

Weekly Devotional

January 7, 2008

The Beginning Of Another Chapter

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

Do you use a bookmark of some sort when you have finished one chapter of a book and plan to read the next chapter soon? Mine are not the pretty ones you buy in the bookshop, but I like to have something there so I can hurry back to my place. Of course, there are times when my reading schedule is disrupted and I have to go back and read a little of the last chapter to refresh my memory with the events of the story.

Beginning another year is like beginning another chapter in a book. The year at hand usually serves as a bookmark for all the happenings in that year. For instance, my wife and I would say, “We were married in the summer of 1971.” In this first month of the New Year, the bookmark has been placed and everything in this chapter will be dated accordingly.

The text before us is the beginning of a new chapter, the first chapter of Matthew. It is also the beginning of the Gospel records. Mark, Luke and John will follow with their stories. This text is also the beginning of the New Testament. The Old Testament has been completed and we find our place now in the New Testament. For a few minutes, let’s consider Matthew’s opening words and what they suggest to us.

The beginning of this chapter encourages us to trust God to fulfill all His promises! The promised Seed, the Messiah, was to come through the lineage of Abraham and David (see Gen. 12:3; Isa. 11:1). Here, in the record of Christ’s genealogy, we are told of “Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” In like fashion, as we come to the new chapter of this New Year, we can stand firm on the promises of our God.

The beginning of this chapter encourages us to trust God to continue with His plan! What He set in motion in the days of Abraham did not cease with Abraham. Like a mighty river, His plan continued to flow in the days of David. And, in this chapter, His operations can be traced on to the coming of Christ. In the face of the New Year, we can be sure that “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

The beginning of this chapter encourages us to trust God to work in His people! Nearly fifty people are mentioned in the first seventeen verses of Matthew 1. There are names, like some of the patriarchs, that might be expected to be in this list. But there are also some surprising individuals, like Rahab and Ruth, who are included in Christ’s genealogy. As we begin another chapter in our lives, may we be conscious of God’s inclusive grace.