

Jesus the Messiah, Son of David
Pastor Larry Kroon
Wasilla Bible Church
December 27, 2009

When you open up the New Testament and you turn to the first page of the story of Jesus, and you start reading, the opening line found in Matthew 1:1 will read like this. It starts off, it says

The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

And our tendency is to read that line and quickly pass over it and move on because we wanna get to the stories of the heralding angels, the awe-struck shepherds, and the wise men from afar. We wanna get into the action; we wanna get into the story. So we tend to skip right past this opening line. Matthew did not. He spent the next fifteen verses verifying what he says in this opening line, fifteen verses tracing the descent of Jesus to verify that when he said "*Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham*" he was speaking correctly and accurately according to the genealogy of Jesus. He is so devoted for that he takes twice as long explaining the descent of Jesus as he does devote to describing the birth of Jesus. Matthew does not skip over these facts. And as we said last week, this year we won't, either.

We're taking our time this holiday season to explore the stories behind those statements—Jesus, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Last week we took the time to look at what was related to the story of the son of Abraham. This week we're gonna turn around, we're gonna come back, and we're gonna look at what is the story that goes with the statement 'Jesus the Messiah, the son of David.' The reason we're doin' it so carefully is because I'm absolutely convinced that the stories linked to these statements—Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham—those stories...we need to know them if we're gonna see the grace and wonder and the mystery of Jesus in its fullness. And so we're doing that. And today we're gonna be focusing on that element, 'the son of David.' What is the story linked to that statement when you say 'Jesus the Messiah, the son of David'?

We're gonna trace that story and to do so we have to go way back into the Old Testament. And we're gonna have what I call a 'grace sequence' here. We're gonna walk through a series of statements or events in the Old Testament, a story line that we can trace the unfolding grace that is involved when we say 'Jesus the son of David'. To do that we need to go way back, and we're gonna trace some key points in your Old Testament. So I'm gonna encourage you to use your Bibles if you have 'em there, because we're gonna look at some passages of scripture that are crucial if you wanna be able to track the story of the Old Testament and see how it leads to Jesus.

We're gonna go back first of all to a time prior to David, before David was ever king. We're goin' back almost four hundred years before the great hero of the Old Testament, David, was king. We're goin' back to the book of Exodus where God is acknowledged as King. It's an amazing one-of-a-kind event. We're familiar with the story, most of us, how God rescues His people Israel out of the land of Egypt where they've been held in bondage and slavery. He takes 'em out into the wilderness and He takes 'em to this tremendous mountain called Mount Sinai. And there, with smoke and thunder and lightning, everything else, God does something unheard of before or after. He speaks to a nation gathered at the base of that mountain. And He announces to them His laws for them as a people. We know the ten basic laws, the Great Commands, but there were six hundred and over thirty others that followed up with that. But He announced to them...He said in essence 'These are My commands for you. If you are to be My people and I am to be your God, these are the conditions.' Researchers look back and they say this incident where God speaks to the nation is structured, is recorded just like the ancient treaty relationships between kings and their servant peoples. And that's what this is. God was offering a treaty to this group of people when He says, 'I will be your God, you will be My people; here are the conditions.' And He laid out the Law beginning with the ten Great Commands.

The people of Israel gathered at the base of the mountain at first were terrified. In fact, they were so terrified by the voice and the thunder and everything else that they sent Moses on up after the first ten Great Commandments and said, 'Moses, you go get the rest of 'em.' And Moses did. But it's important that once they heard those commands, once they heard the conditions that God laid out in that Old Covenant, that Old Testament, that old treaty, we're told in Exodus 24:3 that the people, as one, responded and said

"All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!"

What they were doing at that point in time was accepting God as their king. And at that moment there came into the world the first, only, pure theocracy ever to have existed—the people ruled directly by the unseen God. For four hundred years they existed like that.

A really unusual nation...a nation ruled by an invisible king, twelve tribes. If you came into 'em as a political scientist you'd come in and you'd think, 'This is just kind of a loose confederation. I can't find their central leader.' But if you dug closer you'd find that their central leader was an invisible God who had given them laws at Mount Sinai—the only pure theocracy to have ever existed, the people to whom God said, 'I will be your king, I will be your God; you may be My people. Here are the conditions,' and they said, 'We will do it.'

But then, after four hundred years, an amazing thing happened. They rejected God as king! They rejected God as king. There was a judge who was overseeing things at the time, Samuel; and he was nearing death. And as he was nearing his death they had decided, 'You know what? We want a king like everybody else has. We want a king we see and we can talk to. And when we go out to battle we want a king that stands in front of us in full armor and full array, and everybody knows that we're a people with a king. We are done with this invisible-king thing.' And so they asked for a king.

