

Madness: Chronicle of the King

Chronicle of the King

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

Bible Text: Matthew 1:1-17

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As we turn to Matthew chapter one, my wife and I had the privilege over the holiday season to visit one of the most renowned and famous personal residences in all of America. There is this little house up in North Carolina that has 255 rooms in it. And on the tour they gave us they made it quick to point out that there was a painting on the wall that proved that the residents had a connection to royal lineage.

I want you to turn with me to the book of Matthew chapter one as I will not read all 45 names. But I do want to read some strategic verses that will give us some insight into today's message, beginning in verse one of Matthew one.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;¹

Fast forward to verse five.

And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;²

Verse 11: "And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon."³

Verse 17: "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations."⁴

There are 14 times three generations, 42 generations, 45 names and 40 references to the word begat. This first chapter of the book of Matthew, this first chapter of the New Testament and is communicating to us that the king has come, begins with what all kings possess, a lineage. And one of the things that I want to discuss today is how this both compares and contrasts to a lineage of an earthly king. We are going to see all this season that the King known as Jesus Christ came completely different and opposite than any earthly king ever would. In fact, the form in which he came, the manner in which he came, the things that he taught, would be in our language utter and sheer madness.

¹ Matthew 1:1-2.

² Matthew 1:5-6.

³ Matthew 1:11.

⁴ Matthew 1:17.

So today I want to welcome you to Matthew chapter one as we begin a series entitled “Madness,” seeing that this King Jesus Christ, has a lineage like other kings, but it is so drastically different. The first thing that we must notice about the lineage of Jesus is it does compare to other earthly kings, but because it contains a list of royalty, not a list of earthly royalty, but it lists a royalty as far as God is concerned. Look at the first two verses. You have Abraham. You have Isaac. You have Jacob. You have David. That is a who’s who of Jewish royalty. Maybe they do not wear the crown jewels. Maybe they do not live in a “palace,” but these are the who’s who of Jewish history.

And as we look at these royal figures there are three in particular that I want to call to your attention who give us an idea of the manner in which the king is and will be. The first one is this. The calling of Abraham. You notice there in the first two verses that Abraham is mentioned. We have to go all the way back to Genesis chapter 12 to find the very first Jewish individual in the Bible. In fact, in the previous 11 chapters everybody was a Gentile, just like most of us. But in Genesis chapter 11 we know the famous story about Babel, the story where all the peoples of the earth came together when the Lord said to scatter. They came together and built a tower trying to place their name above God’s name. In Genesis 11 it records that God came down. He scattered the people. He scattered their languages. Then, in chapter 12, up in an area known as the Ur of the Chaldees, an area that we know as modern northern Iraq, there was a man by the name of Abram. He would become Abraham later, but for reference we will just call him Abraham. The Lord came to him and said, “Abraham, can you see the number of stars in the sky?”

He said, “I do.”

He said, “Can you number them?”

He said, “I cannot.”

He said, “Your descendants will be able to outnumber those stars. Do you believe me?”

And he said, “I do believe you.”

Now here is what is amazing about this calling if you don’t know anything about it. He and his wife were, in our language, already collecting Social Security and didn’t have children. And yet he believed that they would have children more numerous than the stars. Now, ladies, you understand he had this conversation with God without his wife present. You do get that, right? So nonetheless, what we see is the Lord calling Abraham not only to have a child of promise whom we would know as Isaac, but calling Abraham according to Hebrews chapter 11 verse eight, to go to a land he knew not of.

When Jesus comes as the King in Matthew he comes as a King who is following the calling of Abraham. It would be in the book of Genesis that God would call Abraham not only to start a new people, but to have a new purpose, to reach all the nations of the world

with the saving message that a redeemer is coming and a king is coming. The royal family in Jesus' lineage begins with the calling of a man named Abraham, but it continues with the name known as Isaac.

It says there that Abraham begat Isaac. And though Abraham received the calling, Isaac is the connection. You say, "Well, the connection..." If you ever study the patriarchs in the Old Testament there are three names that always go together—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—but if you look at their lives Abraham had this great calling, right? Abraham has these incredible stories about going to a land he knew not of, the famous Sodom and Gomorrah story. I mean, after all, you have got Isaac and then Jacob. Jacob is the one who established the 12 tribes. Jacob is the one who started all of the divisions of the land. Isaac just kind of gets left out in the mix. But Isaac is an absolute necessary connection in the lineage of Jesus to understand the madness of a king that Jesus would be.

