

## “Great David’s Greater Son”

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Concluding a series *A King for God’s People*

Matthew 1.1-17; Matthew 11.1-6

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On this lazy summer day, I’m going to grab your attention with a genealogy. The folks who arranged the order of the “New Testament” decided to make this list of names the opening act. Matthew, led by the Holy Spirit to tell the Good News of Jesus, started his Gospel with this family tree. Why? It’s all about Jesus.

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See the Scripture by clicking [here](#).

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This genealogy is the Good News of Jesus. No, not all the Good News. Matthew and the rest of the New Testament are just getting started. Still, it is the start. The world-saving, life-changing, sin-forgiving, evil-defeating, soul-justifying, disease-healing, outcasts-redeeming, word-of-God living, most-important-news story of Jesus begins here.

These forty-two fathers — and strategically-intruding mothers — all lead to Jesus. These forty-two generations strung through twenty centuries and more, all finish with Jesus. This mixture of saints and scoundrels, famous, infamous or anonymous, is all about Jesus.

Think of steps going up three flights, turning at four landings.

- Launch from Abraham: God created and called his family to be God’s People for the world, God’s light to the nations, Israel.
- Go up and land on David: God anointed him as the king for God’s People, to lead Israel in God’s mission.
- Up more and land at the Exile: David’s dynasty collapsed, and God sent away and scattered the People.
- Climb to the top, up to Jesus.

Matthew wants us to see that

Jesus is the *son of Abraham*. He is a Hebrew, an Israelite, a Jew. With all Jews, Jesus is a child of God’s promise, an heir of God’s mission, sharing in God’s hope for the world.

Jesus is the *son of David*. He is royalty, directly in line from the great king. Jesus is the child of God’s promise to David, the heir of God’s mission for David, bearing God’s hope for the world.

Jesus is the *Christ*. Christ means *Messiah*. Messiah means *the Anointed One*. That's the king!

Matthew's message: the King for God's People has finally come. Jesus!

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Or has he?

Folks are wondering. Including John. John, Jesus's cousin. John, who baptized Jesus and saw God's Spirit rest on Jesus. John, who's been telling everyone that Jesus is the One.

John has waited for the King, hoped for the King, prepared for the King.

The King will win the decisive victory, setting Gods' People free. We can't be light in the world, if we are crushed, mocked and ignored. John knows: God's mission for God's People needs a New Messiah.

The King will rebuild the Temple. We can't truly rejoice, when our worship places are ruined and defiled. John knows: God's mission for God's People needs a New Christ.

The King will bring justice and peace — the peace and justice of God. So much is wrong, and needs to be made right. John knows: God's mission for God's People needs a New King.

The King will restore David's kingdom, finish what David started, succeed where even David failed. John knows: God's mission for God's People needs a New David.

Jesus arrives and John celebrates: the King had come!

Now, however, John is cramped in prison, his days numbered. He wonders and worries. Jesus is not doing what John expects, what everyone anticipates. Tyrants overthrown, idols smashed, God's destroying and purifying fire, righteous restored, justice regained, peace reigning. It is not happening. Has John been wrong about Jesus? Have they reached the top of that long stairwell — from Abraham through David through Exile — only to fall back down?

What's a king supposed to do?

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See the Scripture by clicking [here](#).

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### III

About an hour's drive from Madrid is *El Escorial*. It is one of the palaces of Spain's royal family.<sup>1</sup>

In the complex is a church. Inside the church, in the crypt, entombed in bronze and marble sarcophagi rest the remains of 500 years of Spanish kings and queens. The walls are panelled in wood from an ancient Cuban forest, also gilded in bronze and marble, and plated with gold.

Outside the church, high on its walls stand statues of kings. Not the kings of Spain. Kings of David's line, ancient rulers of God's People.

In *El Escorial* are memorialized together the biblical monarchs who inherited God's covenant with David, and Spanish monarchs who conquered empires, ruled millions, and amassed great wealth.

What story is this royal chapel telling? The kings of Spain and the kings of Israel are essentially the same. Israel's royal dynasty was chosen by God, so Spain's was too. It's political spin in stone and metal.<sup>2</sup>

A crucifix hangs elsewhere in *El Escorial*.<sup>3</sup> It's just Jesus on the cross, in white marble on wood, naked against a bare wall.

Does this crucified Jesus belong with the kings of Spain and of David?

What's a king supposed to do?

### IV

This whole idea of a King for God's People was a disaster in waiting. It was never God's idea. The people saw that all the other nations had kings. These nations were more prosperous, more powerful and, by the world's measures, better than them. So they demanded a king.

God warned. Like all other kings, theirs would lord over them, take from them, conscript, enslave and use them. Their kings would be like the kings of *El Escorial*, the sovereigns and governments of any nation. God's People need to be different from the world, for the sake of God's mission in the world. God warned them, but they insisted.

God did not walk away. God gave them kings. First with Saul, and better with David, God

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<sup>1</sup> El Escorial is a UNESCO world heritage site. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_Escorial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Escorial).

<sup>2</sup> The Spanish monarchs were not the only ones who claimed the glow of David to bolster their own prestige and power; see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David#Christianity>. The coronation ceremony for British monarchs also evokes elements of the Davidic monarchy; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David#Christianity>.

<sup>3</sup> Carved by Benvenuto Cellini.

worked through the king. Through the generations, God promised a king who would prove faithful — faithful to God, faithful to God’s mission, faithful to how God rules in the world.

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Once, *“as Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ . . . And Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.”*<sup>4</sup>

“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight. . . .”

Just before, some disciples had been arguing over who would get the most power when King Jesus seized his throne. *“And Jesus called them to him and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’”*<sup>5</sup>

Finally! Jesus proved faithful to God, faithful to God’s mission, faithful to how God rules in the world. . . . In Jesus, God became King. Jesus is what no monarch, no sovereign, no parliament or congress, no prime minister or president, no court or law can be. He is our one King, the world’s one true Lord, God Almighty.

“He came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

That’s what a king’s supposed to do. Our King Jesus has done it.

The King for God’s People.

And he says to you, “Follow me.”

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<sup>4</sup> Mark 10:46-47,52 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> Mark 10:42-45 (ESV)