

#1 in a NT introductions series. A Hoggan 2025  
Isiah 11:1-9. Matthew 1:1

vs1 An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

It's great to be with you this morning and I hope and pray that what I have to share will be an encouragement to you in respect to your confidence in the scriptures, and the trustworthiness of the gospel story.

Let's pray before we look at the text together. Lord Jesus, as we look at the opening vs of Matthew's gospel, help us to see what it teaches us about you and how we can apply that to our lives, amen.

From time to time, as we look at various NT introductions as opportunity presents, our question will be "why does each book or letter start as it does?"

Our aim, or goal, will be to find clues and keys that might help us understand the book or letter as a whole. OK, thinking about introductions generally, what's the point of an introduction?

Imagine, two people being introduced by a mutual friend. But rather than Bill saying "Jenny this is Charlie, like you he has a real interest in Asian cooking and you might enjoy swapping ideas".

Rather than giving some kind of introduction, your friend silently leads Charlie to where you are standing, and simply walks off leaving two slightly bewildered people looking at each other.

Introductions are important because they help us in starting to understand the person we are meeting. Matthew wants us to understand something about Jesus. He is also giving some clues that will help us as we continue reading.

In this sense you could even think of an introduction as a doorway or entrance area to a house. In the entrance area there might be pictures and photos on the wall that give some idea of what the house as a whole contains. There may even be a floor plan and a set of keys to open various doors and cupboards within the house.

Just so, in a gospel or letters introduction a key theme or themes, a key truth, or truths may be signaled and then unpacked as you continue reading.

Further, an introduction will usually signal the focus of the writer that fits the context.

- Why is he writing as he is?
- Who is he targeting?
- What does he want to achieve with his intended readership or audience?

Mathew clearly has a target audience. Those who have an understanding of the scriptures, which at the time was the OT

He has an addenda.

- firstly, to build faith and point to Jesus as the focus and culmination of our faith.
- secondly, to show Jesus to be the true and ultimate king of kings and Lord of Lords.

He does this in the very first vs?

How? By linking Jesus, who has already been given the title, Messiah, which means saviour, with David, one of the good kings in Israel's history, and with Abraham, the great model of faith.

Not a bad effort in one introductory vs.

Now if Jesus were reading the introduction to Matthew, and wanted to put himself centre stage, I wonder what kind of "I am" statement he might make that fits with Matthew's aim and focus?

Remember, Matthew is writing to those who are familiar with the OT, which means that they been waiting for Gods promised deliver, the Messiah, the saviour. As Jesus is named at the beginning, and the end of Matthew's genealogy, it might be fair to have Jesus say "I am the one you have been waiting for".

Further, given Matthew ties Jesus, Abraham and David together in the very first vs, Abraham and David who are the prototypes, or models, of faith and kingship, Jesus could also say

- “I am the culmination and focus of your faith”.
- “I am the true King.”

Before we look a little more closely at the significance of linking Jesus, David and Abraham, it might be helpful to look a little at how scripture works as compared modern literature.

Let’s take the difference between a biblical genealogies, and how we might write a genealogy today.

The major difference is this. Biblical writers do not need to note every link in the chain, or branch on the tree. For example there is a 2000 year gap between Abraham and Jesus. Jesus the son of Abraham. Key players only is the principle.

Further, if we can mis-read, or misunderstand something, because we don’t understand why the writer writes as he does, we might fall into the trap that many have fallen into, by thinking that differences in the gospel accounts are evidence of inconsistency or contradiction, as compared aim and focus.

Let me illustrate it this way. Say you are going on a trip from ChCh to Queenstown.

- Some of you are going by car.
- Some by plane.
- Some by boat.

Your starting point and your destination is the same. It’s how you are travelling that is different.

So, if I were to give you instructions for the journey, your instructions would be linked to the way you are travelling.

- If you are driving you may need accommodation.
- If you are flying you might be limited in regards luggage.
- If you are going by boat you might need some sea sickness pills.

Matt Mk and Luke are writing about the same gospel, the same good news. But each is shaping the story dependant on the primary audience, and how

that audience is best going to arrive at the truth of who Jesus is, and what that means.

The way I look at differences in biblical accounts is this. Is this a contradiction, or a way of making a particular point?

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Let's ask a logical and practical question. How under Jesus, our saviour, the focus of our faith, the king of kings, are we meant to live?

Matthew answers that in some detail in the sermon on the mount. Arguably, the most detailed set of instructions about what it means to live as a follower of Jesus.

Notice also that Matthew ends his recording of Jesus sermon on the mount, with the summary statement "Seek first the KoG and his righteousness".

Seek Jesus' kingdom and live like Jesus could be another way of saying it.

Jesus the Messiah, David the King. Abraham, the model of faith. We know Abrahams trust in God was the basis of his faith. If God promised something Abraham was going to take God at his word.

Even if what was promised would seem impossible. Abraham an old man, with an old and infertile wife, was promised dependents as numerous as the stars of the sky. He believed God and that faith was reckoned as righteousness. Romans un-pacts that in some depth.

To make the fulfilment of Gods promise even more impossible we could throw in the curveball of Abraham being asked to sacrifice his only son Issac.

We know the story. As soon as it was clear Abraham was willing to trust God and follow the instruction, Issac was not sacrificed and God provided a lamb which was sacrificed instead.

Faith and trust in the God who can fulfil his promises no matter the circumstances is the point. Then as we join the dots, and bring Jesus into

the picture, we see that Abraham and Issac is something of a foreshadowing of what actually happened with Jesus.

Jesus the true lamb of God who was sacrificed and then was raised to life.

As Matthew introduces his good news story he links Jesus, David and Abraham because David and Abraham, are prototypes, shadows if you like, of the central player in Gods saving work, Jesus.

The main point we can take away is an entirely practical one. It's this.

True faith in Jesus as king of kings will mean we let him call the shots. That's the definition of Jesus is Lord. Matthew links faith and Jesus having control of our lives in the very first vs.

Its a challenge for sure. But it important we understand that Jesus control, is not a coercive or dominating control.

It is a saving one. Jesus the messiah, the saviour.  
Jesus, the

- "I am the one you have been waiting for"
- is also
- "I am" the true king",
- is also
- "I am" both the reason for you faith and the means of your faith.

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness".

That is, seek to live in a way that will be transformative, and do so in the knowledge and power of the Lord Jesus.

That one we find through the entirety of the scriptural story. Promised and foreshadowed through the OT, and we heard a little of that in Isaiah's passage.

That one also who is the focus of the NT writers and we see that from the get go. Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

How might we live out the challenge we are presented in the very first vs in Matt? Thankfully we don't just have words. We have the Spirit of the Lord Jesus living within us. Empowering us to be the people God calls us to be.

How might vs 1 of Matthew's gospel shape what we all do until we meet again next Sunday?

Imagine the encouragement it would be to faith and action, if we could turn to the person next to us in the pew and say "you know what I was in this or that situation, and I was going to do this or that, and then I was remembered "Jesus is in control" so I did this instead."

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, you are worthy of our faith. Help us see you as we need to, that our lives might reflect what it means to be a follower. More than that even, one who is related to you as a loved child of the living God.