



Ministry of the Word

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Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17

Subject: Part 2 – The Genealogy of Jesus

The genealogy of Jesus Christ as recorded by Matthew is more than a list of names as you would expect in such a record. It is more than just the evidence or proof of the lineage of a King. It is the presentation of the Gracious King of kings. This separates Him from all others who are primarily interested in power, control, fame and fortune. His kingdom and rule is far, far above all of that. His kingdom is not solely about law but about love and grace. Even His credentials testify to this, and those whom He chose to be his ancestors reveal this wonder and gives hope to all sinners!

The genealogy of Jesus begins by acknowledging him as the Christ, the anointed one, the fulfilment of prophecy, the Messiah. Matthew also gives him a full title, in fact, there are two distinct ones, which would have caused great interest to the Jewish mind had they the inclination to check the validity of the claim, and they did many times. These titles, The Son of David and The Son of Abraham, at the start of Matthew have importance not only to the believer but they could be used to disprove every would-be messiah as Jesus said there would be many coming in the last days claiming to be the Messiah (Matthew 24:5). The record is not just fixed by Matthew but further back by the Lord.

So let us look at these titles in a bit more detail. Verse 1 –

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

The Son of David is not a title that Jesus ever used to refer to Himself nor did His disciples ever use it. In fact the most common title Jesus used of himself was Son of Man. In saying that, the title Son of David is used in the Gospels with the exception of John. A few examples would include Matthew 9 verse 27 when two blind men called out to Jesus, *'Son of Dave have mercy on us'*. In chapter 12 verse 23 after a healing and deliverance of a demon possessed man, the crowd cried out saying *'Could this be the Son of David?'*, which of course they were asking, could this be the Messiah. In Matthew 15 verse 22, the Canaanite woman said to Jesus *'O Lord, Son of David'*, where did she come up with that title, it was surely a revelation that God gave her, as she called him the Messiah. Again in another encounter in Matthew 20:30-31, two more physically blind men cried out *'Have mercy on us O Lord, Son of David'* Surely they were not spiritually blind. The title is next heard as Jesus rode on a Donkey, in his triumphant entry into Jerusalem in Matthew 21 verse 9. Then in Matthew 22:42 to 45, Jesus was having a discourse with the Pharisees, and Jesus asked them who they thought the Messiah could be, which they answer *the Son of David*. Jesus quoted back to them Psalm 110 verse 1, this was the last time they questioned Jesus.

No-where else in the New Testament, as far as I could see, other than those three Gospels is the title Son of David used. The Importance of David's lineage is in relation to the promises and prophecies we find in the Old Testament, which have found their fulfilment in Christ only. If we understand this, it will open up the Bible for us greatly. Let me give you a few examples of this.

2 Samuel 7:13 to 16, and I'll just read verse 16:

¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever."

This was a promise that the Lord made to David directly but when you examine it more closely it is obviously a Messianic prophecy. David's throne is not currently set up in Israel. We know that Israel is not a monarchy, neither is it a theodicy. So these words extend beyond David's natural dynasty.

Next, let's look at **Psalm 89:36**:

His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me;

When the Psalmist, who in this case was Ethan the Ezrahite, penned these words, he knew he was writing about God's covenant with David, but may not have known the extent of the

words in this verse, because once you take a closer inspection, it reveals that it goes way beyond David and his seed. This is about a greater King and a greater seed.

Another significant Psalm is **Psalm 132:11**:

The Lord has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it: "I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body.

Some Bible entitle this psalm as "A Song of Ascent". In Hebrew it is Shir Hama-aboth or songs of steps. There are a number of them clustered together and they were sung by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, and possibly while ascending up to Mount Zion. Consider the words and the hope that they give to the pilgrims. The Bible itself tells us that David's seed did not live up to the standards that God set down as markers. Only One did to the letter, and that is Jesus.

