

Matthew 19-02-17a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday Morning Services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. It is a privilege to greet each and every one of you, individually, collectively, and to express appreciation for the fellowship that we enjoy, whether we're co-located or at a distance. We have an exciting morning ahead of us.

We're starting a new study in the Gospel of Matthew in preparation for it. I've reviewed some of our previous Gospel studies, and I was shocked to realize how long it has been since we did our first Gospel, which was back in 1994. That was the Gospel of Mark, and we then followed that with the Gospel of Luke, starting in late 1999 and moving through 2000 and 2001.

And then more recently we did the Gospel of John, but it's been several years since we've been in a Gospel, and to look at the Lord Jesus at first hand in His origin, His ministry, His work on the cross, and His turning the great message of redemption loose on the world, at large, beyond Israel, is a very central, obviously, part of Scripture. But the miracles and the parables and the words and works of the Lord Jesus contained in any one of the Gospels is of profound and gratifying significance. So I'm happy to be starting this this morning, and hold on to your hats.

We will be doing two chapters in the Gospel this morning, so prepare to be shocked and awed. I don't generally travel that fast, but you'll see why as we get started. Let's go to the Lord in prayer, and then we'll begin.

Father, we are so grateful for the new life we have in Jesus Christ. It creates for us a whole new environment, a new frame of reference, new skills to learn, new assets and resources to employ and avail ourselves of. We see our lives and the context of history with fresh eyes, and the horizon is broken through, and we see into eternity.

We thank You for that. We thank You for the means by which these tremendous blessings have been granted to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are motivated and encouraged as we look at His earthly life, living in our flesh as one of us, facing what we face, enduring what we endure, and more, yet without sin, showing us the way to be enabled and empowered by Your Spirit and Your Word.

We pray that as we embark on this study of the Gospel of Matthew, that Your Holy Spirit will bless it to each heart, help us to see clearly those points of truth and application that are pertinent and helpful, and that will advance us in our service, our obedience, our faith, and our function in Your plan, so that we will be ready for that day when the Lord Jesus comes a second time, takes us to Himself, and we enter into that even more vast realm of the eternal future. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Gospel of Matthew, it does not internally claim its author, this ascription. It does not

claim its author, this ascription is ancient and really uncontested. There is no serious opposition to the notion that Levi the tax collector, also known as Matthias or Matthew, wrote this Gospel.

It is, as you I'm sure are aware, oriented toward Israel. It relies heavily on Old Testament allusions. It refers frequently to Old Testament prophecy and its fulfillment.

There have been many analyses put forward of why we have the four Gospels, what each one emphasizes, whether it is the deity of Christ in John, the humanity of Christ in Luke, the identity as the Messiah to Israel in Matthew, and the tremendous words and work of Christ that are distilled in the Gospel of Mark. But here in Matthew, it is one of the two Gospels that include the birth narrative, and that include the genealogy of the Lord, and that's where the Gospel begins. So if you turn your attention to the first page of your New Testament, you see the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Son of David, son of Abraham. Why those two figures? They're obviously important, but why are they important? What is the significance of David and Abraham? Abraham originates the people. David originates the nation, the monarchy.

The nation becomes a formal nation. You need several things to be a nation, and you might say, well, weren't they a nation when they entered the land? Well, they had not sufficiently conquered the land to have full possession. In the days of Joshua and the judges, after the initial conquest, the land was contested, and there was a back and forth, and there was 400 years or so of growth until the point that the people demanded a king, and God rather reluctantly gave them a king, a king of their choosing, which didn't work out, and then God gave them a man after his own heart, David.

And this is where the kingdom really begins. Saul didn't really have a capital city. He didn't have a palace.

There was no centralized worship in those days, despite the fact that they had the Ark of the Covenant. The tabernacle was in tatters, and with David, you have the creation of the capital. You have the dynastic palace, and you have the foundations laid, metaphorically speaking, for the temple, which is going to be built by his son Solomon.

And so the Lord Jesus provides the third component. You have the people. You have the nation, which includes possession of the land.

But these are meaningless if you do not have redemption, if you do not have the Anointed One who comes and grants life in its fullness. What did Jesus say? I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. Your ethnicity and your genealogy and your roots in whatever people group you may come from, most of us, it's several people groups.

We're quite the mix master of origins. But whatever you come from and whatever you possess in terms of your land or your location or your accomplishments, if your life is just a brief moment in the sun and you're like a flower that grows in the morning and is dead by evening, those things count for little to transcend the temporary boundaries of this life. You think about Ecclesiastes and Solomon reflecting on the brevity of human life.