It was in Genesis chapter 22 where Abraham took the child of promise, a young boy by the name of Isaac, the one of whom he had called him to bear and they did bear through faithfulness. The Bible records in Genesis chapter 22 that Abraham and Isaac were going to go on top of a mountain and offer a sacrifice to the Lord. The only problem there was only two people were going to the top of the mountain, Abraham and Isaac. The Bible records—and I cannot grasp this in my flesh as a dad, particularly of a boy's perspective. We have the words of Abraham in Genesis chapter 22. His son says, "Dad, I see the wood and I see the fire. Where is the sacrifice?"

And he says, "Don't worry, son. The Lord will provide."

Abraham turns to his servants. This is in Genesis chapter 22 verse nine, one of my favorite parts of the Bible. Do you know what he says to his servants? "We will return."

Do you get that? We will return. And the book of Hebrews chapter 11 verse 19 states that Abraham believed when he went on that mountain that he was even able to raise his son from the dead. They go on top of the mountain and in the scene I can only imagine, but cannot fathom, his young son, the son of promise, his first born as far as the promise is concerned—we will talk about that in just a moment—is put on that sacrifice. Abraham raises his hand in the motion to sacrifice. Thankfully the Lord speaks and says, "Stop."

Abraham looks up and there is a ram that has been caught in the thicket. And the Bible records him saying, "The Lord has provided the sacrifice."

Why is this the necessary connection? Because in Genesis chapter 22 in his famous lineage of Jesus, of royal characters, of Abraham who had this calling, it was Isaac who connects us to the understanding of what kind of king Jesus would be. See, kings on this earth spend their whole life trying to avoid death. The King from heaven came to die for the children of earth. And that is the connection. It pictures for us in this lineage what type of king he would be, a type of king who would offer himself as a sacrifice for the

sins of humanity. There was a calling of Abraham. There was the connection of Isaac. Oh, and then there is the covenant of David.

Do you recognize there in verse one that David is actually listed first. In other words, before we get into the chronologies of all the begats, the first person listed is the person whom we know as King David. He is mentioned later on in verse six as King David. But in 2 Samuel chapter seven verse 16 whom we know as the second monarch... Remember, the first king was the man by the name of Saul. The second one was David. The third was Solomon and then the kingdom divided. In 2 Samuel chapter seven verse 16 listen to what the Lord says to David about his lineage and the king.

He says, "I am going to establish an everlasting covenant with you. "That means that your kingdom will never go out. Your kingdom will always be an everlasting kingdom."

Now for some of you who do not grasp what that word everlasting means, let me take you to a very familiar verse, John 3:16.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."⁵

When the Lord says everlasting he means without end. So when he called Abraham out, when he connected the dots with the sacrificial act of Isaac, he established a covenant. He established an agreement with David. In fact, later in Psalms 110 verse one King David would make this statement. He says that my Lord, speaking of Jesus eventually, when he comes, his throne will reign forever. The royal lineage of Jesus contains the calling of Abraham, the connection of Isaac, but for us it contains the contrast or the covenant of David, that this would be a king whose kingdom would never cease.

You know, this is what we expect to see from a royal lineage, right? But the problem is we have only listed three of the 45 names. The next section that we need to address in Matthew chapter one isn't the royal lineage of Jesus, but the other relatives who came along.

You and I all have those, right? We call them the other relatives. The thing that is fascinating to me about the lineage of Jesus in Matthew one is its completely different from the other nine lineages in the Old Testament. There are nine major genealogies or lineages in the Old Testament and there are major differences between Jesus' and theirs, the first of which is Jesus' lineage is the only one to contain a listing of people who are female or women. The second thing that is interesting to me is that in Jesus' lineage nobody ever dies. Now we know these people actually died, but it says so and so begat so and so. All the lineages of the Old Testament so and so begat so and so and after so many years they died. There is no death mentioned in the lineage of Jesus. It contains women where the Old Testament ones don't. It contains no death where the Old Testament does. And here is the thing that strikes me. It lists individuals that if you were

⁵ John 3:16.

an earthly king you would never list in your family history. These are the people that you conveniently remove from the family tree.

