

JESUS SON OF DAVID AND SON OF GOD

Every Christmas the world celebrates the birth of Jesus. What is the significance of Jesus to the world? To answer this question, we turn to the primary sources of the birth of Jesus.

The Christmas story comes to us from two sources, the gospels written by Mathew and Luke. Mathew records Jesus' birth in the context his genealogy while Luke places Jesus' birth next to the Angel's appearance to Zechariah and the promise that his wife Elizabeth will conceive a son.

Mathew's gospel begins Jesus' genealogy with Abraham. Mathew divides this long history into three moments in Israel's history; from Abraham (2068 BC) to David (1010 BC); from David to the Babylonian Exile (597 BC) and finally from the Babylonian Exile to Jesus' birth (around 6-4 BC). In this human history God patiently worked and prepared for the birth of Jesus.

The first era from Abraham to David tells the building of the Davidic Monarchy. The second era on the genealogy tells the fall of Davidic monarchy and the deportation to Babylon. In others words, it's the story possessing the land – Israel losing it. The kings during the second era were either idolators, murderers, incompetents, power-seekers and corrupted. King David himself was combination of a saint and sinner. He lusted and murdered. The era from David to the Babylonian exile included stories of individuals and an institution that had strengths and weakness. The third era is one of promise and hope for the Messiah who will save Israel from captivity.

Mathew's genealogy also included five women, two Canaanite Tamar and Rahab, Ruth a Moabite, Bathsheba and Mary. Normally in a patriarchal society one traces lineage through fathers, but in this case five women were named. All these women have controversial marital stories but they played an important role in the Davidic succession.

The genealogy of Jesus contains saints and sinners. It shows how God writes on both the straight and crooked lines of human history. A God who did not hesitate to use the saintly people as well as the sinful and weak in his plan. God's plan is not limited to the straight lines but even works in the crooked lines. Mathew's genealogy teaches encouragement in the midst of discouragement.

The birth of Jesus was announced to Joseph, a descendant of David.

“Joseph Son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit.”

The angels message fulfils the prophecy of the Old Testament prophets that the messiah will be born into the house of David.

The angel further instructs Joseph: “She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.”

According to Jewish culture, Joseph takes on legal fatherhood of Jesus by naming him. The father's testimony is considered a valid proof that he is the father of the child. Jesus is son of Joseph and therefore of the house of David. Jesus is also Son of God because he is conceived by the Holy Spirit and he will save humanity from sin.

Jesus' dual identity as Son of David and Son of God is God's plan, but Joseph must work with God's plan, he must obey God's plan – although the circumstances are not clear. Likewise in Luke's gospel Mary must obey and do God's will.

During Christmas, Christians and the world are reminded to obey and do God's will. Our world is becoming more secular and human beings are in control. Human beings think that they are the centre of the universe. Humans have pushed God from the center.

Christmas reminds us that God has a plan for whole of creation and human beings must obey and do God's plan. The climate crisis, wars, and violence we witness today show that we are not living according to God's plan.

May this Christmas be a time of resetting our lives according to God's plan. May this Christmas be a time for hope and encouragement in the face of discouragement. Our hope is in God who is patiently working in the whole of creation. Like Joseph, we must obey and do God's plan.