Isaiah, the grass withers and the flower fades. It is the Word of God that abides forever. And if you think about that, the eternality of God's Word, what is a word? It is a communication to someone.

I was musing and having a conversation or two earlier this week about the nature of solitude and solitary confinement. I saw an interview with a lady who was held over in the Middle East in solitary confinement for 411 days, I think. And this was in a documentary about the brain and what happens when you are cut off from other brains and communication with other people.

And you essentially go gradually crazy because we are designed to be in a network. We are designed to communicate. Well, God's Word, the reason God's Word lives and abides forever is it is God's communication to His creatures.

They've got to live and abide forever for the Word to abide. The Word doesn't exist in a vacuum. It has an origin and it has a destination.

So these things all come together in Matthew 1, the book of the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, Yeshua Mashiach, Joshua the Messiah. I really long sometimes for a world in which they had not Greekified and Anglicized Jesus' name because he was never called Jesus until things were put into German and English. In Greek he was Iesous, which is close to Yeshua, but there was no hard J at the beginning of his name.

There was no word such as Jehovah until centuries after the fact. And if you were somehow transported back in time like some of these Bible cartoons do, these little adventurous exploring kids go back and live alongside the Bible figures, if you went around asking for Jesus you'd never find him. If you said Yeshua, I hear there's Yeshua, he seems to be a prophet, he's teaching on the hillsides, somebody could direct you to him.

Yeshua Mashiach, Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Messiah, he provides the essential third aspect that redeems the people and redeems the nation. And you notice that Jesus comes to save his people from their sins, as we'll see, his people. They are saved from their sins.

He redeems the people. He also is anointed king of the nation. So the people individually become redeemed and the nation, the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are as an entity and as a collective established in perpetuity.

Son of David, son of Abraham. Now you have this genealogy beginning with Abraham going all the way down to verse 6. You see that Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac Jacob, Jacob Judah, and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, circle Tamar.

Perez begot Hezron, Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amenadab, Amenadab begot Nashon, Nashon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, circle Rahab.

Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, circle Ruth. Obed begot Jesse, Jesse begot David the king, David the king. David the king begot Solomon by Hur of Uriah, circle Hur.

This of course is Bathsheba. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam Abijah, Abijah Asa, Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Put a star by Jehoram begot Uzziah because Joram did not beget Uzziah in the way that we understand it.

Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham Ahaz, Ahaz Hezekiah, Hezekiah Manasseh, Manasseh Ammon, Ammon Josiah, Josiah Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. After they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shaltiel, Shaltiel begot Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel begot Abiud. Put a little star by Abiud.

Abiud begot Eliakim, Eliakim Azor, Azor Zadok, Zadok Akim, Akim Eliud, Eliud Eliezer, Eliezer Mathan, Mathan Jacob, Jacob Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are 14 generations. From David to the captivity in Babylon, 14 generations.

From the captivity in Babylon until the Christ, 14 generations. This is what we're going to spend our first session on this morning, and we've got about a quarter of an hour to do it. So as I say, I will not be wasting many words.

This genealogy is distinguished by several features. It is unusual in at least three ways. The first way is that it is inclusive of five women.

Five women. I had you circle four of them. The fifth one is in verse 16, Mary.

So how does that affect our understanding? What do we do with that as observers? Does that have meaning for us in terms of application? We will see. But that's a first observation. The second is that it is artificially divided into 14 generation sections.

The first is that it is a combination of 14 generations. The way men count, the math does not work. God makes the math work by changing some things in the genealogy.

So the 14 generation idea is something we want to look at. Why 14 generations, and why is the lineage compressed to ensure that? And why do we care about that? And I think we'll focus on just those first two. If I have time, I'll get to the third.

But let's talk first of all about why these women are included. We've alluded to some of

this in the past as we were going through the Old Testament. We looked at the book of Ruth.

We saw that she is included. We went through the book of Genesis and saw the story of Tamar. We have been through the issue with David and Uriah and Bathsheba.

Of course we did Joshua and saw Rahab. And of course we've seen almost annually something related to Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus. In Luke we saw her Magnificat, the wonderful composition that she made at the birth of the Lord Jesus and its Old Testament roots.

But in this genealogy they are all included, and this is a stretch. It normally was not done. In the records that were kept at the temple all the way down to the time of Christ, it was possible for most people to trace their lineage back.