I want to discuss some of these folks that are listed in Matthew chapter one beginning in verse five, compare them to our lives, but also compare them to the royal blood that we saw just a few moments earlier.

The first one is found in verse five.

“And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab.”⁶

Yes, that is the Rahab from Joshua chapter six. Do you know what the Bible calls her in Hebrews chapter 11? Calls her a harlot. In fact, the first element of the relatives of Jesus that we see actually contains the names of people who lived a life of open sin, sinful lifestyles that everybody... she is known by her profession. She is known by that which she did as a trade which is less than godly and less than righteous. Of all the people that you could have possibly put, don't you think this would be one that you would have left out? But do you know what? Every one of us has people in our families who live in open sin. I will never forget a couple of years ago I had the privilege of leading a youth camp. And I went to go lead that youth camp. I found out from my mom that one of my relatives was going to be there, a young lady about 14 or 15 years of age at the time. She was the only person in her family who was going to church of any kind whatsoever. She came from one of those branches of the family that you wish you could hide, but you just can't.

When I showed up at the youth camp I was walking down one of the halls and there she came. I had not seen this young lady in a couple of years, but obviously she still had the same characteristics that she did years before. I recognized her. She recognized me. She was 14, 15 years old. She is embarrassed, number one, that I am there. Number two, she is embarrassed that I am the camp pastor. So there is a lot of embarrassment going on. And, plus, she is a teenager who just lives in embarrassment.

So I am walking down the hall and I said, “How are you doing?”

And she kind of looked, you know, kind of... she said, “Fine. How are you?” And she just darted on her way.

It just so happened that about maybe 12 to 15 feet away from that little conversation were three or four young ladies probably in their early to mid 30s, parents of these teenagers, people who volunteered with youth ministry. You know, every church has those groups of parents that you couldn't do church without. You know what I am talking about. They are at everything, doing everything. Making sure that teenagers and young people get ministered to.

⁶ Matthew 1:5.

I realized that these were the people who knew what I needed to know. So I went over to these young ladies. I said, “Ladies, I hate to bother you.” I introduced who I was. “Do you know that young lady that I spoke to in the hall?”

“Oh, yeah.”

I said, “What do you know about her?”

They said, “Well, she is on the dance team and she does this at school, blah, blah, blah.”

And I said, “No, what do you really know about her?”

They said, “Well, she is the only person in her family who comes to church at all. We don't see anybody else.”

And I said, “Speaking of family, what do you know about the family?”

She said, “Oh, man, you don't want to meet the mom.”

I said, “Really? What would happen if I met the mom?”

She said, “You just have no idea what kind of lifestyle she lives, what kind of this...” And they went into graphic detail of all that she was involved in. And I will never forget the look on their faces when I said, “You know, my relative has got a pretty messed up life, doesn't she? You all have a good day.”

I said, “Don't worry, ladies, I am not here to embarrass you.” I said, “All I needed today was to know that you all knew the same thing we already knew, too.”

Don't we all have people in our family that we can't hide? Particularly now that we have social media we just can't hide them. They are everywhere. And they are just like Rahab. Everybody knows what they do and everybody knows where they are. You know, that is the kind of person that if you were a king you would make sure they didn't make the list. But there it is in verse five. There is Rahab, a woman of open sin. But then it moves on to verse six and shares with us someone who is living in hidden sin. It says the woman who used to be the husband of Uriah.

In fact, so hidden that we have got to do a little puzzle work here. This is the woman by the name of Bathsheba. Remember Bathsheba who was married to Uriah and King David said, “I am not supposed to have you. I want you. We will kill him. We will take care of things,” and he became her husband? So hidden that even in Matthew chapter one she is not listed by name, but we cannot doubt who she is.

Don't we all have those relatives that we just hope nobody does find out about? You all know what I am talking about right? If not, then you need to come visit my family. I will introduce you to some of these folks.

When I went to college as a freshman I participated in an endeavor. I joined what is known as the fraternal system, a group of guys who get together and play sports and hang out and all that kind of stuff. As you go through the process of joining that fraternal system one of the questions that is asked of you as you go through the process is they want to know if you are a legacy. What that means is of all these different organizations that are offered on campus, do you have someone in your family who has already been a part of one? Now they want to know this for multiple reasons. Number one, they want to know who you are so they know who you are. And, second of all, it is actually easier, typically, to get in an organization if you have already had a dad, a granddad, an uncle or a brother who has already gone through the procedure.

