Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Gracious King
Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17
Code: 2180

Take your Bible and turn with me to the wonderful Gospel according to Matthew. We are going to begin tonight in this tremendous Book.

We're going to have an adventure folks in the next months and years as we share together in this tremendous, tremendous Book.

I want to give you just a little bit of background, and I'm not going to spend a lot of time giving an overview of the Book, not going to spend a lot of time telling you all the themes of the Book. The reason is, I've never really studied it, and I don't want to make any conclusions till I've been through it. So after we've been through it together then we'll go back and sum up all the parts, and draw together all the themes and the subjects, and we'll do that with the inductive method rather than the deductive method. So what we're going to do is just to begin by studying the first portion, we'll go right on through this wonderful Book of 28 chapters and see what the Spirit of God has to say to us.

Let me introduce the subject and the Book a little bit though to start with. At the time when Christ was born, Israel was as you well know under Roman domination, and there were many things about the Roman domination that were oppressive to Israel. One aspect of the oppression of Rome was the crushing taxation system. It was a cruel system, it was relentless, and it was very systematic. Rome had exacted very firm taxation from its conquered nations. Two particular taxes were taken, one was the poll tax, which basically would be comparable today to our income tax, the other what was called the ground tax, which would be kind of like a property or land tax. And it was interesting the way this worked, the ah, Roman senators, who were very wealthy in the city of Rome, along with very wealthy and predominate magistrates in Roman society, would have the opportunity to buy at public auction, the revenues of a certain country at a fixed price and then hold those revenues for five years, in other words some sort of coalition of Roman wealthy senators would buy the right from the Roman government to draw the taxes from the nation Israel for a period of five years.

So it was up to them to get as much as they could possibly get. They Were called the publicani, and they would hire slaves and countrymen in the nation from which they had received the permission to exact the taxes, they would hire these people to do the actual tax gathering.

So that what you have then is these individual people working to gather taxes to give to wealthy senators who have purchased from the Roman government the right to all of the money they could

exact from those people. Now these people as I said, in the wealthy spots were called the publicani, and the other folks who did the tax gathering are what we know in the New Testament as publicans. Publicans or tax...not republicans, publicans or tax gatherers. And of course the people in the country would look at them as traitors, because here they were gathering taxes from their own countrymen to give to people of a foreign nation, and so they were thought of as traitors who were gouging for the wealthy Roman capitalists, and overtaxing for their own gain. And what you had was you had ah, ah, ah gouging by the Romans who owned the rights and then you had a further gouging by the tax gatherer himself to pad his own pocket, such as in the classic example of the man named Zacchaeus, who had done this. Now tax gatherers or publicans, as the New Testament calls them were ranked with harlots, they were ranked with the heathen, they were ranked with highwaymen, robbers and murderers, so they didn't run in very good company. To make things worse, around the year 33 A.D. there was a great financial crisis in Rome, and because of that great financial crisis Rome exacted even worse taxes from its chattel nations, which created an even more intense problem in Israel at the time. Now one of these publicans who worked for some wealthy coalition of Roman senators who had bought the right to tax Israel was a man by the name of Matthew Levi, Matthew or Levi. If you'll look with me for a moment at chapter 9 of Matthew and verse 9, I'll introduce you to him in terms of his chronology in the history of the life of Jesus.

Matthew 9'9, "And as Jesus passed forth from there, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the tax office: and he saith unto him, Follow me.

And he arose, and followed him." Now here's the first time that we meet Matthew, the tax collector. Now it's an amazing thing in the first place that Jesus would have anything to do with such a man, a man who was known in his society at least by ah, the general designation of his particular job as a gouging criminal. And yet Jesus said to him, follow me, and he arose and followed, right getting up from his table where he was collecting his taxes. Uhm, some have said, and I'm sure it's true that only Jesus Christ could work such a transformation of turning a publican into an apostle, and such was the miracle of Matthew who became then the writer of the first Gospel record. There's only one Gospel, frankly, only one Gospel just four different writers recording it. Only one Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ is a singular message. But there are four Gospel's that we call Gospel's historically though they are just four writers writing of one Gospel. And what's interesting to me is that we really don't want to be unfair and you don't want to necessarily condemn the man because he had a rotten profession, you can always find ah, a good man in a bad business from time to time, and maybe that was the case with Matthew. At least Jesus saw in him something that was useful, and when Jesus spoke to him he immediately followed, which leads us to believe that he was perhaps very familiar with Jesus.

Now perhaps on some other occasion had heard or seen Jesus, he may have been a religious man, he may have been a rarer honest man, there doesn't seem to be any necessity for him to exact retribution to people in the way that Zacchaeus had to do, so perhaps he had been very, very fair, he

doesn't apparently sense any need to go out and pay back everything he's taken wrongfully. Jesus drew this man into an amazing inner circle of twelve people. In fact there were twelve people in the history of the world, and I think it's important to remember this, there were twelve people in the history of the world who had the kind of relationship with God, that Matthew and the other eleven apostles had, and only twelve.

