT TO THAT CONCLUSION.

BEFORE WE READ THE GENEALOGY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT MATTHEW DOES NOT LIST EVERY SINGLE RELATIVE FROM ABRAHAM TO JESUS BUT LISTS TWO GROUPS OF 14. HERE IS A NOTE AS TO WHY THIS MAY BE:

"MATTHEW DOES NOT MEAN ALL THE GENERATIONS THAT HAD LIVED DURING THOSE TIMES BUT "ALL" THAT HE INCLUDED IN HIS LIST (FOR HE EVIDENTLY SKIPPED SOME, SUCH AS THREE GENERATIONS BETWEEN JORAM AND UZZIAH/AZARIAH IN V. 8...PERHAPS FOR EASE OF MEMORIZATION, OR PERHAPS FOR LITERARY OR SYMBOLIC SYMMETRY, MATTHEW STRUCTURES THE GENEALOGY TO COUNT 14 GENERATIONS FROM EACH MAJOR SECTION...MATTHEW MAY HAVE DRAWN FROM 1 CHRONICLES 3:10-14, SINCE BOTH GENEALOGIES OMIT SEVERAL KINGS FOUND IN THE NARRATIVE OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES. OMITTING NAMES IN A GENEALOGY WAS COMMON TO MAKE FOR EASE OF MEMORIZATION." (ESV STUDY BIBLE ON MATTHEW 1:6-17)

MATTHEW 1:1-5 - ABRAHAM TO JESSE

Q - DO ANY OF THESE NAMES STAND OUT TO YOU? IF SO, WHO AND WHY?

THIS PORTION OF THE GENEALOGY BEGINS WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS CHILDREN (ISAAC AND JACOB AKA ISRAEL) WHICH IS DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS AND CONTINUES THROUGH THE TIME OF THE EXODUS AND JUDGES, ENDING JUST BEFORE DAVID BECOMES KING.

ABRAHAMIC PROMISE - THE SUMMARY OF GOD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAHAM IS THIS - GOD WOULD BLESS AND CARE FOR ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS (WHICH WILL BE ABUNDANT AND NUMEROUS), AND THAT THEY WOULD INHERIT THE EARTH/LAND. THIS PROMISE PUTS RIGHT THE BREAK THAT OCCURRED IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN WHEN ADAM AND EVE LOST THEIR AUTHORITY OVER GOD'S CREATION, WOULD DIE AND WERE CURSED.

ADAM AND EVE LOST THE EARTH, WOULD DIE AND WERE CURSED.

ABRAHAM WOULD INHERIT THE EARTH, HAVE INNUMERABLE DESCENDANTS AND WAS BLESSED.

THIS CAN BE READ IN GENESIS 12-17 AND 22

MATTHEW 1:6-11 - JESSE TO BABYLON

Q - DO ANY OF THESE NAMES STAND OUT TO YOU? IF SO, WHO AND WHY?

THIS SECTION OF NAMES RELATES TO THE TIME OF THE KINGDOM OF DAVID. DAVID'S DESCENDANTS WOULD RULE FROM JERUSALEM IN A UNITED KINGDOM AND THEN AS THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH DURING THE TIME OF SOLOMON'S SON REHOBAM. THIS DYNASTY WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL THE DAYS WHEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON WOULD DESTROY JERUSALEM AND EXILE HER CITIZENS TO BABYLON. THIS DEFEAT WAS GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON HIS PEOPLE FOR THEIR SIN AND REJECTION OF HIM.

DAVIDIC PROMISE - THE SUMMARY OF GOD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO DAVID IS THIS - ONE OF HIS DESCENDANTS WOULD RULE ON HIS THRONE IN JERUSALEM, FOREVER. THIS PROMISE PUTS RIGHT THE BREAK THAT OCCURRED IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN AS WELL. ADAM, THE FIRST HUMAN CREATED BY GOD, WAS GIVEN DOMINION OVER THE EARTH (UNDER GOD) AND THEY LOST THAT POSITION WHEN THEY SINNED. THROUGH THE DAVIDIC COVENANT, DAVID'S DESCENDANT WOULD RULE OVER THE EARTH FOREVER AND WOULD NOT ONLY BE DAVID'S SON, HE WOULD BE GOD'S SON.

ADAM LOST DOMINION OVER THE EARTH.

DAVID, THROUGH HIS PROMISED HEIR, WOULD BE GIVEN THE AUTHORITY OVER THE EARTH AGAIN.