Let's move on to **Isaiah 9:6-7**:

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace, There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice, From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Of all the Old Testament writers, Isaiah contains more Messianic references than any other. The Lord held David in very high esteem without question. People can point to his bad failures, but thankfully, the difference with God is that He forgives completely and He chooses to remember your sins no more. David himself held the Lord in very high esteem. He more than any other king followed the Lord very closely. There were others of course who followed the Lord, but, they were always compared to David.

Let's now go to **Jerimiah 23:5 and 33**, very noteworthy verses indeed!:

⁵Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

³³So when these people or the prophet or the priest ask you, saying, 'What is the oracle of the Lord?' you shall then say to them, 'What oracle?' I will even forsake you," says the Lord.

Without question these are Messianic verses. They are referring to the promised seed and the line it would follow. It is also about the Lord Himself fulfilling His Word. These verses again, point to the deity of Christ. Verses 17 to 26 of that same chapter are also interesting because they mention God's promises to David which had to be in the future, because by that time David was long gone, dead.

Now we can move on to **Amos 9:11**

On that day I will raise up, The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old;

This verse is in relation to the second coming of Jesus and physical establishment of the restored kingdom of David by Jesus Himself.

There is so much in the old testament even in Zechariah 12:8 into chapter 13 which is regarding the restoration and salvation of Judah which is associated with David's house.

Really all these are a great study and I would encourage you to follow. I have laid out the verses in the notes and all you have to do is look them up and consider them and write down your thoughts, it will bless you. There are many verses also in relation to the promised seed of David, which is the Messiah. The following verses are an example:

Luke 1:31-32, 69-70; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; Acts 13:22; Romans 1:3; John 4:22; Revelation 22:16.

The next title we need to examine is **The Son of Abraham**. Abraham means father of a multitude, when he was called Abram that meant father of height. Suffice to say that these two titles go hand in hand. In Genesis 15, God made a covenant with Abram, his name had not yet changed till chapter 17. In that chapter, God caused Abram to sleep as God preformed a covenant making ritual which gave Abram's seed legal title deed and decree to the land of Canaan, which is Israel. Then in chapter 17, God gave a greater covenant to Abraham and his posterity, in which the Messiah would come through his line. This covenant was sealed with the sign of circumcision that would be Abrahams only part and all of his descendants. It applied to males only.

Like a lot of things that the Lord gave to man, the Jews began to take what the Lord gave as badges of not just identity, but they took it a step further and thought it gave them the automatic rights, regardless of their actions or faith. For example, circumcision no longer served as “covenant seal” but a right of way. The apostle Paul however makes short work of that approach in Romans 2:25 and onwards. In 1 Corinthians 7:19, this former rabbi spelt it out.

If we go back to Genesis 21:2-5, we see when Abraham was 100 years of age, he was still following the Lord, and we also see that the promise of the “seed” comes into clearer focus. The promised seed of Genesis 3 was clouded by many events such as the flood in Genesis 6 and even in Genesis 11 with the instant of the Tower of Babel which at that time Shem one of Noah’s sons was 100 years of age, and he was one of Abraham’s ancestors. You may recall that we have said the Abram, even though he lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, a pagan society, he was in fact a lost or misplaced descendant of Shem. God reached down into the society Abram had grown up in with all its pagan ways, dust him off and brought him out. Genesis 21 is a glorious occasion both for the Jew and indeed for us as well. From this point on we once more see the hand of God, as before do great and mighty things. We see His mercy, His love, His grace just as we do in the new Testament. We see His divine justice and His severity just as we do in the new Testament.

Down through the descendants of Abraham, when the promise land became a reality for them, Joshua had to remind the Israelites, of their origins and roots, as we see in Joshua 24:2 and 3. They are a chosen people by God and for God. If they needed such reminding then, how much more do we, as the children of God, need to be reminded today that we too have been chosen? They needed to be reminded that they were the custodians of sacred things and that if they didn’t protect them they would have nothing to pass onto their children. We also have to pass on what we know to our children, but not just in word, but also in deed. By the time we get to Isaiah, we see that the Israelites were forsaking the Lord God. We see the changing tides within the land of Israel and the real pressures of external influences which endangered their identity from a spiritual perspective. For many it was not a big deal to “break free” from the chains of religion and following after the true and living God. They believed they could do what they liked! When in fact they ended up doing what they were told by the Devil!

