

December 17, 2023

“The Family of Faith”
Lesson 3

Matthew 1:1-17

Intro

Biblical genealogies of Jesus are not intended to be exhaustive lists of all the ancestors, or even all the generations. The differences come from the writer’s intention. Luke’s genealogy contains 56 generations between Abraham and Jesus but Matthew’s only has 42. Considering who Matthew includes in his genealogy prepares a reader who is looking carefully to examine certain themes that Matthew develops. Among these themes are the inclusion of women in God’s plans, and the inclusion of sinful and imperfect people in God’s plans.

Read Matthew 1:1-17

1. vs. 1: Matthew makes his intentions clear about Jesus’ genealogy
 - He is going to show how Jesus is connected to both David and Abraham
 - These are the two most important persons to the nation of Israel in terms of faith
 - God made promises to these two men which Jesus fulfilled
 - How He fulfills them is what Matthew spends His gospel explaining
 - Matthew also refers to Jesus as “the Messiah”
 - After David’s time, the term Messiah referred to an anticipated Savior for Israel
 - The whole NT explains what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah, the Christ

2. vs. 2: This verse names the first three patriarchs of the nation of Israel
 - Abraham, whose son was Isaac, whose son was Jacob
 - They connect the theme of God choosing Abraham as the founder of the nation
 - Isaac was a miracle baby, born to Abraham when he was very old
 - God kept His promise to establish a nation thru Abraham by this child
 - Isaac’s second son was Jacob, who was renamed “Israel”
 - Israel means “struggles with God” as Jacob did in Gen. 32
 - This is where the name of the nation came from, which Jesus came to
 - Jacob’s 12 sons become the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel, the ancestors of all Israel

3. vs. 3: This verse mentions Perez and Zerah, and their mother Tamar
 - Tamar was Judah’s daughter-in-law; her husband was Er, who died
 - He left her childless, and his brother Onan refused to give her children
 - This is the Levirate marriage condition, a brother marrying his dead brother’s wife
 - This is to ensure that a name is not lost, that the family line continues
 - Judah refused to provide care for Tamar, so she became pregnant by Judah himself
 - Tamar was likely a Canaanite
 - These names remind us of two important themes in Matthew:
 - God’s concern for Gentiles, and God’s concern for women
 - This story hints at salvation for those not of Israel
 - It also shows God’s concern for real, messy human families
 - He can and does work through sinful people to fulfill His promises

The last part of vs. 3 mentions one of Tamar's sons, Perez, and his son and grandson
Perez and his son Hezron go to Egypt during the famine
Perez is also one of the brothers that sells Joseph into slavery

4. vs. 4: This verse mentions Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, and Salmon
Ram (the grandson of Perez) and Amminidab were born in Egypt
Aminidab and Nahshon are connected with the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness
Salmon is part of the first generation tasked with conquering Canaan in Joshua's days
5. vs. 5: Significant names are listed here: Salmon, Boaz, Rahab, Obed, Ruth, and Jesse
Salmon was the father of Boaz, who is in David's lineage
Boaz's mother was Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute who aides the Hebrew spies
Boaz marries Ruth, who was a Moabitess, and their child was Jesse
This verse names two women, further supporting the value and interest God has for them
Ruth is the third Gentile mentioned in the genealogy so far
The story of these people reinforces how God's redemptive work in messy families
6. vs. 6: Jesse and his son David are the focus of this verse
Jesse is the son of Boaz and Ruth, a Jew and a Moabite
This verse notes that Jesse is the father of "King David"
Matthew's genealogy is of Jesus, and he connects Him to the greatest king of Israel
One of God's promises to David was that his throne would be established forever
This was fulfilled in Jesus, who will reign eternally
David's son Solomon is referred to here as having a mother formerly belonging to another
His mother is Bathsheba, who David had an affair with
Her previous husband, Uriah, was put to death by David's orders to hide a child
These names remind Israel that David was not sinless or flawless
No hero worship should attach itself to him
7. vs. 7a: The first part of this verse names Solomon as the father of Rehoboam
Solomon is rightly considered by some as Israel's greatest king
There was peace in his time, and the temple was built as well
The kingdom was united during his time, the last king to have that situation
His son Rehoboam acted foolishly, listening to his friends instead of the wise advisors
This action caused the split of the kingdom
But God was faithful to His promise, keeping one of David's line on the throne
8. vs. 7b-8: This verse lists various kings who followed Solomon
Rehoboam was not righteous, not was his son Abijah
But Abijah's son and grandson (Asa and Jehoshaphat) were both righteous
Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram "did evil in the eyes of the Lord"
Uzziah, the last one listed, is another king who "did what was right"
There are three kings and one queen between Jehoram and Uzziah
Being called "the father of..." indicates a family line connection, but not necessarily direct