A marvelous, incredible, unique relationship in which they walked with the very God of the universe in human flesh for a period of three years.

So God, in Christ called this man into the inner circle. And he must have been a man worth calling. I think too the fact that he moved instantly is indicative of where his heart was. Now the man had a lot of wealth, no doubt and a lot of power, and he was willing to walk away from it, which says something for his character. In fact even when, he even went one step further, look at verse 10 it's most interesting. He threw a kind of a party. It says, "It came to pass, as Jesus sat eating in the house," this is no doubt the house of Matthew, "many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples." Now he had a whole crowd of these people, and tax collectors and sinners basically ran around together. "And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with tax collectors and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that are well need not a physician, but they that are sick." Which was a very sarcastic statement, He was saying, you couldn't use Me because you think you're holy. "But go and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous," like you, sarcastically, "but sinners to repentance." Now what is the setting here? And that's all we really want to note. Apparently, when Matthew decided to follow Jesus, he decided to throw a big feast, and the idea of the big feast was to illu...was to introduce his old friends to his new Master. And he did that. So I think Matthew must have been a good man, and he made a deep commitment. And he was willing to walk away from a very lucrative life, and he didn't walk away quietly he threw a feast to introduce his old friends to his new Master. I think Matthew was a modest man, I think he was modest because in reciting the many events of tremendous importance that he does throughout his record, he never makes a personal reference to himself, that is in the first person.

He always treats Matthew in a third person, the way he would treat any other individual and he gives no particular credit to himself for anything. He never even claims the authorship of this Gospel, anywhere in the entire Gospel. The reason we know that he wrote it is because all of the early manuscripts have his name attached to the title, and the unanimous affirmation of the early church fathers is that this was written by Matthew, it's just one of the most clear Books in terms of authorship in all the New Testament, everyone knew that Matthew wrote this. Now we don't know when he wrote it, he wrote it sometime between 5O and 7O A.D. sometime before the destruction of Jerusalem, we don't know when. We do know why he wrote it, and I can express that to you in a simple statement, this Gospel is written to rehearse the story of salvation and in that story to demonstrate the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the predicted Messiah, the King of the Jews who was rejected by His own people,

who was accepted by the Gentiles and who someday will return to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is the Gospel, it is the story of the King who comes, the King who is rejected and the King who will return. That's the message of Matthew, very simple.

And let me just talk about those three major thrusts and flows of this particular record. First of all Matthew deals with the King revealed.

The first thing you notice in Matthew's Gospel is that Christ is presented as a King. There's just no question about it. The person of Jesus is painted in royal colors. His ancestry is traced from the royal line, and we'll see that tonight. His birth is dreaded by a rival king.

Wise men offer their royal gifts. His herald, John the Baptist declares that His Kingdom is at hand. Even in His temptation, you see the royalty of the person, because the temptation itself reaches a climax when He by Satan is offered the kingdoms of the world, and acknowledgment that He has a right to rule. His great message on the mount was the manifesto of the King setting forth the laws of the Kingdom. His miracles were His re..,were His royal credentials. His parables were called the mysteries of the Kingdom. He was hailed as the son of David. Be claims the freedom to pay tribute to the kings of the earth for He Himself is a child of the King. He makes a royal entry into Jerusalem and claims sovereignty and tells concerning Himself the story of the marriage of a Kings Son. And while facing the cross He predicted His future reign.

He claimed to have dominion over the angels, so that He could have called a legion of them to His defense. His last words are a kingly claim and a royal command as He says, ..All authority hath been given unto me, go ye therefore." And so Matthew presents Him as a King. A King revealed. And then the Book takes on another character, the King rejected. And as we study the Gospel of Matthew we're going to see that the people to whom He came, and for whom He sought submission, never gave it, and He was a King rejected. Matthew was the Gospel of rejection. No other Gospel has so much to say about His Kingliness, and no other Gospel has so much to say about His rejection as King. The shadow of rejection is never lifted from the Gospel of Matthew. Before He was born, his mother was in danger of being rejected by Joseph. At His birth, Jerusalem was troubled and Herod sought His life. On the plains of Bethlehem no angel choir sings but mothers are weeping in anguish as their babies are being slaughtered. He was hurried away for His life to live thirty years in the obscurity of a little no-account village called Nazareth. His forerunner was put in a dungeon and finally beheaded. He had nowhere to lay His own head, His parables indicate that His Kingdom would not be accepted in this age, and even in His death He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" No penitent thief is praying, no word of human sympathy is spoken, those who pass by revile and mock, and they hire soldiers to lie even about His resurrection.

In no Gospel is the attack upon Christ as bitter as it is in Matthew, from the beginning to the end. So the King is revealed and the king is rejected. But Matthew also presents the fact, that the King is

returning, and no other Gospel lays such emphasis on the second coming as the Gospel of Matthew. And so in a sense it is a Gospel of triumph.