And this was the basis for being allowed into temple worship, was that you could document that you were a Jew and not a Gentile. You could document your roots and show that you were qualified to pass beyond the court of the Gentiles into the place of worship to offer sacrifice, to observe feasts and so on. And these records existed all the way down to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD at which point they were lost.

And modern Jews seldom if ever have the ability to establish their tribal lineage. There are some clues and hints in names. If your last name is Kohen, which is the word for priest in Hebrew, there's a possibility that you have a litical extraction somewhere back, but much more difficult after the destruction and the loss of these records.

Well, let's begin with the ladies here. Tamar is a Canaanite. She's not from the family of Jacob.

She's an outsider. And yet she is with Judah, the originator of the royal tribe. All of the prophecies about the scepter will not depart and so on are fulfilled through Tamar.

It is her descendants, remember the twins? They're mentioned here, Perez and Zerah by Tamar. And the line comes through Perez, meaning breach. The red string story and the shifting God determining in his own wisdom and knowledge who is going to be in the line.

And God often violates the pattern and the elder ends up serving the younger. You see this with Jacob himself. You see this with Abraham.

Abraham was not the oldest son of his father. He's the third son, if you go back and read Genesis. And yet God calls Abraham because he's the man of faith.

He's the man that can transcend his birth order by faith. Isaac was not the firstborn of Abraham. And yet he is the line through which God is going to fulfill all of his promises to

Abraham.

Jacob is not the firstborn of Isaac. And what do we draw from this? We see it reflected in the genealogy. It takes us back like a footnote to the fullness of the story in the Old Testament.

Your faith allows God to change the natural order of things. God will work his will in our lives when we are people of faith and obedience. We will have our failures.

Abraham had his failures. Jacob had his failures, certainly. Judah had his failures.

More than one. Judah was in part responsible for Joseph not being rescued and instead being sold into slavery. And he takes and accepts responsibility for that later in the book of Genesis.

And he also has the problem with being unwilling to observe the proprieties when his son dies without issue. And he doesn't give Tamar, after two tries, he doesn't want to risk his third son. He evidently is superstitious and thinks she's bad luck.

Marry a son to her and they die. So you have the clear illustration of the fact that God is not limited by what we would consider a limitation. Human assumptions, well, primogeniture is the law.

It's the way things work. And yet God repeatedly overcomes that and works his will for people of faith. Fallible people, certainly, but people who return, who repent, who keep coming back after straying, who keep picking themselves up by God's grace after falling down.

That's the kind of people we want to be so that we can be those for whom God does amazing and supernatural things. So Tamar would be an outcast. She would have never really been accepted in the same way that Esau's wives were sort of a stench in his parents' nose because he married women of the land.

And this is normally not a good idea, but Tamar is a woman of faith and she is legitimized and is adjudicated, acceptable and proper. And Judah has to basically say, I was wrong, she was right, she is in the clear. And by her faith, she is entered into the people of Israel.

She wants to bear a child in the family of Jacob. That's her goal. She doesn't want to be set aside.

She has joined to that family by marrying Judah's first son. And she's not interested in being excluded. She wants to be with the people of God.

So God makes sure that happens. You come on down to Salmon who was one of the spies that Joshua sent into the land and he meets Rahab and marries her. And Rahab, a

woman of dubious reputation, let's say, in Jericho, manifestly a Canaanite.

But by her faith and by her persistence, she is made a part of Israel. Now this is where it gets interesting because you have Rahab in verse 5, you know that story well, and she's Boaz' mother. When we're going through Ruth, we don't always dwell on the fact that Boaz' mother is Rahab, but she is.

Now if Rahab is a Canaanite and Salmon is an Israelite, work the math, how much Israelite is Boaz? There have been enough generations, I mean nobody is 100% from Tamar onward, but as you keep marrying into Israel, the percentage of Israelite purity keeps increasing and you get to Salmon and he's 90 something percent. But then he marries Rahab and so their son Boaz is half Israelite. Remember when they talk about there is a nearer kinsman involved in Naomi's family? Well you could get the idea that there's an additional element going on there that somebody may have thought, well there's a bit of a taint here because yes Rahab was declared good to go, but Boaz is a half Israelite, half Israel, half Canaanite.

So who does he marry? He marries a Moabite, who is not an Israelite either. So when Boaz and Ruth have Obed, what percentage of Israelite Abraham, Isaac and Jacob blood is Obed? He's a quarter. He's three quarters something else, Canaanite and Moabite, Obed is.

That's how the math worked. Obed begets Jesse. He married into Israel, so you get Jesse being about a third maybe.

