



Jesus' Family Tree

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW
Matthew 1:1-17 Gal 3:26-29 1 Cor 15:20-22 2 Cor 1:18-20

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A popular thing to do today is to trace your **family tree** and to do research on your **genealogy**. Maybe you have tried your hand at that to some degree. There are several websites that will help you find your family history. You can even do DNA testing to help. One of the things that makes it interesting and exciting is finding the exact birth records, or a marriage certificate, or even a tombstone of a family member from generations past. **Today, people consider it a success if they can track down relatives from 200 years ago or more.**

***Can you imagine finding relatives
from over 2,000 years ago?!!***

Matthew, in his Gospel, traces **Jesus' family tree** back 2,000 years --- all the way back to Abraham ---- *the great patriarch of the Old Testament!*

Jesus' genealogy is hard to read through because of all the names (that's why we had the video today). Jesus' genealogy may at first seem unimportant. But once you study it and understand it, it is a **fascinating** and **significant** section of the New Testament!

Matthew starts out with the phrase, "*this is the **genealogy** of Jesus . . .*" This word "**genealogy**" could also be translated as "**genesis**", it means the **origin** and the **beginning**. Matthew is saying, "*this is the **genesis** of Jesus, the Christ.*" It connects Jesus back to the Old Testament **Book of Genesis**, where we learn the **origin** and **beginning** of creation: when "**God created the heavens and the earth.**"

But we know that sin corrupted the original creation, and brought suffering, pain, and death into the world and into our lives.

Matthew starts his Gospel by signaling to us that in Jesus, God is *re-creating the world*, a “**new genesis**” is happening because “**the Christ**” will restore what sin has destroyed. Through faith in Christ you are a “**new creation**” where death is destroyed, and you are given new life! In Christ, you are reunited with Your Creator; sin no longer separates you from God! *In other words:*

Jesus will reverse and restore everything that Adam corrupted and destroyed.

His work will be to redeem fallen, broken, and dying sinners through His own life, death and resurrection! The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is the beginning of the *New Creation* that will culminate with the *New Heavens and the New Earth* in the eternal Kingdom of Heaven!

JESUS' HUMAN NATURE

Another important thing that this “**Genesis** of Jesus”, this “**genealogy**”, teaches us is that Jesus was a true human being born into a specific family line. He had ancestors; He has a mother! The “Messiah”, the “Christ”, is not only God Himself, but also a **true man**. The theological way to say it is that **Jesus Christ is one person with two natures: a human nature and a divine nature.**

The genealogy of Jesus highlights His **human nature**: that He is just like us, **a human being**, but without sin. He is the Savior who sympathizes with you; He understands you, and He will suffer, bleed, hurt, and die in order to save you from your sins! Matthew highlights that Jesus has a **human nature**: **He is a TRUE HUMAN BEING who was born into a specific family line.**

A Little “Christology”

We believe, teach, and confess that the Son of God, although from eternity, has been a particular, distinct, entire divine person, and thus, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, true, essential, perfect God;

nevertheless, in the fulness of time assumed also human nature into the unity of His person, not in such a way that there now are two persons or two Christs, but that Christ Jesus is now in one person at the same time true, eternal God, born of the Father from eternity, and a true man, born of the most blessed Virgin Mary.

Book of Concord, Formula of Concord, VIII.6-7

HISTORY MOVES TOWARDS CHRIST

Another key thing that Jesus’ genealogy teaches us is that all of the Old Testament history was moving towards Jesus... **one generation at a time**. Jesus is the focal point of all the prophecies and types in the Old Testament. All the hopes and all the promises of the Old Testament come true in Jesus. Everything

in the Old Testament pointed to Jesus. Each generation was waiting for the Messiah to come --- just as God had promised. Jesus' genealogy teaches us that all of the Old Testament history was moving towards Jesus... **one generation at a time.**

This is one of the major themes of Advent.

ALL THE OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES COME TRUE IN JESUS!

His “*incarnation*” – His arrival “*in flesh*” – **conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary** – signals the beginning of all those promises being fulfilled.

It reminds us that **God is faithful: He keeps His word and promises.** From Abraham to David and through all the prophets --- through all these generations that Matthew lists --- God promised to send a Savior who would **bless the entire earth¹** and who would be **a great King and who will have an eternal Kingdom².** Jesus fulfills those prophecies, promises, types, and hopes. The Messianic Age has arrived with Jesus; **GOD KEPT HIS WORD!**

God keeps His word and promises to you also!

It all starts with the promises of forgiveness! God promises that your sins are gone. They have been paid for; they were placed on Christ, and He died with them. In His death and resurrection, your sins are no longer counted against you; you have been set free and forgiven! You are reconciled to your Creator and your God; you are a **New Creation** in Christ: the old is gone, **the new is here!** You are as close to God as Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. God's promises all start with forgiveness --- and then they flow to every area of your life!

Jesus' genealogy teaches us that you can trust all of God's promises to you! He promises to provide for you; to watch over you; to protect you; to listen to your prayers. **For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so we respond with our “Amens” as we trust those promises!**

² Corinthians 1:1:20 paraphrase

¹ This is the key Messianic promise given to **Abraham** in Genesis 12:1-3

² This is the key Messianic promise given to **David** in 2 Samuel 7:12-16

Finally, one other fascinating thing about Jesus' family tree. Jesus' family tree reminds us why He came into the world: **to save sinners!**

There are 41 names listed in Jesus' genealogy; including five women. Some of these names are **familiar**, like Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob; some are **notoriously immoral**, such as Solomon³ and Judah⁴; one is perhaps the **most rebellious and evil** King of Judah, Manasseh⁵; Rahab⁶ is listed. Remember that she was a **prostitute** in Jericho. Ruth was a **Gentile**. And Bathsheba⁷ was so **scandalous** that Matthew could not even write her name down, but rather simply called her the "the wife of Uriah"! ☺

Jesus' family tree reminds us why He came into the world: **to save sinners!** Jesus came for all people: men and women; Jew and Gentile; for Judah, Manasseh, and Rahab, for you and for me. We have all sinned and fall short of God's Commandments. We all need the Savior that God sent for us: **Jesus, the Christ – true God and True Man.** **Jesus' story begins with a family tree but it will take us to a crucifixion.** That is exactly why Jesus came into the world: His death rescues sinners! His death rescued those who came before Him: like Solomon, Ruth and "the wife of Uriah"; and His death rescued you as well! **Jesus' family tree reminds us that He came into the world to be the Savior of all people! No one is excluded --- not even you!**

Today we continue our **Advent preparation** by looking at how the Gospel of Matthew prepares us for Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

Matthew begins his gospel by teaching us --- through a family tree --- that Jesus is the **PROMISED DESCENDENT** of Abraham and David: He is a true human being, but yet He is also the **Eternal King** who will **bless the entire earth!** Throughout the generations of the Old Testament, **God kept His Promises!** Jesus is the long-promised **Messiah**, the **Christ**, whose death and resurrection redeems sinful people --- *like those in his own family tree* --- and like you and like me! Amen!

³ Read of **Solomon's** fall in 1 Kings 11:1-13

⁴ Read of **Judah's** lurid behavior in Genesis 38

⁵ Read the dreadful account of **Manasseh** in 2 Kings 21:1-17; however, by God's grace, Manasseh repented!

⁶ **Rahab's** story is told in Joshua 2 and 6.

⁷ **Bathsheba's** story is told in 2 Samuel 11.