

# Dartmouth Bible Notes



Notes from the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church  
Series: Who is God/Who God Is Lesson 13 (Advent Attribute #1)  
Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17  
Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M., D.Min.  
Date: December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

## *An Eternal God*

### **Matthew 1:1-17 (ESV)**

Marker #1

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. Marker #4                      Marker #3

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. Marker #6

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Marker #9

Marker #8

**Introduction** This week someone said to me, about my belief about God, “Well that’s just an evangelical Christian perspective.” This annoyed me. The idea *whispered* to me, “all propositions of truth are just reflective of that person’s perspective who proposes it.” The implication is that there is no, final, unrelative proposition of truth. In other words, we are ever doomed to be revising our outlook, always ready to upgrade revise our outlook to 2.0 or 8.0 or 10.0 version d, like so much software. The deeper implication is that we Christians should wait to hear what Gandhi said about that, or what Confucius might have uttered about that, or how some contemporary beat-poet in Greenwich Village or some other heavy-head at Harvard thinks about that, and well, why we’re at it maybe there’s some smart people in Bolivia or in Paris or in Tehran who *haven’t even been born yet* that we should wait for *them* to come, grow up, write books before we make any decisions about anything. I’m annoyed, because despite the suggestion to me that I *just have* an evangelical perspective, the core of classic Christian theology is WHAT I BELIEVE. I believe that THE God, who spoke, and sovereignly self-

revealed Who He is, at distinct times on earth’s “time line”, to chosen people, and being all omniscient and omnipresent and stuff, He has not changed! So if Gandhi and Harvard Divinity School and Karl Marx don’t dig it so be it. Tough tahootis. Who is God? He is the God Who is.

As we come to the beginning of the season of Advent, I have chosen the attribute of God of BEING ETERNAL to look at today (which I am calling *Advent Attribute #1*). Our God is eternal. Tim Challies<sup>1</sup> defines this as **“God has always existed, having no beginning and not end and having no succession of moments.”**

“Advent” probably was known by Christians as a celebration or at least recognition **by the fifth century** which makes it pretty old—predating even what we would call the “Catholic church.” I spent years and years ignoring it. Now I look forward to it.

We begin today with a reading from Matthew, and although it includes lots of names you can see they were important to Matthew who begins his writing calling it ***the book of genealogy of Jesus Christ***. (Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) The 45 names may be an annoyance to us but they were important to Matthew, Jesus’ disciple, to lay them out and make sure people who read his writing knew that Jesus descended from Abraham and through David. You and I take this for granted but in Matthew’s day, as he was writing to Jews mainly, he saw that it was important to validate who Messiah’s résumé. I find it interesting to notice several (what I am calling *markers*), nine actually, which Matthew embeds in his tale.

Matthew 1:1	marker #1		son of David
Matthew 1:5	marker #2	wife 1	Rahab
Matthew 1:5	marker #3	wife 2	Ruth
Matthew 1:6	marker #4		"the King"
Matthew 1:6	marker #5	wife 3	by Uriah's wife
Matthew 1:11	marker #6		Nebuchadnezzar
Matthew 1:16	marker #7	wife 4	Mary
Matthew 1:16	marker #8		of whom Jesus was born who is called Christ
Matthew 1:17	marker #9		three 14 generation groups

Matthew’s story of Jesus Christ begins with a transcending of TIME and He does so because God, of which Jesus is the second Person, transcends time. One thing I always sort of liked about the Christmas story, *even when I was little*, was

---

<sup>1</sup> Tim Challies, chart on the Attributes of God, *Visual Theology*, 2017.

the way the story seems to be ABOVE time and yet it brings time together. Although my parents were not especially religious, they let me hear the Christmas story and to my earliest memories they brought or allowed the time-transcending feeling of Christmas to permeate our home especially on Christmas Eve.

1. You get the angels, out of time, appearing and blowing away the shepherds who are completely time-bound creatures.
2. You have a beautifully *young* Mary, and you have crusty old Zechariah and Elizabeth and soon ALSO CRUSTY OLD Simeon and Anna.
3. You get the *magi* from the east, who seem unbothered by long-distance travel and who are intrigued to look into the *long legends* of Israel's Messiah-King, and the star (a visually out-of-time thing), "GPSs" them to Him.
4. You have a distinct place—Bethlehem—and time—about 4 BC—and yet a relevance is born which spreads to the whole world quickly.