He's climbing up the Israelite bloodline ladder as the fathers marry into women of Israel. So Jesse is about a third. Jesse begets David with an Israelite woman, so David is probably two thirds, give or take.

I don't want to work the math. But why is there this cluster of women around David who are not Israelite? Right around David within a few generations you have Rahab, you have Ruth, and then David is about two thirds, but then Bathsheba is evidently, we don't really know, we don't know her origin. But she is certainly unusual in the sense that Solomon is the product of what had been an adulterous relationship that was later legitimized with the death of Uriah, which was illegitimate in itself.

But you have these women listed, and you say, well, this is, and I think legitimately so, a foreshadowing of God's ability to bring into the line of redemption and into the line of legitimacy and of propriety and of divine favor anybody he wants to. And women in particular were without the kind of standing in a patriarchal society that would make that easy to do. But God does it.

And not only were these women of dubious origins, shall we say, outside the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in most cases, and outside the normal channels by which they

would be incorporated into a genealogy, there is that suggestion that the Gentiles are going to be included in salvation, which goes all the way back to the promise to Abraham. You will be a blessing to all people. Through you all nations of the earth will be blessed.

And so that is reflected in this line. The Redeemer has these ladies in his ancestry and is going to have the same sort of blessing and the same sort of sympathy to them. You wonder if this might be why Solomon was so sympathetic to so many different nationalities of wives, because he himself was a polyglot in near generations of several different nationalities.

But secondly, each of these women are marked by faith. Tamar is clearly willing to risk her life to be a part of the salvation of the people of God. That's what she did, and she risked her reputation.

She did certainly nonstandard behavior in waylaying Judah along the road. But she wanted to be a part of the people of God. Rahab, obvious manifestation of faith in hanging the scarlet thread and protecting the spies.

Ruth, obvious manifestation of her faith throughout that entire book in the Old Testament. And Bathsheba, you see in the latter days when she is intent on protecting her son Solomon from being executed by some of David's other sons, and that the promise of God through the prophet would be fulfilled, that he would be the next king. And she stands up and she fights a battle of faith to make sure that that happens.

These are women of faith as well as foreign women. And in many cases, their faith outshines some of the people around them who are native Israelites. Ruth is more faithful in initial days than Naomi who has sort of lost her faith.

Tamar is more faithful than Judah himself. Rahab is more faithful than a lot of the people who doubted the Lord and who didn't obey. So they reflect both of those things.

You can be an outsider and faith can make you an insider. You can be a woman instead of a man and yet God will put you in the genealogical record of the Lord himself. And in many cases, their Gentile extraction foreshadows the opening up of the gospel to the entire world.

All of these women also had marital circumstances that are out of the ordinary. Again, Tamar, that's not the usual. Rahab had a lot of marital circumstances and she's called Rahab the prostitute.

I think we would say former prostitute by the time she joins the nation of Israel, but she has a shady past. Ruth is widowed and remarried. The circumstance with these women always involves something to do with marriage and something happening in marital circumstances.

And it doesn't focus so much on whatever sin or shortcoming might have been involved, but this is going to bear on the fifth woman, Mary, because the circumstances of the Lord's birth are shadowed by innuendo and rumor and scandal. So the use of these women is an encouragement. It's an encouragement.

It's an encouragement whether your background is dubious, whether your circumstance is dubious, whether you are looked at askance by others. Faith and looking to God overcomes all of that. It overcomes order of birth.

It overcomes place of origin. It overcomes ancestry. It overcomes whatever hand of cards we might have been dealt.

Coming to God in faith overcomes every circumstance. And these are the big ones. And there's an a fortiori argument there.

If God can overcome these big obstacles, how much more easily and fully can He overcome the smaller obstacles that we encounter? He is a God of mercy. He is a God of grace. And He is a God who looks for, recognizes, and rewards faith.

Faith in the face of what seems like insurmountable obstacles we trust anyway, and God works it out. And so this genealogy by including these women makes those points. The second aspect we wanted to look at here is the 14 generation idea.

We don't find this in Luke. And interestingly, in this genealogy, from David to Christ is how many generations? Careful now. How many generations in the Matthew genealogy get you from David to the Lord Jesus? Each of these 14 generation sets is marked off by a major figure or event.

Abraham starts. And so from Abraham to David is 14 generations. From David to what? Captivity in Babylon, 14 generations.