I will never forget that night as I was entering this process. They listed all these organizations that were on campus and they asked us to fill in the name and the college of any of our direct relatives that had been a part of any of them. And I have a relative that was a part of one of those organizations that I was technically a legacy to. And I had this debate in my mind. Do I really want them to know that I am connected to him? Do I really want them to know that... This can't be good, so we are going to leave it blank. I left it blank.

A couple of days later we showed up to the orientation and when you showed up to the orientation they gave you a name badge that listed what you were a legacy to. And lo and behold it was listed with his name. I went up to them. I said, "How did you do this?"

They said, "It is in the books."

Oh.

How many times do we have people in our lives, relatives in our lives that we just like to keep their identity hidden? You know, Bathsheba and that whole scenario with King David, that is one of those stories you just don't want people to tell, but it is right there. There is open sin. There is hidden sin.

And then you get to verse 11, a name that may not mean much to you. It is permanent sin.

"And Josias begat Jechonias."⁷

You may not be familiar with the character by the name of Jechonias, but he shows up in Jeremiah chapter 22 and he is one of the most evil, most wicked, most ungodly men you have ever seen in the Bible. He is so horrific that the Lord comes to him in Jeremiah 22. Listen to this. He is a descendant of Abraham. He is a descendant of David. He is in the royal lineage and the Lord says to Jeconiah, "Your behavior is so awful that I am cutting you off. No longer will a king reign from this family." That is how we got the virgin birth, folks. We had to have a supernatural manifestation of God.

⁷ Matthew 1:11.

Does anybody have any of those family members who made a permanent dent on the family tree? See, when I was a sophomore in college I took an anthropology course and in an anthropology course your final exam or your thesis, for lack of better terms, is you have to present a full scale genealogy, a full scale family tree, where you came from, your descendants, all the different backgrounds. Here was the problem. On one side of my family, about seven generations back we got nowhere. I mean, we called everybody we knew. We called the Mormons, because they know where everybody is, ok? We couldn't get anywhere on this guy. Who is he? Where did he come from? It is almost like it just stopped. But we knew there had to be a mom and dad, because he lived. When we started investigating the story, do you know what we found out? We found out there is a reason that my family is from Texas. Just like most people who settled in Texas they were running from problems somewhere else. He had caused some trouble, so much so that he got "snuck out" of another state, changed his identity and removed every known reference to his name, because he knew if he didn't somebody would come get him.

Do you know that permanently changed our family? It changed what our name would be. It changed where our location would come from. Anybody have any relatives that their behavior was such that it changed everybody's history forever? That is the background of this king.

You have got Rahab. You have got Bathsheba. You have got Jechonias. This guy really messed it up. But when you take the royalty and the relatives and you overlap them, you see something that you may have never seen before. Let's go back to the royalty for a moment. Abraham lived a life of calling, right? But he also lived a life of open sin. His first born, biologically, was not Isaac. It was Ishmael. He lived his entire life and everybody around him knew that he had disobeyed God. Everybody knew that he had not done what God asked him to do. Why? Because Ishmael grew up. Ishmael had a family. Ishmael had descendants and today even when you watch the news, the descendants of Isaac are fighting the descendants of Ishmael. It is an open sin and everybody knows it.

Then there is Isaac, a man who lived with hidden sin. You know the story. He had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob would receive the birthright. Jacob would birth the 12 tribes, but Esau was the first born and he lived his life hoping to hide the fact that as an old man he got tricked. As an old man his younger son and his wife manipulated him into giving the birthright to the wrong person hoping nobody would ever find out, but Esau stayed around and Esau told the story. And then there is permanent sin, just like Jechoniah.

How about King David? Did King David have anything in his life that was so dramatic that it prevented him and altered his life history? Yes, he did. In fact, the Bible says there was one thing he wanted to do more than anything else. He wanted to build a temple. He wanted to build a physical house for the presence of God. And do you know what the Lord told him? Because you are a man with bloody hands, you cannot build the building.

