



Matthew 1

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Tape #8001
By Chuck Smith

“The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord and He delights in his way” (Psalm 37:23). Every once in a while, the Lord lets us see how that He is in control and ruling over all.

Yesterday, I was scheduled to speak in San Diego for the men’s conference that Raul Reis is putting on, and somehow it didn’t get on my calendar. And so I was talking with my son on Friday and we were talking about a fellow and Jeff said, “Well, he’s going down tomorrow to a men’s conference in San Diego and he’ll be down there this weekend, so we won’t be able to get a hold of him until Monday.” I said, “A men’s conference in San Diego?” And so [we] called over to the Golden Springs Calvary Chapel [Raul Reis’ church] and sure enough, it was this weekend. I had not put it in my calendar, I had forgotten which weekend it was.

I decided to go on down Friday night [the conference began Friday night] and to spend the night down there because I was one of the first speakers yesterday morning. Actually, the second speaker but I was.. 9:30 in the morning and rather than drive down in the morning, I figured it’d be better to go down there Friday night.

It just so happened that while I was there in Vista on Friday night, one of the ladies in the church died suddenly, leaving three small children or a teenage daughter and two smaller boys. Her husband happened to be away on a fishing trip at the time and was coming home, and so we stayed there in order to minister to him when he received the news of his wife’s sudden and untimely death.

Kay couldn’t go with me so I called Steve Mays, the pastor of the South Bay Calvary, to see if he would like to go with me, and he said sure but that he would just meet me down there in Oceanside. I met Steve and then I received the call--the fellow was over at the church wanting to talk with me. And so Steve and I went over to the church together, and interestingly enough, the fellow used to come to the study that Steve had on the Friday night Bible study that Steve had back in the 70’s. Steve knew him and we were both able to minister to this fellow.

Steve and I went on down to the conference on Saturday morning. I spoke and after I spoke, they were going to have all of the participants [the speakers and all of the conference], they had a brunch for it, and so Steve went to the brunch with me. At the brunch, the conversation came to the terrorism by the Islamic fundamentalists and the subject of the bombing of our Marine outpost there in Beirut. And I shared with the fellows, there is an interesting story about that bombing at the base there in Beirut.

There was a young Christian soldier who loved the Lord very much, a real witness for Christ, but his love for Christ was an irritant to the sergeant that was over him. The sergeant just hated his witness. But this young man, not only by word but by his life, was an outstanding witness. The sergeant gave him every rotten duty he could think of and the fellow would just do it smiling and with a good attitude and as the sergeant would say deriding things, he’d say, “Sarge, the Lord loves you, He wants you”; and it just galled him.

They got rations of one beer a day over there and the sergeant decided that he was going to go on a drunk and he told the fellows, “No beer rations today for any of you.” He took them all and was just going to drink them all and just get totally soused. It was his duty to stand guard at the gate that day of the terrorist bombing. But he said to this young soldier, “Would you mind taking my duty at the gate and be guard at the gate today? I’m going to go on a drunk.” And he said, “Sure, sarge, be glad to do anything for you.” And so that was the day that the terrorist came with the car bomb and blew the place apart, and this young man was killed who was standing guard.

The sergeant did receive wounds that have left him handicapped and will ultimately and soon take his life. He was injured quite severely, sent back to the States and felt that he owed an apology to the parents of this young man. So when he was out of the hospital, he went to their house and said, “I was the sergeant over your son and I feel a responsibility for his death. I should have been standing guard duty that day but he was

there for me and I'm awfully sorry." They said, "No, you're wrong, you shouldn't be dead. It's right that he was there because you weren't ready to die but he was. And so it's all a part of God's plan." And they said, "We'd like you to take our son's Bible, he wrote us about you." The government had sent his Bible and personal effects back to the parents, and so the sergeant took the Bible out of courtesy but just put it on the shelf and was just deciding to drink himself to death. Life was too painful, he just didn't want to go on living any longer and the injuries that he had sustained are terminal injuries, it's just a matter of time until they take their toll.

