



The King's Ransom

Matthew 20:28

Text

Matthew 1:1-17

Topic

The Gospel of Matthew opens the New Testament with the genealogy of Jesus, the son of Abraham, the son of David

Title

"ancestry.God"

Introduction

Genealogy searching has become so popular we might as well call it a craze. A recent survey concluded that a whopping 87% of Americans are interested in learning about their family histories.

NBC aired a series called *Who Do You Think You Are?* in which each week a celebrity goes in search of the roots of his or her family tree.

The Bible is full of genealogies. The New Testament opens with the genealogy of Jesus:

Mat 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

If I had a dollar for every time I've heard someone (including myself!) reference a Bible genealogy as boring I'd be rich.

If we are interested in the genealogies of run-of-the-mill celebrities, wouldn't it stand to reason we'd be all the more interested in the ancestry of Jesus?

What if we looked at the genealogy of Jesus Christ as if **we** were part of it - as if it was **our** genealogy, too?

There's a very real sense in which it **is** our genealogy. Matthew starts with Abraham. Talking to us as Gentile believers, the apostle Paul said, "and if you are Christ's then **you are Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

Christians in this church age are the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

The genealogy of Jesus Christ doesn't just look back; it also looks forward. When Matthew next tells us that Jesus was "the son of David," he doesn't only mean that Jesus came from David's line. The Jews were looking forward to one particular "son of David" who would establish the kingdom of God on the earth promised everywhere in the Old Testament.

The genealogy looks forward to the yet future generation that will help establish the kingdom.

And, guess what? **You and I will be a part of that generation as we rule with Jesus for a thousand years.**

All of a sudden this is better than logging-on to ancestry.com.

I'm going to organize my thoughts about the genealogy of Jesus Christ around two questions: #1 Do You See Yourself In The Genealogy Of Jesus Christ, The Son Of Abraham?, and #2 Do You See Yourself In The Generation Of Jesus Christ, The Son Of David?

#1 Do You See Yourself
In The Genealogy Of Jesus Christ, The Son Of Abraham?

(v1-16)

"Christ" is used so often in conjunction with "Jesus" that we tend to think of it as His last name. It isn't. He would have been known as "Jesus bar-Joseph," meaning "Jesus, son of Joseph." "Christ" is Jesus' title.

God promised the ancient Israelites that a Messiah would come to deliver them from sin. The idea of the Messiah is carried over into the New Testament with the title "Christ." The Greek word *Christos*, from which we get the English word Christ, is the translation of the Hebrew term *Mashiach*, which is the source for the English word Messiah.

Mashiach is related to the Hebrew verb *masach*, which means "to anoint."

Therefore, when the New Testament speaks of Jesus **Christ**, it is saying "Jesus the Messiah," which literally means, "Jesus the Anointed One."

In Old Testament times, people were anointed with oil when they were called to the offices of prophet, priest, or king. In a sense, anyone in the Old Testament who was set apart and consecrated for a servant task was a messiah, for he was one who received an anointing.

But the people of Israel looked forward to that promised individual who was to be not merely *a* messiah but **the** Messiah, the One who would be supremely set apart and consecrated by God to be their Prophet, Priest, and King.

At the time Jesus was born there was a strong sense of anticipation among the Jews who had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. There were some who claimed to be him.

In order to be THE Christ you must be descended from Abraham through the kingly line of David. This is the genealogy that establishes Jesus was and is the Christ.

Mat 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

A more literal translation would be, "this is the book of the genesis [or *origin*] of Jesus Christ." That same wording is used in two notable passages in the Book of Genesis:

- It is used in Genesis 2:4 to refer to creation.
- It is used in Genesis 5:1 to refer to Adam.

A Jew would put those together and understand that the Christ came to restore the creation that was ruined by Adam's sin.

Matthew is proclaiming that the Jesus the Jewish leaders crucified, and Who rose from the dead three days later, is, in fact, the Christ. He's in the line of David, descended from Abraham, and the names that follow prove it.

We know from historians that the Jews had incredibly precise genealogical records till the end of the first century. Any Jew reading or hearing Matthew chapter one could easily check it out for himself.

