

The DNA of Jesus Christ

Mt 1:1-17

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Guys, if you've ever wanted to know if that child is really yours or not, all you need to do is contact DNA Diagnostics Center.
1. The DNA Diagnostics Center performs 3 out of every 4 private DNA paternity tests in the country.
 2. It was the DNA Diagnostics Center who performed the testing on Dannielynn, the daughter of Anna Nicole Smith.
 - a. In front of the Bahamas court where the custody proceedings were taking place, Dr. Michael Baird, director of the DNA Diagnostics Center, announced that Larry Birkhead was Dannielynn's father.
 - b. Dr. Baird was appointed as a DNA expert by the Bahamas court in March of 2007.
- B. Quite frankly, the fact that we need paternity testing demonstrates how woefully corrupt our society is.
1. I cannot even imagine ever wanting a paternity test for my two kids & I'm sure there's not a guy here who has ever worried about whether or not you really are the father of your children.
 2. But, we read of a guy who really would have liked some DNA-testing—Joseph!
 - a. “When [Jesus'] mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly” (Mt 1:18-19).
 - b. Joseph & Mary were planning on getting married.
 - 1) But, before they are married & consummate the relationship, Mary turns up with child.
 - 2) We know the Child was conceived of the Holy Spirit & Joseph will soon discover that for himself, but he doesn't understand that at first.
 - a) I'm sure Mary told Joseph that Jesus was conceived miraculously, but remember God has been silent for 400 years—only with the birth of John does God begin to break that silence—&, remember there was never another child born without both father & mother. I'm sure that whatever Mary told Joseph seemed to him to be an ill-conceived excuse.
 - b) Imagine if this narrative took place in a time of technology such as ours.
 - Joseph really wants to know who the father of this baby is, so Mary goes to her doctor for amniocentesis.
 - The ob/gyn sends off the cells & then gets a report back.
 - Can you even imagine the call she would have made to Mary to come into the office?
 - “Mary, we need to talk. This Child has no biological father!”
- C. I really do wonder what modern DNA testing would have said about Jesus' origin.
1. Matthew, as he begins his gospel, fails to answer that question, but he does provide the DNA line of Jesus all the way back to Abraham.
 2. Because verse 16 mentions Jacob as the father of Joseph, the genealogy we have in Matthew is likely the genealogy of Joseph.
 - a. Although, as Matthew records, Joseph was not Jesus' biological father, he could have adopted him, and, in this time period, the genealogy of an adopted father became the child's genealogy.
 - b. Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the genealogies of important people—including those of royal descent—were kept in the temple. So, when this Gospel was written, people could have gone to the temple to examine Jesus' genealogy.

- D. This morning, we begin a study of the Book of Matthew, and the most obvious place to start is at the beginning.
1. We often skip over the genealogies in the Bible. We do so because: (1) We have a hard time pronouncing the names & (2) We don't place the value on genealogies that former societies did.
 2. However, if every word of Scripture is inspired (as it surely is), then even these genealogies are the word of God.
 - a. The purpose of this genealogy is to establish that Jesus is Jewish as the son of Abraham & that he is the promised Messiah as the son of David.
 - b. This morning, with that purpose in mind, let us look at "THE DNA OF JESUS CHRIST." His DNA is INAUGURAL DNA, IMPERIAL DNA, INSURED DNA, & IMPERFECT DNA.

II. INAUGURAL DNA, v 1.

- A. On January 20, 2009, Barak Obama will be inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States.
1. Presidential Inaugurations often mark the beginning of a new era. I have no doubt that President-elect Obama will speak of the new era his inauguration brings: He campaigned on that theme & he is the first African-American President.
 2. Two Presidents well captured the sentiment of a new era in their inaugural addresses. Ironically, they are John F. Kennedy & Richard Nixon who fought that hotly-contested race of 1960.
 - a. In 1961, President Kennedy said, "Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans." Kennedy, as the first President born in the 20th century, wanted to point out the new era his election brought.
 - b. In 1969, President Nixon said, "Each moment in history is a fleeting time, precious and unique. But some stand out as moments of beginning, in which courses are set that shape decades or centuries. This can be such a moment." Nixon hoped that his swearing-in was the inauguration of a new era in American history.
- B. Matthew begins his book with an inauguration of a new era in world history.
1. He begins: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (v 1).
 - a. Those words are an inauguration, a new beginning.
 - 1) You see, the record of human history begins with precisely the same words: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God" (Gn 5:1).
 - 2) While our English translations may read somewhat differently between Gn 5:1 & Mt 1:1, the Gr OT—which the Jews of Matthew's day would have known—and the Gr of Mt 1:1 read the same.
 - b. Matthew's point is likely: Just as the genealogy of Adam begins the history of God's people, so the genealogy of Jesus begins a new history of God's people.
 2. Jesus' DNA is inaugural DNA—it brings about a new era in the history of God's dealings with man.
 - a. Throughout the Gospels, we have the idea that Jesus' brought a new era.
 - 1) When he records that Jesus went to live in Capernaum, Matthew recalls the words of Isaiah: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned" (4:15-16).
 - 2) When Jesus is in the synagogue at Nazareth, he takes a scroll and reads these words from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4:18-19).
 - 3) When John was in prison & sent messengers to Jesus to ask if he truly was the Christ, Jesus answered, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their

sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them” (Lk 7:22).

- b. Notice in all those texts we have the common theme that a new day has dawned: the poor have light & have the good news and liberty proclaimed to them.
- c. You & I live in an inaugural era: an era of new hope, new life, & new forgiveness.
 - 1) Because Jesus brought about a new history in the people of God, we can start anew: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away behold, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17).
 - 2) Because we live in a new era, we can have a new relationship with God: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are” (1 Jn 3:1).
 - 3) Are you living with all the benefits of Jesus’ INAUGURAL DNA?