One day as he was cleaning his room, he accidentally knocked the Bible off the shelf. It fell open and there was a letter that fell out written by this young man to the sergeant. And in the letter he told of the love of Jesus Christ for the sergeant and of his own love for him and his desire to see him saved. He said, "Sarge, I would gladly give my life if it could bring you salvation." It was more than he could handle and he accepted the Lord. He now works in the Calvary Chapel of Capistrano Beach (he's in charge of the handicapped ministry there because he is handicapped) and he has a fantastic ministry with the handicapped children. God is just using him and it's just exciting what the Lord is doing.

I shared this story with these fellows down there. Steve was impressed by this story and decided to share it with his church this morning. As he was sharing the story in his church this morning, as he told about the sergeant's conversion, a lady began to weep very loudly. She stood up and she said, "I was the wife of that sergeant, I divorced him because he was such a miserable person." And she accepted the Lord this morning there in Steve's church.

I mean, you can't beat the Lord. What are the chances of something like that--that I would share the story, that Steve would repeat it, that the wife would be there in that service, of all places, hear the story of her husband who she hadn't seen or heard from in years? So touched by the Spirit that she also accepted the Lord. How wonderful are the ways of the Lord! How far beyond our finding out!

Let's go to Matthew's gospel because it's filled with miracles also. You see, "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8)." And the book of Acts is a continuation of the gospel of Luke and he said, "The former treatise have I written unto you, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until his ascension" (Acts 1:1,2); but after that he then continued his ministry through the apostles, and the work and ministry of Jesus continues today. The story of the life of Christ does not end at the end of Matthew with the resurrection and His ascension into heaven. But His story continues and Jesus still works today His glorious, miraculous work.

From the book of Malachi to the book of Matthew, we have a period of 400 years. They are called the "silent years". There were books that were written in this period of time. They are called Apocrypha books. In 1526 or so at the Catholic Council of Trent, the Catholic church determined that some of these apocryphal books belonged in the Holy Canon, and thus were included in the Catholic Bible. These apocryphal books had not been included in our Protestant Bible; they were in the Latin Bible, they were [some of them] found in the Codex Sinaiticus, but for various reasons they were rejected. They were not in the Hebrew scriptures either. However, in the Septuagint translation which took place a couple of hundred years before Christ, they were incorporated [some of them] in that Septuagint translation.

The most notable of the Apocrypha books is the first and second Maccabees and these books are valuable from a historic standpoint because they tell of the tremendous exploits of the Jews under the leadership of one Judas Maccabeus who was so incensed at the profaning of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes that he gathered a group of just, religious zealots who began guerilla warfare against the Syrian occupation; and against insurmountable odds, defeated the Syrians and they rededicated the Temple. It was an important period of their history and the first and second Maccabees is a record of that portion of history. There was the book of Esdras (which was supposedly a book written by Ezra), the book Tobit, the book of Enoch and other books of the Apocrypha.

The interesting thing is that in the New Testament Jesus does not quote from any of the Apocrypha books. Nor do the apostles quote from any of the books of the Apocrypha. There is only one quotation in the New Testament from an apocryphal book and that is in the little book of Jude where he quotes from the apocrypha book of Enoch. And he refers to that "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, Behold

the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints” (Jude 1:14). That’s the only quotation at all in the New Testament from the Apocrypha books.

However, most of the other scriptures, most of the other books, are quoted from quite fully--many, many quotations from the Old Testament, the Hebrew scriptures. These were not considered books of the Canon by the Hebrews, they were not a part of the scriptures of the Hebrew reading, they are not accepted even today in the Hebrew scriptures and are not accepted by the Protestant church.

So these were the writings that came out of this period of time but are not considered as divinely-inspired scriptures. Interesting stories, some of them quite fanciful, the wisdom of Solomon, another one of the books and some of them have.. Tobit has quite a fanciful story, little gory, but nonetheless fanciful. So the silent years from Malachi who was prophesying, the last prophecy of Malachi is the prophecy of the coming of Elijah “before the great notable day of the Lord: to turn the hearts of the children unto their fathers (Malachi 4:5, 6).”

So Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus. Let’s correct that, it actually is the genealogy of Joseph and he calls it,

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (1:1).

