

Studies in Matthew Parts 1 through 4

By Vernon J. McGee

Vernon J. McGee:

We return back to the man. We're going to get into this gospel next week and I'm sure but right now I'm putting down a foundation. And yesterday I attempted to do the best that we could in making, as it were, a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Now, let me say that there is a bridge between the Old and New Testament that we have to go into secular history and pick up. And that bridge covers—that is something that's tremendous. It-it-it tells the story of the movement of the power center from the east to the west. When the Old Testament closed, the leading world power was Medio Parish. When the New Testament opens its way over Rome and something tremendous has taken place. And that means that there has been a shift. It was Alexander the Great, the the king of the Macedonian and Greek empire that made the change from east to west and the power went to the west. And we find it as we open the New Testament, and we find that there are several different groups have arisen that the Old Testament knows nothing about. Several different factors, we find there's the presence of the Synagogue, it has arisen in this area, and these people scattered throughout the world have established Synagogues, and that's going to be God's springboard for Paul the Apostle and the other apostles to go to and to begin the preaching of the Gospel in every great center of the Roman Empire, north, east, south, and west, if you please. And it will uh form a bridge here that will go out among the pagan heathen nations of the world. God will use that, you see. And that was the way God had prepared the world for the coming of Jesus.

Now, may I say that there's some other factors that have entered in. Now we want to take up today this important matter. And that is the preparation of the world for the coming of Christ. We got started in that yesterday. That was four groups in the world at that time. And God had prepared all four groups for the coming of Christ into the world. Now, we mentioned yesterday that each-there are four gospels and each one of these gospels is directed toward one of these groups. And the interesting thing is, though, the groups [Unintelligible] have disappeared as far as their names are concerned. But you can still divide mankind into these four groups. And there's a gospel for each one of the groups. Now, let's look at that. We mentioned yesterday that the gospel of Matthew, the one that we're going to study, is the gospel that's written to the Jew. Now God has prepared this nation for the coming of the Messiah. God has taken them aside, man, we saw that in Genesis, Abraham. And from that man, and with great care and patience and difficulties, God formed a nation. And God took that nation aside. And then He scattered that nation. And then yonder in Bethlehem, God brought forward in that nation, for the Lord Jesus said to the woman at the well, salvation is of the Jews. And He brought forth the Messiah, and the Savior. God had prepared His people for the coming of this Messiah. And He was born there among them. And so we find that that was first of all, then that preparation among these people, the nation of Israel, and they were looking for the coming of the Abba Messiah.

Now, they had every reason to do that for their Old Testament. Everything in the Old Testament pointed to His coming, that He was told-that He was to be born. In fact, in this series I'm presenting on Sunday morning, by the time I have concluded, I find that I can demonstrate from the word of God that the nation Israel should have been sitting on the doorstep at the inn in Bethlehem, waiting for the announcement of His birth. God had made it just that clear, my

friend, I don't think there is any question about that at all. God had prepared these people and they were looking for the coming of the Messiah. Now, the thing is, they thought He'd be riding on a great white horse instead of having to be-it, coming in the land, riding on a great white horse, instead, being a little baby taken out of the land on a little donkey down into the land of Egypt, they just missed that great fact concerning Him. And yet the word of God had made all of that clear, as Matthew will show us out of Egypt, into the Promised Land. All of that, a fulfillment of prophecy. Now, God has prepared other peoples in the world. Now there's another great division of the human family, and we stan-still have them. And that was the mission of the Oriental pick-races of the world in that land was Babylon, Medio Persia. That was the important one. Today, it's India and China and Japan. They are the great oriental races and the same factors still hold good. That was younger in the Orient in Chri-in the day that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, fabulous wealth and splendid luxury.

And right by the side of it was abject poverty. And people in desperate circumstances of life. That was the thing the Orient presented. And the Orient had a great hunger and thirst. Oh they had had religions, they had Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Confucianism. And they had not met the means to the human heart and the people were left in degradation. And my friend, after nineteen hundred years since the coming of Jesus, you see today the bulk of the human family still under those awful systems. And they-the-the people that are under them is the proof that they do not meet the needs of the human heart at all. And so there were the Oriental races with a great hunger in their hearts and multiplied millions on top side of this earth living in abject poverty. And it was out of that silent and mysterious east that there rode into Jerusalem wise men who said, where is He that's born king of the Jews. May I say that there was that great

hunger in the human heart and yonder among the Oriental races, and today they are still the great mission field of the world. And after nineteen hundred years of our playing at missions, why the great company of them have fallen back of the bamboo curtain. And communism has taken them over. And a great many people, they say "Oh that's too bad." I'm not sure, friend, if you and I could get off this morning far enough and get a perspective that God has-God who says, I gave you your opportunity. I gave you that several hundred years in China. In fact, we know today that one of the first places the gospel ever went was in China. I'm told that there are ruins there of the Nestorian church, church after church through China. Went back first.

