

## 1:1

**The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.** By the time you get to Matthew 1, Matthew writing to other Hebrews expects that audience to know Abraham. Matthew is probably the first Gospel written.

*Galatians 3 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before **the gospel** unto Abraham, saying, 'In thee shall all nations be blessed.' Let me read that again. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

The Gospel that Abraham had preached to him was very simple: "Abraham, in you I will bless all nations. All nations, Abraham. I will bless all nations through you."

**The son of David, the son of Abraham.** Matthew expects you, the reader, as a Jew, to know who David and Abraham are. God promised Abraham that he would bless all nations. He would bless all nations. God blessed Abraham and told Abraham that he would bless all nations through him. As a matter of fact, Paul said it was the Gospel that Abraham had preached to him.

Genesis 12, and you know we're in the story of Abraham. When I say story, I mean the true account of Abraham. When you get to Genesis 12, you are at least 33% through human history. Think about that. Abraham is dated at about 1900 BC. That is more than 1/3 through human history. Now think about that. We know that this last third of human history since the time of Christ basically wasn't recorded in the Bible. That means that the first third of human history is covered in the first 11 chapters of the Bible and the middle third of human history has the other 1,178 chapters.

*Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. **I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.***

It was so much about Jesus that two chapters earlier than this "Gospel to Abraham" in the book of Galatians, Paul says, "If anyone comes unto you with a Gospel other than the one I preached, let them go to hell." (1:8-9) Now think that through with me for a minute. The Gospel that Abraham heard was the same Gospel that Paul preached. Abraham got saved by the same Gospel you and I do. It was put in different words. "Abraham, I'm going to bless all nations through you."

Abraham is 75 years old and he has no son. Abraham is 86 years old and he has no son and so he is tempted and he takes, I suppose, human ingenuity to help God out with his will. Many of us are guilty of doing that from time to time. We find out God wants something and we substitute it for maybe a good way to help him out. Maybe his timing is not what we think it ought to be and so we jump the gun and we get impatient. We expect God to do something immediately because he says he'll do it eventually, you see. We're not happy with eventually, we want immediately. You see, we think in five minute increments of time and sometimes 30 if you're really lucky.

So we think in little increments of time but we're dealing with a God here who is not limited by the sitcom. He knows exactly how much time he's going to take doing something and Abraham is a little bit challenged here. You see, when we read through the book of Genesis, we see a man and a woman walking with God in the garden and they lose paradise for the many. So Adam and Eve are estranged from God and their obedience or rather disobedience leads to the ostracization of all people from the presence of God. Your sin affects more than just you. It affects more than just you. You may not know how it affects other people, it does affect other people in some way or another. You say, "Well, no. I don't know." It affects other people.

So the few become the many. They are instructed to expand. "You will go and you will repopulate the earth," and at Noah's flood, God says, "We're going to start over. Man's heart is just sinful and wicked and I can't put up with it anymore. My Spirit will not always strive with men." So eight people get on the boat. It

wasn't because there wasn't enough room. God knows there was room for anyone that wanted to get on the boat but only eight did. Let that be another life lesson: no one will ever, ever go to hell saying, "I trusted Christ but there was no room on the boat." Nobody. Nobody. Nobody will ever say, "I wanted to get on the boat but I trusted and I wasn't led in." Nobody. The amazing thing about the ark is the door was huge. It was big enough for the rabbit, it was big enough for the elephant. It was big enough for anybody and Jesus Christ can handle your sin whether you're a drunk, a derelict, or a Baptist. You take your pick. He can handle your sin. The door is big enough for whosoever will.

When it's time to get off the ark, they are told, "You will go and repopulate the whole earth," and they dwelt in the Plain of Shinar. So we have people that are disobedient, once again, and they are expected to actually seek him. So you have people with bad hearts. Now remember, even though most of the population of the planet was destroyed, the sin nature got on the ark and the sin nature got off the ark. And what you have with people whose imaginations are only evil continually because you know sinners came from somewhere, and it didn't take long for Noah to show that he was a sinner. I mean, he got drunk and he got naked and things happened and so he showed that he was still a son of Adam. That's Genesis 9. So you see Noah and his kids are then ordered to love God and to seek him but, their hearts are wicked and they have no desire to love this God.

So Abraham gets a promise and what good is a blessing to people who are not always sure they need to be blessed? I mean, think about how audacious it is for God to pick one. That's what he did. He looked over the entire planet, and there were plenty of people to choose but he chose Abraham. Abraham. Now, if there could have been potentially billions alive at the flood, that was about 1,800 years after creation, then it makes good sense that you could at least have a couple million by the time Abraham is called out of Ur of the Chaldees. God picked one.

