

# The Family of Faith

Devotional Reading: Psalm 9:1-14

Background Scripture: Genesis 38; Joshua 2; 6:22-25; 2 Samuel 12:24;  
Ruth 4:13-22; Matthew 1:1-17

Today's Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17

## I. From Abraham to David

### Matthew 1:1-6a

**1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.**

**2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;**

**3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;**

**4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;**

**5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;**

**6 Jesse begat David the king;**

1. Right away we can sense Matthew's primary reason for writing this Gospel: to reveal who *Jesus Christ* is and why His life is significant. The Hebrew word for *messiah* and its Greek equivalent, *Christ*, mean "anointed one." *Messiah* also referred at various times to both priests and kings. Sometime after the fall of David's royal line, the phrase came to more explicitly refer to an anticipated savior of the Jewish people. This hope grew out of the expectation that God continued to care for Israel and would reverse the nation's painful circumstances.

2a. The three men listed here are Israel's patriarchs and the subjects of Genesis 12-50. They represent the time following God's choosing of *Abraham* to God's creating the new nation of Israel.

*Isaac* was a miracle baby, born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age when it seemed they would not have a family through which to establish God's promise. Unexpectedly, the promise was carried out through Isaac's second son, *Jacob*. Jacob was renamed *Israel*, a designation meaning "struggles with God" (Genesis 32:28).

2b. The "founding fathers" of Israel were the 12 sons of *Jacob*, here presented as *Judas* (Judah) and *his brethren*.

3a. We note Matthew's first deviation of the pattern from male to male (so far, father to son). *Thamar* (Tamar) was Judah's daughter-in-law, assumed to be a Canaanite given Judah's own marriage and his physical location when Tamar married into the family. She was left a childless widow when her husband, Er, died and his brother, Onan, refused to fulfill his duty according to what would come to be known as Levirate marriage. When Judah proved unwilling to care for his daughter-in-law, Tamar devised a plan to become pregnant by Judah himself. The result was twin boys, *Phares* and *Zara*.

From this spotlight, we can anticipate two themes in Matthew: God's concern

for Gentiles and for women. This hints at the hope of salvation beyond Israel, as well as the need for a more robust understanding of salvation.

3b. *Phares* and *Esrom* journeyed to Egypt during the famine in Canaan. Their father's complicity in the sin of selling his own brother Joseph into slavery was redeemed through Joseph's God-given work of mitigating the effects of a transnational famine.

4. *Aram* and *Aminadab* represent generations born in Egypt who experienced part of the 430 years there, culminating in the exodus from slavery. *Aminadab* is further associated with the 40-year wandering in the wilderness, as is *Naasson* (Nahshon). *Salmon* represents the first generation that was tasked with conquering Canaan in the days of Joshua.

5a. *Rachab* (Rahab) is the second Gentile woman to be named. Specifically, she was the Canaanite prostitute who became a heroine in Israel's conquest of Jericho. Her inclusion reinforces the reality of sinfulness in Jesus' family tree as well as God's continued redemptive work through this less-than-ideal family.

5b. The story of *Booz* (Boaz) and *Ruth* comprises the four chapters of the biblical book named after this Moabite heroine. She is the third Gentile named in this genealogy. The birth of her son, *Obed*, relieved her mother-in-law of great sorrow.

6a. *Jesse* originally offered his older sons as candidates for kingship. But the Lord chose Jesse's youngest son, *David*, instead.

Referring to David as *the king* and emphasizing his position in the family tree calls to mind promises God made to David. Chief among these promises was that his throne would be established forever.

## II. From David to the Exile

### Matthew 1:6b-11

#### 6b And David the king begat Solo-

mon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

6b. We can make educated guesses as to why Bathsheba is referred as *the wife of Urias* (Uriah) instead of by name. Given that the other women in this list were Gentiles, it's possible that giving this title to Bathsheba highlights that she was likely a Hittite. And the designation emphasizes her first marriage that was destroyed after David called her to his house. Reminding the reader of David's sins serves to temper any hero worship that the king's status might otherwise inspire.