The thing that we see here is that even the royals had the same problems as the relatives. And we see that the relatives now because of Jesus can have access to the lineage of

Jesus, which brings me to verse 17, the final verse today. And I want to speak why. What is the reason? What is the purpose? Why would we have 45 names, 42 generations and 40 begats? Why the Abrahams Isaacs and Davids? Why the Rahabs, Bathshebas and Jechonias? Why do we have these folks listed?

You will notice in verse 17 it says:

“So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.”⁸

As you take a step back from that verse and look at the Old Testament literally in totality, the first thing we see from Abraham to David, the reason we have the genealogy in Matthew chapter one is it pictures for us what salvation will look like, when God called Abraham out to go from the Ur of Chaldees to a land he knew not of, when his sons were born, when he had descendants, the Lord asked him to do something. He asked him to circumcise their flesh, to cut their flesh, to distinguish themselves from everybody else. But here is what it pictures for us, a cutting off of the flesh is exactly what Jesus Christ offers us in the cross. In fact, Colossians chapter two verse 11 speaks of Jesus offering a circumcision made without hands, separating the body from the soul.

In other words, the picture that we get is all of the bad, all of the sin, all of the unbelief that we have committed, he is able to remove, he is able to cut that off so that it is no longer ... it is a picture of cutting. It is a picture of circumcision, from Abraham to David that was the one thing that identified the people of God. And through the cross of Jesus Christ whoever, however, from wherever can have their sins removed and cut off forever.

But then there is a second statement. It says, “From David to the carrying away.” From David was Solomon and the desire that David had, but it was Solomon that would see it fulfilled. There the Bible records particularly in 1 Kings chapter eight they dedicated what we know as the temple. They dedicated the building that would have gold over everything including the door hinges. Solomon would build a permanent place for the presence of the Lord. And up until the carrying away.... Remember it says and from David or Solomon to the carrying away, what was the one thing that marked them as believers in God? It was the place where they worshiped, the place where they offered sacrifices, the place where the holy of holies, the presence of God was.

See, verse 17 doesn't just give us a picture of what salvation will look like, it gives us a prophecy of what salvation will be, because according to 1 Corinthians chapter six verse 19 it states:

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.”⁹

⁸ Matthew 1:17.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:19.

You were bought with a price. A building that housed the holy of holies from David unto the carrying away is now possessed by your earthly flesh, why? Because Jesus died. Jesus rose and Jesus ascended. He sent the Holy Spirit and he prophesied that we would be his dwelling place, we would be where he would reside, we would be his house to move and act. It pictured for us a cutting off of our sin. It prophesied where the presence of God would be. And then there is that last statement.

From the carrying away unto Christ. There was that time in biblical history where the people of God, the Jewish people marched from Babylon back west to an area that we know as Israel or Jerusalem. Characters like Nehemiah and Ezra and others rebuilt the wall and rebuilt the temple.

One of the most fascinating things about biblical history at this time is this, that though they had a room set aside for the holy of holies, the Bible records that the ark of the covenant was not there.

In the first lineage you have the picture of circumcision, the cutting away. In the second one you have the prophecy of the temple and the dwelling place, but in the third one you have the person of Jesus Christ. For we see when Jesus came, no longer would a sacrifice do. No longer would rote prayers do. For we hear and we see from his voice, from his teachings and particularly from his actions that only the person of Jesus Christ can forgive us of our sins. Only the person of Jesus Christ can save us. And only the person of Jesus Christ can take a Rahab and turn her into an Abraham. Only Jesus Christ can do that.

If you think about the lineage in Matthew chapter one it is sheer madness. Earthly kings don't list those types of people. Early kings don't allow for those stories to continue to be told, but the King of kings showed us something. He showed us that whether you are an Abraham or whether you are a Bathsheba, we all need the person of Jesus Christ. He shared with us that whether you are in the upper crust or in the lower crust, we need Jesus Christ.

And we have entitled this series "Madness," but on this very first day as we look at the lineage of Jesus, let me share with you what I think is madness. Do you know what I think is madness? It is hearing what you have heard for these minutes and still saying no to Jesus Christ. That is madness, why? Because Jesus did everything "different" than the world did and that is what he calls us to be. Instead of trusting in our own abilities, trust in him. Instead of trusting in another human being, trusting God himself. Instead of thinking that we are all that and a little bit more, realize that we are sinners in need of saving. It is madness not to realizing that we desperately need Jesus Christ as our Savior and as our Lord.