

The Son of David
Matthew 1:1-17

Slide 1

Michelangelo was a famous painter and sculptor. His most famous sculpture is “David,” a marble statue that’s 17 feet tall.

Because of its height, it’s possible that Michelangelo never meant for people to be able to look at David’s face head-on. Viewing him from below, David appears to have a calm expression on his face.

But if you’re able to look at David face-to-face, he has an expression of concern, maybe even anger. That’s because he’s about to do battle with Goliath in the most famous underdog story of all time.

It seems that many artists and sculptors place hidden images in their works which you’d never know about unless someone pointed it out to you.

For example, not long-ago members of Italy’s National Committee for Cultural Heritage reported that in Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa,” the letters “L” and “V” are visible in one of her eyes when viewed under a microscope, along with some other less-decipherable letters.

Could it be that Leonardo da Vinci signed his name in one of her eyes in microscopically small letters? This is what Matthew was doing in the opening verses of his Gospel.

In his genealogy of Jesus, when Matthew referred to Jesus as “the son of David,” he not only gave the people a portrait of the royal Messiah that the people were longing for, but he also placed within it a hidden message.

Matthew began his Gospel with these words, “*This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah.*”

In the NIV translation of the Bible, we see these words, but in many other translations, it says, *“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.”* Each is correct.

The Greek word for “Christ” (Christos) means “anointed” or “an anointed one.” It’s the equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew word “Messiah,” which means the same thing.

In modern Bible translations, “Messiah” is often used when the term functions as a title (like, the Messiah), and “Christ” is used when the term functions as a name (like, Jesus Christ).

One commentator points out, *“Matthew states at the outset what he will develop and demonstrate through his Gospel, that Jesus was the expected Messiah, of the royal line of David, with the rightful claim to the title ‘King of the Jews’”*

In today’s message, we’re going to see that Jesus, *“the son of David,”* is the Messiah Who is the King of the Jews.

In Matthew 1:1-17, we learn that Matthew calls Jesus *“the son of David”* because Jesus fulfills God's promise of a future king who establishes God's kingdom on earth.

Jesus wasn’t the Messiah that the people expected, but Jesus was the Messiah that God intended.

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But how did Jesus fulfill God’s promise? When Matthew began his Gospel with *“This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham,”* he wanted his readers to know that Jesus was the son of David.

Now, the name “David” occurs 39 times in all four Gospels. This may be a lot, but the Gospel authors wanted their readers to understand who David was because, if the readers didn’t understand who David was, they wouldn’t understand Jesus.

So, let’s learn a little about David. You may remember that David became king after Saul. Upon taking the throne, he conquered all the enemies who opposed God and his people.

David never lost a battle. He won every war that he fought against the enemies of God. Eventually, a relative peace came to the land, and David moved into the capital city of Jerusalem.

Upon his move to Jerusalem, David built himself a beautiful house, which we’d probably call a palace. From this house, he ruled all Israel.

2 Samuel 7:1-3, “After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.” Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.”

One pastor said that Nathan was like a lot of ministers today. If some wealthy person came to the minister and said, *“I want to make a huge donation to your ministry,”* what do you think the minister would say? *“Go ahead! I am sure that the Lord is with you!”*

Nathan was probably thinking that God was blessing David since the people were beginning to experience peace and were settling down as a nation.

Since David had a beautiful palace, he believed that it was only appropriate that a house—that is, a temple should be built for the worship of God.

But God told Nathan that he didn't want David to build him a temple. Why? We learn why in 1 Kings 5, when Solomon writes to Hiram, King of Tyre.

1 Kings 5:3, "You know that because of the wars waged against my father David from all sides, he could not build a temple for the Name of the Lord his God until the Lord put his enemies under his feet."

God didn't want David to build him a temple because of the warring intentions of David's surrounding enemies that still needed to be held off. Full peace would not come until David's son Solomon became King.

Regardless of the reason why David wasn't allowed to build a temple, God did make an astonishing promise to David.

2 Samuel 7:12-16, "When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

Instead of David building a temple for God, God was going to build a house, that is, a kingdom for David.

God promised David that one of his offspring would become king and reign forever on the throne. David eventually died and his son Solomon became king.

Now, the Gospels contain two genealogies of Jesus. One is given by Matthew and the other by Luke.

Luke essentially traced Jesus' biological descent to Mary, whereas Matthew traced Jesus' legal and royal descent to Joseph.

So, Jesus was the royal, legal, and covenantal descendant of King David. Throughout his ministry, Jesus was referred to as "*the son of David.*"

The expression "*the son of David*" is used 16 times in the Gospels in reference to Jesus.

To ensure that no one else claimed to be a descendant of King David, God allowed all the genealogical records to be destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

So, there is no one today, or for the last 2,000 years for that matter, who can claim to be a descendant of King David.

Remember last week when I detailed why genealogies were important, one of the key points of a genealogy was that any claim to royalty or priesthood had to be verified by genealogy.

The point is that God fulfilled His promise of sending a king who'll sit on the throne of David. That king is Jesus. He's the only legitimate heir who can sit on David's throne.

In Bunyan's great allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the incident is related about how Christian decides to leave the Main Highway and follow another Path that seemed easier.

But that Path lead him into the territory of Giant Despair who owned Doubting Castle. Eventually, Christian is captured by Giant Despair and kept in a dungeon where he's advised to kill himself.

The Giant said there was no use trying to keep on with his journey. For the time being, it seemed as if Despair had really conquered Christian.

But then, Hope, Christian's companion, reminds him of previous victories.

So, it came about that on Saturday at about midnight they began to pray and continued in prayer until almost morning.

