

**Home : Sermons : December 24, 2006****Born in a Manger: The Son of David, the Son of Abraham – Matt 1:1**

Introduction – Matthew begins his gospel with these words: “*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.*” These words are as central to the Christmas story as the narrative in verse 18 and following – “*Now the birth of Jesus was as follows...*” In fact, without the genealogy of Jesus Christ proclaimed and understood, the Christmas story loses its power and substance and becomes nothing more than a strange folk-story surrounded with sentimental feelings. When we look at the manger, we see the Baby – but who is He? He is Jesus, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

Jesus, the Son of David – David was just a shepherd-boy. He was the youngest of eight boys of Jesse, and yet selected by Samuel through the Holy Spirit to be the king of Israel. It would be a long road of trials and suffering before David, then a full grown man, would come to actually sit on his throne and rule Israel. Even as king, David would be a warrior, battling inside and outside his kingdom his entire life. He was a shepherd-king and a war-king.

At the end of his life, God promised David that He would set up David’s son and establish his kingdom (2 Sam 7). This son would build a house for God’s name and the throne of his kingdom would be established forever. Solomon would become that next king and he would be the peace-king and the wisdom-king. And yet, the kingdom, because of Solomon’s and then his descendants’ idolatry would not continue forever. In just the very next generation the kingdom is split in two and over the next centuries both halves spiral down into judgment and exile. How could this be?

Jesus, the Seed of David – Paul will teach us that not all Israel is Israel (Rom 9), and that through it all, God kept a faithful remnant. The fulfillment of God’s promise was to come through another Son of David, one prophesied of at the time of Judah’s exile (Ezek 34, 37) – another Good Shepherd and another Good King. David himself wrote a Psalm where he describes himself calling his son, the coming Messiah, “my Lord.” This Son of David would not only come from David; He would be greater, because He would be the very Son of God. Paul also would teach that Jesus was the son of David in the flesh and the Son of God, declared so with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by His resurrection (Rom 1:3).

This is why, when the angel came to Mary to announce the conception in her virgin womb, he said that His name would be called Jesus (Y’shua – God is salvation), that He would be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God would give Him the throne of His father David (Luke 1:30-33). Jesus reigns as that Root and Offspring of David (Rev 22:16).

The story of Christmas is the story of the fulfillment of the promise to David that His throne would be established forever.

Jesus, the Son of Abraham – The story of Abraham begins right after the story of the tower of Babel. There, mankind had sought to build a tower to heaven. They were a people with one language, convinced they could create their own way to Paradise, exalting their own name, not the name of Yahweh. The tower is an utter failure, as are all man’s attempts to glorify himself autonomously from God. They build the tower up, up, up, but God still has to come down to examine and judge the work. God judged mankind by confusing their language into a multitude of tongues (hence the word “babel”). This is the origination of the table of nations and why we speak so many different languages (words); and why we are so many people-groups with so many false religions (Words) today.

Out of this judgment, however, God selects one man, Abram, from Ur (present day southern Iraq). Abram is sent from his homeland to go to another land that the Lord promised him. God says there that He will make Abram a great nation and through him, all the nations (people-groups) would be blessed (Gen 12:1-3).

The problem, you will remember, is that Sarai, Abram’s wife, is barren. How do you bring forth a new and great nation from your loins when your wife is unable to bear children? But God promises to do the impossible – He will bring forth a child from Sarai and this seed will begin a process whereby there will be so many descendants of Abram that they will be more numerous than the stars in the sky or the sands of the seashore.

And so, God enters into a covenant with Abram, making these promises, and Abram believes God. Later, Abram’s name is changed to Abraham (father of a multitude) and he is circumcised, the mark of God upon his people. These people would not come from the flesh (and so the foreskin is cut away) but by the Spirit of God, His miraculous work. Isaac, the son called “laughter” is born the next year, the fruit of this covenant.

Jesus, the Seed of Abraham – And yet a greater miracle would take place. A son and daughter of Abraham would be betrothed and, while still a virgin, Mary would conceive by the Holy Spirit. Mary sings, “*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit*

has rejoiced in God my Savior....as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.” Jesus is born, and when He is circumcised, Simeon knows by the Holy Spirit that the gospel promised to Abraham is being fulfilled. Jesus is “*a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people, Israel.*” All the nations, Jew and Gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised, would be greatly affected, and ultimately greatly blessed, by this one Babe. God would do the impossible again. Paul, speaking of the promise to Abraham, said that the promise of the world was not only to Abraham but to his seed, and that it would come through faith, like Abraham’s (Rom 4). In fact, the true sons of Abraham, those who are Abraham’s seed are those who have the faith of Abraham, faith in Abraham’s Seed, this Savior of the nations (Gal 3).

The story of Christmas is the story of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that all the nations would be saved through his Seed.

The Making of a Glorious Christmas – Gather around the nativity and stand in awe, or kneel with the shepherds before this blessed Child. There was a hush, a fear, a wonder, as those men gathered around the manger. But it was not a mushy, sentimental hush. If that’s all it was (and is), you can understand why any man worth his masculinity walks away in disgust and unbelief. You can understand why any woman with her sense about her realizes that the frost is just spray-paint, the snow is white cotton, and the camels are just plastic molds. Christmas is not a warm Hallmark moment. It is the middle of a long story, the fulfillment of the promise of the Incarnation, and proof that God is good to His Word – a Word which would put down His enemies: sin and death.

From a Feeding Trough to an Everlasting Throne – Like David, Jesus would begin in the meanest of situations – a lowly, and eventually suffering, servant. But He would be anointed with the Spirit, proclaiming the kingdom of God and the need for all to repent and follow Him. He would die for the sins of His people, be raised on the third day, and ascend, physically, really, and gloriously, to the throne of His Father Almighty (and His father, David) where He now reigns over heaven and earth until all of His enemies are put under His feet. That is what must be seen in the Christmas scene.

From Irrelevance to Worldwide Blessing - Like Abraham, Jesus would be promised the world but would be rejected by that world in His day. Seemingly an unimportant cult-leader, Jesus will be eventually crucified to satisfy an angry Jewish mob. Rejected by His covenant people, Jesus would rise from the dead and pour out His Spirit in a Pentecost of fiery tongues, reversing the curse of Babel, and begin the work of blessing all the nations, making sons of Abraham from every tribe, tongue and nation. Having ascended to Abraham’s bosom, Jesus now sends His angels, His Spirit-filled messengers, ordained through His established church, to preach the gospel and disciple the nations. As the hymn says, “*He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found.*”

All of this is true. What a wonderful reason to get caught up in the Christmas Spirit.

Dave Hatcher – December 24, 2006