In other words, the entire New Testament begins with a genealogy which must have been 100% accurate or the Jewish leaders could and would have used it to discredit Jesus and His followers.

If you are a writer you want your opening sentence to floor people. Some of the secular world's greatest novels have memorable opening words. "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." "Call me Ishmael." "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit."

This opening verse of the New Testament puts all those to shame. It is a powerhouse. It is saying, in no uncertain terms, that Jesus is the Christ Who was promised and is prophesied to restore Israel and fulfill all the promises made to both Abraham and David - promises of a land and a forever kingdom that would bless the entire world.

Mat 1:2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

God promised Abraham that through him all the world would be blessed. The one promised in the Garden of Eden, Who would reverse the effects Adam's sin on creation, would be born through Abraham's descendants. He would be a Jew.

Although Abraham had another son, Ishmael, the Christ would descend not from him but from Isaac. Ishmael represents the efforts of the flesh to fulfill the promises of God; Isaac, born after it was physically impossible for Abraham and Sarah to conceive, represents the principle of grace by faith in God.

Isaac's oldest son, Esau, forfeited his birthright. His twin but younger brother, Jacob, would produce the line from which the Christ was born - through his son, Judah. The Old Testament regarded the coming Christ as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

Mat 1:3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

Mat 1:4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon.

Scanning these names you see an oddity in this genealogy. A woman is mentioned - one of four to be mentioned by the time we are through. Tamar's husband died before there were any children born to them. Seeing that Judah was not going to insist that his other sons perform their tribal duty by getting her pregnant, to continue her husband's line, she disguised herself as a prostitute and enticed Judah himself to sleep with her. Perez, born from this sordid incident, is in the line of the Christ.

People who are into genealogies sometimes find out things they wish they didn't. Not the case here, however. It should surprise you with joy that such a sordid event is in the line of the Christ.

It shouts to us, as sinners, that He was not ashamed to be identified with us and to call us His brethren.

Mat 1:5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,

Salmon married Rahab of Jericho, the woman who hid the spies Joshua had sent into the city. Together with her family she was spared when the walls came tumbling down and the city of Jericho was destroyed by the Israelites.

Their son Boaz married Ruth the Moabitess who came back to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi. Their son was Obed, and his son was Jesse, the father of King David.

This might be disheartening for a Jew - that two Gentile women, one of questionable reputation, both of questionable ethnicity, are in the line of the Christ. It shouldn't be. The promises made to Abraham included blessings upon the Gentiles. Through Abraham "all the nations of the earth" would be blessed.

Mat 1:6 and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Mat 1:7 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa.

Mat 1:8 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah.

Mat 1:9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah.

The Christ came through David's union with "her that had been the wife of Uriah." That's Bathsheeba, who David committed adultery with, and it's the Uriah that he ordered murdered.

If you haven't figured it out yet, **the Christ came to save sinners.**

Mat 1:10 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah.

Mat 1:11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

Make a quick mental note of Jeconiah. A curse was pronounced upon him. Very specifically God said, in Jeremiah twenty-two, that **none** of his offspring would ever sit on the throne of David. Period.

How can Jesus be the Christ if His line comes through Jeconiah? The answer is forthcoming!

Mat 1:12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel.

Mat 1:13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor.

Mat 1:14 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud.

Mat 1:15 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob.

Mat 1:16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

Notice Matthew's careful wording that "Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus.

If Jesus had been the natural son of Joseph, Jeconiah's curse would have eliminated Him as the Christ.

At the same time, however, He had to be the legal son of Joseph in order to be in the line of kings to qualify as the Christ.

How was Jesus the legal, but not the natural, son of Joseph? God resolved the issue through the virgin birth of Jesus.

There's a *Wow!* factor if you were a Jew following this line of descent. It would blow you away. It's like finding out something totally amazing about your genealogy - only times about a million.

Do you see yourself in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of Abraham? Let me help us see ourselves.

Earlier we cited Galatians 3:29, "And if you are Christ's then **you are Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise."