In the Old Testament, God made a promise to Abraham that through his seed, all of the nations of the world was to be blessed. Paul in Galatians 3:16 points out that he said, “Seed, singular, as unto one; not plural, as unto many, for that seed is Christ.” Abraham was promised that through his seed, the Messiah would come. This promise was repeated later to David. God said to David that He would build him a house. And that they would never cease [one of his seeds] from sitting on the throne. And that again was a prophecy and David understood that to mean that the Messiah would come from David’s line. So first of all, Abraham through Jacob, the promise was given to Judah that the scepter would not part from Judah until Shiloh came, thus then through David and so if a person was to lay claim to be the king of Israel, he would have to prove that he had the kingly lineage. He would have to prove that he was a son of Abraham, and that he was a son of David and from the tribe of Judah. It should be noted that this would be an impossibility today because for hundreds of years they have lost their genealogical records and no one of the Jewish ethnic group can actually prove his genealogy. They do not have record that goes back that far anymore, they’ve been lost.

But Matthew is seeking to show that Jesus is the son of Abraham, the son of David and thus has the right to the claim of the throne in Israel. Now there is some confusion over this because Luke’s gospel also gives to us a genealogy. But in Luke’s gospel, the genealogy is that of Mary; and whereas Matthew begins with Abraham and comes forward to Joseph, Luke begins with Joseph, the son-in-law of Eli, and he goes back to Adam. So you’ll find that from David, there are two different lines. Here in Matthew, from David he followed the genealogy of Joseph through King Solomon and through the kingly line so that Joseph was actually a son of David and heir to the throne of Israel; whereas Mary, her genealogy goes back through David’s son, Nathan. So from Abraham and on back to Adam, from Abraham to David, the genealogy is the same. When you get to David you find the split in the genealogies between Matthew and Luke, as Luke traces back through Nathan, the son of David; and Matthew traces through Solomon, the son of David.

This is significant because as we get into this genealogy of Joseph and we read in verse 16, *And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary,*

Notice it doesn’t say the father of Jesus,

of whom was born, [not of Joseph but of Mary] Jesus, who is called the Messiah (1:16).

As we look at this genealogy that comes from David, we find in verse 12,

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconias begat Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel (1:12).

Jeconias was a wicked king, so wicked that God placed a curse upon him in Jeremiah 22; and this curse that was placed upon Jeconiah in the last verse of chapter 22 verse 30, “Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man Coniah [who was Jeconiah], write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling anymore in Judah.” The curse was that none of his children would sit on the throne. So if Christ were the son of Joseph, he could not be a rightful heir to the throne of David because of Jeconias and the curse that was upon him by the Lord--none

of his seed shall prosper sitting on the throne of David. That's why Luke gave to us the genealogy of Mary and coming through Nathan we skipped this fellow Jeconias. And we come down to Joseph who was the son-in-law of Eli, or Eli was Mary's father. So they both of them were from the tribe of Judah, they both of them were of the seed of David.

Another interesting thing to note in these genealogical records is that we have the names of four women which is very unusual for genealogy. There's a general rule in the lifting of the genealogies: women weren't mentioned, just the men, the father. But there are four women that are mentioned in the genealogy here in Matthew's gospel. But it's even more remarkable when you look at these women in the record of the Old Testament.

The first woman mentioned is Tamar. Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, his one son married Tamar and he died before they had any children. According to the rules, and it became incorporated in the law later on, when a man took a wife and died before any children was born, it was the obligation of his brother to take that woman as his wife and the first child would be named after the dead brother in order that that brother's name would not be lost in Israel. So when this son of Judah died without any children, he gave to Tamar the brother, the next brother in line, as Tamar's husband. He also died not having any children. At this point, Judah had another son but he was a little reluctant to give his third son to Tamar. So he made up this story; he's too young, as soon as he gets old enough he can marry you. But when he was old enough, Judah wasn't doing anything about it and Tamar realized that she was getting the royal runaround from Judah. And so he was keeping his flocks and was heading out to where his flocks were and she put on the attire of a prostitute and she sat beside the road. Judah came along and propositioned her and so she said, "What will you give me?" He said, "I'll give you a little goat." And so she said, "Well, you don't have it with you." He said, "I'll send it back to you." She says, "How do I know you'll send it back?" He said, "I'll give you this ring as a pledge that I will indeed send the goat back." And so they had their little affair and he left.