The whole Christmas story is one of expectation and waiting.

"Something's coming... Something's going to happen. It's coming in OUR time, but it existed before our time and its impact will prevail and last *long* past our time." People wonder at how this thing came to HAPPEN in *their* time? And I am telling you that this feeling of *outside-of-time* is why **I** have come to love ADVENT!

His presence was before Bethlehem. He was always the Son of God. He even shows up occasionally in events of the Old Testament. This suggests that Jesus existed before He came to earth and if the Bible is to be believed, even before the earth itself was created.

You have to love the first two verses of the Letter to the Hebrews, late in the New Testament: ***Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*** (Hebrews 1:1,2) That writer has a sense of a sovereign and eternal God.

Moses said ***Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*** (Psalm 90:2).

Solomon intuitively saw that God ***has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.*** (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

John quotes Jesus saying ***Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.*** (John 8:58).

John quotes Jesus again proclaiming ***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*** (Revelation 22:13).

There is no reference in the Bible to the day Jesus came into existence—just the day He came to earth as a human being—when He came from out-of-time INTO time. Now, many intelligent and reasonable people in our world do not believe this. They may not even care whether it is true. But that is nothing new, and we proclaim His reality and His eternal nature.

Our God who is the only God always has been, and always will be. Who knows what changes will come to the universe? He will be there to superintend them, to govern and order them for His own glory. He *was* before time began. He is not enslaved to time though we are and can hardly imagine an existence that is not marked by “the succession of moments”.<sup>2</sup>

God’s eternality is one of the reasons we call Him “awesome.” It is why we feel a kinship and a brotherhood with the ancients who way back then were mesmerized by the awesomeness of God. If Jesus does not return for a thousand or five thousand years, God will not be older. He will be as He has always been.

And we hold tightly to the conviction and the belief that this timeless, eternal, forever “young” God loves us. He loves us deeply. He loves us with a holy and jealous love which will never stop being love. This is the God we serve and seek. Do you feel His wonder?

He sent His Son at the right time, within time, to be born of an obscure young woman in an even more obscure place: Bethlehem. Let’s sing again those words we already sang once:

For lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
shall come the time foretold  
when the New Heaven and Earth shall own  
the Prince of Peace, their King  
and the whole world send back the song  
which now the angels sing.

---

<sup>2</sup> Challies, quoting Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (1994)

# THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

COMMUNICABLE

- BEING
- PURPOSE
- MENTAL
- MORAL
- SUMMARY

INCOMMUNICABLE

To study God's attributes is to study his character, to answer questions like, Who is God? and What is God like? A typical classification of God's attributes divides them into those that are incommunicable (those that he does not share or "communicate" to anyone or anything else) and communicable (those that he shares with other beings). Like most theological classifications, this one is imperfect but still helpful as we seek to understand what is so far beyond ourselves.

God's communicable attributes can be further categorized into: attributes of God's being, mental attributes, moral attributes, attributes of purpose and "summary" attributes (attributes that, in a more particular way, modify each of the others).

It is important to consider that God is not simply the sum of his attributes. His attributes are not separate from one another, but each one modifies or qualifies each of the others.

**SUGGESTED RESOURCES:**  
*Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem  
*The Attributes of God* by A.W. Pink