When you get to chapter 24 and 25 and you hear the fact that He will come in the clouds with great glory, you know that He'll ultimately reign. And so it's a Gospel of the revelation of a King, the rejection of the King, and the return of the King.

But to begin with let's look at chapter 1, and Matthew starts by presenting the King. The King is revealed, and it all begins with Jesus family tree. If a King is to be heralded as a King, if He is to believed to be a King, if He is to have any credibility at all, if anybody is to accept the fact that He in fact is a King then it must start with the proof that He comes from the royal line. There was a royal line in Israel and it came through David. In Second Samuel chapter 7 God said through the prophet Nathan to David, that it would be through the loins of David that the King would come, who would ultimately reign in Israel and set up an eternal Kingdom. That was never fulfilled in Solomon, and so they waited and waited for one born of the seed of David to fulfill the prophecy. And so if Jesus is to be the King it must be established that He has the right to reign because He descends from the genealogy of royalty. Now that is precisely what verses 1 to 17 present, let's read them, look at them. "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac: and Isaac begot Jacob: and Jacob begot Judah and his brethren: And Judah begot Perez and Zerah of Tamar: and Perez begot Hezron: and Hezron begot Ram And Ram begot Amminadab: and Amminadab begot Nahshon: and Nahshon begot Salmon:" and these names will be on the quiz, verse 5, "And Salmon (Salmon) begot Boaz of Rahab: and Boaz begot Obed of Ruth:

and Obed begot Jesse1 And Jesse begot David, the king: and David, the king, begot Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah: And Solomon begot Rehoboam: and Rehoboam begot Abijah: and Abijah begot Asa: And Asa begot Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begot Joram: and Joram begot Uzziah: And Uzziah begot Jotham: and Jotham begot Ahaz: and Ahaz begot Hezekiah: And Hezekiah begot Manasseh: and Manasseh begot Amon: and Amon begot Josiah: And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel: and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel: And Zerubbabel begot Abiud, and Abiud begot Eliakim: and Eliakim begot Azor: And Azor begot Sadoc; and Sadoc begot Achim: and Achim begot Eliud: And Eliud begot Eleazar: and Eleazar begot Matthan: and Matthan begot Jacob; And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. 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." And we'll stop there.

Now I'm not going to let you go now, because you haven't got any practical information yet. You say, why in the world do we have all of this? Well, let me tell you why. First of all, the Jews were tenacious about their pedigrees. And if anybody was going to be presented to them as a King, it was absolutely

essential that He have the pedigree to prove it. Always, always was this important to the Jews. For example after the conquest of Canaan, you remember when they went into the land of Canaan and took the land flowing with milk and honey as God had promised them when they came out of Egypt? After the conquering of the land of Canaan it was essential to determine what your tribe was and what your heritage was so that you knew where you were to live, because the line of all the land was divided into tribes. And according to Numbers chapter 26 and chapter 35, you had to know your tribe, you had to know your family and you had to know your fathers house so that you could identify yourself in the right location in the land, so pedigree was very important, tribal identification essential. Under certain circumstances according to the Book of Ruth, chapters 3 and 4, we won't take time to look at it all but according to Ruth chapters 3 and4 under certain circumstances transfer of property required accurate knowledge of the family tree, God wanted to keep tribal land within the tribe, and so there had to be pedigree in order to make some business transactions with land. Another interesting thing is indicated to us in Ezra 2, I think it's verse uhm, I think it's way at the end of Ezra 2 you can find it for yourself, but it tells us at the end of Ezra, see if I can spot the verse, verse 62, "These sought their registration among those who were reckoned by genealogy." And what it means is that when after the Babylonian captivity the people started coming back to Israel, you remember at the end of the 7O years, they started flowing back, many of them were claiming to be priests, and they were claiming to be the tribe of Levi, and you know that God was very, very serious about who was a priest, you know that. Anybody who tried to play the role of a priest and wasn't was in great, great danger. And so when these people came back and tried to claim the right to the priesthood, they had to be proven on the basis, it says in Ezra 2:62 of their genealogy. And if it wasn't found they were "put from the priesthood."

So they needed to know their pedigree for the exchange of land, for their tribal location, and for their priestly identification when they returned from captivity. And in fact it's most interesting to remember, and I'm sure you do remember this, that even when the New Testament begins, what is it that Joseph and Mary are doing? They're going down to be registered according to their own ancestry in their own place, because they were still identifying people in that manner. And in Luke chapter 2 in the first 4 verses it tells us simply that, I'll read it to you very quickly, "And it came to pass, in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be registered. And the registration was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everybody went to be registered, into his own city. And Joseph also went from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, to Judaea, which is the city of David, because he was of the house and what? ... and lineage of David." You see? Those identifications were still in existence at the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. By the way, the writings of Josephus, the ancient historian support the use of ancestral files, as a part of Jewish culture around the time of Jesus Christ. So this was a very common thing. The Jews really were hep on everybody having their pedigree and knowing exactly to whom they belong.