God through the prophets kept reminding them, as well as us, not to forget that we are on a journey to a better place. God informed them that life's terminus is ahead, don't get discouraged, distracted, disenchanted, or even go into denial of who you are. Remember the rock from which you were hewn, as you go through Isaiah chapter 51, God gives His people great encouragement.

As you go through this great sweep of Scripture and you see the people of God like yo-yos up and down, in and out, we continual and consistently see God's faithfulness. They abandon Him countless times but he never once let them go. Behind the historical aspect, there is the Spiritual, the Supernatural workings of this world, the unseen battle. We see many times the enemy's efforts to destroy, if even possible, God fulfilling His word. There are the times when we are brought to the very edge of our seats, yet God is over all. If we ever needed evidence of this, we only have to examine the names before us here in chapter 1 of Matthew and their history as outlined in Scripture.

Matthew's genealogy is unusual for a Jewish genealogy lineage in that it includes 5 women, four named and one unnamed. It shows not only that God treats women fairly and considers them equally important but it also shows us the work of God's grace, in that the first four women were in fact former outcasts until Mary, through whom the Messiah and great King would descend.

We see them in verses 2 to 6:

² Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴ Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵ Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

The first outcast was Tamar, she was the Canaanite daughter-in-law of Judah, one of Jacob's sons. God had taken the life of her husband Er. As was the custom of the day, because she didn't have a child with Er, she could have one with the next available brother. This was a

Levitical marriage in Deuteronomy 25 verses 5 to 10. But then Onan the next brother after being with her died because of his wickedness. By rights, Judah promised her his younger son Shelah to the widow. After Judah failed to keep that promise, Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute and tricked him into having sexual relations with her. From that illicit union twin sons were born, Perez and Zerah. The sordid story is found in Genesis 38. What Tamar did wasn't right, however it did turn out to be essential for the Messianic line. Despite deception and prostitution, God's grace fell on all three of those undeserving persons, including a desperate and deceptive Gentile.

The second outcast was a woman and a Gentile. Interestingly, according to the Mishnah, this lady was from the line of one of Tamar's Twins. She, too, was guilty of prostitution, but for her, unlike Tamar, it was a profession. Rahab, an inhabitant of Jericho, protected the two Israelite men Joshua sent to spy the city of Jericho. She lied to the messengers of the king of Jericho in order to save the spies. Because of her fear of God and her kind act towards His people, God spared her life and the lives of her family when Jericho was overcome and destroyed (Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-25). God's grace not only spared her life but brought her into the messianic line, as the wife of Salmon and the mother of the godly Boaz, who was David's great-grandfather.

The third outcast was Ruth, the wife of Boaz. When we consider who Boaz's mother was, we can see how he could be naturally inclined towards Ruth because like Rahab, Ruth was a Gentile. Her people, the pagan Moabites were the descendants of the incestuous relations of Lot with his two unmarried daughters; who in order to preserve the family line, and because they had no husbands or brothers, each of the daughters got their father drunk and caused him to unknowingly have sexual relations with them. The Moabites were one of Israel's most implacable enemies. Ruth's first husband was an Israelite, Mahlon. His married Ruth in violation of the Mosaic law (Deuteronomy 7:3; cf. 23:3; Ezra 9:2; Nehemiah 13:23) and many Jewish writers say that his early death, and that of his brother, were divine judgments of their disobedience. When Mahlon died, Ruth returned to Israel with her mother-in-law, Naomi. Ruth was a godly, loving, and sensitive woman who had accepted the Lord as her own God. Though she was a Moabite and a former pagan, with no right to marry an Israelite, God's grace not only brought Ruth into the family of Israel, but later, through

Boaz, into the royal line. She became the great grandmother of Israel's great King David. In fact the book of Ruth, is the ultimate love story. It is profound in relation to prophecy and on a personal level. It is the most significant book in the Old Testament for the Church as it exemplifies the Kinsman Redeemer role very well, as well as a precursor for Revelation 5. Also, the 10th man in the genealogy is significant. From Adam, we see the 10th man, Noah, from there the 10th man is Abraham and then the 10th man is Boaz. In chapter 4 and in verse 12, when Boaz acted as a Kinsman redeemer, redeeming Ruth the gentile as his Bride, and Naomi was given back her land, a person gave a strange blessing which was –

May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the Lord will give you from this young woman."