Samuel, in 1 Samuel, speaks to the nation as they come to him and they say, 'Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the other nations, one who will go out in front of us when we go out to battle, one of us who will lead us when we have deliberations.' They say, 'Appoint for us a king.' And as they make that request Samuel is just discouraged at 'em. He can't...he feels like they're rejecting him and the way he's been as a judge and everything else. And God comes back to him in 1 Samuel 8, and God says to Samuel, 'You know what? They're not rejecting you. They're rejecting Me from being king over them. They're rejecting Me.'

A little later when they had their first king, their first human king that they can see and they can follow into battle, and they're installing him and they're putting the crown on his head and everything else, Samuel the old judge speaks to the nation one last time. And as he does so he warns them that this is a happening, is a wickedness that is great. He says, 'What you've done in the sight of the LORD,' 1 Samuel 12, he says, 'This is a great, great wickedness by asking for yourselves to have a king. This is a great wickedness.'

A recent book published this past year...in fact in Christian circles, "Christianity Today" and some other places, it was awarded Book of the Year. It was written by John Piper; it's called "Spectacular Sins" is the name of the book. And as a writer he goes through the scriptures and he finds what he calls some spectacular sins, sins that just astound you, sins that are so tremendous that you just say, 'But...'. He devotes a whole chapter to this one spectacular sin, where a people said 'We don't want God as our king. We want a human king. We want a king we can see, that we can touch, and a king that we can go out to battle and we can point to him. We want a human king. We wanna be like all the other nations.'

God's response was to give 'em a king, and He gave 'em a king just like they wanted, one that fit their request...a king that was impressive, that stood head-and-shoulders above everyone else, a king that was impressive in appearance, a king that when he marched out to battle you were proud to be behind him. His name was Saul. When he was first introduced to the people by Samuel he stood out. And they looked at him, and the introduction went this way. He [Samuel] said, "*Surely there is no one like him among all the people.*" This is a stand-out. This is the one that when you walk into the race track you say 'That's a thoroughbred to be on right there.' That's the one you want. So all the people shouted and they said, "*Long live the king!*" God gave 'em the king they requested. He turned out to be a disaster. He turned out to be one of the worst kings in Israel's history. They said, 'We don't want God. We want a king we can see.' He gave 'em Saul, and he was a disaster.

Now we start the story of grace. The people have rejected God. After giving them Saul, God inexplicably...they didn't do anything to deserve it, they didn't do anything to earn it...He just simply, as an act of free grace, gave them a king who is described as a king after His own heart, after God's own heart. In other words, he was a king who shared the heart of God, who shared the priorities, the concerns, the goals and desires of God, a king who literally represented God's heart on earth! He gave them the great King David. And God is the One who gave him to the people. They didn't go out and find him. They didn't go out and say 'Here's the one we want.' They didn't go out and do a great search and go through a candidate process and say 'This is the best one.' They didn't elect a king that they thought, having sorted through, they thought, 'This is the best one to lead us.' They did not find David—God brought David to them.

Much later in David's life, in 1 Samuel 7 [should be 2 Samuel 7:8], God, explaining how David came to become king, and this is after David was established king of Israel, and he'd established peace and he'd established the nation secure in the land, and God is speaking to David and He says

"I took you from the pasture, I took you from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel."

God gave 'em a king, and the greatest king they would ever have...David. He took him out of the pasture where he was literally following sheep, and put him on the throne where he could lead God's people, a people who had rejected God as king. God now gave them a king after His own heart, and he blessed 'em.

But the grace grows even greater. God promises them a future king greater than David. Again, that passage in 1 Samuel 7 [should be 2 Samuel 7] is just so critical to go back and see... and I just realized I blocked it out. So you guys are gonna have to read light gray print. I will just read it for you. This is, again, David. After he'd been established and he had decided that he wanted to build a temple for God, now that he had established Jerusalem as his center city, he'd established his palace there, he says 'You know what? The God who has brought me up, the God who has led me, the God who has made me king...I wanna build a temple for this God.' And God says, 'David, I didn't ask for a temple. I've been worshipped in a tent for all these years. I didn't ask for a temple. But I appreciate you want to do that, and someday someone will.' But He comes back to David and He makes this promise to David. He says, 'Your house...' 'Not My house,' God says, but '...your house, your descendant and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever, and your throne shall be established forever.' That's in 2 Samuel 7:16. God says, "*Your house...*" In other words, 'your dynasty' will never end. There will be a king who is a descendant of David who will rule forever and ever and ever. 'Your kingdom, your rule, will be established forever.'