But may I say to you, my friend, that having failed in taking the gospel there, I'm not sure but what God would say to us today, I gave you your opportunity to take the gospel and you would not. And therefore, it's a warning to us that others are going to fall back of a curtain unless the gospel is taken to them. I believe that any people that will be faithful in taking the gospel to God will keep the door open. I think we're living in the day when God says to the church, I've set before you an open door, but you've got to go in it, brother, or God will slam the door in your face. And He's certainly done that for us, there's been no question. That ought to alarm us and alert us today. But why the Oriental races? And you say, well, what gospel is written for them? I think the gospel of John is a gospel peculiarly suited to the Oriental races. I'm confident that it had a tremendous influence and even does today. Now, there was another great people: the Greeks. God was preparing the Greeks. You see that--in this--between the two testaments, that it's the period when this nation came to the foreground. They were uh, they were a race of people that over a period of one hundred years presented a glory that the world has never seen. They presented as the summum bonum, the very highest, that man has obtained by his own intellect

and by his own ability. And you will find that they attempted to perfect humanity. Any way you look at the Greek culture, they were attempting to perfect humanity. For instance, they were looking for the perfect man. And you will find that uh, that as you go through their-their history. Look at their architecture. They were seeking perfection. Look at the Parthenon. Look at their sculpture, statues, all of them physical perfection. Look at their literature. Look at their drama.

Look at anything that the Greeks did, and they were attempting to find human perfection. But, you know, they never found it. They never attained it at all. And when Luke wrote his gospel, Luke, a doctor. Luke acquainted with that culture. Luke, the intellectual, the doctor, the poet. This man who wrote a Gospel alone gives us the great songs of Christmas. This man wrote in a peculiar way for the Greek mind, you see. And he presented to them what they could not obtain, uh to the perfect man. And you see Jesus presented in the Gospel of Luke, as the son of man, the perfect man, the goal the Greeks had in mind, but never could attain to. And here is the perfect man that's able to take mankind broken and will lift them up. And the day is coming when they'll be like Him, those that have trusted Him. But God prepares, you see, the Greek world and they gave to the world a language. Alexander the Great went about over the world taking the Greek language. It was a language of culture, and it became the language of commerce. And before long, it was spoken in Alexandria, in Egypt. It was spoken yonder on the Euphrates. It was spoken in Jerusalem. It was spoken in Asia Minor and Ephesus. It was spoken yonder in Rome. It was a universal language. And God saw to it that the Old Testament was translated into Greek, it's called the Septuagint, down yonder in Alexandria. And that's the uh, that's the one that the New Testament quotes from, my beloved, more than any others, that translation into the Greek.

And God, therefore, put into this language, the Greek language, the entire New Testament. It was a vehicle that God could use to declare the gospel throughout the then-known civilized world.

God prepares Greece, you see, for the coming of this one and use that language to scatter this wonderful, glorious gospel throughout the then known world. God was preparing these people, you see. Now that uh, that is the gospel of Luke directed to them. Then--may I just add this, if you have an intellectual friend, and I've always felt that the gospel you ought to give out at colleges is not John, but the gospel of Luke. It's written to the intellectual. And by the way, and it's the one that goes the strongest on the virgin birth, by the way, and other the great truths of our faith. And that's a glorious, wonderful gospel, to present the intellectual with. Then there was the mission of the Romans, the Roman government. You know, Rome was that that great empire that was ruling the world when Jesus was born, reason He was taken down to-- or, Mary went down to Bethlehem. And He was born then and He was crucified on a Rom-Roman hills. But, you know, Rome boasted of giving justice to the world. They said to every subject people, we only ask that you adopt Roman roads and adopt Roman, uh Roman law and we'll bring you justice. All we are concerned about is to get an army and also to pay taxes. And we want you to pay your taxes. And Rome was supposed to rule in justice and the Iron Heel of Rome was down upon the world in that day. And by the way, they did bring a measure of justice. You follow Paul the apostle throughout the Roman Empire. He was protected, actually, by Roman authorities on many occasions. Take that inc-incidente yonder in Corinth and then yonder in Ephesus. Paul was actually protected by Roman authorities, you see.

Rome did bring justice to the world. But, you know, that's not what we really want is justice. You get so much of that today. You know what we really want? Mercy and the world was crying out under the Iron Heel of Rome for mercy. Oh to have mercy. That was what they wanted. And then there came one to their search. Born in Bethlehem and He made a mercy seat on the throne of God and said that that poor publican who cried out, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, could have a mercy seat that the cross of Christ and the world could go to. So the Roman world, you see, was prepared. And the gospel of Mark, sure, breathed the gospel of power. It soared like a Reader's Digest, one of these little magazines you stick in your pocket, read it on the bus on the way to work, you see. And Romans were busy people. And Rome was in a hurry, and cutting things short, you see. And the gospel of Mark, the Gospel of power, they didn't care about the genealogy of Christ. They wanted to know if He could get the job done. And the gospel of Mark shows that He can get the job done, you see. Now each one of these gospel slanted in that direction. Now, today, we have them in our midst the same type of individuals. And they're all, I think, in our community today. There's the Jew. The gospel of Matthew is for him. The gospel of Mark, and today, why, there are people, a business man wanting something right to the point, gospel of Mark is for them. You take the gospel of Luke to the cultured, to the educated. The gospel of John to those that are religious and-and turning in that direction. Oh to turn to this one presented today. Well, I see, our time is up today. We'll take this up--

[Audio pops]

Vernon J. McGee:

--[Unintelligible] from a little different viewpoint. Last Friday when we were giving that introduction, a preacher from up in the bay area sat here in my study, actually slipped in here, I didn't know he was here. The door was open and I had my back to the door. And I didn't know that he was listening at all. And he said to me, said, I have never heard that kind of an approach to the gospels before. And he says, it interests me very much and wanted to know if he could get notes or if he could get that in print because of the fact that he felt that it was something that gave you a different view of the gospels. Now, we attempted to show that God prepared the world for the coming of Christ and that these four gospels went out to the world, that is, they were-they were written to be adapted to the thinking of four different groups of people. Now don't misunderstand me, that doesn't mean it's for these four different groups of people exclusively. For instance, the gospel we're studying is written to the Jews primarily. I'm confident that we'll see that as we go along. That is certainly clear, but that doesn't exclude us at all, it's to us also you see! And uh after all, uh, God's truth, friends, is God's truth, and we needed to see that. So that--but this has a peculiar ministry for these people. And I do believe these are the gospels will fit in to the thinking and the psychological background of different kinds of folks. You see a busy man that doesn't give much time to study and reading because he's very busy in the business world, he wants things done, well the gospel of Mark would appeal to him, I'm sure. And then as the intellectual man that sits in yonder, probably in a steady part of the day, walks down the cloister, well, that man probably would be reached better by the gospel of Luke.

While there is a person that has the-uh-a lot of people calls it a 'religious ends' thing. I don't know what that is, but a lot of people seem to think folk have it. Well, if you have it, brother, the gospel of John, of course, would appeal to you. But that doesn't exclude any of these gospels

from any other group at all. But the gospel of Matthew is slanted, we are confident, to the Jews. Now let's come and look at this from another viewpoint. Why do we have four gospels? Well, it takes four gospels to present the Lord Jesus Christ. One gospel is not adequate. Now we have seen that that's a map of the Holy Spirit, back down in the Book of Genesis. You remember we called it the law of recapitulation. That's a big word, but it's very important, and it means that the Spirit of God has a way of repeating things in the Word that's important. Well we saw that in the first two chapters of Genesis, the first six days are given there in the first chapter. Then in the second chapter, the work of the six day, creation of man, is given under title. In other words, where God wants to put the emphasis, He puts the emphasis by repeating. And you will find that He'll do that again and again and again. And that's the reason that we have four gospels, because it's the-the life of our Lord is very important. And it takes four gospels to present Him in all of His beauty and wonder. I think that's probably is the-the in-one and gives us a spiritual approach to the four gospels, because the living creature, you remember that, Ezekiel saw, and I've always thought that that was quite interesting. And I'd like to turn now to the first chapter of Ezekiel and the eleventh verse.

And you'll notice this living creature, that's where their faces and their wings were stretched upward. And we're told here, "And for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, the face of a lion. And they four had the face of an ox and the face of an eagle." Now these four animals are presented to us here. Well, now you have, in the gospel of Matthew, the lion. You remember that? That was what we met in the-in the tribe of Judah. Back in the borderline chapter of Genesis, you remember that they-that old Jacob said of Judah that that the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Lord Jesus is called that in Revelation? Well, he's present in the gospel of

Matthew as the lion of the tribe of Judah, as the king. Now in the gospel of Mark, He's presented as the ox. You see the ox is the animal of sacrifice and service. And he was the servant of man. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the servant, behold my servant, that's the language of the gospel of Mark. And then when you've gotten to the gospel of Luke, well, you have there the face of a man who's presented in the gospel of Luke as the son of man. And that's all quite interesting. You see there in the gospel of Mark he's busy. You're not interested in this genealogy, because if a man comes to work for you and you've got a piece of work for him to do and he tells you, well, my my great great great great grandfather came over on the Mayflower, you don't-you're not interested in that. If he's a painter, you want to know what he can paint. If he's a plumber, you want to know if he can plumb or not. And if he's something else, a carpenter, you want to know whether he can drive a nail or not, doesn't make any difference whether his kin-folks came over on the Mayflower or not.

Now, in the gospel of Mark, the genealogy of Christ is not given, He's a servant. Question is, can he get the job done? Does he have power? And that's the presentation in Mark. Now, when you've done the loop where you're interested, he's the son of man, you want to know his background and where he came from. And the virgin birth is given there, and he's traced back to Adam there you see. And that's Mary's genealogy, and you see how important that is. And you see in there's the man. You see, Dr. Luke was a medical doctor and he just put the stethoscope right down on it. And he said, this one I examined, he was a man and I followed them all the way through. And I'm confident, Luke says, that he's the son of God. You see, now that's Luke's gospel, presenting him as the son of man, face of a man. Then the gospel of John, you have the face of the eagle, you see. And that's very important too, the eagle speaking a deity. Watch as I

brought you-born you on eagle's wings. That's a symbol of God, you see a deity, and you have that in the gospel of John. He's presented as God in the gospel of John. Now Luke, you see, uses what might be called the scientific method. He says, I took this man Jesus, I found he was virgin born. I looked at him when He was twelve years old and I found that he was growing physically and mentally and spiritually. He's growing in stature and in favor with God and man. You see Luke makes an examination. Then Luke says, I look now at the day when he began his ministry, and that this man I'm examining carefully, my conclusion is, my findings are, that he's got the son of God.

