

series: **The Baby is Proof...wk 1 *God is Big, but not Too Big***

<http://OakbrookChurch.com> 11.27.11 Morgan Young

This series is called "The Baby is Proof." And we're going to look at four things that the Christ Child proves that are unique to Christianity. Today we're talking about how God is big, but not too big.

And I want to start today with the Matthew 1:1. (get Bibles & SmartPhones).
I want to start this series with this simple truth: that there is proof for this Baby!

To help us understand historically what we're going to read here...the first name we'll read is Abraham. He lived approx. 2166 BC.-- 4,177 years ago.

That was 1,000 years before the city of Peking was built.
And that was about 1,000 years before Mythology was fully developed...

So I want us to understand that the FIRST person listed in this genealogy wasn't MADE UP. There is validity and proof of Abraham.

In a world where people can't agree on anything, THREE world religions accept that he existed and that God revealed Himself through Abraham.

Jews, Christians and Muslims claim Abraham as critical to their faith and ancient writings.

Matthew 1:1-16 NLT (those expecting: get some ideas here! ;-)

¹ This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham:

² Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar).

Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Ram.^[b]

⁴ Ram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).

Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).

Obed was the father of Jesse.

⁶ Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon

(whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).

⁷ Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.

Rehoboam was the father of Abijah. <a-BY-jah>

Abijah was the father of Asa.^[c]
8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.^[d]
Jehoram was the father^[e] of Uzziah. <uh-ZY-uh>
9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham.
Jotham was the father of Ahaz. <EH-hoz>
Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.
10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.
Manasseh was the father of Amon.^[f]
Amon was the father of Josiah.
11 Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin^[g] <Je- HOY-ocken> and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).
12 After the Babylonian exile:
Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel. <she-ALL-tee-el>
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.
13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud. <ab-EYE-ud>
Abiud was the father of Eliakim. <el-yaw-KEEM>
Eliakim was the father of Azor.
14 Azor was the father of Zadok.
Zadok was the father of Akim.
Akim was the father of Eliud.<a-LIE-ud>
15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar.
Eleazar was the father of Matthan.
Matthan was the father of Jacob. *(and other names I can pronounce ;-)*
16 Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah. //

Ok. So the incredible proof for the Baby is a genealogy that's been recorded and preserved since the beginning of record keeping.

And just in case we don't think that's a big deal—how many Americans are on ancestry.com because most of us know little to NOTHING beyond the 4-6 generations prior to us?!
But just like THAT, we ran through over 2,100 years of recorded ancestry!

(Just for fun, you can track Jesus back to Noah by checking out Luke ch 3:23—Luke KILLED the details!)

And let's pick up the story in verse **Matthew 1:18-2:6**.

¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

²³ "Look! The virgin will conceive a child!

She will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel,
which means 'God is with us.'"

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ² "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him."

³ King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. ⁴ He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,
for a ruler will come from you
who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'"

Matthew 1:18-2:6 NLT

And so this passage we just read ushers in the baby Jesus that we can all relate with. Even though there is this herculean claim that a virgin has given birth, the Christ child is not too big for us to grasp.

In fact these next 4 weeks are a whirlwind based on the reality of Him. We'll get cards with His infant likeness on them. We can relate with baby Jesus. (Ricky Bobby in fact prefers to pray to "tiny baby Jesus.")

God coming to earth, in the flesh, as an infant who grew into a man is not too big for us.

It is this earthly manifestation of God that we can identify with and relate with.

This is called the INCARNATION; God taking on flesh.

And for anyone who says "all religions are the same"—this incarnation exists in NO OTHER RELIGION.

Listen to me: In no other religion does god put himself on the same playing field as man. But as we read in Matthew chapter 1, Jesus Christ, descendant of Abraham AND Son of God, takes on flesh—the incarnation.

He makes Himself "not too big" because this God chooses to be relational with us!

This Christ Child will do away with the need for priests to be the go-betweens between us and God.

This Christ Child, the incarnation, will usher in the priesthood of all believers—where everyone who comes to Christ has direct relational access to God.

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9 nlt

This BIG GOD chose to “shrink Himself” (so to speak)---put Himself in human form, so that we could relate with Him.

God is big, but not too big.