Now in the New Testament you have Paul saying something like this, Romans 11:1, "I say, then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid." And then Paul says this, "For I am an Israelite, of the seed of

Abraham, of the tribe of, what?... Benjamin." You see, he was still laying out his pedigree. To the Jewish people this was very important. And this is why you see, there are at least fifty genealogies in the Old Testament.

Because it...there were reasons for that, not only the royal line, the priestly line, but in terms of property transfer and so forth. Now all of this has changed today, Jews today don't know this. They have absolutely...now watch this, they have absolutely no record of their tribal ancestry today, none. They can't trace it at all. It is completely vanished, I mean it has totally vanished. No Jew existent in the world today could ever prove himself to be a son of David. Now I want you to know something, if anybody comes along claiming to be the Messiah, they'll never be able to prove it. And there are some orthodox Jews who still believe the Messiah is going to come, but the problem is there will never be any lineal way to prove that, which goes to say this, Jesus Christ is the last verifiable claimant to David's throne, if He is not the Messiah nobody else can ever lay believable claim to it. That's it.

Now in this genealogy in Matthew, we're looking at it in broad sense we're not going to go through and tell you the story of every name, so you can relax. But in this genealogy we have what we call a descending record, leading through Joseph to Jesus. A descending record, it comes right on down from David and Abraham descending down through Joseph to Jesus. In the New Testament Jesus' genealogy is also recorded in the third chapter of Luke, you don't need to turn to it I'll just allude to it, but the genealogy in Luke is the reverse, it is a ascending genealogy, it starts with Jesus and goes back through Mary. So here you have a genealogy coming down through Joseph, and there you have a genealogy going back through Mary. One begins with Jesus, the other ends with Jesus. It just goes both ways, and it all comes out the same in the end. It's as if the Spirit of God says, anyway you cut it folks this is the one. Now there are some other distinctions between this one and the Luke genealogy. Matthew is showing the legal, now watch this you're going to have to get this, Matthew is showing the legal descent of Jesus as the King of Israel, Luke is showing the lineal descent. In other words, Matthew shows us the royal line whereas Luke shows us the blood line. You say, what's the difference? The difference is this, the royal line, now watch, the royal line always was passed through which parent? The father.Th...always came through the father, but Jesus had no human father, and through Joseph He has the right to reign that belonged to David even though Joseph was not His father in terms of actuality he was His legal father. Now stay with me we'll cover it another way.

Matthew follows the royal line, through David and Solomon, David's son, Matthew follows it all the way down and he gets to David and then the royal line went through Solomon. But David had another son, he had several, but this other one was Nathan, and Mary's line came through Nathan, so what you have is one line coming down through David and then it goes this way through Solomon and this way through Nathan, through Nathan you come to Mary, and through Solomon you come to Joseph. Both of them of the seed of David, both of them passing on royal blood, so lineally blood line He is of David, legally as a heir to the throne He is of David, both by His mother and His father. He is the

actual seed of David through Mary, He is the legal heir of David through Joseph.

Look at verse 16, "And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary." Isn't that interesting? What doesn't it say? The father of Jesus. Joseph was not the father of Jesus, in a human way, he was the husband of Mary.

The Bible never calls Joseph the father of Jesus. By the way, look at verse 16 again, "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus." Of whom in the Greek is in the feminine gender, He was born not of Joseph, He was born of Mary. He was Joseph's child legally because if you were adopted into a family, you were the legal child with all the rights and privileges. He was Joseph's child legally, He was Mary's child lineally and by blood. And so every way possible, Jesus Christ had the right to rule. The father was the one who granted the royal line, the mother was the one who granted the royal blood to Jesus. It's interesting that in Luke, in his genealogy verse 23 of chapter 3 it says, "Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being the son of Joseph, the son of Heli." And so forth. He was considered by everybody, now watch this, He was considered by everybody, though He was not the real son of Joseph, He was not the physical son of Joseph, He was considered by everybody to be the son of Joseph. Now most people thought, at least at the time that He was birth...of His birth that He was the son of some illicit affair. But they called Him the son of Joseph because Joseph was constituted His legal father.

There was never really any question about that at all, in fact through His life He was known as the son of Joseph, there was never any argument because they accepted what amounts to adoption in the legal sense, with all the rights and privileges. In Luke 4:22, "They bore witness, And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" So they recognized that.