Abraham's "seed" is an expression that is used to describe three distinct groups:

1. First, there is the natural use, referring to all those who are the actual physical descendants of Abraham through his son, Isaac, and then through his son, Jacob, to the twelve tribes. Anyone born a Jew is "the seed of Abraham."
2. Second, the expression "the seed of Abraham" is used to refer to saved Israelites - those descendants of Jacob's who were believers in God. Not every Jew was a believer; no one is automatically saved, but must believe God, as Abraham did, and have it accounted to them for righteousness.
3. There is a third use of the term "seed of Abraham." It is used in Galatians 3:6-9 to describe Gentiles who, by believing in Jesus, become a spiritual seed and inherit the promises God made him that were unique to Gentiles when He said, "**all** the families of the earth be blessed."

We are most definitely in this genealogy. We also have seen a few other points of contact in this genealogy:

1. You see within this genealogy the understanding that Gentiles will be blessed and included by the Christ in the mention of Rahab and Ruth. We can identify with them as outsiders who were nevertheless saved by faith.
2. The stories of Tamar and Bathsheeba speak to us as sinners who must be saved by grace if we are to enjoy the promised blessings.
3. In fact, many of the names we skipped are absolutely wicked individuals - yet through them came the Christ, as a man to save lost men and women just like them.

We are the spiritual seed of Abraham, justified by faith as he was through believing in Jesus. Hopelessly lost, born dead in trespasses and sins, God made a way of salvation. Because He became a man and died on the Cross and rose from the dead, we can believe and it will be credited to us as righteousness.

Jesus Christ is also "the son of David."

#2 Do You See Yourself In The Generation Of Jesus Christ, The Son Of David?

(v17)

Matthew has been called "the Gospel of the King." More than the other three Gospel's, Matthew is all about introducing that Jesus Christ is the King of the Jews Who came to establish God's kingdom on the earth.

Over and over again Matthew will refer to Jesus as "the son of David." To the Jew this didn't simply mean He was someone in David's line of descent.

God had promised David,

2Sa 7:12 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

2Sa 7:13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom **forever**."

When Matthew says Jesus was "the son of David," he means He is *this* promised son of David, Who would "establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

Mat 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Breaking the genealogy up into three parts of fourteen was a memory aid for a time when people didn't have iPads.

Why fourteen? There is a lot of wild speculation; and then there is this simple fact. In Hebrew there are no vowels. The three letters that make up the name DaViD have a numerical value of fourteen when added together.

Everything about this genealogy screams "son of David," the One Who will reign forever as King over God's kingdom.

The three divisions of fourteen all relate to the monarchy:

1. The first fourteen lead up to the kingdom under David's rule.
2. The second fourteen lament the failure of the kingdom after David's rule.

3. The third fourteen remind us that the Christ - the Anointed One - would come and reign on David's throne forever.

All the names in the second division are of kings, but it ends with "the captivity in Babylon," with Jeconiah as the last true king of the Jews until the Christ.

Is it a problem, then, that the Jews killed their King at His coming?

Only in this sense: God postponed the establishing of the literal kingdom on the earth. But it's still coming as promised.

In the mean time, during the postponement, Jesus gave His followers a commission to go throughout the whole earth and tell everyone - Jew and Gentile - that He is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe.

At any moment the postponement might end with the resurrection and rapture of the church. While we are safe and worshipping The Lord in Heaven, the seven years of the Great Tribulation will be unfolding upon the earth. It will be the time of Jacob's Trouble - meaning it is intended to turn the hearts of Abraham's physical descendants, the Jews, to their Christ. At His Second Coming the Jews will look upon Him Whom they pierced and will believe; all Israel will be saved.

Then the promised kingdom will begin. And, guess what? We are going to rule with King Jesus.

- First Corinthians 6:1-3 tells us we will judge angels and the world.
- In Second Timothy 2:12 we read, "If we endure, We shall also reign with Him."

- Rev 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
- Rev 2:26 & 27 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations - 'HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; THEY SHALL BE DASHED TO PIECES LIKE THE POTTER'S VESSELS' - as I also have received from My Father;

Tomorrow you can tell people you've discovered your genealogy. Not at ancestry.com but at JesusChrist.com-passion.

His compassion moved Him to leave Heaven, to come to earth as a man - the son of Abraham, the son of David. Jesus made a way for you to be the spiritual seed of Abraham and to rule with Him on David's throne.