Not only does God give 'em a king they do not deserve; He promises 'em a future king, a future king. We now call that king the Messiah, the Anointed One. The prophets begin to see in their visions visions of this future king after David had been given that promise. Almost a thousand years before Jesus that promise was given. And in the centuries that followed they kept looking for the descendants of David, and they kept looking as the prophets saw...they began to see that vision refined and refined, and they began to look for this king that was coming, this Messiah who would someday rule over all humanity, not just the nation of Israel but all humanity. God promises a future king to a people who had rejected Him.

And then going even further, and this is the greatest element, God comes as that promised King. This is the King who is rejected. This is the King the people said, 'We don't want You. We want a king we can see.' That king chooses to come as a descendant of David, in the person of Jesus. Statement in Matthew 1...after we're done with the genealogy and Joseph is confused about Mary being pregnant, even though he's never been with her yet; and he's wondering, he's concerned about what to do. And he's told to not be afraid. He [an angel of the LORD] says, "*The Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*" And then verse 23 says, "*They shall call His name Immanuel,*" and we're given the translation of that. It means "God with us." Jesus was literally God with them, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the future king that had been promised by God, the King who had been rejected.

That's grace...that's grace. The people had looked at God and said, 'We reject You.' Fourteen hundred years later He comes to them in Jesus, the Anointed King. That's grace. And it's grace not extended just to Israel, but to all the world. That is grace.

The challenge when we see it, and we start piecing it together, is getting a grip on that grace...having it be more than a story outlined on Power Point, a story that we trace through various promises in scripture. The challenge is to take that and experience that grace in our life. I mean, it's one thing to see it in the stories of scripture, to see it unfold in this amazing way. It's one thing to see it in that story. It's another thing to experience in our story. The question is how do we grip that grace in such a way that we experience it in our own lives? How do we?

That's what I want to devote the next part of this sermon to, and it's what I've been trying to...it's a target I've had to get to this point. Because I want the grace that we talk about at Christmas not only to be recognized as grace, but to be a grip-able grace, a grace that we hang onto, a grace that shapes the way we live. So I'm gonna walk us through that, because this is grace you can grip.

Start at it this way...when you trace the story which we did, and you come to that point where you finally see that Jesus is son of David, Immanuel, God with us, He is the Messiah, the Anointed King from God...when you recognize that, confirmed by the way with the resurrection after His crucifixion...but when you recognize He is the Messiah, the Anointed King of God, suddenly the grace becomes very easy to grip, very practical, very clear, very

specific. You don't have to be confused about 'How do I grasp this grace that God has unleashed in history, this promised king Himself after being rejected? How do I grip that grace?' There is only one way to appropriately respond to a king, a sovereign. It's very practical, it's very specific. There's only one way, and that is with obedience, with loyal obedience; an obedience that will pledge allegiance, will acknowledge the sovereignty, will recognize the kingship, and then will do as that King commands. That's how you grip the grace. It's very specific, it's very simple, it's very clear...once you understand the grace takes the form of Jesus, son of David, the Messiah, King over us all. And there's only one way to grip it...obedience.

In fact, just so you know I'm not saying that, I would argue that that is the central goal of all the preaching in the New Testament—is that anyone and everyone who heard the message of Jesus would respond with loyal obedience to Him so they can experience His grace.

Give you a passage of scripture to put with that and connect with that. It's found in Romans 1:1-5. The Apostle Paul is explaining to the Roman church...he'd never been there before. He wrote a letter ahead, and he writes this letter and he's explaining to them, and he starts his ministry, and he starts off by explaining that he's proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the descendant of David who is also verified through the resurrection as the Son of God. And as he comes down through there he describes this message and the working of Jesus in his life, and then he says “...through whom...”, a reference to Jesus, “...we have received grace and apostleship...”, in other words, we've been appointed as messengers, “...to bring about...”, and here's the part to underline, “...the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for His name's sake.” In other words, Paul says 'Our ministry, our goal, our apostleship, what we've been appointed to do, is to go out and to bring people into the obedience of faith.' That's our goal. That's what we're about...the obedience of faith. And the literal idea there is the idea of obeying, an obedience that is prompted by, rooted in, confidence and faith and trust in that king named Jesus.

We wanna be careful here, because we get confused at this point. When we're speaking about the obedience of faith we're talkin' about an obedience that is an expression of confidence in the One whom we obey. In other words, it's an obedience that is rooted in an absolute trust in all that He is, and all that He claims to be. We are confident that He really does see the best things to do at the best time and the best way. We really do believe He is fully competent to be king. We fully believe that He has a good grip on the situation. We are fully convinced that He really is the King that God has appointed. He is the future One who will establish righteousness throughout the whole earth. We have confidence in Him. And that leads us to obedience.