Now John doesn't do it that way. John says that God became a man that, you see, is presenting it from the other side. And so we have here this four-fold presentation. Now, let's keep this in mind, that in the gospel of Matthew, the Lord Jesus Christ is presented as the king, the king of the Jews, if you please. And he's presented that-as the king who is come to establish his kingdom. You're going to find out that the expression "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" and the way it's used after that, the rejection of Christ is very important to this gospel. I'm of the opinion that a proper understanding of the expression, the phrase, the kingdom of heaven is actually, friends, the key to the Bible. You tell me what you think of that, and I'll tell you what you think about the rest of the Bible. We're going to see that as we get into this glorious gospel here. And now I think that probably I would say just this word by way of introduction relative to the writer of this gospel. We'll come to that section where you they briefly tells us about the fact that he was [unintelligible] and how he was [unintelligible]. The other gospel writers give us a little more detail. They tell us that he was a very wealthy man, that he was a publican sitting at the feet of custom, when one day the Lord Jesus went by and called this man, this outcast from his own

nation, a man that had become rich at the sacrifice of his nation. And the Lord Jesus called, and he followed him. And he is the one who wrote this gospel. This man is a very important man, by the way. We'll have a chance when we come to that particular section to dwell upon that to be sure.

Now, you'll notice that this gospel has a movement in it. The gospel of Matthew has a movement in it. The fact of the matter is that as you read, and if you feel-if you can do it, read it at one sitting, you'll be amazed what this gospel will do for you, if you'll learn to just sit down and read it at one sitting. And when you do, you'll find out there's a movement here. You'll find out that He in this gospel is born as a king. And you will find out that they tried to kill him as a king. Wise men came to worship him as a king. He was brought to Nazareth, brought up even as a carpenter. But he was a king. And then we find that he began his ministry as a king, baptized as a king. He was tempted as a king, and then he began his ministry as King. Called the disciples to follow him as a king. And then he went to the mount and gave the law of the kingdom. We call it the Sermon on the Mount. And the question is, is this one who gave the law, got the power to carry it out? When he came down from the mountain and in the gospel of Matthew, an indefinite attempt to give you the chronological order of the life of Christ, as no gospel writer attempts to give you a biography of Christ. The-each gospel is written for a purpose. And Matthew after he comes down from the mount, having given the law, why, he then brings together a group of miracles that he performed. Because the question is, can the one who enunciated the ethic, does he have the power to carry it out? And he therefore performs these miracles as a king. You find Him moving as a king, walks as a king, presents himself as a king, is rejected as a king, by the

way. But the king, even at this rejection, he is still a king, and he predicts the judgment that is to come upon those that have rejected him.

He announces a new program, a program of the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. And then you see him begin moving toward the cross. And friends, as he moves toward the cross, He moves as a king. He's a king. He's a king all the way through. He is a king. They arrested him as a king. They tried Him as a king. And he died on a cross as a king. They put that above him, and they buried Him as a king. He came forth from the dead as a king. He's gone back to heaven as a king. And someday he's coming again as a king to this earth. He's a king in Matthew. And I think that what Shakespeare had King Lear say the night he was challenged in the storm by the sentry. King Lear, when he was challenged "who goes there?" said, "a king, every inch a king." Well, this one's a king. Every inch a king. And we're going to see that all the way through this gospel, that he's a king. And friends, He's the king that's to come and establish a kingdom someday upon this earth. That is the great promise that is given in the word of God. That's the thing that is said concerning him. Now, as we talk, and all we can do today is just the put our foot right here in the door of the gospel of Matthew. And I just want to say this word that each one of these chapters is we-uh, we'll have a title for it. And it's well to think your way through Matthew, in order to, uh, in order to catch the movement. Two books of the Bible that I think that you oughta know, fact of the matter is, I really think they're four, but they're too. And they're important to us because we just finished studying one of them, the gospel of--the Book of Genesis. Actually, you ought to fight your way through Genesis.

And the Gospel of Matthew is the second one. Think your way through the gospel of Matthew, chapter by chapter and even verse by verse, and you'll find out that you'll get [unintelligible]. And friends, if you don't get in [unintelligible] in this gospel, you'll miss, I think, the important part. Now in this very first chapter here is-the theme of it is, that genealogy and record of the virgin birth of Jesus, the genealogy and record of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. Now, I don't mean to put in a commercial here, but next Sunday morning I'm preaching on the subject Born of a Virgin in this series that we've been running. May I say that I think this is one of the most important truths of our faith today. It's in the oldest creed of the church, the apostle's creed, born of a virgin. Gospel of Matthew teaches it definitely. And the gospel of Luke also. It's being attacked today. And there's a reason, I think, for that in the presence of this new Revised Standard Version, is the thing that has prompted the new attack upon the Virgin birth. May I say to you that as far as the word of God is concerned, it is clear that-on that subject. And we'll see in this first chapter, it's clear cut on this. Now, when I went to college uh, to prepare for the ministry, taking my first step in preparation, I wanted to be very broad-minded, as we called it in those days, very latitudinarian.

Now, I believe the virgin birth, but I thought that others, that they didn't want to believe it, to be perfectly all right and that you could be a Christian and not the virgin birth. Now, I've come a long way since then. Maybe I'm getting old and narrow. Maybe that's what you will attribute it to. But I want to make a pretty positive statement right now. I do not believe you can be a Christian and deny the virgin birth of Christ. Now we're going to see why that's true in this first chapter of the gospel of Matthew. That's-now that's a very strong statement that I've made. But I think that I can back that up. At one time I did not believe that. I thought I was very broad

minded, you know, latitudinarian. But I found out I wasn't at all. I was ignorant, and did--I do not believe you can be a Christian and deny the virgin birth. Now, that's a broad statement, important statement. And in this chapter, we'll attempt to back that up, and next Sunday morning, I intend to back it up. Well, now that's all we have time for today, but we'll continue this tomorrow. And we're actually going to get into the first verse of Matthew tomorrow.

