

## Jesus: The Son of Abraham

Advent Midweek #2 – 12/09/20 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Matthew 1:1-2 Pastor Keith Besel

### **Introduction**

- ✘ When people research their ancestry, they often hope to find out that they are related to some great historical figure. Maybe some distant relative fought with George Washington at the Battle of Bull Run, or maybe your ancestor was a swashbuckling pirate. Genealogies are fueled by a curiosity to see what new, wild stories might be discovered and how far back you can go with your connections.
  - ➔ Jesus' family tree in Matthew's Gospel goes some 2000 years back from Jesus. Not only is Jesus a descendant of King David, but His line is traced all the way back to Father Abraham. It's exactly the kind of genealogy that would thrill the most casual observer. Just think about it – 2000 years!
- ✘ If we were able to do that today, it would take us back to the reign of Caesar Augustus; to the very birth of Christ! For any Jew in Jesus' day to be able to do what Matthew has done for Jesus would certainly be a source of great pride.
  - ➔ In fact, for many of the Jews, the significance of connecting to Abraham was that he was their connection to the land in which they lived and how they had received it. But for those who truly came to understand things by faith, it wasn't the land, but Jesus Himself who mattered.
- ✘ Matthew tells you and me about this genealogy back to Abraham so that we understand that through faith in the Son we are now connected to the same promise Abraham received from God. And now through that fulfilled promise, Abraham and we, his descendants, have inherited a far better – eternal country as our own.

### **I. Abraham – the father of many nations.**

- ✘ To the average human mind, God's plan to make Abraham the father of many nations seemed totally preposterous. The LORD God called Abram from the land of Haran and told him to go to a new land where he would make him into a great nation, even though he was already well advanced in years.
  - ➔ In fact, God tells Abram that all families of the earth would be blessed through him. Then, God promised Abram that Sarai would give birth to a son and that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky (Gen. 15:5).
  - ➔ Now, remember, Abram was old and Sarai was considered barren. All the evidence said that this was not possible. But "with God all things are possible" (Mat 19:26). So Abram believed God's promise, and we're told in Genesis 15:6 that the LORD "counted it to him as righteousness".
- ✘ From Abraham would come Isaac, then Esau, then Jacob; all of his descendants continuing to grow in number all the way to the child born to Joseph and Mary where God's promise would be fulfilled.

### **II. Abraham passed on the sins of Adam.**

- ⊗ To be honest, most people who spend time researching their ancestry end up disappointed to find that their ancestors are all just common, ordinary people – there’s no one particularly famous in their family tree at all.
  - ➔ And the same, to be honest, can be said for Jesus’ family tree. When you get down to it, Abraham was actually nothing special. Apparently his wife, Sarah, must have been quite the looker since she caught the attention and desire of two different kings. But Abraham was so cowardly that he repeatedly claimed she was his sister rather than stand up to defend her honor.
- ⊗ Then when Sarah directed Abraham to use her maidservant Hagar to produce an heir, Abraham failed not only to honor Sarah but also to distrust God. The fact that he then had a child outside of God’s plan fits right in line with the common discovery found in most family trees.
  - ➔ Yes, the “father of many nations” – as Abraham’s name literally means, also passed on to his descendants a legacy of lies and lust; deceit and adultery. What do you know – father Abraham was just another sinner; just like his ultimate father Adam, who would pass on the trait of hard hearts and sinful deeds to all who would come from his seed.
- ⊗ But now, in Jesus’ day; at the time of Matthew’s Gospel, there were definitely those who thought they were safe from scrutiny and had a special standing before God because they were descendants of Abraham.
  - ➔ They told Jesus in John 8:33, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone”. Upon which Jesus pointed out the ridiculousness of that statement because they failed to see how they were in fact enslaved by their own sin.
  - ➔ Unless they were brought to faith, God’s promise to Abraham would be nullified by their rejection of both the promise and the Promised One of God.
- ⊗ Friends, understand that we too are children of Abraham because, like them, none of us can be saved by our lineage, our obedience, or our good deeds. Like Abraham, we have failed again and again; falling into the same sins repeatedly; trusting like the Pharisees in our family tree or our status or our self-centered superiority.
  - ➔ You see, the only difference between Abraham and the Pharisees was faith. They were all sinners, but as Romans 4:21 tells us, Abraham was “fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised” (Rom. 4:21).

