



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & School

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A Stephen Ministry Congregation

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Advent 1

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“Jesus, Son of David”

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*(Based on a series written by Dr. Reed Lessing, Concordia
Seminary – St. Louis.)*

**Every day, everywhere, by everyone...
sharing the grace of the Good Shepherd.**

Collect: Lord Jesus Christ, so govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your glorious return, we may persevere in both faith and holiness of living; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Since the dawn of time, about 60 billion people have walked on Planet Earth. Of those 60 billion, only a handful have made any real, lasting impression. Of that handful, one stands far above all the others. His name is Jesus.

Jesus never wrote a book, and yet millions of books have been written about him. Jesus never painted a picture, and yet the world's greatest art has Jesus as its source for inspiration. Jesus never traveled very far from his birthplace, and yet his testimony has gone around the world.

To ignore or reject Jesus is disastrous. But to know and trust him is to be dramatically changed by him, eternally changed by him. The most important question, then, is this: "Who is Jesus?"

That's the name of our sermon series for Advent. "Who is Jesus?" Matthew wants us to know! So in the very first chapter of his Gospel account, he gives us the genealogy of Jesus, to help us know who Jesus is, right from the onset.

Today we begin with Matthew chapter one verse one: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Jesus is the son of David. Remember, David was the great king of Israel who lived about a thousand years before Christ. Matthew is saying Jesus comes from the lineage of David, the family line of David. But he's also saying much more when he writes, "Jesus is the son of David". David is a king. Because Jesus is the son of David, that makes *Jesus* the King. Jesus is the King.

When we confess that Jesus is the King we dare not confuse him with American politicians. While both are rulers, both are very different!

American politicians make big, crazy promises – right? In 2004 John Edwards said, "We will stop Diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's!" In 2012 Newt Gingrich said, "We will put a colony

on the moon by 2020!” Politicians will say almost anything to get elected, but mostly they’ll say what they think the majority of people want them to say. No one’s campaign slogan is, “Slow, arduous, difficult change.” No. We want leaders who promise the moon – or at least a colony on the moon!

However, when we look at Jesus, we see a completely different kind of leader – a different kind of king.

First, Jesus is the promised King. Our text says, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David.” When we hear the term “Jesus Christ,” we sometimes think Jesus is his first name and Christ is his last name. No. “Christ” is a title. It’s the Greek translation of the Hebrew word “Messiah,” which means “anointed one.”

The Old Testament foretells of a coming Messiah – a king who would be anointed with the Holy Spirit to accomplish God’s mission. The Messiah would come from the line of David. He’d be born in David’s city and sit on David’s throne. Matthew labors to demonstrate that Jesus is this King, the Christ, the long promised Messiah, the Son of David!

When Matthew writes his gospel, Israel had been without a legitimate king for hundreds of years. Now, Matthew declares, “a king has finally come to sit on David’s throne. It’s Jesus!” Matthew hammers this truth home by citing ten specific Old Testament promises regarding the Messiah and alluding to the Old Testament over 250 times! The message is this: Jesus is the One, he’s the long promised King, the Messiah.

So first, Jesus is the **promised King**. Second, Jesus is the **compassionate King**. Jesus didn’t come to drive out Israel’s enemies. Jesus came to bring in outcasts, because he has compassion on them. This is also evident in Matthew’s genealogy.

In the ancient world, people traced their ancestry through the father. It comes as no surprise, then, that Matthew’s genealogy is predominantly male. However, it isn’t exclusively male. Did you notice that Matthew also

mentions four women? There's Tamar in verse 3, Rahab and Ruth in verse 5, and then Bathsheba in verse 6. Matthew doesn't highlight Jesus' connection to any of Israel's matriarchs – Sarah, or Rebekah, or Rachel. Instead he highlights those other four who are all outsiders, foreigners. Tamar was a Canaanite. So was Rahab. Ruth was a Moabite. And Bathsheba was a Hittite like her husband—Uriah the Hittite. Each of these women were outsiders to Israel. Moreover, each of these women had a stigma attached to her. Tamar was dishonored by her brother-in-law. Later, she tricked her father-in-law, and bore a child by him. Rahab was a prostitute. Bathsheba committed adultery with King David. Ruth once worshiped Chemosh.

The Jews expected a Messiah who would drive out their Roman oppressors, and crush the nations to establish God's rule. But at his first coming, Jesus doesn't come to judge the nations. He comes to save the nations. Jesus brings outcasts home to God, and he removes the shame of marginalized people—like Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba.

This is a preview of the rest of Matthew's Gospel. Who does Jesus spend his time with? Outcasts. Jesus gets close to the diseased, to people who were quarantined away from society. And Jesus touches them. He gets close enough to contract their diseases.

Did you also notice that three of the four women in Matthew's genealogy were sexually exploited? I know that some in this church carry deep wounds of this sort. And often, those wounds are made worse by the shame others inflict, as if it was somehow their fault. Jesus welcomes and heals people who carry these wounds, even the unnecessary wounds of shame that accompany them.

And that finally includes all of us. The ugly shame. The haunting shame. Jesus not only takes away our sin and our guilt. Jesus also takes away the shame. We don't have to drink our shame away or work our shame away. We don't have to explain our shame away, or cry our shame away.

Jesus isn't a King who just sits on his throne

frowning from a distance. No. Jesus is a King who descends from his throne, filled with compassion, and forgives us and cleanses us of our shame. We don't have to live in shame. We aren't worthless. We aren't damaged goods. What other people said and thought and did to you doesn't define who you are. No, you are a redeemed, baptized child of God. He has made you clean and whole because he is the compassionate King.

So, Jesus is the 1) Promised King, 2) the Compassionate King.

3). Jesus is also **the rejected King**. To the religious elites of his day, Jesus was the wrong kind of king. He lived in the wrong place, associated with the wrong people, preached the wrong message, appointed the wrong disciples, carried out the wrong mission, and offered the wrong redemption. And so the authorities opposed him at every turn.

The whole thing came to a head on Good Friday. Matthew writes about it. "Above his head they placed the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Mt. 27:37). But he wasn't just king of the Jews. Remember what he said after his resurrection? "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt. 28:18). That means he's our King too. Not the kind that just makes self-serving demands. No, as our King Jesus comes for us, lives for us, dies for us, and Jesus rises for us. Jesus gives everything for us. That's a King worth following all the days of our lives!

Matthew would know. He's the one who wrote this genealogy, and he also tells us how he became a follower. Matthew 9, "As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him" for the rest of his life.

Who is Jesus? Matthew says Jesus is our King, one worth following all the days of **our** lives. Amen.