9. vs. 9-10: The kings listed here represent opposites: some of the best and some of the worst kings
The good kings are Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah
Josiah is credited with reinstituting the worship of the Lord
He also is credited with teaching the Law, probably from a copy of Deuteronomy
The worst kings were Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon
Jeremiah attributes the fall of Jerusalem to Manasseh's horrible reign
10. vs. 11: Josiah's wicked grandson was Jeconiah
He was exiled to Babylon in the first wave of exiles
Many residents were killed; most survivors were carried off to Babylon
This exile makes the end of the second set of 14 generations noted by Matthew (1:17)
11. vs. 12: The Babylonian exile lasted 70 years
The names listed in this verse represent the line of kings during this time
Jeconiah was king at the time of the exile
His son was Shealtiel
Shealtiel's nephew (the son of his brother Pedaiah) was Zerubbabel
Zerubbabel was instrumental in rebuilding the temple upon their return to Jerusalem
12. vs. 13: Our text says that the kingly line ends with Zerubbabel
There are names of his sons and descendants listed
Our text says the names in vs. 13-15 come from a source that is unknown to the editors
13. vs. 14-15: The names listed in these two verses are the family descendants from Azor to Jacob
They cover the time from the rebuilding of the temple to Jesus' adoptive grandfather
14. vs. 16: This last verse of the genealogy notes the names of Jacob, Joseph, and Jesus
The wording changes here from "father of" to "husband of"
Joseph is blood kin to all the people named in this genealogy
He is now, however, a biological relative to Jesus, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
This indicates it was choice, not heritage, that put Jesus into this family
God fulfills his promise to David in this action
Mary is the fifth woman in the genealogy
She is not like the other women in two significant ways
She is not a Gentile
She was a virgin when she conceived
Calling Jesus "the Messiah" here echoes what was said in Matthew 1:1
He begins and ends the genealogy with the key idea of Jesus as Messiah
15. vs. 17: Matthew concludes this section with the statement about the number of generations
Having 14 generations in each grouping is an organizing tool
It emphasizes the roles of Abraham and David and the exile
Each of these were key in forming Israel's people
This summary also emphasizes the fulfillment of God's promises
Abraham received the first promises specific to Israel and blessing all the world
David received promises for a kingly line to be unbroken
The exile marked the end of kingship in Judah

How would God then fulfill His promises?
Fourteen generations after the exile began, Jesus comes to fulfill all the promises
God is faithful, and brings about His will in His way in His time

Application: This genealogy serves as a reminder of two key things for us. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the prophecies and promises that occur in the Old Testament. During this Christmas season, we remember His birth because it is the beginning of Him fulfilling all of God's promises to man on earth. Second, we see that God wants all people to be a part of His family: Jews and Gentiles, men and women, and especially all that feel far away. He can and does use people despite their sin and selfishness to accomplish His plans in this world. As we allow Him to work in and through us, we are working with Him in the fulfillment of His will for the world.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for reminding us through this genealogy that You use all kinds of people to accomplish Your will. We ask that You use us, despite our sins and weaknesses. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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