SELAH

And at the same time that we can relate with the incarnation—Jesus in the flesh...Let's look at a passage about Christ that we CANT relate with. It's so UNFATHOMABLE, it will make our heads explode ;-)

(SmartPhones & Bibles) **Colossians 1:15-20 nlt**

¹⁵ *Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.*

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,

¹⁶ *for through him God created everything
in the heavenly realms and on earth.*

Pause: Jesus is not just equal to God, but He IS God—“the visible image of the invisible God.”

He didn't come into existence when Mary gave birth to Him—that was the incarnation. Christ existed before EVERYTHING!

Everything we see and things we CAN'T see, were created thru Christ.

*He made the things we can see
and the things we can't see—*

*such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.
Everything was created through him and for him.*

¹⁷ *He existed before anything else,
and he holds all creation together.*

Pause: “He holds all creation together” means that everything is held together, protected and prevented from disintegrating into chaos, because Christ is holding the physical and spiritual world all together!!

Who's head just exploded trying to fathom that?!

*¹⁸ Christ is also the head of the church,
which is his body.*

Pause: This means Christ is the sovereign ruler over all the redeemed people of God, everywhere.

"Body" means 3 things:

- 1) the church is a living organism
- 2) the church is the means by which Christ carries out His purposes & performs His work
- 3) the connection between Christ and His people is intimate (relational) and real.

*He is the beginning,
supreme over all who rise from the dead.
So he is first in everything.*

Pause: "He is the beginning" means Christ is the origin and source of the life of the church—the church flows out of Him.

"Supreme over all who rise from the dead, so he is first in everything" means He was the first to rise from the dead—to live eternally.

And because He was first to be born from the dead, He possesses IN HIMSELF the way for His people to share eternal life.

*¹⁹ For God in all his fullness
was pleased to live in Christ,*

Pause: Again—Christ is fully God.

*²⁰ and through him God reconciled
everything to himself.
He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth
by means of Christ's blood on the cross.*

Colossians 1:15-20 nlt

This is a HUGE statement! Through Christ's blood on the cross, God reconciled the UNIVERSE to Himself! Can any of us begin to understand that statement?!

What does it look like for everything in heaven and on earth to be made right with God?!

(And...cue my head exploding!)

So Colossians 1:15-20 shows us that

CHRIST IS BIG!

Christ is unfathomable

Christ is BEFORE everything, THROUGH everything and holding ALL THINGS TOGETHER!

Christ is beyond our comprehension.

SELAH

Why is God beyond our comprehension? And is that a *good thing*? Does it serve a purpose or should we just focus on Jesus whom we can relate with?

In this room, everyone who was in a certain age range in the early 1980s can tell you all about Rubik's Cube.

When I was a freshman at Kokomo High School this little puzzle was all the rage. It kept everyone's attention. Everyone had one. There were little Rubik's Cubes on key chains.

By 1982, 100 million had been sold!

It's still a popular puzzle, but sales trailed off fast by the mid '80s. Why?

Because it became widely known how to SOLVE it.

This puzzle that was unsolvable was now being solved in a few minutes.

So I say this next statement, not biblically, but philosophically:

If God wasn't too big for us...He'd be like the Rubik's Cube--He wouldn't hold our attention.

If we could really get our arms around every part of God here on earth...how long before we'd lose interest?

Ok let's have a biblical answer to the question: *Why* is God beyond our comprehension? And is that a *good thing*?

God is big and beyond our comprehension because He's more than just Lord of *this* world we live in.

We keep thinking that this life is a LONG time. It is NOT.

James 4:14 says that (our) "life is like the morning fog— (we're) here a little while, then (we're) gone."

So God is our Lord now AND in our life YET TO COME.

The biggest part of our life happens AFTER we pass away—eternity.

I can't fathom eternity...

YOU can't fathom eternity...

We think 90 years is a LONG time. In the scope of eternity, 90 years is a BLIP!

God is an eternal God who reigns in a dimension we can't comprehend on this side of heaven!

As much as we draw close to Him in this life and live in His Word, there will always be more of God to know and learn about.
We will never "solve the puzzle."

God is big and can't be solved and that reminds us that we are SMALL and our knowledge is TINY. That puts us in our proper perspective: BIG God, LITTLE me.