This is very strange in light of what we know about Perez and Tamar surely, but if we look at the 10th generation after Perez we can see that this was in fact a prophecy, it was about David. Remember, according to the Law, in Deuteronomy 23 verse 2 it says –

"One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord."

An amazing discovery has been made by Jewish scholars who are into their coding, when they examined Genesis 38 in the Hebrew language, which is the story of Tamar, the names of Boaz and Ruth, and then Obed, (their son), Jesse (Obed's son) and David were all found. The letters of their names are separated by 49 letters and they are in chronological order, always with the separation of 49 letters. One would have to ask, how did Moses know all this, how could he have been so precise? The fact is he didn't, it was the Spirit of God. So when Jesus said that not one tittle or jot would be missed, there was a very good reason for that, because each tittle and jot are important in relation to coding.

The fourth outcast was Bathsheba. She is not identified in the genealogy by name, but is mentioned simply as the wife of David and the former wife of Uriah. David committed adultery with her, had her husband sent to the battlefield to be killed, and then took her as his own wife. The son produced by the adultery died in infancy, but the next son born to them was Solomon (2 Samuel 11:1-27; 12:14, 24), who was the successor to David's throne. It was through Solomon's line that Matthew traces Jesus' legal royal lineage. Surely, this is God's grace.

The fifth Woman that is mention in the lineage, where we also see the Grace Of God, is in verse 16:

And to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

The genealogy regularly notes the male who fathers a child, but Matthew delivers an exact statement when he reaches Joseph, "the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born". The relative pronoun "*of whom*" in Greek clearly refers to Mary, for it is specific to the feminine gender! And the passive voice of the verb in Greek which translates as "*was born*" - is the only passive among the forty occurrences of *was born* in the genealogy, which prepares the way for the divine conception and natural birth of Jesus Christ in 2:1. This is an example of how the use of words, really do matter!

God showed His grace to Mary by choosing her to be the mother of Jesus. Although descended from the royal blood line of David, Mary was an ordinary, unknown young woman. Mary was just as much a sinner as all other human beings ever born (see Luke 2:47). She was deeply devout and faithful to the Lord, as she demonstrated by her humble and submissive response to the angel's announcement (Luke 1:38). Mary needed a Saviour just like all human beings, as she herself acknowledged at the very beginning of her song of praise, often called the Magnificat:

"My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bond slave" (Luke 1:46-48).

The notions of her being co-redemptrix and co-mediator with Christ are wholly unscriptural and were never a part of early church doctrine. Those heretical ideas came into the church several centuries later, through accommodations to pagan religions that originated to the time of Nimrod.

Nimrod, was a grandson of Ham, which was one of Noah's three sons. Nimrod founded the great cities of Babel, Babylon, Erech, Accad, Calneh, and Nineveh (Genesis 10:10-11). It was at Babel that the first organized system of idolatry began, and from that the famous tower was built there. Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, became the first high priestess of idolatry, and Babylon became the fountainhead of all evil systems of religion. In the pagan legends,

Semiramis was miraculously conceived by a sunbeam, and her son, Tammuz was killed by a wild pig, some of his blood fell on the stump of an evergreen tree, and the stump grew into a full new tree overnight. He was then raised from the dead after forty days of fasting by his mother (this is the origin of Lent). The same basic legends were found in counterpart religions throughout the ancient world. Semiramis (the mother) was known by various names such as Ashtoreth, Isis, Aphrodite, Venus, and Ishtar. Tammuz (the son) was known as Baal, Osiris, Eros, and Cupid.