[Audio pops]

Vernon J. McGee:

There are some things you find about this gospel, you won't find true in any of the other gospels, that is, in a lesser degree. That the first is this: in-a-the gospel of Matthew quotes the Old Testament more than any other gospel. Fact of the matter is you will find that very few chapters in which there is not a reference given to the Old Testament. It's no accident that the gospel of Matthew comes first and heads the New Testament. That's no accident at all. And don't misunderstand me, I'm not trying to say that the arrangement of the books of the Bible are inspired in our King James Version. I'm not saying that at all. But I do believe that the spirit of God supervised the arrangement of it, and that the gospel of Matthew stands first. And it is a door to the New Testament. It's a swinging door. It not only swings into the New Testament, and it actually goes farther than any other gospel. This is the only gospel where the Lord Jesus mentions the church. It's in this gospel that he says, "On this rock, I will build my church." Now, that might be a surprise to many folks, that just said that the gospel of Matthew is just directed to the Jew in such a way that it excludes everybody else. Why this is the first place you'd find any reference about the church my, my beloved. And it's been-been--this Gospel's for the church also

you see, and it's all written directly, of course, and primarily to the Jew. But that does not preclude the fact that it is for the church today. And so it goes farther into the New Testament and than any other gospel. Then another thing is it's a swinging door I say, and it swings back into the Old Testament.

Why it'll go right back, we're going to see here in the first verse, goes right back to those-to the book of Genesis, and begins there, and follows through from there, so that you have in the Gospel of Matthew a very remarkable book, a swinging door back into the Old Testament, on into the New Testament. Now, that's one of the reasons that I say it's impossible to understand the Bible without understanding the gospel of Matthew. It offers the key to the Bible because it gathers up the Old Testament and interprets it in the light of the New Testament, or the new covenant. Now, the second the peculiarity of this gospel is this: that is an-a phrase that's used here that is peculiar to Matthew. It does not occur in other--in the other gospels at all. And that expression is the kingdom of heaven. Now, those of you that have received the outlines have discovered that I have written here a rather extended section on this expression, the kingdom of heaven. Now, not only is is that important, but what-when I get to that expression in the third chapter, for the first time, we'll see John the Baptist walking out on the, uh, on the stage of scripture and the im-out of a clear sky, he says, "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Curious expression isn't it? What does it mean? Well, after nineteen hundred years, there is just as much confusion in Los Angeles today about that expression as there's ever been in the church. Well the fact of the matter is, when it was first given, there wasn't any confusion because the ones to whom it was given, it was never explained to them. They all understood it.

Just like if a speaker get up today and say, now, I want to talk to you about Texas. Well, everybody knows about Texas and where it is. And the speaker wouldn't have to stop and say, well, now I know a lot of you people just don't know what Texas is. Someone has said it is a state of mind, but it's more than that. It's a very tangible piece of property. And everybody knows where it is. And there's no use if you've got to give a-that-if you're going to give a talk to your PTA or to your Rotary Club on Texas. Just let me give you a little advice, as uh, one that's had a little experience in public speaking, don't take time to explain that what Texas is or what you mean by Texas. They'll understand, you see. If we all understand that--but then not--now John the Baptist didn't take time to explain it, a little later on when Jesus used it, He didn't take time to explain the meaning of the kingdom of heaven. So apparently the ones that he's speaking to understood what it meant is just as clear in their minds as Texas is in our mind today. And I do wish we could get clear on thinking about the kingdom of heaven, it's causing a great deal of confusion. Now, we'll deal with that when we get to it and not take any time for debate. But I just want to call attention that that phrase is in this Gospel, and it's very important. Now, the third thing is, the gospel of Matthew is not chronological. I've mentioned that, I've suggested it before. I'd like to develop that just a little along this line. None of the Gospels are a biography of the Lord Jesus Christ. They don't claim to be that. Each one is written for a purpose. They don't attempt to tell you many things about Him.

And then after you've read the entire four gospels, you tell me what the color of his hair is. You tell me whether his eyes were blue or brown. You tell me how tall he was, how much he weighed. You can't find that, you don't know that at all. Like everybody reads about George Washington as a mighty high look, and Napoleon, and Caesar, and many people lived in the

time, even the Lord Jesus, they there. And even Socrates lived before Him and we have an idea how it-how they look. But you tell me how Jesus looks. Somebody says oh, I've seen pictures of Him. Yeah, but those pictures are no more like him than the man in the moon, friends, I do not mean to be uh irreverent. Those pictures are pictures of people that lived in the Middle Ages, and they they don't look like him at all. They apparently, he was not like the pictures or the paintings. We have no notion of how He looked. Why? Well these Gospels do not attempt to tell you that at all. They are concerned with a message to give and to tell you about this glorious person, but each one from a purpose. Now, Matthew has probably broken over the chronological line more than any other. John rather follows chronology. You'll find that Mark, to a certain extent, is so [unintelligible]. But to--Luke attempts to do that. But when you get to the gospel of Matthew, believe me brother, there's no attempt, there's no-no chronological order here at all. But there is a logical order. Everything is presented for a purpose at a particular time. And Matthew has a way of bunching together a great many things. For instance, we call a certain section here Sermon on the Mount.

