

The working of God in our past

God is sovereign over everything that happens in the world. Nothing happens by chance. He either orchestrates everything according to his purposes or he allows things to happen according to his purposes. None of us is here by accident. We are all here by God's design according to his purposes. Although He doesn't necessarily orchestrate all the bad that happens in our lives, He does channel them for His glory. As we look at the Gospel of Matthew, we will see how God worked His purposes in the coming, life, and ministry of Jesus.

Matthew 1: 1 – 17

Introduction

- The genealogy of Jesus at first glance seems to merely be a long list of names of a family tree. However, it is far more than that. It is the unfolding of the purposes of God.
- Matthew begins his Gospel with the sentence: This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham
 - Here he sets the tone and purpose of the Gospel
 - The Gospel is about Jesus, the Messiah, who was promised to Abraham and who would come through the line of David.
 - This genealogy is a demonstration of the working of God in history.
- The Gospel of Matthew is a fulfilment of the promises of God in the Messiah Jesus.

1) Living by the faithfulness of God

- God is always faithful and never lies. He is truth and no falsehood can be found in him at all.
 - When God makes a promise, we can be absolutely sure that He will keep that promise.
 - True faith is not blind faith. It is an implicit trust in God who is faithful in all he is, all he says, all he does, at all times.
- Jesus was known as the son of Abraham.
 - This means that Jesus was a descendent of Abraham. He is of the natural family of Abraham.
 - However, it means much more than that.
- Jesus is the spiritual seed of Abraham through whom all the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled.
- The promise that through Abraham all the nations will be blessed
 - Genesis 12:1-3 The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.
- Abraham's offspring according to the promise would come through Isaac, not Ishmael.
 - Genesis 21:12 But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.
- God would provide on the mountain where Abraham sacrificed a ram in the place of Isaac
 - Genesis 22:13-14 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.
- All these promises were fulfilled in Jesus.
- In Jesus God we are the seed of Abraham and recipients of the promises of God
 - Galatians 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
- The promise to Abraham that through him all nations would be blessed came to us through Jesus.
 - The faithfulness of God in fulfilling his promises to Abraham means that we have received the promise of eternal life through Jesus.
 - This is the greatest blessing that we can ever receive.
 - He not only promises us eternal life, but also promises to sustain us until we inherit it when He comes to fetch us.

2) Living under the direction of God

- Not only do we live by the faithfulness of God, but we also live under his direction.
- God knows the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He IS the beginning and the end of all things.
 - Nothing takes God by surprise.
 - He orchestrates history just in the way he wants it.
 - He knew that the line of Jesus would be through Isaac and later on through David.
 - He knew that the Israelites would be exiled to Babylon.
- The genealogy of Jesus is a demonstration of how God directed history from Abraham to Jesus
 - If something like this happens over a period of a few year, or even a hundred years we could maybe call it a coincidence.
 - However, the time from Abraham to Jesus was 1800 years with each generation having numerous children.
 - It is clear that no coincidence was involved from the time of Abraham to Jesus. Life was lived under the direction of God.
- What about the exile of the Israelites to Babylon? Was that God directed?
 - Yes, it was. They were warned that if they sinned they would be sent into exile. However, the number of years in exile were also foretold.
 - Jeremiah 29:10-11 This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- God does not only direct our lives into good and not bad, into ease and not hardship, into prosperity and not trials.
 - His plans for us are for our ultimate good, and he directs our lives accordingly.
 - The ultimate good comes after the cross and does not bypass it.
- Those mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus went through severe trials before they received what was promised.
 - Abraham was commanded to sacrifice Isaac, the son of promise who he had waited years to receive.
 - David was hunted down as a criminal by Saul before he became king of Israel.
 - Jesus was scorned, mocked, tortured, and crucified before he was raised to glory.
- Living under the direction of God isn’t always easy, but it always leads to the best that God has for us in life.

3) Living by the grace of God

- God’s faithfulness and direction won’t get us far without his grace.
- If we look closely at the genealogy we will notice that four women are included in it.
 - Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah who became the mother of some of his children
 - Rahab was a prostitute in Jericho
 - Ruth was a Moabitess, the daughter-in-law of Naomi. She was the grandmother of David.
 - Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon from an illicit affair with David when her husband Uriah was on the battlefield.
- If we were to delve into the lives of the men we would find equal brokenness and wickedness.
 - Abraham himself lied.
 - David committed adultery and murder.
- The line from Abraham to Jesus was far from pure.
 - This was the line to Joseph, who wasn’t the blood father of Jesus.
 - Jesus was born of a virgin, and thus wasn’t included in this inherited sinfulness.
- By including the sinful and broken in Jesus’ ancestral line we come to understand the grace of God.
 - If the line to Jesus was such no matter how sinful or broken our ancestral line or personal past has been, God can bring us to himself and restore us through Jesus the Messiah.
 - Jesus did not come for the healthy, but the sick.