When Babylon was destroyed, the pagan high priest at that time fled to Pergamum (or Pergamos; called "*where Satan's throne is*" in Revelation 2:13 and then went to Rome. By the fourth century A.D. much of the polytheistic paganism of Rome had found its way into the church. It was from that source that the ideas of Lent, Mary's immaculate conception, and of her being the "queen of heaven" originated.

Those pagan systems had infected Israel centuries before the coming of Christ. It was to Ishtar, "the queen of heaven," that the wicked and rebellious Israelite exiles in Egypt insisted on turning to offer sacrifices to (Jeremiah 44:17-19; 7:18). While exiled in Babylon with his fellow Jews, Ezekiel had a vision from the Lord about the "abominations" some Israelites were committing even in the Temple at Jerusalem. Practices that included "weeping for Tammuz" (Ezekiel 8:13-14). Here we see some of the origins of the mother-child cult, which has drawn Mary into its grasp. In the last days, Revelation chapter 17 verse 5 tells us - "the great harlot" will have written on her forehead

"Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth"

The Bible knows nothing of Mary's grace except that which she received from the Lord. She was the recipient, never the dispenser, of grace. The literal translation of "favoured one" (Luke 1:28) is "one endued with grace." Just as all the rest of fallen mankind. Mary needed God's grace and salvation. That is why she "rejoiced in God her Saviour" (Luke 1:47). She received a special measure of the Lord's grace by being chosen to be the mother of Jesus; but she was never a source of grace. God's grace chose a sinful woman to have the unequalled privilege of giving birth to the Messiah.

Let's turn our attention to some more interesting observations. Verses 7 to 11:

⁷Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. ⁸Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. ¹¹Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

There are three people missing from this genealogy, and they were each killed due to their idolatry. Ahaziah was slain by Jehu in 2 Kings 9, Joash was slain by a servant in 2 Kings 12 and Amaziah was slain by the people in Jerusalem, in 2 Kings 14. Remember what the Lord said about idolatry in Deuteronomy 29:20 –

“The Lord would not spare him; for then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the Lord would blot out his name from under heaven.

From Matthew's summary of the genealogy we see God's grace at work in three periods, or eras, of Israel's history verse 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.

So, there were fourteen generations between Abraham to David; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations (except the three people who were blotted out); and from the deportation to Babylon to the time of Christ fourteen generations.

The first period, from Abraham to David, was that of the patriarchs, and of Moses, Joshua, and the judges. It was a period of wandering, of enslavement in a foreign land, of deliverance, of covenant-making and law-giving, and of conquest and victory.

The second period, from David to the deportation to Babylon, was that of the monarchy, when Israel, having insisted on having human kings like all the nations around them, discovered that those kings more often led them away from God and into trouble than to God and into peace and prosperity. That was a period of almost uninterrupted decline, degeneracy, apostasy, and tragedy. There was defeat, conquest, exile, and the destruction

of Jerusalem and its Temple. Only in David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah do we see much evidence of godliness.

The third period, from the deportation to Babylon to the time of Christ, was that of captivity, exile, frustration, and of marking time. Most of the men Matthew mentions in this period, from Shealtiel to Jacob the father of Joseph, are unknown to us apart from this list. It is a period shrouded largely in darkness and characterized largely by inconsequence. It was Israel's Dark Ages, it included the 400 years of uninspired writing, but Daniel was not silent about them.

Nevertheless, God's grace was at work on behalf of His people through all three periods. The national genealogy of Jesus is one of mingled glory and pathos, heroism and disgrace, renown and obscurity.

The genealogy of Jesus Christ is immeasurably more than a list of ancient names; it is even more than a list of Jesus' human forebears. It is a beautiful testimony to God's grace, His sovereignty and to the ministry of His Son, Jesus Christ, the friend of sinners, who

“did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matthew 9:13).

If He has called sinners by grace to be His forefathers, should we be surprised when He calls them by grace to be His descendants? The King presented here is truly the King of grace!

Amén.