Now, I think he gave it probably on one occasion yonder on the mount, as we have it here. But you know, he gave statements of that again and again and again. And I'll show you that when we get to it, that he gave that--and he repeated all of these teachings again and again. But, Matthew just brought together, you see, all of this for a purpose. And then he brought together a group of the miracles. And he did that for a purpose, and everything he presents, he presents for a purpose to set before you the key, you see, so that this is peculiar to the gospel of Matthew. Now there are other things about this gospel that are going to come out in our study. But I want us to get here to this first chapter today. And there are two or three things that I want to say about this first

chapter. Now, actually, the first chapter, the subject of it, the theme of it, is the genealogy and the record of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. Now, the first part of it is a very natural sort of a record. The last part of this chapter, beginning at verse 18, is supernatural, if you please. It gives the virgin birth of Christ, and the supernatural elements that enter in. And you couldn't have a greater contrast than you have in this first chapter. Why, this first is a dusty, musty genealogy. That's all in a world that it is. And it was something that I have a notion that was on file at the temple. There is a belief today that a great many of the records of the Jews, their genealogical tables, have been destroyed. But they were carried in more than one place. And I have a notion at this particular time that this genealogy that's here was on record yonder at the temple, and you can check on it. It's a very natural sort of a thing.

But when you get to the last part of this chapter, brother, you you're in altogether different territory, you're in something of supernatural. You have the virgin birth. You have the appearance of an angel, and you have the-the angel giving Old Testament prophecy being fulfilled in the coming of this one who's to be born to Mary? Now, all of that you see, we moved definitely out of the natural and into the supernatural. Now, the the important thing for us, of course, is to take up this genealogy, and I'm going to spend a little time with it. Now, it looks rather boring, doesn't it? I can't imagine anything quite as uninteresting as this genealogy. You read the thing over and see what you get out of it. It'd put you to sleep if it was much longer, because it's just so and so begat so and so, and so and so begat so and so, and so on and on and on and on. And that's the record that you hear. Now, that's another reason why I think that a great deal of care should be exercised in giving out God's word to unsaved people. I remember a chaplain in the war, young fella was telling me out here in Pasadena, he was a chaplain in one of

our camps. And then he was later transferred to the war theater in Europe. And he said that he gave out literally thousands of new testaments. And he said he watched it, so what did he observe? He said that he-as he'd give out a new testament, the fellow would take it and go over and lie down and sit in the box where he generally gave 'em out. He said they'd go and lie down on a buck and begin to thumb through. And of course, then naturally, in any book, you turn to the first chapter in the first page, imagine starting in like this. Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, Jacob begat Judas and his brethren, and Judas begat Perez and Zerah of Tamar, don't tune this out friends, I ain't gonna quit reading now!

You can see, that's not very interesting, that's sure as not thrilling, is it, to read that kind of writing. And you can imagine an unsaved boy. Not uh, no bible training whatsoever. He's given out God's word and given quite a little talk before it's given to it by the chaplain. And he takes this and goes and lays down and starts in. You know what this chaplain told me he did? He says nine times out of ten, they put it over somewhere with their equipment. And that was the last of it, they never read it again unless they got in trouble or got in a hospital, or got in a tight spot. Then they turned to it. But he says it's given them the gospel of Matthew first wasn't the thing to do. And he said he got so, and I'm sure he used good judgment, although I think I would've given Mark, but he gave em John. He says you start reading in the book of John. And he said he found out it meant a great deal of difference. The fact the matter is, you got to tell them the page it was on, 'cause some of them didn't even know there was Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. So he just gives them the page number, says now mark page so and so, and you begin reading there, for that's the beginning as far as you're concerned, then you can come back to here. Now you see this genealogy that opens the New Testament is very important. I hope that by the time I finish that

you'll come to the conclusion, as I have, that this is the most important document that there is in the entire New Testament, because the New Testament stands or falls on this genealogy in the accuracy of it. But-but the important thing is, that you just don't give uh new folk, and especially unsaved folk, this to read.

This is certainly not very thrilling, reading you see, especially an age that looks at pictures and the most popular magazines, picture magazines, on top of them. In fact by that time you get down to verse fifteen or sixteen here in the Gospel of Matthew, you just lost your reader. There'd be no question about that. And that was the experience of this chaplain. But may I come back to that genealogy to say that this is tremendously important? I just don't know how to tell you that they how important that it is. Now, will you notice how that this genealogy opens up? It opens up like this, and this is the way the New Testament opens, the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Now, there's a great deal in that. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ. What kind of book? Well, it's the book of the generations. Well, what do you mean by generation? What you mean genealogy, His family tree. This is the family tree of Jesus Christ and it's--

[Audio pops and changes]

Vernon J. McGee:

First, by the way of Matthew one, you see, we're not moving very fast here in the gospel of Matthew. And we're going to find that in this gospel, there are many things that we need this pause and spend time on, and not just rush through. So in this first verse, verse we've seen, it

opens in this majestic way, "The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ." And he's called first The Son of David, and then the Son of Abraham. Now last time, we mentioned the fact that the son of David is put first, and anybody knows David didn't come first, and the one that was probably more sure of that than you and I could possibly be would be Matthew. But he puts David first because he's not following a chronological order at all. But he is following a logical order. He's presenting the Lord Jesus as the king, the king of the Jews. That's the first question asked about Him, came from gentiles from the East. Where is he that's born King of the Jews? Now he's son of David, in order to fulfill that he'd have to be the son of David. We saw yesterday, God made a covenant with David. God said to David, I'm going to-I'm going to be in your house forever, and that you will never lack a man who sat on your throne, and there is a coming one that will reign upon your throne. You'll be a blessing to the world. Now, this is just-it is-it just happened to be the number one on the hit parade in Israel from that day on, up to the time that the Lord Jesus came, they were looking for the Messiah. And that was the site that the entire Old Testament pointed toward, the coming of this one. Every prophet made that his theme song. Now, very candidly, some of them seem to be almost like a record that's been stuck, you get the same one thing, and that is the King is coming in David's line.

