

Matthew 1:1

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Preacher: Fergus MacDonald

[0 : 00] I would like us now for a few moments to turn to the passage which we read in the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew, and looking particularly at the first verse of the Gospel, where we read these words, A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

This verse traditionally has been regarded as the original title of the Gospel that we call Matthew's Gospel today.

He set it as a record of the life story of Jesus Christ, the son of David. Tonight I would like us to think particularly of the significance of the title that Jesus was given, the son of David.

This is a common designation of Jesus in the New Testament. We see it within the narrative of this Gospel.

We see, for example, Bartimaeus coming to Jesus and calling him, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Again, we read that when the people witnessed the miracles of Jesus, that all the people were amazed and said, Can this be the son of David?

[1 : 38] And again, at the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the crowd cried out, Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

What then is the significance of this title, the son of David? Now this is an important question.

And it's important for us to seek to discover a biblical answer to it. Because it is crucial that we know who Jesus is. Especially at this time when his name is on the lips of people more than at any other time probably in the year.

So what does the designation, the son of David, mean? I think we need to answer this question by taking two steps.

The first step is to go back to the life of David. King David in the Old Testament. To the story that is recorded of David there.

[2 : 49] And we know more about the life of David than probably about the life of anyone else other than Jesus in the Scriptures. The story there not only concerns the life of a man for whom God became real.

A man who experiences ups and downs. A man who spent ten years in exile or at least as a fugitive. It is a story which also enshrines an ideal.

David was looked upon by later generations as the ideal king. And it is this question of the idealism of the title that I think gives us or helps us to understand its significance in its application to Jesus.

David rather was regarded by succeeding generations as the ideal king. He was by far the most successful of the kings of Judah.

All the kings of Judah were of the line or the dynasty of David. But David was by far the most successful. Many of the others who followed him, the great majority, were spiritual disasters.

- [4 : 14] There were exceptions as we shall see. But many of them were failures in spiritual terms. So David is regarded as the ideal despite all his shortcomings.
- And of course it is important also to remember that he was God's choice in preference to Saul. Saul was the product of the people's revolt against the kingship of God.
- And he was replaced by David. And from the very beginning David symbolized the original ideal of God as king of his people.
- Furthermore, we read in 2 Samuel chapter 7 in the words of the Lord through Nathan to David.
- How God promised the king that his dynasty would continue. And we know that it did. Right down to the exile. Unfortunately, as we have said, the majority of David's successors were unfaithful to God.
- [5 : 23] But the people remembered God's promise to the house of David. And believed that he would raise up another king like David. The people also looked forward to a prophet being raised up like Moses.
- And there's this very strong note of expectation in the Old Testament that God would raise up a prophet like Moses and a king like David.
- And so we see this forward looking, this forward look of the Old Testament going right through it. It's a forward looking book that looks forward to the coming of the prophet who was typified in Moses and of the king who was typified in David.
- And so Moses was a type of the prophet with a capital P who was to come. And so David became also a type of the king or the anointed, the Messiah who would come.
- Each king was anointed. And in that sense each king was a Messiah with a small m. But because of the failure of so many of these messiahs with a small m, there was this sense of expectation that God had not yet provided the king, the Messiah, who would be like David.
- [6 : 51] The Messiah with a capital M. No doubt when each king of Judah came to the throne, there would have been among the people some measure of expectation whether this king would be the Messiah that God had promised.
- Perhaps there was great hope for a while during the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. But they also, in spite of their strong spiritual strengths, displayed weakness.
- They were not the Messiah with a capital M. Psalms look forward to the coming of the Messiah with a capital M.
- They're called royal psalms because they expect a king who will come in the future to be the perfect king, to be the king who will establish righteousness and justice in the world.
- Perhaps these psalms were sung at the coronation of the kings of Judah as prayers that that king would come and perhaps expressing the hope that that particular king would be the king, would be the Messiah that had been foretold.
- [8 : 16] Psalms like Psalm 2, Psalm 45, Psalm 72, Psalm 110, and there are others which outline the features of the expected king no doubt imply a prayer on the part of those who sung them originally that a particular king would be the Messiah.
- Now by the time of our Lord, a thousand years after David, all the Jewish people agreed that the Messiah would be a descendant of David.
- This was an accepted fact that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. However, for 500 years from the beginning of the exile onwards, there had not been a king on the throne of Judah.