Interestingly enough, that's where the custom of giving a ring comes from in marriage, the pledge that you're going to keep the promise. That's what it was, it was a pledge that he was going to keep the promise to send back the goat and that's where the whole custom started of giving the ring when you get married. It's a pledge, I'm going to keep the vow that I made to you. And he made the vow so here's the pledge, you have this ring, this is the pledge I give and then I'm going to keep this vow.

So he got to his herds and he said to one of his servants, "Take this goat back to the prostitute that's back at work in that corner." And when the fellow came back there was nobody there and he asked the people around, "Where's the prostitute that works this corner?" And they said, "No prostitute works this corner." So the servant went back and said, "Nobody knows about her, no one's there, no one seems to know about her." Judah says, "Oh well, alright."

Well then he received word that Tamar was pregnant. Now they were very strict about illegitimate pregnancy then so he said, then she's to be stoned. So he came to her and now she was without her veil and she said, "The man who owns this ring is the man who made me pregnant." And Judah said, "Oops." The son's name was Perez but the interesting thing is that he comes into the lineage of Jesus. Interesting! You see, Jesus came to save sinners. And here in the line of Joseph we find Tamar.

The second woman listed is Rahab and we remember the story of the taking of Jericho. How Joshua sent some spies into the city and the king heard that spies had come in from Israel and so Rahab who was a prostitute took the spies and hid them on her roof under some flanks so that they came looking for the spies and she said, "They already left and they went that way." So they sent out men to find them and she let them down from the wall. Her house was on the wall and they escaped, but they promised, when we take the city leave a scarlet thread hanging out the window and when we destroy this city, get all of your family in the house because we'll spare your family when we see the scarlet thread. She is in the lineage, actually, her son was named Boaz, who begat Obed of Ruth and Obed begat Jesse, the father of King David.

And Ruth, of course, is the next one in line. Ruth was the Moabitess who was under a curse in the law and yet she comes here in the lineage.

And finally, 'though she is not named but identified, as Solomon was born from the wife of Uriah or

Bathsheba, and we're all familiar with that story.

So not the most colorful, or maybe is very colorful kind of a history, but not the most proper as far as the history is concerned.

And so the genealogy of Jacob and those are sort of the highlights out of the genealogy. Just reading names can be laborious and so we will not just read the names but just point out the highlights and coming now to verse 18, or verse 17, we should at least look at that, or back to 16,

And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who was called the Messiah. So all of the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen, from David to the carrying away unto Babylon are fourteen, and from the carrying away unto Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations (1:16, 17).

There are some omissions in these generations so that there were actually more than fourteen generations from David to the carrying away of Babylon. There are three prominent omissions and they are the seed or the descendants of Athaliah. Athaliah was the daughter of King Ahab. King Ahab's wife was Jezebel, their daughter Athaliah married the king of Judah. Jezebel and Ahab were as wicked as anybody can be. Their daughter, Athaliah, was a horribly wicked person and she sought to wipe out all of the descendants of David to ensure her family's position on the throne in Israel.

And so the three who are the descendants of Athaliah are omitted from the fourteen generations. There are other omissions, it is obvious that Matthew was just seeking to set them up in fourteen, fourteen and fourteen. There were actually from Abraham to David fourteen generations literally over a period of one thousand years. The next 400 years from David to the carrying away of Babylon the fourteen generations, and then from Babylon unto Joseph, the fourteen generations—that was a period of 600 years--so a total of 2,000 years and the total generations would be the three times fourteen, or fifty-two generations from Abraham to Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit (1:18).