### **III. God kept His promise of a son and a Greater Son.**

- ⊗ Therefore Abraham is a lesson in humility for all of us still today. We do not place our hope and trust in a birthright, but in the One who was born for us. God looked upon Abram and Sarai and their need. And, in love, He promised them a son.
  - ➔ At the same time God looked upon the need of all His beloved children. And His solution; His answer; His perfect way of making things right, was to promise a son for all people as well.
- ⊗ So, immediately God kept His promise to Abram by sending a son through Sarai, Isaac. But the ultimate way that God met the need of Abram and Sarai and all of His creation was by sending His own Son, Jesus through Abram’s family tree.
  - ➔ Yes, Jesus was sacrificed in the place of Abraham, Isaac and all who are Abraham’s descendants.
- ⊗ Now today the promise God made to Abraham is fulfilled each time a child or adult is marked by the sign of the cross upon the forehead and heart and baptized into the name of the Triune God.

- It's also accomplished and fulfilled when God's promises are proclaimed and people are brought to saving faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. It's pretty cool to think about it, isn't it? God still continues to raise up children for Abraham today as you are made sons and daughters of Abraham through faith in Jesus; as those you and I share the truth of Jesus with are then brought to faith by His gracious work in the days, months and years to come.
- ✘ Just think of how many people this means have now become part of God's nation of believers throughout history. Certainly as many as the number of stars that you or I can see with the naked eye. This promise God made to Abraham ultimately finds its "yes" in Christ. God has called you and me, like God called Abraham before us. And we have His promises now and forever by faith.

#### **IV. God Leads Abraham's Children to a Better Country.**

- ✘ During World War II in England, the most ominous sound one could hear was the air raid siren. For a nine-month period between 1940 and 1941, the Germans attacked Britain's airfields, and then their cities with nightly bombing raids.
  - The sound would start softly but then grow until it reached a spine-tingling trumpet sound. The constant threat of the sirens over those months meant people began to dread the coming of sunset each evening. It was during this time that Rev. Eric Milner-White was serving as dean of the famed King's College at Cambridge. Understanding the fear that gripped the people, he wrote a prayer to address the people's uncertainty. It said, "Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen" (LSB, pg. 311).
  - These words describe well the uncertain path that Abraham walked as he trudged toward a new and unseen land. Yet he walked by faith, not by sight. He walked forward; trusting that God, with His love, was leading and supporting him.
- ✘ My dear Christians, in these gray and latter days that we find ourselves, we certainly face many and great temptations. To live in this sin-fallen world still means that the threat of mental and relational and even physical sirens blaring away is constantly before us.
  - Granted, they don't warn us of impending bombs, but they still bring great fears as we worry about infection of a deadly virus, financial ruin, doctor's appointments, car repairs, family conflict and much more. We live with anxiety as we contemplate an uncertain future.
  - But friends, take heart! For God forgives us of all our fears and doubts for the sake of Jesus. Through our baptism, the Holy Spirit sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith, even when all around us we face things that want nothing more than to try and drive us into despair.
- ✘ Yes, we are gifted with a certainty; with a confidence that is founded upon the very promise of God which does not change or waver like the promises or news that we hear from men each day.
  - So just as God's promise of a son and ancestors gave Abraham assurance in his journey to the Promised Land, so you and I have the confidence that God has made us sons and daughters of Abraham by faith in God's greater Son, Jesus.
  - For we, too, are looking forward to a better country; our promised heavenly one; the ultimate land of promise. And so we wake up each day with good courage as we walk by faith not by

sight; as we eagerly await the fulfillment of the promised land that lies ahead in the resurrection on the Last Day.

- ✘ Today folks, we are bold to claim Abraham as our father; not because of something special about him, but rather because, like him, we believe the precious promises of God; especially the promise of His coming Son. In Jesus' name. Amen.