You say, "Why did he pick one?" I don't have any idea why he picked one. Deuteronomy 7 says so he could show himself to be a loving God. It wasn't because they were lovely; it was because he was loving. So those who have a problem with God's, how should we say it, discrimination, get over it. God is not asking permission from anyone if he can do anything. He does whatever he wants to. No man stays his hand or says, "What doest thou?" (Job 9:13)

So we are not going to sit back and say, "God, what are you thinking picking Abraham?" But here is Abraham who is told, "You're going to be a blessing to all nations." Abraham looks left, looks back, looks right, looks forward and says, "Well, I don't see anyone that wants to be blessed by me." So God sees a paradise restored off in the distance and mankind finding his joy in the garden, walking in God's glory. He sees Revelation 22 all the way back here in Genesis 12, but how is this supposed to happen? "I don't even have a son. I'm 75 years old. I should be playing shuffleboard, right? A descendant? A son? A mass conquering? I have over 300 armed servants. I guess we could conquer a people and bless them." That's not really blessing them, I don't know. "Trips to Egypt? I mean, we've done that twice. We could subdue Pharaoh and we could trick Abimelech. I'm not sure. Hey, maybe I could just impregnate all kinds of women like that Egyptian girl, Hagar." Did you think the Bible was squeaky clean full of Ivory soap? I mean, it is full of that stuff.

No, that's not the way to go because in Matthew 3, know what they thought about mass discipleship. He says in verse 7, John the Baptist,

*when he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees come to the baptism, he said, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?....9 And think not to say within yourselves "We have Abraham to our father:" for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

God, I don't understand. If being a son of Abraham is such a big deal and if I'm supposed to be a blessing to all nations, why can't we just have some kind of massive indoctrination and just march people through a river and call them Christians? Why can't we do that?" Well, because their hearts are still bad.

Then in one place we have Jesus, in Matthew 8, there will be people "coming from the east and the west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob [but you Pharisees, you're going to be put in outer darkness]". So being a son of Abraham is not a popular thing in the book of Matthew.

Now, think of all the things Matthew could have begun with. I mean, Luke begins with the birth of someone else: John the Baptist. Mark begins with his baptism. That's kind of impressive, I might have started that way. John starts with his preexistence. It's tough to top that. Matthew starts with the exciting genealogy and of all the exciting things he could have started out with, he says, "He's the son of David, the son of Abraham." So it looks to me, though, like he's shooting himself in the foot because twice in eight chapters he's basically said, "Being a son of Abraham doesn't help." Well, then how in the world is a man who's been dead for 1,800 years by now...how is he supposed to "bless all nations?"

How are we going to bless all nations, Abraham? Well, we're not going to do with manipulation, maneuvering, misappropriated masculinity, masterful mobility or mass reeducation, so how exactly are we going to bless all nations who aren't even sure they want to be blessed by you? There is no substitute for the heart change. This is a worldwide blessing. Christ died for sinful men and women, mankind.

*Matthew 20:28, For the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Not to be a great teacher but to be the son of Abraham who will bless all nations.*

How are you going to bless all nations?

*5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, **Blessed** are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **Blessed** are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. **Blessed** are the meek.*

"Wait a minute, Jesus, this is far from the domination that I was hoping for. You're blessing all nations by sitting up there in your little Rabbi's outfit and you're telling us that those who mourn are blessed? Those who are meek are blessed?"

*5:6 "Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are **blessed**"? **Blessed** are the pure in heart. **Blessed** are the peacemakers. **Blessed** are the persecuted. **Blessed** are you when men revile you, and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.*

"Is that the very best you can do is just bless, bless, bless, bless and talk to us about blessings? Is that all we can do?"

Then if that's not good enough of God, he takes Jesus in the first years of his life and sends him to the very place he yanked his people out of 2,000 years before, 1,500 years before. He pulls people from the east and brings them to the Christ and he brings the Christ and sends him to Egypt. That is the missional heart of God right there. You thought we had to go all the way to Acts to find a God that cared about the nations. Oh no, no, no, we find God caring about Gentiles a long time before Gentiles ever wanted to be cared for because God is a God that cares about people who are lost and people who are dying without him. It's so popular to talk about theology these days. It's so popular to talk about how we have liberty in Christ and we have so much liberty and we're so right on theology that the world goes to hell tonight with over 3,000 people groups without a single verse of Scripture in their language, and we sing about the "God who saves."

Away with our pious nonsense about how, "It's not us that does the saving," for in 1 Corinthians 2:9, Paul said, "By all means, I might save some. I become all things to all people," 1 Corinthians 9:26. "I become all things to all people that I might by all means save some." Romans 11, "If by any means I might save some."