In those days the girls usually got married by the time they were fifteen or sixteen years old. But they were often engaged when they were two or three years old because marriage was by arrangement. There would be families that would be friends, did a lot of budding around together and they'd have children around the same time and they'd say, when your little boy grows up why don't we make arrangements and he can marry our little girl. So because the parents had set them aside and marriage was by arrangement, a child could be engaged when they were in kindergarten. I'm engaged to her, you know. A year before they were actually married, they got serious and they entered into a second stage that was known as the espousal. There was actually a ceremony for this and it was a year of waiting and courting and keeping themselves for each other. This espousal period was sacred, it was to be kept pure, you had to get a divorce from being espoused, it was a time of full commitment unto each other; but the marriage was not consummated until after the marriage ceremony. And it was after the ceremony and you would go into the tent and the marriage was consummated and then you were fully married. But this espousal was more than an engagement, it was a complete commitment to each other, legally bound to each other but yet the marriage was not consummated until the actual ceremony. So that during this time that they were espoused, Mary showed up pregnant. "She was found with child by the Holy Spirit" (1:18b).

In Luke's gospel, Luke gives us a little more detail of this. He tells us that, "In the sixth month of the pregnancy of Elizabeth, the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin who was espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, who was of the house of David (Luke 1:26, 27)." We've discovered that because Matthew took us back to the house of David.

"And the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her and said, Hail, thou art highly favored, the Lord is with you. Blessed are thou among women. And when she saw him, [that is, the angel] she was troubled at his saying and cast in her mind, what kind of a greeting is this? And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God and behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth the son and shall call his name Jesus, [Joshua, Yehoshua]. He shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David (Luke 1:27-32)."

And so the promise of the throne of his father David. "He shall be great and shall be called the son of the

highest and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:32, 33)."

The prophecy of Isaiah, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, the government will be upon his shoulder, his name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David to order it and establish it in judgment and in justice from henceforth even forever, for the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this (Isaiah 9:6, 7)."

This is the fulfillment of the promise of Isaiah 9:6. Child is to be born, will be great, he will reign, he'll sit upon the throne of his father David, reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be seeing I know not a man? [That is, I have not had any kind of intimate physical relationship with a man]. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:34, 35)."

And so here in Matthew's gospel again,

The birth of Jesus Christ was like this: When His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband being a just man... (1:18, 19).

It's interesting that Joseph does fade from the picture very early. We know that Joseph was a man of God. The Lord spoke to Joseph in dreams. Here we find the Lord speaking to Joseph and as he is in this troubled state of mind--this gal that I'm espoused to is pregnant, she's trying to tell me that it's somehow involved with the Holy Spirit, that she's still a virgin—and he's troubled. We know that the Lord spoke to Joseph and warned him to flee with the child and his mother to Egypt. We know that the Lord then spoke to him and told him that he could come back at the death of Herod. And we know that they moved to the region of the Galilee and they lived in Nazareth so that Jesus grew up in the little village of Nazareth in the Galilee region. And we know that Joseph was a carpenter. And thus we assume that Jesus learned the carpenter's trade there in Nazareth under Joseph. But beyond that, in the ministry of Christ, there is no mention of Joseph at all. It is assumed that he probably died early, died young because he drops quickly out of the picture.

Mary is found in the gospels and she appears at different times throughout the gospels. She is standing there at the cross when Jesus is crucified. She is there when He rises from the dead and she is with the company of disciples who are waiting upon the Holy Spirit there in the book of Acts chapter one. But after that, Mary drops out of the record and we know nothing more about her.

So Joseph her husband [Here he is called a just man, he was a good man] and he was not willing to make her a public example by publicly exposing her (1:19)

Declaring that he wasn't responsible for her pregnancy would subject Mary under the law to being stoned to death. That was the public example that you girls aren't to mess around, you're not to get pregnant and so they would take them out publicly and stone them to death. He wasn't willing to do that, to make her a public example.

...and was deciding just to put her away privately (1:19).

His ego was such that he couldn't really take her as his wife now but he would just divorce her and put her away privately. As I mentioned, you had to get a divorce from an espousal.

But while he was thinking about these things [mulling these things over], behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit (1:20).

The angel confirmed to Joseph the story that Mary had given to him.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus (1:21),

That's what the angel had told Mary earlier, that she was to call his name Jesus. The angel here tells Joseph the reason why they are to call his name Jesus.

for he shall save his people from their sins (1:21).