So, perfect, now listen, perfect fulfillment, perfect fulfillment, Look at verse 11, "And Josiah," I want to just pull out one thought here that's very fascinating, "And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brethren, about the time (of Babylonian captivity, about the time) they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon," watch this, "Jeconiah begot Shealtiel: and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel." Now I want you to notice something very interesting, we read, we read this name Jeconiah, Josiah begot Jeconiah, and Jeconiah begot so and so. Now there's something very interesting, you remember who's line is this in Luke? Er, in, in Matthew? Joseph's, Joseph's, okay. Now I want you to notice something, Jeremiah 22:30 just listen, write it down Jeremiah 22:30, now listen to what it says, "Thus saith the Lord, Write this man down as childless." And the man to whom it refers is Jeconiah, this is the same man. "A man who shall not succeed in his days; none of his offspring shall sit on the throne of David." Did you get that? None of Jeconiah's offspring will ever sit on the throne of David. That was the curse on Jeconiah, of Jeremiah 22:30. Now listen to me, if Jesus had been the real son of Joseph, He never could have sat on the throne of David. Did you get that? He would be under the curse. And yet, He had to be the legal son of Joseph to have the right, so God had to devise a plan by which He would be the legal heir to the throne but that He would not be in the

line of David descending through Jeconiah. And so God did it by the virgin birth. By-passing the actual blood line of Jeconiah, and yet carrying the royal right to reign and descending the blood through the side of Mary. It's a fantastic thing, isn't it? How God guarded every single detail. And the virgin birth solved it. So you see, the reason for the genealogy is to present the fact that this is the one who has the right to reign. Listen, it may take me along time to unscramble the significance of this but all the Jewish people had to do was read it and they got the message, they knew their Old Testament, they knew the curse on Jeconiah, they knew this line, they knew their pedigrees. And Matthew is establishing that He has the right to be King. Let's go back to verse 1 for a moment. This is all still introduction. "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

The book, biblos, it can mean a book or it could mean a list of names, here it means a list of names, a record. The book of the genesaos, genesis, beginnings, the book of beginnings about Jesus Christ. This is the story of how Jesus Christ came to be, this is the record of His origin, the record of His ancestry, Iesous Chrisros. Iesous is the Greek equivalent of the Old Testament Jeshua or Jehoshua. which simply means Jehovah saves. That was to be His name, Matthew 1:21 it says, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he will, what?... save his people from their sins." Jeshua, Jehovah saves. And the shortened form emphasizes the verbal action. And then there's Christos. which means the anointed, and He was anointed as a prophet, He was anointed as a priest, and He was also anointed as what? As a King. And so here you have the book about the beginnings of the one who will save, who was anointed as prophet, priest and King. Oh, it was so important to know this. And our dear Lord Jesus pure and spotless, without sin was mocked, maligned, slandered. And always, always the innuendoes and the remarks about His origin. In the 13th of Matthew and the 54th...

"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and they said, From where hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" Matthew 13:54, where, where did He get this ability? "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? From where, then, hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him." He doesn't have any right to this kind of stuff, who's He? He's come out of a lowly bunch up in Nazareth. In the 7th chapter of John again the kind of mockery about His origin. John 7:27, Jesus comes down to the feast of the tabernacles and ah, the Jews get upset at Him because of what He says, and in verse 27, "Nevertheless, we know this man, from where he is, but when Christ comes, no man knows from where he is." Listen, we know this Jesus, I mean this is not the Christ, we know where He came from. He's a hayseed from Nazareth, up the hill, you know? I mean you couldn't believe that the Messiah would come from anyplace other than Jerusalem. Such a thought is intolerable. He's a nobody from a nowhere. And in verse 40, "Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet." This is the Prophet prophesied by Moses back in the Pentateuch. This is the Prophet, and "Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" You kiddin'? In the 8th chapter and the ?lst verse, "You do the deeds of

your father." He says to the Pharisees, Jewish leaders, "You do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We are not born of fornication:" what do you think they meant by that? That's slander. "We're not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." Verse 48, "Then answered the Jews, and said to him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" You're a demon possessed result of fornication that came from a nowhere town, and a nobody family, don't lay us with any of your Messianic credentials.

So Matthew you see, looks back on all this. And under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he writes down, the book of the beginnings of Jesus Christ, so there never needs to be a question about where He came from.