Captivity in Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations. So how many generations in Matthew between David and the Lord Jesus? 28, right? It's a little bit of a trick question. There's actually 27, because the final set oddly only has 13 names instead of 14.

We'll deal with that in a minute. But 28, right? 28 generations. In Luke, the same distance between David and the Lord Jesus, 41 generations.

41. Now the reason I had you put a star by Abiud up in verse 13 is that the genealogy is reflected in Old Testament Scripture in Chronicles, all the way up to three generations after the exile. So Abiud is the last guy mentioned in Chronicles.

After that, we can't check Eliakim, Azor, Zadok, Akim. These would have been in the temple records in Jerusalem. But Chronicles ends, and it tells you the latest that the Chronicles could have probably been set down in writing, three generations after the

exile.

So Abiud is the end of the Old Testament documentation. And so are these actual lineal descendants? Are there generations skipped? The tendency is to think that there might be, only because you've got half again as many generations in the Luke genealogy spanning the same distance. So either these people really lived a long time before they had their sons, or it's been compressed.

But we know it's been compressed back in verse 9, actually verse 8, when it says that Joram begot Uzziah, and Uzziah begot Jotham. There are three kings of Judah left out in order to make this 14 generations work. Three kings are left out.

Now, did Matthew just make a mistake? Obviously not. It's something that's done consciously and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So a question we can ask ourselves is, why? Is he just fudging so that he can get 14 generations, and why is the 14 generations so important? So we kind of have two questions here.

Let's address the first one. Why are these three kings left out? This is in, and you can just put a note out beside this, 2 Chronicles 21-25. These chapters, 21-25, detail the lives of the missing kings.

So just flip back and you're going to quickly see why they are left out when you go to 1 Chronicles 21. Now, what was our first point about the genealogy? It's unusual because it includes women, right? When you get to 2 Chronicles 21, here's Jehoshaphat. He's mentioned in verse 8. Asa begat Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, bearing the city of David. Joram, his son, reigned in his place. That's the Joram that is in verse 8 of Matthew 1. Jehoshaphat begat Joram.

Now, he had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat. Verse 3, their father gave them great gifts of silver, gold, precious things, fortified cities, gave the kingdom to Joram. Jehoram and Joram are the same guy, because he was the firstborn.

Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father. He strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword. Also, other princes of Israel.

He was 32 years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife, and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. Who's the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel? It starts with an A and ends with Thaliah, right? Athaliah.

Joram marries Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat married the daughter of Jezebel, Athaliah, and she is Hades on roller skates. She is intensely evil.

She combines and distills the evil of Jezebel in fresh and new ways. The rest of this

account in 21 and 22, a letter from Elijah the prophet, you remember the significance of that letter? It tells us that Elijah was still around after the fiery chariot incident when Elisha takes over, because this letter comes several years after that incident, and it's easily calculated. Thus says the Lord God of your father David, you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat.

Verse 13, you walked in the ways of the king of Israel. Harlotry, the house of Ahab, killed your brothers. The Lord will strike you, verse 14, your people with serious affliction, your children, your wives, all your possessions.

You will become sick with the disease of your intestines until your intestines come out by reason of sickness day by day. The Lord stirred up against Joram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians. They came and carried away everything that was found in the king's house, his sons and wives.

There was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. The Lord struck his intestines with an incurable disease. They buried him in the city of David but not in the tombs.

Then you get Ahaziah in chapter 22, but he gets killed and so Athaliah reigns. So you can follow this all the way through, and it isn't until Uzziah is born that the genealogy of Matthew resumes. But these three guys are skipped, and the one in the middle is Joash, little baby Joash.

But you remember when we studied through Kings and Chronicles, Joash departed from the Lord and became a rascal and a reprobate and murdered the blood of the sons of Jehoiada, the priest is on his hands. And so even little baby Joash that everybody is so sympathetic to, he was a rascal. His father was a rascal and his son was a rascal.

And those are the three that are left out. And God subtracts in a three generation curse manner these three individuals between Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram and Ahaziah. And Jehoram was a garden of Uzzah, but there is such a rotten spot in between that those three intermediates that are associated with Athaliah so completely are subtracted out.

So you have four Old Testament women included, and there is a sense in which you have one Old Testament woman written out. And anybody she was the mother of, or the grandmother of, or the great grandmother of, in a three generation curse manner is wiped out, subtracted out, not considered. So not only can we look at these women of faith and be encouraged, but we can look at this woman of evil and be warned that just because you are associated with even the royal line of Judah, that's no safety net.