Jesus is a Greek name. It is thought that the gospel of Matthew was first written in Aramaic and then translated into Greek, but the Greek name Jesus is the Hebrew name Joshua. And the Hebrew name Joshua is a contraction of Jehoshua. The servant of Moses, he was first called Jehoshua but as names so often, you have a real long name and they no longer call you by that name but they shorten the thing down, try and make it a one-syllable as possible because it's just easier to say Brad than Bradley. My grandmother's name was Annabella Clarabella Arabella Smith, so they just called her Belle. So the name Jehoshua became shortened to Joshua.

The actual name would have been Jehovah Shewa or Yahweh Shewa which means the Name of God, the 'I Am', the Yahweh, combined with the Hebrew word 'Shewa' which is salvation, is Jehovah, is our salvation, or has become our salvation. And through Jesus Christ we have salvation. As Peter said, "There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved. Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12). Jehoshua: "Thou shall call His Name Jehoshua for He shall save His people from their sins (1:21)."

That's His mission, that was His purpose in coming. He said, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost." So His very mission is implied in His name: Jehoshua, Jesus.

All of this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying: Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel which being interpreted is God with us (1:22).

"In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God and all things were made by Him; without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life and that life was the light of men. That is the true light that shineth to every man who cometh into the world. Now there was a man sent from God whose name was John. He was not the true light but came to bring witness of that light (John 1:1-6, 8)."

And then we read that, "The Word became flesh and He dwelt among us (John 1:14). In the beginning was the Word, the Word was God (John 1:1)." Immanuel, God with us. And the prophecy was, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, call his name Immanuel which means God with us (Isaiah 7:14)."

And so the prophecies and now the beginning of the prophecies and it is important to note that Jesus in His coming, in His birth, in His life, in His death, in His resurrection, fulfilled over 300 prophecies and Matthew points out more than the other gospels the various aspects of the life of Jesus which were the fulfillment of prophecies from the Old Testament. And thus, Matthew will give to us many places where this was done in order that the prophecy might be fulfilled which said, and he'll give us many of the prophecies that were fulfilled through the birth and life of Jesus.

But important to note that there were over 300 predictions that were fulfilled by Jesus. Now if you would try to figure out the chance factors of one man fulfilling all 300 of the prophecies, you find that you get a factor that is so humongous that it is impossible to believe that He could have done this by accident. A science class at Pasadena College several years ago took upon themselves in a semester's project to seek to ascertain the probabilities of one man fulfilling and they took eight of the predictions concerning Jesus.

Born in Bethlehem, betrayed by a friend for thirty pieces of silver, the silver used to buy a Potter's field, making His triumphant entry on a donkey--and they took eight of the predictions and they concluded that conservatively, to find one man who could fulfill the eight predictions... for instance, they took the average population of Bethlehem and compared it with the average population of the world. Because you're going to be born, you can be born anywhere. And so the average population of Bethlehem compared with the average population of the world, they discovered that only one in 280,000 persons were born in Bethlehem. So you see, the fact that Bethlehem was to be his birthplace (we'll get that in chapter two) immediately eliminates most people. There's only one chance in 280,000 you could be born in Bethlehem.

Now it's even more than that. At the present time, the chance of a person being born in Bethlehem today is one in 2.5 million. So you've immediately eliminated most people. You come up to me with a story, I'd look after services, and say, "Chuck, I wanna tell you something. I'm the Messiah." Now where were you born? Huntington Beach. Get lost! You have to be born in Bethlehem!

And so they took the chance factors of these predictions and they came out to only one in 2.8 times 10 to the 28th power (or 10 with 28 zeroes behind it) which is, they figured that that's about how many grains of

sand are in the earth, or about how many stars there are [may be] in the universe.

They subtracted the 11 billion people who have lived upon the earth from the times of the predictions and brought it down to one in 10 to the 17th power which if you had this many silver dollars you could cover the entire state of Texas two feet deep; and then if you mark one of those silver dollars and blindfold your friend and let him roam over the state of Texas as many days as he wanted and finally reached down in the two feet piles of silver dollars, he's walking over and pulls out one, the chance that he'd pull out the silver dollar you had marked would be the chance that Jesus could have fulfilled the eight predictions.