7a. David had several wives and many children; at his death, *Solomon* became king. He was the last king of the united monarchy of Israel, due in large part to his own faithlessness later in his reign. His son *Roboam* (Rehoboam) acted foolishly by listening to his friends instead of wise advisors. This precipitated the division of the kingdom that the Lord decreed following Solomon's faithlessness. Even so, God left a remnant to David's family in light of God's promise to that man.

7b-8. This verse and a half lists the names of King *Roboam* and his successors who ruled over the southern kingdom of Judah in Jerusalem following the revolt of Israel's 10 northern tribes. *Abia* was not a

righteous king. But his son *Asa* and grandson *Josaphat* were. *Joram* stepped out of his father and grandfather's footsteps and "wrought that which was evil" (Jehoram). *Ozias* (Uzziah) was again characterized as doing "that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 26:1-4).

9-10. The kings listed here represent some of Judah's best—*Joatham* (Jotham), *Ezekias* (Hezekiah), and *Josias* (Josiah). Assyria conquered Israel during the reign of Hezekiah. Judah's survival of that crisis is attributed in part to Hezekiah's continued faithfulness to the Lord. Later, Josiah was credited with reinstating the worship of the Lord and teaching the book of the law.

11. Josiah's wicked (grand)son *Jechonias* (Jehoiachin) and his brethren were exiled in the first wave of captives. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in the final Babylonian siege in 586 BC.

### III. From the Exile to Christ Matthew 1:12-17

**12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;**

**13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;**

**14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;**

**15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;**

**16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.**

**17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.**

12. Matthew 1:12-16 is the final third of the genealogy. *Babylon* was the low point of Jewish history. The people had been forcibly removed from the promised land by God's own plan. And the throne was never reestablished in Jerusalem.

*Jehoiachin*, *Salathiel* (Shealtiel), and *Zorobabel* (Zerubbabel) represent the 70 years of Babylonian exile. After Babylon was conquered by the Persians, King Cyrus allowed the people of Judah to return to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel was instrumental in rebuilding the Jerusalem temple.

13. Matthew includes nine names in verses 13-15 that come from a source unknown to us.

14-15. Nothing is available in the biblical record about these men, whose lives cover the time from the rebuilding of the temple to Jesus' own adoptive paternal grandfather, *Jacob*.

16. Matthew breaks his pattern of "begetting" with *Joseph*. He is *the husband of Mary*, not a biological relative of Jesus. Jesus' belonging in Joseph's family was a matter of choice, like adoption, instead of natural heritage.

17. Numbering *fourteen generations* between *Abraham* and *David*, *David* and *the carrying away into Babylon*, and the Babylonian exile to Jesus is an organizational tool that emphasizes the roles of Abraham, David, and the exile as formative people/events in Israel's history.

This summary serves to emphasize the fulfillment of God's promises. Abraham received the first promises specific to the nation of Israel and blessing through the nation for the world. David received promises for a kingly line in Israel. *The carrying away into Babylon* marked the end of kingship in Judah and seemingly of the nation itself, thus throwing into question God's continued intention to fulfill His promises, especially toward David. But only 14 generations later *Christ* was born!

# Involvement Learning

## The Family of Faith

### Into the Lesson

How have you researched your family heritage?

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What ancestors are you most proud of? Which ancestors would you rather forget? Why?

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What family legacy has been handed down to you from your ancestors?

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Jesus' genealogy includes a lot of characters who might surprise us—if we forget that God works through surprising people. Let's see what we can learn from Jesus' ancestry and how we can be encouraged by it.

### Into the Word

Read Matthew 1:1-17 and write down any names that you're surprised to see included as well as any names that you don't recognize.

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Why did Matthew start his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus?

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What is Matthew claiming in 1:1 and again in 1:17? Why is that important?

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### Key Verse

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.  
—Matthew 1:1

### Into Life

What are themes in your own genealogy that show God's work in your family?

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Read 1 Timothy 1:4 and Titus 3:9. How can you avoid the dangers noted in these two verses?

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### Thought to Remember

God uses imperfect people to accomplish His perfect plans.