THIS CAN BE READ IN 2 SAMUEL 7 AND 1 CHRONICLES 17

MATTHEW 1:12-16 - BABYLON TO JESUS

Q - DO ANY OF THESE NAMES STAND OUT TO YOU? IF SO, WHO AND WHY?

THIS LAST GROUPING OF NAMES COVERS THE LAST PERIOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY, AFTER THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH, ONCE RULED BY DAVID, IS JUDGED THROUGH EXILE TO BABYLON FOR 70 YEARS. AFTER THE 70 YEARS THE RETURN TO JERUSALEM AS GOD PROMISED BUT A SHELL OF THE FORMER GLORY OF THE DAY OF DAVID'S REIGN. EVEN SO, GOD IS WORKING.

MESSIANIC PROMISE - ULTIMATELY INHERITING THE EARTH AND HAVING A RIGHTEOUS KING RULING IS NOT ENOUGH TO RESTORE ALL THAT WAS LOST DUE TO SIN IN EDEN. HUMANITY NEEDED SOMETHING ELSE TO RESTORE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENTION - OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. JESUS COMES IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL NOT TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD AND RULE AS KING, BUT TO DIE FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD SO THAT MEN AND WOMEN COULD BE A PART OF THE GLORIOUS RESTORATION PLAN IN THE END.

ADAM SINNED AND POLLUTED THE HOLY UNION WITH GOD.

JESUS NEVER SINS BUT RATHER DIES FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD TO OFFER FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION WITH GOD FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE.

THIS IS THE STORY WE ARE GOING TO READ IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

MATTHEW 1:17 - 14 GENERATIONS

ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS GENEALOGY IS HOW IT IS FILLED WITH SO MANY IMPERFECT PEOPLE. OF COURSE ALL HUMANS HAVE SINNED BUT JUST THINK HOW LISTED IN THE LINEAGE OF THE MESSIAH WE HAVE LIARS (ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB) AND MURDERERS (DAVID), FORMER PROSTITUTES (RAHAB) AND FOREIGNERS (RAHAB AND RUTH). WE HAVE GOOD KINGS (HEZEKIAH, ASA, JEHOSEPHAT AND JOSIAH) AND BAD KINGS (MANASSEH AND JECONIAH). WE HAVE WELL KNOWN HEROES (DAVID) AND UNKNOWN (ABIHUL). AND THEN JUST BEFORE THE NAME OF THE MESSIAH IS WRITTEN WE MEET HIS FATHER, JOSEPH, A RELATIVELY UNKNOWN BLUE COLLAR WORKER FROM AN UNREMARKABLE TOWN CALLED NAZARETH. ALL RELATED TO JESUS THE MESSIAH.

AND ALL OF THIS LEADS US TO HIM! TWISTS AND TURNS, GOOD NAMES AND BAD NAMES, GOOD DAYS AND BAD DAYS - STORIES OF AMAZING THINGS AND STORIES OF ABHORRENT THINGS - AND THEN WE ARRIVE AT LAST AND MEET JESUS.

THIS GENEALOGY IS EASY FOR MANY OF US TO SKIP OVER AND RUN THROUGH AS WE PLOD THROUGH THE READING OF FOREIGN AND STRANGE NAMES - BUT THIS GENEALOGY IS NOT JUST GIVING LEGAL AND HEREDITARY FACTS ABOUT JESUS - IT'S A PICTURE OF THE HUMAN JOURNEY TO JESUS.

GENEALOGY OF MATTHEW IS NOT AN ANNOYANCE, NOR MONOTONOUS NOR CUMBERSOME. IT'S A TESTIMONY OF GOD'S LOVE.

BECAUSE MATTHEW'S GENEALOGY IS NOT ~~JUST~~ A BORING LIST OF NAMES, IT'S A LIST OF PEOPLE. AND THE REASON WHY THEY'RE IN THE BIBLE IS BECAUSE GOD CARES ABOUT PEOPLE. AND IT'S NOT ~~JUST~~ A LIST OF PEOPLE, IT'S A LIST OF PEOPLE WITH NAMES - BECAUSE THESE PEOPLE'S NAMES ARE KNOWN BY GOD! AND YOURS IS TOO. AND NO MATTER WHAT TWISTS AND TURNS YOUR LIFE HAS TRAVELED AND NO MATTER WHAT YOUR PAST HAS BEEN, GOD IS WORKING IN THE WORLD AND IN YOUR LIFE TO LEAD YOU TO JESUS TOO.