So they took sixteen [predictions] and having subtracted the population factor they now have one in 10 to the 45th power. If you had these many silver dollars you could make a silver ball. If the center of it was here in the earth, the outside edge of it would be thirty times farther out than the sun, or would be out around the planet Neptune, about 2 billion 750 million miles out there. Now give your friend scuba gear and blindfold him. Let him just dive into this pile of silver dollars, grab one in his fist, surface, hold it up, the chance that he had grabbed the one that you marked would be the same chance that Jesus could have fulfilled sixteen of the predictions.

Then they took forty-eight [predictions]. One chance in 10 to the 157th power. A number that is so vast you could not make a ball out of silver dollars. You'd need something smaller. The universe isn't big enough to make a ball of silver dollars. You need something smaller. And about the smallest thing we know is an electron. Two-and-a half quintillionth of an inch. That is, if you had two-and-a half quintillion electrons and you laid them side by side, they would be one inch long. If you wanted to count them and you could count at a rate of 250 a minute, it would take you 19 million years counting day and night to count the electrons one inch long in a single file.

Can you imagine how many electrons you'd have in a one-inch cube of electrons? Take 19 million years times 19 million years times 19 million years to count them at 250 a minute. If you had, not 2.8 times 10 to the 157th power, but you just had 10 to the 157th power electrons, and you decided to make a ball out of electrons. It is estimated that the radius of the universe is probably 12 billion light-years. A light-year is the distance that light travels at 186,000 miles a second. If you could jump on a ray of light you could travel around the earth six-and-a half times in one second. You'd have to really time jumping off or you wouldn't be here, you'd land in China someplace perhaps. Quick, jump! Six-and-a half times in one second. Seven-and-a half minutes you could pass the sun. In seven hours you could be out at the planet Neptune. Two billion 750 million miles up. You'd really travel. But stay on that ray of light for 100,000 years and you get to the edge of the Milky Way galaxy. Then you leave and you get into a vast blank of space until you come to the closest star outside of our Milky Way galaxy Alpha Parqma, but that will take you some 1,500,000 years on this ray of light. But continue on it for 12 billion years and you'll get out to the edge of space, as far as we can see and know at the present time.

Now if you had 10 to the 157th power electrons you could make a ball as big as the entire universe out of electrons. And if you could set up mass production and start making these balls at the rate of 500 a minute, you could go on making them for the next 3 million years and still have 10 to the 25th power electrons over. Now mark one of the electrons in one of the balls. And let your friend guess which ball to dive into.

That's why Peter said, "I was an eyewitness of His suffering and of His glory (Peter 5:1)." "But we have a more sure word of prophecy [300 predictions] (2 Peter 1:19a)." And Matthew will be careful as we go through to point out how that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament, as he does here:

All of this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, shall bring forth a son, shall call his name Immanuel," which being interpreted is "God with us." So Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him and he took unto him his wife, and he knew her not until she have brought forth her firstborn son and called his name Jesus (1:22-24).

They did not consummate the marriage with physical intercourse until after the birth of Jesus. Now the idea of the perpetual virginity of Mary is an invention without Biblical basis. For in Mark's gospel chapter 6,

we read there in verse 3, “As Jesus had come to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and many of the people listening to Him were astonished and they said, Where did this fellow learn all these things, tremendous wisdom and all of these marvelous works? And they said, Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Judah and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us? And they were stumbled by it. They said, we know this fellow, he’s a carpenter. His brothers and sisters are out here. How did he get all this, how does he do these marvelous works?” And so the scriptures definitely shows that Mary had other children by Joseph, no doubt a rather normal family life.

We don’t have much more except we’ll get next week the flight to Egypt and moving back to Nazareth, and only when he was 12 years old, when he was taken to the temple for the feast, that again we have a record of Jesus. But then not until He begins His public ministry with John the Baptist.

So they called His name Jehoshua in obedience because He is the Savior of man from his sin.

Father, we thank You for Your word and how we thank You for sending Your Son Jesus Christ. And Lord as we begin the study of the life of Christ, we pray Lord that You will help us to actually, personally experience the life of Christ in us. And may it not just be a study of history and a purely academic exercise, but Father let us enter into the spirit, to the life of Jesus our Lord. And may His spirit come and indwell us, and may we know the transforming power of the Spirit of God and the salvation that has been offered to us through Him. In Jesus’ Name we pray, Amen.