III. IMPERIAL DNA.

- A. “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”
- B. Jesus’ DNA is *imperial*—i.e., *royal*—DNA. He is descended from King David.
 1. Because of the prophecies that the Messiah would descend from David, the Jews began to refer to the Messiah as “the Son of David.”
 - a. “To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore” (Is 9:6-7).
 - b. “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness” (Jer 23:5-6).
 2. Therefore, the fact that Jesus has “IMPERIAL DNA” establishes him as the Messiah.
 - a. Matthew refers to Jesus as the Messiah as he begins the book & then he demonstrates that Jesus is the “son of David” to prove that assertion.
 - b. “Christ” is used in Scripture more as a title than a name.
 - 1) The Gr “Christ” & the Hebrew “Messiah” both mean “Anointed One.”
 - 2) The term refers to the anointing of prophets, priests, & kings in the OT to demonstrate that God had chosen them for a task.
 - 3) As the Christ, Jesus is the One whom God has anointed to bring his message to the world.

IV. INSURED DNA.

- A. “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”
- B. If you had skidded off the road this morning on your way here and called your insurance agent and he were to say, “Yeah, you paid for that coverage, but we’re not going to honor your contract,” what would you do?
 1. Wouldn’t you call the Attorney General, the Better Business Bureau, & get the company to pay?
 2. You’re insured—the company has made a promise & you expect them to keep it.
- C. So, it is with the promises of God.
 1. God had made promises to Abraham & the reference to the “son of Abraham” informs the reader that God is keeping his promise.
 - a. “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gn 12:3).
 - b. After Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac, God says to him, “In your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice” (Gn 22:18).
 2. What a privilege it is to serve a God who keeps his promises!

- a. Abraham became such a bulwark of the faith because he was “fu convinced that God was able to do what he had promised” (Gn 4:21).
- b. As Solomon dedicates the temple, the wise king says, “Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant” (1 Ki 8:56).
- D. Booker T. Washington describes meeting an ex-slave from Virginia in his book *Up From Slavery*.
 - 1. “I found that this man had made a contract with his master, two or three years previous to the Emancipation Proclamation, to the effect that the slave was to be permitted to buy himself, by paying so much per year for his body; and while he was paying for himself, he was permitted to labor where and for whom he pleased.
 - 2. “Finding that he could secure better wages in Ohio, he went there.
 - a. When freedom came, he was still in debt to his master some three hundred dollars.
 - b. Notwithstanding that the Emancipation Proclamation freed him from any obligation to his master, this black man walked the greater portion of the distance back to where his old master lived in Virginia, and placed the last dollar, with interest, in his hands.
 - 3. “In talking to me about this, the man told me that he knew that he did not have to pay his debt, but that he had given his word to his master, and his word he had never broken. He felt that he could not enjoy his freedom till he had fulfilled his promise.”
- E. That’s the type of faithfulness our God has demonstrated!
 - 1. He never walked from Ohio to Virginia, but he has done so much more!
 - 2. He informed a young virgin that she was going to be a mother; he demonstrated that Jesus was his Son by giving sight to the blind, allowing the lame to walk & the deaf to hear; he caused the sun to quit shining while the perfect Lamb of God died for our sins; & he moved a stone thereby allowing his once-dead Son to conquer death!
- F. Oh, the promises of God!

V. IMPERFECT DNA.

- A. There is likely not a one of us here this morning who doesn’t have some quirk in his or her DNA.
 - 1. We have likely all inherited some little imperfection.
 - 2. I am one of three brothers, and three of us—along with Dad—have hiatal hernias. Accident? I think not.
- B. Jesus has imperfect DNA.
 - 1. The people who make up his family tree here are full of problems—Judah went in to Tamar thinking that she was a prostitute & David had an affair and committed murder. They were full of problems.
 - 2. Honestly, however, the women mentioned in this genealogy demonstrate the imperfections in Jesus’ DNA far better than do the men.
 - a. Because Jews traced their ancestry from their fathers, genealogies did not need to include women.
 - b. But, Matthew does include women here & these are not at all women you’d expect to find in the Messiah’s genealogy.
 - 1) Every single woman here—every single one—is a Gentile or married to a Gentile.
 - a) Tamar was from Canaan; Rahab was from Jericho; and Ruth was from Moab.
 - b) Bathsheba was married to a Hittite. Even if she were a Jew, she had married a Gentile in violation of God’s covenant.
 - 2) Why would Matthew include these four women in the genealogy of Jesus?
 - a) In the first place, these women demonstrate that God can take unusual people to do great things.
 - Who would ever have thought that Rahab & Tamar, two women of quite questionable reputes would ever appear in the genealogy of the Messiah?
 - But, God can take a prostitute & make her an ancestor of the Messiah the same as he can take an unlearned fisherman & make him a gospel preacher.

- God can take us with all of our warts, with all of our problems, with all of our imperfections and make us his servants! Have you permitted God to make you into what he desires?
- b) These women in the opening of the Gospel foreshadow the Commission at the end of the Gospel: “Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19).
 - The kingdom of God, you see, is for all people: whether she be a Moabite or a women whom the king gets pregnant.
 - The Gospel of Jesus is for all people: whether they be Republicans or Democrats; whether they be Iraqis or Americans; whether they be white or black; whether they be rich or poor.
 - The Gospel of Jesus is even for you. Have you responded to that Gospel?