Now, there's an emphasis in this genealogy that I want to speak to for the last time that we have together tonight. There's an emphasis here that just thrills me. It's just...it's woven into this thing in a way that...as I begin to study it and I was seeking the Lord and I said, Lord, what do You want me to say about this, how do I do it, how do I hang this whole thing together, these names, you know? What am I going to say? And I began to think about the fact that Jesus Christ was a King. But He wasn't a King like any other King, He wasn't a King who ruled by law, He was a King who ruled by what? By grace. And I began to search the genealogy to see if 1 could find grace in this genealogy, and oh man! It just started leaking grace everywhere, everywhere, got all over my desk. Grace everyplace. He is a king of grace, and you know even in this, you know God can't even lay down the royal credentials of Jesus without spilling grace all over everybody who reads it, it's all over the place. He is a King, but most kings rule with an iron fist, most kings rule by the law, most kings don't know anything about grace, this one does, oh, what a gracious King. And I see it in four things, and you have an outline maybe with you, you can see how it unfolds like the budding of a beautiful flower. First of all, I see the King of grace in the choice of one woman, the choice of one woman. The first thing that just hit me was when I was reading verse 16, and it says, "And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." And I thought to myself, oh, there's grace, grace to that one lady, that one little lady, Mary, became the mother of the Messiah, the mother of the Son of God, Mary. As Luke records, "the child of Heli," Mary. Nobody knew about Mary before this. I don't want to shake you up too much but I'm gonna, tell you something, Mary was a sinner, Mary was a sinner. You say, well, I'm a Catholic I don't believe that. Well, the Bible tells us that. Mary was a sinner, she was like everybody else, she was like all other men and all other women, I don't mean she was worse than anybody else, she was probably better than most, and no doubt a deeply devout and religious person but she was a sinner who needed a Savior, and the Lord Jesus Christ had to be a Savior to her as well as a son to her. And yet God in His wonderful mysterious grace chose her...you know something? God didn't have to do that. But He chose Mary, what grace. You know, the Roman Catholic Church has elevated Mary to a place of incredible loftiness, I'm sure Mary if she knew about it would be very upset. I'm sure she's not really bothering a lot about it in heaven.

But they say that Mary is sinless, Mary maintained perpetual virginity, which is hard since the people recited all the names of her children.

They say that Mary is co-redemptrix with Christ, she is His equivalent in saving us. She is co-mediatrix, that is, there is not one mediator between God and man there are two, Mary and Jesus. That she bodily assumed into heaven and never died because she was sinless, virgin born therefore she wouldn't die, she ascended, they literally mirror in Mary every single thing that is true about Christ. Unfortunately none of it is true about Mary.

Beloved let me say this to you. Mary was just a, just a sinner lady like all other ladies, and she needed a Savior. In Mark chapter 3 in verse 31 it tells us, "There came, then, his brethren and his mother, standing outside, sent unto him, calling him." And Jesus was inside teaching. "And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren outside seek for thee.

And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, and my brethren? Be looked around about and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!" In other words, your My mother and My brethren. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother." Jesus minimized the place of Mary, Mary was a face in the crowd, that's all.

Mary was nobody, when it came to that issue Mary had to come the same way anybody else had to come, to be related to Jesus Christ had nothing to do with the fact that she was His mother, she had to do the will of the Father, you see. That's the way it had to be. And in Luke chapter 11 and verse 28, it says this, "He said, (this is great) Yea rather'"

well, lets go back to 27, It shall come, "It had come to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman of the company (Jesus is speaking here, a certain woman) lifted up her voice, and said, Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breasts which nursed thee." This lady would have made a good Roman Catholic. Blessed is Mary. "And he said, Yea (but more, is the idea) rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." You see, He saw the real issue, didn't He? There was nothing sanctimonious about Mary. The issue was obedience to His word, and Mary needed that as much as anybody else. Mary knew it, she knew it. In Luke 1:28, "The angel came, and said, Hail, thou who art highly favored, the Lord is with thee;" You know what that is in the Greek? You who are endued with grace. Mary needed grace, do you see that? And grace is what kind of favor? Unmerited, given to sinners.

And then when she prayed she said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, (Luke 1,46) And my spirit (watch this,) hath rejoiced in God my Savior." Mary said that. She knew, she knew. Hey, Mary was a wonderful lady, I, I wouldn't deny that. She was probably very devout, a pure lady, a virgin. But she

was a sinner who needed a Savior. Hey, do you see God's grace, in that He chose a sinner to be His own mother?

Second, we see the Gospel of grace in the choice of one woman. We also see it in the seed of two men, the seed of two men. Look at verse 1, this is fabulous. Verse 1, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David," and what's the second one? "the son of Abraham." Let me ask you a simple question, was David a sinner? Was Abraham a sinner? Did God act in grace toward them? Yes. Imagine David, David who sinned so vilely with Bathsheba, and had her husband murdered.

David the polygamist, David the sexual, you could almost say pervert except maybe that's a strong word, David who was sexually tormented.

David a, a rotten father, David who slaughtered multitudes of humanity, so many that his hands were too bloody to build the temple of God. And Abraham, Abraham who lied about his wife in Egypt, and brought them both into shame. Abraham who disbelieved God, Abraham who committed adultery with Hagar, Abraham, again at Gerar lied about Sarah and gave her to the king as if she was his sister. Two sinners, and their seed was the Son of God. That's grace. God used these two, one to father the nation of Messiah, the other to father the royal line. Jesus is son of David, son of Abraham. His connection with the Hebrew people is racial and royal, and it's royal first and that's why David comes first, that's the point that Matthew wants to make. And by the way, grace was extended to every...to each of those men even in their seed. 1 mean think about it. Ou...you say, but David shaped up and so did Abraham.