And when life crashes in on us--- it is GOOD to know there is a HUGE loving God that we can't full understand ON OUR SIDE...

When you're in Haiti with knives at a gun fight—it's a phenomenal truth that there is a HUGE UNFATHOMABLE God being your shield, your salvation, your rescue!...

When we are under siege by the challenges and pains that life throws at us—it is GOOD and COMFORTING to know that there is a BIG GOD working on our behalf and loving us!...

SELAH

So. Here we are again.

We survived Black Friday...and Haitian gunmen... and we're a month away from the biggest Christian holiday and the biggest consumer holiday.

My question for us is:

***Will our focus be a 4 week shopping trip,
or
an intimate relationship?***

Don't answer that too fast...because it's an answer than requires more than lip service.

Let's look at **Luke 9:59-60 nlt** (Bibles & SmartPhones)

*He (Jesus) said to another person, "Come, follow me."
The man agreed, (NOTE: "Will you follow me?" "YES!")*

*but he said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father."
But Jesus told him, "Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God."*

Luke 9:59-60 nlt

This is a passage that seems harsh and extreme to us. But this man is not asking to attend his father's funeral.

He is most likely putting off Jesus, until his elderly father dies. Had his father been dead, he would have already been in the throes of Jewish burial traditions and would NOT have been there with Jesus.

And so what this man is really saying to Jesus is, "Not now."

He's saying, "I'm in a season of my father's old age and this isn't a good time to really follow you."

Likewise, sometimes we subliminally say to God,

"I'm in a season of busy-ness till Dec 25—I'm too busy doing stuff about you, to really follow you...Not now."

But Jesus responds, No. I need followers *now*.
The importance of the Kingdom of God overshadows EVERYTHING.

So my question for us as we look another Christmas season in the face is:

Will our focus be a 4 week shopping trip,
or
an intimate relationship?

Will we put this BIG, but not too big, God at the center of all we do?

Or for the next 4 weeks will we say like the man in Luke 9:59-60,

"Not now...I have a lot of presents to buy...I'll see you on the 25th."

"Not now...my social calendar in Dec is nuts...I'll see you on the 25th."

"Not now...I've gotta make extra money to afford this holiday...see you on the 25th."

Listen—I'm not saying don't go to holiday parties and gatherings!

For Pete's sake—Christians NEED to be at more office parties with people who don't know God! We NEED to get out of our holy huddles!

I'm not saying don't buy gifts for people. God calls us to be generous.

Let me just ask this question...How many times have we sat around on December 26th and felt like the month was a blur of consumerism and frenetic hurriedness?

After we watch our kids open their 16th Christmas gift, is the Holy Spirit even on our radar? Or do we more, feel the spirit of, "Are we done yet?"

Will we let this season run us?

Will we subconsciously say to Jesus, "Not now?..."

Will we go in debt buying Christmas for our families or will we leverage our finances to do something for people in need outside of our families?

Will we just put a nativity scene at the bottom of the Christmas tree?
Or will we lead our families to follow Jesus through every day of this season and beyond? (*pause*)

God is big, but not too big--- so that we can KNOW Him and follow Him in the ways of Christ--not the ways of a season of extreme consumerism.

SELAH

(Believe in them!)

I want to ask us as a church family to do two things this season as we all pursue intimacy with Christ through this hectic holiday:

(Bulletin!)

1. YouVersion reading plan: Rediscovering the Christmas Season.
Start it tomorrow! (It's in your bulletin notes.)

2. As a family, do something for people in need, outside your family.
a.) Last year we delivered Red Ribbon Xmas Boxes for Kokomo
Rescue Mission...

b.) Year before we spent less on our family & said no to extended family gifts so we could give a large amount to someone working in Haiti.

God is big, but not too big:

He's so big, who knows what He will do through us this season, in the lives of others if we ask Him to use us...

He's not too big...He made Himself small so that we can relate with Him and know Him intimately. Who knows how our lives will be impacted as we ask Him to reveal Himself to us...

Listen to Luke's words...(Luke 2:8-15 KJV)

⁸And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

⁹And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

¹⁰And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

¹²And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

¹⁴Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

¹⁵And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.