That's no get-out-of-jail-free card. God can take you out of a legitimate situation in the same way that He can take you out of illegitimate and put you into a wonderful place. God will do either.

And this intentional omission not only fixes the math, but makes a point. I don't have to remind you that comparing the two genealogies draws our attention to the curse of Jeconiah, and Jacob, Jesus' father in the human sense, his adoptive father or his stepfather, is in the line of Jeconiah, and that curse that said, a man of your descendants will not sit on the throne, is fulfilled because Jesus is not in that bloodline. His bloodline through David comes to Mary, which is in Luke.

But here you have the Jeconiah down in verse 11, Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And the carrying away to Babylon is the fulfillment of judgment, and Coniah was cursed at that time. And so this becomes the line of Jacob, verse 16, and then Joseph, Jacob, Joseph's father.

I think I'm trying to talk about Joseph and saying Jacob. But Joseph, the husband of Mary, is the stepfather, but not the actual father of the Messiah. So finally, what is the significance of 14 generations real quickly? Do you remember Daniel 9, where you have the 70 weeks prophecy? And there is the suggestion that there will be 490 years from that captivity until the coming of Messiah the Prince, right? 69, 70, 490 years are determined upon your people.

Well, the Biblical generation, we always think, oh, Old Testament Biblical generation is 40 years. But that's actually sort of a rabbinical development, and it's based on looking at the 40 years of wandering, and that generation died in the wilderness. But the actual Biblical generation was 35 years.

Thirty-five years is the way that it was reckoned Biblically. And we have, I'll give you where that comes from after the break, but let me just say 14 times 35, 14 generations of 35 years each is 490 years. And there are, in fact, this math works really well for the later generations, but from Abraham to David, we know Abraham was 18-something B.C., and David is close to 1,000.

And so a 35-year generation doesn't work between Abraham and David, but it does work in the later area. And it is as though the granularity and the specificity is greater as you get close to the Lord Jesus, and it becomes more blurry in general, and the generations are reckoned differently in the patriarchal age than they are in the monarchic age. But the 490-year prophecy was the one nearest at hand, and 14 generations of 35 years make that time up exactly.

I'll close with two additional observations. One is that it's been observed that each of the 14-generation sections reflects a different kind of government in Israel. So you have sort of an aristocracy or an elder-based patriarchal system in the first 14 generations from Abraham to David.

You have a monarchic situation from David to the captivity, and then you have an oligarchy from the captivity to the coming of the Lord Jesus. And the three different kinds

of government pertain in those three epochs, if you will, those three 14-generation sections, and each of them fails to produce a government that has any lasting effect and long-term benefit, and that glorifies God as it should. Each of those fails, and it reminds you of the parable that Jesus tells in Luke of the man who sent three different servants to the masters of his vineyard, and each of them fails in his mission, and he says, well, now I will send my son, and that there's a reflection of the three previous tries to impose order on the workers in the vineyard, and those three tries fail, and so I will send my son.

But when they send the son, they kill him and take everything. So that's an interesting observation, and the second one is that the coming of the Lord Jesus ends the 14-generation clock. But in summary, this genealogy not only has these other interesting features, but I think its primary function in occupying the first half of this chapter is to show that God had planned the coming of the Messiah from the ages past.

And beginning with Abraham, he was at work through all of these generations, working toward the goal of bringing the Lord Jesus into the world. And it reminds us of the long-term view, the big-picture view that God has. The Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world is not an accidental phrase.

God has had redemption and salvation in His heart from the beginning, and each generation plays a part, good or bad, in the progress of the fulfillment of God's purpose. We are a generation, and we have the opportunity to fulfill God's purpose, our place in that line, that line of redemption, that line of accomplishment, that record of God's grace. And whatever the circumstances, whatever the origins, whatever the obstacles, by faith, Hebrews chapter 11, anything is possible.

With God, all things are possible. By faith, we enter into that realm of possibility no matter what. So it's a tremendous introduction, not only to the Gospel of Matthew, but in its place in our canon to the New Testament as a whole, that God is at work to accomplish His purpose and people of faith will.

If you want to join God in His work, *a la* experiencing God, this is the way to do it. You don't have to look around and see where He is at work. Be faithful, and He will incorporate us into His work.

We don't have to run around trying to jump onto a bandwagon. These people weren't trying to become a part of God's work. They simply believed, they trusted, and they wanted a relationship with God, and God brought it to pass, looking particularly at those women.

Let's pause here and take a break. When we come back, we're going to look at the remainder of chapter 1 and all of chapter 2.