Well, all right, but what about their seed? What about Solomon and Isaac? For example the son of David, to whom David looked for the next step in this marvelous fulfillment turned out to be a terrible, terrible tragedy.

His story is a disastrous failure, in spite of his peaceful nature, in spite of his unmatched wisdom Solomon lived a life of appalling stupidity and folly. He sowed seeds of disruption by marrying foreign wives, he went way beyond his father in having hundreds of wives, and concubines who turned his heart from the Lord, the Bible says. The son of David's flesh was a disappointment, the son of David's flesh shattered the unity of Israel. And God would have had every right to cancel His promise someday there came a greater son of right then, but He didn't. I?, David, the Lord Jesus Christ who overcame the failures of David, and overcame the failures of Solomon, and with infinite wisdom He will build a temple that will never be destroyed. And there was the son of Abraham.

The son to whom Abraham looked for the fulfillment of the amazing promise of God, the son who was born when Abraham was a hundred years old, the son in whom his hope was resting. And Isaac, and his name even was laughter because of the joy in their hearts when he was born and through him was to be the seed to carry the enterprise of God, but that seed failed and Israel failed and God set

them aside and cut out a new channel, the church. And the story of Isaac and his seed is a story of weakness and a story of failure and a story of apostasy and a story of idolatry, and a story of sin. But Jesus Christ, the ultimate son of Abraham came to fulfill everything that Isaac couldn't do, and from Him will spring forth a seed that would number as the sands of the seas and number as the stars of the heaven, and they will carry out the purposes of God forever. So Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham came to overcome the failures of both of those lines and their seeds, and to accomplish what they could never accomplish, but He came through the line of two sinners, that's grace, that's grace. God's grace is seen in one woman and two men.

And thirdly, we see the grace of God in the history of three eras, the history of three eras, now watch this, this is most fascinating.

In verse 17 look, "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations: from David to the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations: from the carrying away (unto Babylon) into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations." Notice that? Three eras, one woman, two men, three eras. Now the first period, is the period that he mentions, from Abraham to David. That's the period of the patriarchs.

That's the period of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, that's the period of the patriarchs, and the period of the judges. You know...and it's in that period that you have the great patriarchs and the great judges like Deborah and Barak and Samson and Jephthah and all of those.

It's that great period of heroism when Israel was made famous. You have people even like Ruth and people like Jesse, the father of David. Ahh, it was a period of greatness. Second period is the period from David to the carrying away of Babylon. You know what happens? It's a period of decline. The first is a period of ascendancy as Israel goes from non-existence at Abraham's time, and oblivion to fame because of its great heroism as the judges lead through victory after victory. The second period is the period of the monarchy, and as soon as the monarchy came with Saul, you remember what happened, things started to go downhill.

And from David following you have glory days in Solomon, but after Solomon tragedy upon tragedy upon tragedy, oh, every once in awhile a little...get a little glimpse of a Jehoshaphat, in the, in the genealogy you get a little glimpse of a Hezekiah, you get a glimpse, a little glimpse of a Josiah, and they were good and godly. But what seems to dominate is Rehoboams and Ahazs and Manassehs who were evil men. And it's a period of apostasy and it's a period of degeneracy that ultimately ends up in the devastation and destruction of Israel and the captivity in Babylon. You say, what's the third period? The third period is from the captivity unto Christ. You know what there is about that period? We don't know anything hardly at all. It's a period shrouded in darkness. It's six hundred years of datelessness, names we don't even know. Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Achim, Eliud, Eliud, Eleazar, Eleazar, Matthan, Matthan, Jacob, we don't know these people, oblivion. So the story of

Israel is the story of three eras.

The national genealogy of Jesus is one of mingled pathos and glory. One of heroism and disagree, one of renown and obscurity. But all along even though the whole nation is going down the tubes, until finally they curse and spit on their own Messiah. It is nevertheless through that nation that the Messiah comes, and again I say to you, that is grace.

He's a King of grace. God's grace was given as evident in one woman, two men and three eras in the history of a decaying nation.

Finally, the grace of God is seen in the inclusion of four outcasts.

It may say women on your outline, but I mean it to say outcasts. Do you want to hear something fabulous? There are only four women mentioned in this genealogy, just four women. I want you to see who they are. Woman number one, verse 3, "And Judah begot Perez and Zerah of Tamar;" Tamar is the first lady in the genealogy. Her children, Perez and Zerah. What about Tamar? What kind of a lady was Tamar? Let me introduce you to her from Genesis 38 listen, "And it was told Tamar, saying, (and I don't have the whole time to go into all of this, Judah takes a wife for his first born, Judah wanted a wife for his first born so he took this lady. It was told Tamar, saying,) Behold your father-in-law goes up to Timnah to shear his sheep." This is Judah, her father- in-law. "And she put her widow's garments off from her," her husband had died, "and she covered her with a veil, wrapped herself," got herself all dolled up, see? "Sits in an open place, by the way to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah was grown, she was not given unto him as his wife." That's a whole other story, we won't go into that. "When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot; because she had covered her face.