The promise of 2 Samuel chapter 7, which we read, was no longer represented in one known person because by this time there were many descendants of David and no one was sure who was the one who was a direct descendant and who had a claim to the throne of Judah and of Israel.

And so we see that by the time of Jesus, the Messiah, with a capital M, could be any one of many descendants of David.

[9 : 55] So this is the first step as we seek to answer the question, what does this designation given to Jesus and strongly evidenced in the Gospels, what does it mean?

We need to go back and see how the kingship in the Old Testament, especially David's kingship, typified the coming kingdom, the coming kingship of the Messiah.

And God established the kingship in the Old Testament in order that it might be what we would call a teaching model or what theologians call a type of the true king who would come according to God's promise.

The Messiah would be a son of David because David more than any other exhibited more than any other all that the true king of God's people would be.

The second stage, I think, of seeking to answer this question is to ask ourselves another question, what did it mean for David to be a Messiah with a small m?

[11 : 09] What did it mean to him to be the anointed king of God's people? I think this helps us to understand the ministry, the destiny that Jesus fulfilled.

Jesus, as we've said, is called the son of David because David typified, symbolized, the type of kingship which Jesus alone would fulfill.

If we look at the kingship of David and especially if we look at it in the light of the Psalms which are associated with David, not all of them, but many of them are associated with David and they are either written by him or dedicated to him.

These Psalms, especially the second Psalm, Psalm 2, helps us to understand what is involved in being the Messiah, in being the king that is to come.

And there are two things that are involved in being the Messiah. The first is sonship. We see this especially in the second Psalm. The king of Israel was called the son of God.

[12 : 26] He was called the son of God because he occupied the throne of the Lord. He was God's representative. He was not a king in his own right. He was rather God's viceroy.

God was the ultimate king of the people. And so the king would say at his coronation, in verse 7 of Psalm 2, he said to me, you are my son, today I have become your father.

Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth, your possession. Now these words applied in the first instance to the Davidic king.

And the king, in this sense, was recognized as the son of God. This was a custom in the culture in Israel and indeed the cultures around Israel.

The cultures around Israel did not believe in one God, but they believed that the king was in some sense a son of the gods. In Psalm 45, which we sung earlier in the service, the king is even addressed as God himself.

[13 : 48] Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. It is obvious from the context that this psalm was addressed to an actual king.

And the reference may be simply to be explained by the fact that your throne is of God. That it was a divine throne.

But on the other hand, that may not be quite the meaning. It may be that we have to take it more literally. And that these words were directed not to the king's person, but to his office in fulfilling the part of God to the people by ruling over them.

And the ideals that he seeks to express are fulfilled only in God. And there's a prayer that God would rule his people through the king.

But it's important to recognize that although this may have been a title of the king, it was a title and not an attribute. It was a title in the sense that, in a sense of hyperbole.

[15 : 03] But it is a title which is fulfilled literally in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was symbolical, if you like, in the case of David, in the case of the Davidic kings.

But what was symbol there is reality in Jesus. He is indeed the son of God in every sense of the term.

This monarch in the United Kingdom is described as the defender of the faith. And few would claim that they fulfill this title to its full extent.

Haile Selassie, who was the emperor of Ethiopia, was described as the king of kings. Now, no one believed that he was the king of kings. But given the Christian traditions of Ethiopia, this probably originated as a prayer that the king of kings might come.

that no one believed that the emperor of Ethiopia was literally the king of kings. That there was a symbolism of his office.

[16 : 19] So, every king of Judah was a Messiah, as we've said, with a small m. A occupying the office and enjoying the title of Messiah.