And I mentioned that yesterday. I'm not turning to the Psalms, I said that you'll find it in the Psalms, Psalm 45, majestic Psalm, and Psalm 110. And there are other Psalms, I mention these two. Now, all the prophets speak of the coming of the Messiah. They just didn't have any other subject to talk about friends, that just seemed to be the thing the Spirit of God was placing upon their heart and mind. And I want to turn this morning and look at some of those wonderful prophecies. I turn first to one that's very familiar. And uh, it-and I tell ya, now, I say I'd

mentioned His coming on many occasions. But this is, I think, the completest prophecy of the Davidic kingdom that you have. Now, when you notice it opens on that basis, and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. Other words, he's going to have a son and he can go back to David to his father, to Jesse. Jesse will have one. And that takes us right back to that day that Samuel took one of the sons of Jesse, David, the name and anointed him king. Now, this is the line that's being followed, you see. "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, my spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Now these are tremendous statements that are made concerning him. Only fulfilled, of course, in Christ. And now they the time when he's coming to reign, that's even yet future. Listen to this, "And he shall make him a quick understanding and the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears."

In other words, he won't need to see it nor will he need to have witnesses come in at all. He's able to judge. He knows that-He knows, you see, everything. And it's not necessary for anybody to come in and have a long, drawn out trial. He knows the facts. But notice this, "But with righteousness, shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity for the [unintelligible]." Now he is the only ruler that will ever give the poor people a square deal. They've never had it so far. I think of these two Kremlin clowns that are tearing through India right now, namely Khrushchev and Bougouni. And certainly the millions of India, and the poor folk over there, they do need a break, don't they, and certainly it'd be wonderful to have a ruler that would judge them in righteousness and reprove for the meek of the earth. Well, it would be a wonderful thing to have a ruler like that. But those-but those communist clowns over there, just-they're not the boys to

present it, because they haven't done very well in Russia today as we know it, even with the Iron Curtain and now the information is coming out to know that that's no poor man's paradise whatsoever. Wh-this poor world needs a ruler today. Well, that's David's son that's coming, you see. He's the one that's promised here. And we're told, "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reign." Now, notice what'll happen to this earth when you were-he reigns. The Wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf of the young lion in the [unintelligible] together, and a little child shall lead them.

And now I tell you, we've had nothing like that in the way of uh, of a kingdom yet where you have the wolf that will dwell with the lamb. The only place now that you can get the wolf and the lamb together is to get the lamb inside of the wolf. That's what happens today. And uh, but there is coming a day when he reigns, and even nature is to be changed. The cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together. Bear cub, and a little calf lying down together. And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. Now think of that, the lion-he'd be-he likes T-Bone steaks today, but the day is coming when he'll become a vegetarian. He'll eat straw like the ox. Now, if somebody says "say, that certainly will change the carnivorous nature of that beast." Yes, it sure will. And you can be sure that only the Lord Jesus can do that. Remember, Dr. George Gale of sended memory, telling years ago about holding meetings in a place in the east, and a young fella came up afterwards, a skeptic, and he says "look," he says, "I don't believe the lion can eat straw like an ox. I just think that's ridiculous." And Dr. Gale, in his characteristic manner, said to the young man, he said, "I've got you young man. You make a lion, and I'll make him eat straw." You see, if God made the lion, God can make him eat straw. And that's the one

that's going to do it. The one who is the creator, by Him were all things made that are made. And he'll make him eat straw someday. That's no problem at all. And then we read there on here, and I dropped down verse 10, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which you'll stand for an end sign of the people, to it show the Gentiles see, and his rest shall be glorious."

Now you see again, pointing to one coming in David's line. So you see, I say, I believe that the promise God had made to David was going to be fulfilled and he [unintelligible] to it. Now, Jeremiah, another one of the Major Prophets, has a great deal to say about it. And let me turn to one of the passages in Jeremiah, and many you can turn to, but I'm turning to the 23rd chapter of Jeremiah. And will you notice this, verse 3, "And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries, whether I've driven them, and I'll bring them again to their foes and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up Shepherds over them, which shall feed them and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. The holy days come--" listen to this now, "saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment of justice in the earth. In his days, Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely. And this is his name, whereby he shall be called the Lord our righteousness." What a marvelous passage of scripture, you see, that there's one coming in David's line. And you will find that Ezekiel is very pointed about this, and very plain spoken, way over in the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel verse twenty four--and I'll just list this one verse out-- you remember that chapter thirty-seven is that one of the valley of dry bones and how important this is. And verse twenty four reads, "And David, my servant, shall be king over them, and they shall have one shepherd. They shall also walk, in my judgment, and observe my- observe my statutes, and do them."