Now a little before daylight, good Christian, as one half-amazed, broke out in passionate speech, *"What a fool am I thus to lie in a stinking Dungeon, when I may as well be at liberty. I have a Key in my bosom called Promise that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle."*

Then Hope said, *"That's good news. Good Brother, pluck it out of thy bosom and try."* Christian did, and the prison gates flew open.

God made a promise to David one thousand years before the birth of his offspring, Jesus. God fulfilled His promise in Jesus.

Most of the people at the time of Jesus' birth were stuck, as it were, in Giant Despair's Doubting Castle. They were gripped by fear and disillusion.

They wondered whether God was ever able to do anything. But God kept His promise, and Jesus was the key to the fulfillment of that promise.

But what does the birth of Jesus mean for us today? How does God's fulfillment of His promise in sending Jesus impact us today?

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At the time of Jesus' birth and life, the people of God were longing for God to send His Messiah.

They wanted someone who was God's anointed, but they expected a liberator who would free them from Roman oppression. They expected a military man who'd raise an army and get victory over the Romans.

Jesus was indeed God's Messiah, but he wasn't the Messiah that the people expected.

He didn't come to liberate them from military and political oppression. Jesus came to liberate them from spiritual oppression.

When Jesus was standing before Pilate after his betrayal, Pilate was trying to figure out what Jesus had done.

John 18:36, *"Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.'"*

Jesus' kingdom is spiritual. He's waging war against Satan and the forces of his kingdom. Jesus is winning people to Himself. He's transforming them by His power. He's ruling in their hearts.

And one day, when history finally comes to an end, Jesus will expel Satan, and all those who belong to him, to hell forever, at which time Jesus will set up His kingdom on earth with all of those who belong to Him.

Interestingly, all four Gospel authors record that when Pilate finally ordered Jesus to be crucified, he also had the charge written against Jesus placed on the cross above Jesus' head.

Do you know what it read, “*Jesus of Nazareth, The King of The Jews?*” This angered the religious leaders, as we read in John 19.

John 19:21-22, “*The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”*”

We know that Jesus is the eternal King because three days after His crucifixion, God raised Jesus back to life. This was the Father’s divine stamp of approval on Jesus’ life and work.

We usually just think of Jesus as the Savior of sinners, which He is, but Jesus is also King.

Jesus is the eternal King who sits on the throne forever and ever. And, because Jesus is the eternal king, He’s the only hope for the world.

If Jesus was only a Savior, He’d save sinners here and there and everywhere. That would be wonderful, but Jesus is more than a Savior.

He’s the eternal King with an eternal, universal kingdom. Jesus rules over the entire world. One day, He’ll send Satan and all unbelievers to their eternal destiny and set up His eternal rule here on the new earth.

As King, Jesus will do what David began to do but didn’t complete. Jesus will bring complete peace to all people.

He’ll bring prosperity to all people. He’ll eradicate sin from all people. He’ll make this new world a wonderful place for all who submit to His Kingship.

Then, because Jesus is the eternal King, we must obey Him. In our country, we have a President, and we’re citizens of this country.

If the President walked into our community, we'd respect him and listen to him, but we wouldn't necessarily have to obey him.

On the other hand, if we lived in a country that had a King, we wouldn't be citizens but subjects of the King.

If the King walked into our community, we wouldn't only respect him and listen to him, but we'd have to obey him as well.

Sometimes people say, *"Well, I tried Christianity, but it didn't work for me."* Pastor Tim Keller said, *"When you say, 'I tried Christianity and it didn't work.' Almost always that means, 'There were some nonnegotiable things I want in my life. I want happiness. I want health. I want to be married. I want to be this. I want to be that. Christianity didn't give it to me. What that means is, 'I obey God conditionally,' which is not obedience at all. That's not obeying God. That's using God."* Kings must be obeyed.

And, because Jesus is the eternal king, we can pray boldly. Jesus isn't some local god. He's not some local deity. He's sovereign over the entire universe.

He created every single atom. He created everything. He has power over everything. So, when you come to Jesus, pray boldly.

John Newton wrote a wonderful hymn regarding prayer. The hymn is called, *"Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare."*

The word "suit" doesn't refer to clothing but to a lawsuit. The second stanza of this hymn is as follows:

*Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.*

Finally, because Jesus is the eternal king, we can anticipate His return. Jesus is coming back again.

After Jesus' resurrection, He spent forty days with His disciples. At the end of those forty days, He gathered them together at the Mount of Olives.

At that meeting He told them that the Holy Spirit was going to come upon them and that they were to spread the good news of the Gospel to the end of the earth.

Then we read in Acts 1:9-11, *"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

Slide 4

Conclusion

Early in 1942, General Douglas MacArthur had to be evacuated from the Philippines because of the invading Japanese Army. Before he left, he vowed, *"I shall return."*

Over the next two and a half years, he constantly repeated his promise to return to the Philippines. This was finally accomplished on October 20, 1944.

A short while later, General MacArthur did a radio broadcast in which he announced, *"People of the Philippines, I have returned!"*

One day, Jesus is going to return to earth and say, *“People of God, I have returned!”* Because Jesus is the eternal king, we can anticipate His return.

Because Jesus is *“the son of David,”* let’s surrender ourselves wholeheartedly to His kingship over our lives.

A.W. Tozer once wrote, *“The man who surrenders to Christ exchanges a cruel slave driver for a kind and gentle Master whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.”*

If you’re not a Christian, your cruel slave driver is Satan. You may not think he is but eventually you’ll discover what a monster he really is. Abandon Satan now! Repent of your sin. Trust in Christ.

And if you’re a Christian, your gentle Master is *“the Son of David,”* the eternal King, whose kingdom shall never end. Surrender to Him daily and you’ll discover great joy and delight in serving your King.