But none of them was the Messiah with a capital M because of the tremendous gap between their calling and their character. However, Jesus is the son of David.

Jesus is the son of David and the son of God not simply symbolically but literally and in reality. And what we have typified in the throne of David and his successors becomes a reality in the ministry and the person and the ministry of Jesus.

He fulfilled all that was typified and expected in the Davidic kingship. And so, when Jesus is baptized, we discover that the voice from heaven says, this is my beloved son.

Hear him. Again, at the transfiguration, the disciples are told that Jesus is God's son. So, the son of David in a real sense is the son of God in a literal sense.

[17 : 46] He is God manifest in the flesh. Therefore, Jesus addressed us the son of God not only in name but also by nature because the son of God he is the son of God in a sense which no king of Judah ever was.

He is the only begotten son of God. He is a unique son of God. He has come into the world and the Jews of his generation who didn't accept him acknowledged that he claimed to be the son of God in such a way that he made himself equal with God.

We see that in John's gospel. This is the way they interpreted it that this was not simply a claim to some historic symbolism some symbolic title.

It was a claim to be truly equal with God to be God of very God. And so Jesus fulfills what was written in Psalm 45 where the king is addressed as God.

He fulfills that because what was symbolic in the original use of the psalm becomes real in the ministry of Jesus and that's why the psalm was given.

[19 : 12] It was given to help people to realize that such a king such a divine king would one day come. So the son of David is really the son of God.

When we look at it as the way that title is applied to Jesus and because he is the son of God he is able to save us. There is a divine power in Jesus even in his humiliation even in his life of obedience here on earth when he lived by faith he was possessed by a unique power because he not only had a human nature but he had and still has a divine nature.

He is the son of God and therefore he has got unique power he is able to save us he is able to deliver us because he has the power of an indestructible life as the writer to the Hebrews tells us.

Athanasius who was one of the great theologians of the early church argued strongly that Jesus is God and he said if Jesus is not God he could not save us from our sins he could not have absorbed the wrath of God upon the cross he could not have fulfilled his ministry as saviour and as redeemer were he not God very God of very God and not only is he able to save but he is also able to keep and so he is David David Jesus the son of David is Jesus who is God Jesus who is divine Jesus who is the son with a capital S the Messiah with a capital M but the second aspect of this title is not sonship but kingship because David after all was a king and Jesus came as the king of kings and lord of lords

David as a king was overall a success although he had his blemishes he had his weaknesses he was regarded as overall as a success first of all he was able to he was able to demoralize the Philistines the traditional enemy that plagued Saul David was conquered or at least kept the Philistines at bay kept them down so they no longer were a threat secondly he conquered Jerusalem and through Jerusalem was able to unify the kingdom and he had a strategic center from which he was able to rule and thirdly he extended the frontiers of the kingdom which was and which he inherited which was relatively small somewhat similar to even smaller than modern Israel today but he extended the frontiers to Egypt in the south and to the borders of Mesopotamia in the north and within a generation he transformed the nation of Israel from a mortly band of club carrying hillbillies into the one of the finest armies in the ancient near east so the son of David reminds us that Jesus is a king because David was a king who had outstanding royal ability when the