And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Come, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee," come with me to the Casbah, you know that little line. "and he knew not that she was his daughter-in- law. And she said, (why) what wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?" I mean there's a price, I don't do this for nothing.. "He says, I'll send you a kid from the flock. She said, will you give me a pledge," can you give me a check, so I'll know it. "till you sent it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Your signet, your bracelets, your staff in your hand. He gave them to her and came in unto her, and she conceived by him." Nice lady, huh? Nice lady, Tamar. Harlotry and incest. You say, mercy, what is she doing in the Messianic line? A harlot! Listen, you want to hear the worst part of it? Out of that conception came twins. Perez and Zerah, you know what's amazing about that? They are the next people in the genealogy of the line of the Messiah.

Let me introduce you to the next lady. It goes downhill from here.

Verse 5, "And Salmon begot Boaz of (whom?) Rahab." When you say Rahab what are the next two words that come to your mind? The harlot. Rahab was a Canaanitess. Unclean, outcast, Gentile, pagan, idolatrous. A bad lady, a professional prostitute. Joshua chapter 2 tells us about it, we don't need to look at it. She...it says that the spies when they came into Jericho went in and came into a harlot's house named Rahab, she was a harlot, a prostitute. But look, from her came Boaz, and do you know something about Boaz? Oh, what a godly man, what a godly man.

There's a third lady here, look at verse 5 again, and Boaz had a son named Obed, and Boaz was married to whom? Ruth. You say, Ruth was not a prostitute, Ruth was a lovely la...Ruth was not guilty of incest.

No, you're right. But you know what Ruth was? She was a Gentile, she was an outcast. Tell you something else, Genesis '9 verse 3O is really interesting, "And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him: for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters." Here's Lot in a gave with his own two daughters, this is Lot, two daughters. And the first-born of his daughters said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there's not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let's make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed from our father." They were going to get their father drunk, and try to get their father to produce seed in them, incest. "They made their father drink wine that night, and the first-born went in, and lay with her father, and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose." He was so zonked he didn't know what was going, on. "It came to pass on the next day, the first-born said to the younger, Behold I lay last night with my father, let's make him drink wine tonight also: and you go in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed from our father. They made their father drink wine that night also:" It's tragic he didn't have enough backbone to defend himself against somebody making, him drunk. "the younger arose, lay with him: and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the first-born bore a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day." And you want to know who Ruth was? Ruth was a Moabite. She was born of incest. She herself was a pure lady. She was the wife of Boaz, and you want to hear something wonderful? She became the grandmother of David.

But she was born of a tribe of people who were guilty of incest, in fact in Deuteronomy 23:3 the whole Moabite nation is cursed by God. Deuteronomy 23:3 literally curses the whole nation. Here God picks up a cursed lady, born of an incestuous relationship with the daughters of Judah.

Now that's three interesting ladies. This is the only three, there's only one more left. You want to meet the next lady in the genealogy? The end of verse 6, "And David begot Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah." Who's this? Bathsheba. Bathsheba, according to Second Samuel chapter 11 and chapter 12 she was up on a roof sunbathing and David was up there looking. around and he said,

that's the one I want, brought her over, had a sexual relationship with her, produced a child, she was an adulteress. You've got two harlots, one born out of incest, and an adulteress, and they're the only four ladies mentioned in the entire genealogy of Jesus Christ. Now what do you think the message is? God is a God of what? Grace. Are you glad about that? I'm glad about that. Grace. And you know, I think, I think that this genealogy was a literal knockout punch by Matthew against the Jews. And by that I mean those antagonistic, hateful ones. They were legalistic, boy, they were hot on the pedigree and the line of purity and all of this heritage stuff, and so he introduces the Messiah as descending from two harlots, one adulteress, and one produced of incest. Coming through a nation whose history was a degenerated history, coming from two sinful men, and born to one sinful lady was the King of all Kings. Let it be known to Israel and anybody who listens, Jesus Christ is the friend of sinners, did you get that? He's the friend of sinners. And He Himself said it, I have not come to call the righteous but, what?... sinners to repentance." Let's pray.

Thank You Father tonight again for thrilling beginning to a great, great adventure. Oh God, how devastating this genealogy is when we see it for what You intended it to be. You were just striking a blow in the face of legalism, a blow in the face of self-righteousness, a blow in the sa...in the face of a works righteousness system. Grace just oozes from the pages. It's always been sinners that You identified with, through whom You came, to save sinners. We feel like Paul who said, "of whom I am chief." Thank You for Your gracious salvation. Thank You for being a gracious King who would forgive. We lift up Your name, Amen.

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