Not only do we have confidence in Him, in His competency, in His ability and His position, we have confidence in what He has commanded us. We are absolutely convinced that His command, given to us in scripture through His Spirit, His commands given to us fit our circumstances and our situation, that He has a better grasp on how we should behave in the situation when we are, where we are, than we ourselves have. It's a confidence in what He gives us as commands. It's a confidence that will walk into a hostile situation knowing His command to love our enemies is the best command we could follow at that point in time. It's confidence in what He commands, and it's confidence in why He commands it. It's absolute confidence that He is giving us those commands for our good, that He's not giving us those commands simply because He's irritated and wants us to be nicer, so life is less of a hassle for Him; it's not because He wants us to measure up to a certain standard to make Him look good; that those commands are rooted in His love for us. It's the obedience of faith. That's the way you grip grace...with confidence in Jesus, confidence in His commands, and confidence in His motivation. You simply obey.

I'm belaboring this because, see, there's all kinds of obedience. There's obedience that I would call a desperate obedience; a desperate obedience that just simply doesn't know what else to do. “Maybe I'll just...I'll follow Him because I don't know anything else to do. Maybe He will have a solution.” Or there is that forced obedience where we're backed into a corner and it doesn't seem like we have any other option, any other choice--we finally have to do what Jesus says we have to do. Or there's that tentative obedience that says, “You know, I'm not sure how far I can really trust Him on this. I'm not sure He really has an accurate grip on my situation. But I'll kinda step out like on thin ice. I'll obey a little bit, gradually.” And then there's that mercenary obedience that will say, “You know what? I would do it so long as it pays off.” Or there's that obedience of convenience. “As long as it fits my schedule, fits my time, and fits with what I'm doing, I'll obey Him. But as soon as it becomes costly I'm backin' off.” And then there's what I call 'collateral obedience'. That's where, really, you're not obeying Jesus at all; you just found that if you're nicer to your customers they're nicer to you, so you're pleasant to them. You found out that “You know what? Life goes better when I'm sober rather than drunk.” Or maybe you found out that your family does better if you don't lose your temper, and so you rein in your temper. And you do it all not out of obedience to Jesus. It's just simply...this works. It looks like obedience...it's not. It just happens that at that moment what you're doing fits with the types of things Jesus calls us to do.

See, there's all kinds of obedience. There is really only one kind that fits the reality of the grace given us in Jesus, son of David, Immanuel, the Messiah; and that is the faith that with confidence in Him and what He has commanded, and why, even if you don't understand anything in the situation, you will obey Him. That's how you grip grace.

And as you grip it, two things. One is you begin to discover the reality of God with us, the reality of who Jesus is, that son of David, the Messiah, God with us. As you respond with the obedience of faith you experience Him in your life, and you experience Him at the most critical, most central point, and that's what I call the battle against your sin. As Matthew told and introduced that Messiah to us, the son of David, he said they will call His name Jesus, Yahweh saves, because He will save us from their sins...His people from their sins. When we respond to Him with that obedience of faith we discover that He is with us in the fight against sin, our sin. And it is a fight! But we discover that He is there with us in that fight. And oh, is it a fight worth fighting! It's a fight for freedom, to be freed from that heavy weight of pride; to be freed from the grip of greed; to be freed from that driving, cracked whip of self-indulgent lust; to be freed from that worrisome treadmill of worry and anxiety; to be freed from that explosive temper that destroys relationships; to be freed from that chronic self-absorption that locks us in to this tight little ball that is nothing beyond 'me, myself, and mine'. Jesus says, 'I can break you out of that.' And the promise of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, being with us in that fight against sin...it's a promise that when He is done with us no matter how long it takes, whether it takes our entire life or whatever it takes, by the time He is done with us we will be done with sin. Its stain will be off our record. Its strength will be broken in our soul. And its cloud will be removed from our future.

That is grace. That is grace. And it comes in Jesus. And it's gripped through the obedience of faith. If you want something different, go find a king you can see. Go find a king like all the other peoples have. Go find a leader who will parade out in front of you. Go find a leader who'll give you everything you demand and desire. Go find a leader who's a man. But if you want to grip grace you obey this king we cannot see, and you obey Him with faith.

Let's stand.

It's a grace we can grip and the desire is not just that we grip and enjoy that grace. Our desire is that others will grip and enjoy that grace that we find in Jesus. So let's close with this prayer as we close out this year 2009.

[Congregation sings the prayer song.]

Go in the grace of the King we've been given. In Jesus' name, amen.