[22 : 36] Magi came to visit Jesus as we read in our New Testament reading they brought gifts which were gifts for a king gifts for someone who was born to be a king they came to worship him who was the king of the Jews that he who was the king of the Jews was destined to be the king of kings and lord of lords one of the key themes of the ministry of Jesus is the theme of his kingdom the kingdom of God or the kingship of God it's the key category if you like to help us to understand the teaching of Jesus the kingdom of God the kingship of God the rule of God and Jesus thought that that rule was established through him he is the king of kings he is the lord of lords and what we read in the second psalm is that this one who is the son of God is also the one who will rule the world the one to whom the world will ultimately submit the one who is reigning and ruling and that's what the kingship of God means that God's kingship is at work today in the world the most powerful portion of the world today is not the government of the United States although it may be the most powerful nation in the world the one who is ruling in the world is Jesus he is the king of kings he is the lord of lords he doesn't rule in the way that sinful human beings rule he rules in a mysterious way in a way which often we cannot discern and one of his short parables he explained that the kingship of God is like a seed which is growing secretly and God's kingship is a kingship which often we cannot see but one day we will see it one day it will come to the surface one day every eye will see him and acknowledge him as king of kings and lord of lords and what the writer what we read in Psalm 2 is that because because Jesus is the king never we are to serve him we are to submit to him and that surely is the message that we need to bear in mind at this time of the year that the baby who was born in Bethlehem was born to be the king of kings and lord of lords and he today demands our submission he demands our service we are to serve him we are to acknowledge him as our king and as our god the day will come when Jesus will subdue the earth by force this is clear at the end the closing verses 8 and 9 of the second psalm the nations of the world will become his inheritance and he will rule them with an iron scepter and dash them to pieces like pottery it will be a day of judgment when God will establish the kingship of Jesus powerfully by coercion but at the moment the kingdom of God is not being established by coercion it's being established by love and by grace and by mercy and so Jesus today is seeking to win our allegiance not to coerce us into submission but to win us and tonight this message is a message which invites us to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ to acknowledge that he is God to acknowledge that he is the king of kings and lord of lords and we need to submit to him we need to submit our wills to him one of the key strategies of David was to conquer

Jerusalem and make that his citadel the citadel of our human personality is the will and the question I want to ask you and ask myself tonight is is your will is my will submitted to the will of God have we bent our will to the will of God secondly we saw that David demoralized the Philistines now we have our fifth column within just as the Philistines were our fifth column in the time of Saul penetrating the nation and creating havoc we have what the Bible calls the flesh within us we've got the old nature we've got a sinful nature within us there are besetting sins and we need to ask we need to be ready to deal with these we need to ask God to neutralize them we need to ask God to deal with them if we're going to submit to the Lord

Jesus Christ David also extended the frontiers of the kingdom and he invites us to extend the frontiers of his kingdom among people in the world today by inviting them to submit to him because we who profess to be his servants and to submit to him are also called to be his witnesses and called to be his ambassadors and to commend him to others so Jesus is the son of David and that's the son of David he is the unique son of God he is God himself he is also the king of kings who will establish his rule ultimately here on earth in the new heavens and in the new earth he will as he came in humility and obscurity the first time he will come publicly and in glory the second time he will come to establish his kingdom and as we give God thanks for his first coming let us do so by preparing for his second coming by acknowledging now that he is king of kings and lord of lords by submitting to him submitting our wills to him being willing that he would deal with sin in our lives being willing that he would grant us the grace of repentance being willing to make a total commitment to him not just a partial commitment not just a nod of the head but a commitment of all that we are and all that we have

God has given us his son he's given us his all and he invites us to give our all to him may God grant that tonight we may so respond to the gospel of God's mercy and God's grace that we may respond to the one who is the son of David by acknowledging that he is the son of God that he is the king of kings and by giving our all to him by bowing down before him by serving him and acknowledging him as our king and as our lord may God grant it for his name's sake let us pray our heavenly father as we come to the close of the service we pray that you will indeed enable us to respond to the lord Jesus Christ through the personal commitment of all that we are and all that we have forgive us oh lord if we are rebellious if we refuse to submit so often so frequently we pray oh god that in your mercy you will subdue us and that you will enable us voluntarily to give ourselves to Christ voluntarily to submit to him for oh god you have spoken to us tonight and told us that if we do not submit voluntarily then the day will come when we will be coerced into submission as those who have rejected Christ rather than those who have voluntarily accepted him grant oh god that tonight we may be among those who accept Christ and no longer among those who reject him grant oh god that tonight there may be someone in this building who will be brought out of darkness into light brought out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God we ask this that you may be glorified and that all of us may be blessed in Jesus name amen