Every time you see the word "Gentile" in your King James Bible, the Greek word behind it is *ethnos* and it's the same word behind "nations" in Galatians 3:8 and it's the same word behind "nations" in Matthew 28:18 where he says, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

*Matthew 4:12 When Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The*

*land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.*

There we are, chapter 4, God cares about the nations. Galilee was supplanted by 722 BC. The Assyrian Empire came and captured the northern half of Palestine known then as "Israel," took a lot of the men and put them in other nations. Made eunuchs out of most of them and took a lot of the Assyrian men and put them down there in the land of Israel. They intermingled and intermarried and really until about 104 BC, Galilee was almost completely Gentile. You couldn't really find very many Jews until a Jewish conqueror in 104 BC started putting Jews back in Galilee. It was still so much Gentile that 100+ years later, they're still calling it "Galilee of the Gentiles."

Interesting thing, all the major trade routes go through Galilee of the Gentiles. People would come from the east and cross through Galilee and they would go over to the way of the sea and go down by the Mediterranean Sea into Egypt and there was no place really to pass through the mountainous region of Judea. Very few traffickers going through Judea. Very little happening in Judea except at times of festivals when you could make lots of money off the half-Jews that came from all over the world to offer sacrifices three times a year. Other than that, business went through Galilee.

If I was a Savior, I would have put my home base in the first place closest to my people and I would have been right next to the temple. That's how Bill Sturm would have done it. We find Jesus saying, "Don't fear like the nations. Don't fear like the Gentiles." All through the book of Matthew, Jesus is saying, "The Gentiles get it wrong. The nations get it wrong." And at the same time, we have Jesus reaching out to the nations.

*Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi,*

that is so far north that it's not even considered Palestine. Here's Jesus traveling with his disciples in a land that is almost entirely Gentile and Jesus comes into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi,

*he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He said, But whom do you say that I am?*

So Jesus says, "Okay, out there they say who I am: Jeremiah, Elijah, Moses, but what do you say? What do you say?" Now look what Peter says in verse 16, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou." What? Hold on, folks, that word "blessing" is not used very many times in Matthew. He put the standard so high. There is not a single person that every walked the planet who can live out the Sermon on the Mount other than the one who preached it. But I can live Matthew 16.

Not a single person in here can take credit for their knowing Jesus. Not a single one. Not a single person among God's redeemed can say that you were brilliant enough, smart enough, wise enough, holy enough, good enough, or that you had enough foresight. "Boy, you had your stuff together. You had enough brains." No, John 17:3, Jesus said to the Father, "This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." One way to the Father is knowing Christ. One way to being blessed is knowing Christ.

Meanwhile, in the middle of this grand scheme of redemption for the nation lies broken hearts, exhausted parents, absent minded disciples, mundaneness, each day peppered with excruciating reality that things are not very messianic, not very kingdomly, not very Davidic, not very Abrahamic, not very "blessed." And probably some of you would make good audience members in that crowd reading this book and you're thinking, "How in the world can you say that all nations are blessed today?" I suppose the reason that miracles are in the Gospel is so that you can know what happens when your prayers are answered, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." For at the time when all know who Christ is, "from the least to the greatest" (Jeremiah 31, John 6, Hebrews 10) when all nations know him, they are truly blessed and we all of a sudden realize that Matthew was a foretaste of what kingdom life is like. There are no lame people in the kingdom. There are no blind people in the kingdom. There are no tax collectors in the kingdom. There are no tornadoes in the kingdom. There are no lost children in the kingdom. There are none of those unsavory things in

the kingdom. But let me turn the table on you, my dear, cleaned up, religious friend: there are no falsities or pretense in the kingdom either. There are no greed for the American dream. There is no materialism. There are no lusts for cars that we cannot afford and houses we cannot maintain. There are none of those either.

So all of a sudden, the evils outside don't look as evil as the evils inside because we realize that in that kingdom when all nations are blessed, our hopes no longer melt into dismal, hapless, formless, laughable nonsense. We will see a kingdom without ventilators. A kingdom without funeral homes. A kingdom without misunderstandings and air headed comments from fellow believers who are just not sure what to say at times. We will have a kingdom where everyone will know exactly what to say when they need to say it. We won't begrudge the Lord of his praise. And we'll be in a kingdom where we won't wonder, "What's wrong with my wife tonight?" and she won't be thinking, "What a selfish arrogant pig." And we won't be having these things in the kingdom anymore. Why? Because the son of Abraham has blessed all nations and so every time you take the Gospel to the world and the Father blesses someone by opening their eyes and seeing who Jesus is, the Christ, the Son of the living God, guess what you're doing? You're saying, "Let me give you a sneak peek of kingdom life when all the families of the earth will be blessed." Blessed be the name of the Lord.