- TRANSCENDENCE** — GOD TRANSCENDS ALL CREATION AND IS UNKNOWABLE APART FROM HIS SELF-INITIATED REVELATION.
- IMMANENCE** — GOD IS ACTIVE IN THIS WORLD AND IN OUR DAILY LIVES. GOD CARES ABOUT EVERY ASPECT OF OUR EXISTENCE AND INVITES US TO WELCOME HIS GUIDANCE, GRACE, AND LOVE.
- ASEITY** — GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT AND SELF-SUFFICIENT AND HAS NO NEED OF HUMAN BEINGS OR THE REST OF CREATION.
- OMNIPRESENCE** — GOD HAS NO SIZE OR SHAPE AND IS PRESENT IN ALL PLACES WITH HIS ENTIRE BEING.
- UNITY** — GOD'S WHOLE BEING INCLUDES ALL OF HIS ATTRIBUTES AT ALL TIMES. THESE ATTRIBUTES ARE NEVER IN OPPOSITION.
- ETERNALITY** — GOD HAS ALWAYS EXISTED, HAVING NO BEGINNING AND NO END, AND EXPERIENCING NO SUCCESSION OF MOMENTS.
- IMMUTABILITY** — GOD CANNOT CHANGE IN HIS BEING, PERFECTIONS, PURPOSES, AND PROMISES.
- GLORY** — THE CREATED BRIGHTNESS THAT SURROUNDS GOD'S REVELATION OF HIMSELF.
- BEAUTY** — GOD IS THE POSSESSOR AND THE SUM OF ALL DESIRABLE QUALITIES.
- BLESSEDNESS** — GOD DELIGHTS FULLY IN HIMSELF AND IN ALL THAT REFLECTS HIS CHARACTER.
- PERFECTION** — GOD FULLY POSSESSES ALL EXCELLENT QUALITIES AND LACKS NO QUALITIES THAT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR HIM.
- JEALOUSY** — GOD ALWAYS SEEKS TO PROTECT HIS OWN HONOR.
- GOODNESS** — GOD IS THE FINAL STANDARD OF ALL GOOD, AND ALL HE IS AND DOES IS WORTHY OF APPROVAL.
- PEACE** — GOD, IN HIS BEING AND ACTIONS, IS SEPARATE FROM ALL CONFUSION AND DISORDER.
- HOLINESS** — GOD IS SEPARATED FROM SIN AND HE IS COMMITTED TO SEEKING HIS OWN HONOR.
- LOVE** — GOD ETERNALLY GIVES OF HIMSELF TO OTHERS.
- MERCY** — GOD IS GOOD TO THOSE IN MISERY AND DISTRESS AND HE IS GOOD TO THOSE WHO DESERVE PUNISHMENT.
- RIGHTEOUSNESS** — GOD IS THE FINAL STANDARD OF WHAT IS RIGHT AND HE ALWAYS ACTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT IS RIGHT. (THIS IS ALSO KNOWN AS GOD'S JUSTICE)
- WRATH** — GOD INTENSELY HATES ALL SIN.
- TRUTHFULNESS** — GOD IS THE TRUE GOD WHOSE KNOWLEDGE AND WORDS ARE BOTH TRUE AND THE FINAL STANDARD OF TRUTH.
- KNOWLEDGE** — GOD FULLY KNOWS HIMSELF AND ALL ACTUAL AND POSSIBLE THINGS. (THIS IS ALSO KNOWN AS GOD'S OMNISCIENCE)
- WISDOM** — GOD ALWAYS CHOOSES THE BEST GOALS AND THE BEST MEANS TO THOSE GOALS.
- WILL** — GOD APPROVES AND DETERMINES TO BRING ABOUT EVERY ACTION NECESSARY FOR THE EXISTENCE AND ACTIVITY OF ALL THAT EXISTS.
- FREEDOM** — GOD DOES WHATEVER HE PLEASES.
- OMNIPOTENCE** — GOD IS ABLE TO DO ALL HIS HOLY WILL. GOD EXERCISES COMPLETE POWER OVER HIS CREATION AND RULES AS SOVEREIGN.
- INVISIBILITY** — GOD'S TOTAL ESSENCE, ALL OF HIS BEING, WILL NEVER BE VISIBLE TO US.
- SPIRITUALITY** — GOD IS A BEING WHO IS NOT MADE UP OF MATTER AND WHO CANNOT BE PERCEIVED BY OUR BODILY SENSES.

How  
 Matthew  
 Saw it

Abraham  
 Isaac  
 Jacob  
 Judah  
 Perez  
 Hezron  
 Ram

Amminadab  
 Nahshon  
 Salmon - Rahab  
 Boaz - Ruth  
 Obed

Joseph - Mary  
 of whom Jesus was born  
 Who is called CHRIST

Jesse  
**DAVID**  
 The King

Achim  
 Eleazar  
 Matthan  
 Jacob  
 Joseph - Mary  
 Rehoboam  
 Solomon - by Uriah's wife

Zadok  
 Azor  
 Eliakim  
 Abiud  
 Zerubbabel  
 Shealtiel  
 Jechoniah  
 Nebuchadnezzar  
 Josiah  
 Amos  
 Manasseh  
 Hezekiah  
 Ahaz  
 Jotham  
 Uzziah  
 Joram  
 Jehoshaphat  
 Asaph  
 Abijah