Ain't that a wonderful thing? Ezekiel had [unintelligible], Daniel talked about that one that was to come. The ancient of days that's coming, the Messiah who's coming, and he even told about the fact that Messiah was to be cut off, you see, out of the land of the living, gives time of it, and Mark to get-he gives us the place, "He is to be born, but thou Bethlehem even though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of these shall he come forth unto me that's to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from abo-from everlasting." Wow! There again another wonderful prophecy. Now you will find out that you all-only profits after the captivity. They never lost sight of this, say this was just about the most important thing they could talk about. And in the 12th chapter of Zachariah, tenth verse, "And I will pour up on the house of David upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they've pierced." You see the Lord Jesus when he comes again with the nail-scarred hands, "and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his oldest son and shall be in bitterness for him as one that's in bitterness for his first born." So you see all the prophets--I wish I had time to do nothing else. For the next six months, then just to turn to the prophecies in the Old Testament that point to the coming of Jesus Christ. And may I say that this a-this is a terrific blow that you have here as the New Testament opens in majestic staccato words like this. "The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David." That's important.

That gathers in to itself all these great prophecies in the Old Testament, all the high hopes and the anticipation and the expectation, and says that in Jesus Christ, all of this is fulfilled. He is the son of David. That's important. Then the next is the son of Abraham. Now, may I say that that's where the genealogies go to begin in verse 2, Abraham begat Isaac. Now, if-if-if the Messiah i--

that's coming-- there are two things must be true of him you see, he must be of David's line and he must come from Abraham. Those are just two things that have to be made perfectly clear here. And somebody says what it becomes from David, He'd have to come through the line that that is Abraham's, not necessarily because there's several that got into this line, you see, and it could have been otherwise. But the important thing is that He's son of David and He's son of Abraham, now that immediately, for those of us that have just been studying Genesis, that text says immediately right back, you see, in the 12th chapter of Genesis, when God said, Abraham, I'm going to bring one from you, that will be a blessing to all nations. Then over in the 17th chapter, the sixth verse, God said, you remember to Abraham, Kings are going to come from you, and Kings did come from him. And now, though, this one, who is in-in David's line is also from Abraham, and he is in fulfillment of the promise that God would make this king the blessing to the world. So we have in this verse, oh what wonderful truths are here. And-but we must move along, and I want to get down now in verse 2. It says, "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren."

Now notice that Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob. Jacob begat Judas and his brethren. When somebody says, well, that sounds like we're back in Genesis, sure does. Now do you see the importance of the Book of Genesis? Here is the last part of the book of Genesis right here. Entire lives pass from chapter 12 right through chapter 50. Abraham begat Isaac. Isaac begat Jacob. Jacob begat Judah and his brethren. And that's the whole story in that Genesis 12 right through 50. And now we can look back, and with the perspective of the gospel of Matthew, we can see why God gave the story of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob, and of Judah. He did all of that for one very definite reason, because there's one coming in that line, why there were millions of

people living on the earth back in Abraham's day. God only told his story. Why? Because He's giving you the family of Jesus Christ, my beloved, and the whole Old Testament can be summed up in a statement like this, just one generalization, and I realize that a generalization is a dangerous thing. But the purpose of the Old Testament was to give the family tree of Jesus Christ. Now there are other things, I realize that, but that's one of the primary, basic purposes of the Old Testament. And so here we have the book of, uh the Book of Genesis encompassed in verse 2 of Matthew. Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judah and his Brethren. Now, aren't you glad we started Genesis, spent a long time didn't we, a year, and my how we talked about Abraham. How we talked about Isaac, how we talked about Jacob, and how we talked about Judah. And did you know all of those fellows, back there, the patriarchs were in the family tree of Jesus Christ. That's the reason God gave, because it's from that line "He brought it into the world. He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took upon him the seed of Abraham."

That's what the writer to the Hebrews says. "Took upon him the seed of Abraham." So look, it's the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. How important, how stupendous, how majestic these statements are, and what-how much they nail down, my friend, in as far as the story of the Lord Jesus Christ is concerned. And so we have now this genealogy that begins here with Abraham, not necessary to go back to that at all. You find in the in Mary's genealogy loop, you will find the-uh-her story and her genealogy. She goes back to David too, a different route, through Nathan, the son of David. But the genealogy there goes right to Adam you see, because He, as the savior, born of the woman, is the savior of the world. Born under the law, but he's born under the law that he might redeem those under the law,

as well as those out from under the law. So we have in this segment here, in the first verse, something that's very difficult to just pass by without giving this attention to it. Now we've got to get into these begets and begets next time. And that's tomorrow. And when we do, well we're going to have some more to say about this wonderful genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust we're going to see--

[Audio pops]

Vernon J. McGee:

--three verses. Please don't tune us out because we won't keep it up, I'll assure you that. "Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, Jacob begat Judah and his brethren, and Judas begat Perez and Zerah of Tamar, and Perez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, Amminadab begat Nahshon, Nahshon begat Salmon." Now honestly do you really think that's thrilling reading? I don't think so at all. I feel that it's just what it was intended to be, just the genealogy, the family tree of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just a bunch of names joined together. So and so begat so and so, so and so begat so and so, and so on and so forth. That's the way that it's given to us here. Now we--

[Audio cuts out]