

Born to be Beneficiary

Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17; Hebrew 1:1-5

Heritage connects people to the past and provides roots for understanding themselves in the larger world. In my case, I am connected to a long line of people who share the same blood and those who have become blood by virtue of choice.

In my immediate family, my father first introduced the idea of family being more than just the people who look like you or carry your DNA. After my parents divorced my father remarried and he and his new wife adopted six children, most of which, were brought home as “new born.” Our family was certainly not ideal but the reality is that regardless; how we came together, we are and always will be family.

After the death of my father this past summer, we all realized that we each lost the one person that linked both families together. Our stories shared on zoom calls were very similar and when it came to our father, we could each finish the story that the others would tell because so many of his ways transitioned from generation to generation. It was clear to me that we had more in common than the differences society focuses on. Most importantly, we all had a claim to his estate of which there was none, but if he did have anything we would have all had a share.

In today’s lesson two text of scripture frame the narrative of Jesus and his importance to all humanity. Israel has known very few times of freedom in their existence and during the life of Jesus was no exception. After Babylon came Persia, then Greece, and finally Rome. Therefore, it is important to see why Matthew, a predominately-Jewish letter, takes an opportunity to promote the idea of Jesus’ Jewishness as a way of promoting family pride and self-confidence. They moved from an insignificant group to national leadership.

I. Wanderers to Kings (Matthew 1:1-6)

A. Abraham to Jesse (vv.1-5)

1. The names Jesus, David, and Abraham all represent turning points in Israel’s history (v.1)
2. Abraham received the covenant that ultimately established the people of Israel. (v.2a)
3. After Abraham’s death, the covenant promise passed to Isaac. (v.2b)
4. God met Jacob at Bethel and promised him land and children (v.2c)
5. This verse introduces us to the first of five women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. Her name is Tamar her sons are twins Perez and Zerah. (v.3a)
6. Perez and Zerah have only brief references in scripture but maintain a good reputation (vv.4-5)

B. Jesse to Solomon (v.6)

1. This verse marks a transition from the period of the judges to the time of the united monarchy. (6a)
2. The story line also reminds us of God's faithfulness in the midst of human sin (v.6b)

II. Captives to the King

- A. Jacob to Jesus (v.16)
- B. The Generations (v.17) names broken into 3 sections of 14 names

III. The King as the Son (Hebrews 1:1-5)

A. Greater than Prophets (vv.1-2)

1. In the past, God primarily communicated indirectly; burning bush, dreams, and visions (vv.1)
2. God later uses the prophets as a means of clearer communication (v.2a)
3. Jesus, the heir of all things, has divine authority and ownership.

B. Seated in Heaven (v.3)

1. The son finished the work (v.3a)
2. The son sustains all things (v.3b)
3. The son purified everything (v.3c)

C. Over the Angels (vv.4-5)

1. The son is greater than Israel's fascination with Angels (v.4)
2. No angel gets the title of son, it is reserved for the unique Son (v.5a)
3. The Lord established a house for his son (v.5b)

Conclusion

Matthew told his readers about Jesus' human heritage: Jesus is the king promised to bless all nations. The author of Hebrews, by comparison, focused on Jesus' divine heritage. Through these texts, the Holy Spirit directs us to pay attention to Jesus' message. He is God's Son, greater than any angel or prophet. However, he is also God himself.