

CHRISTMAS TIME "REDEEMING THE TIME" MATTHEW 1:1-17

This Week's Core Competency

Hope – I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 6:19-20 - *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek*

Most, if not all of us, have heard the phrase, "family matters." Around Thanksgiving and Christmas we tend to be more conscious of this. But family *history* matters significantly as well. This is what makes a genealogy so significant. A *genealogy* is a record of ancestors showing a line of descent of a person, family or group.

Those committed to exercising due diligence in tracking down information on their ancestors are often surprised by details they uncover. For some, they can trace their family back to founding families of our nation or families of European nobility from hundreds of years ago. For others, details emerge revealing a history of oppression and/or slavery. Regardless, family history matters because it speaks to the persons and events that shape much of who we are today. Perhaps that is why websites such as ancestry.com have become so popular (visit familytreemagazine.com for a list of the top 25 websites that support this very interest).

We live in the United States today because of the decision ancestral members of our family made to come to America decades, if not centuries, ago. That decision paved the way for educational and occupational opportunities that would likely not

have been afforded us otherwise. And some of those decisions - from the past to the present - led many of us to cross the path of our future spouse, whose life too was shaped by their family's past decisions. Nuptials bring a spouse's family into ours. Before long, kids are brought into the mix, preparing the way for the next generation of our family's history. Family does matter. But let's not forget that our family's *history* matters as well.

In today's text, Matthew is writing primarily to Jewish believers to inspire them to live out the Great Commission (cf. Mt 28:19-20). One of the ways Matthew does this is to frequently point them to Jesus' fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming Messiah (Gk. *Christos*). Given that Matthew wants to point his readers to the veracity of Jesus as 'the Christ', (cf. 16:16) he begins his gospel by arranging a carefully crafted genealogy of Jesus' ancestry. Not only is it chock-full of history, but it is overflowing with hope.

Through this genealogy Matthew's readers can see God's promises to King David (1:1; cf. 2Sa 7:16), their ancestral father Abraham (1:1; cf. Ge 12:3b) and indeed all of God's people (Jer 31:31a, 33a; Eze 36:26-27) being accomplished in the person and work of Christ Jesus our Lord. If Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies relative to the Messiah's life on earth, we can maintain a sure and steady hope of his promise to return (cf. Jn 14:1-3). Therefore let us be bold to tell others of the hope we have in Jesus. The tag line at ancestry.com reads "After all, your family story is the story that leads to you." If I were to recast that line to speak to the significance of today's passage, it would read, "After all, Jesus' family story is *the* story that leads us to Him."

day 1

ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 1:1-17

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

4 Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

6 and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

7 Solomon the father of Rehoboam,

Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

Abijah the father of Asa,

8 Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,

Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,

Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

9 Uzziah the father of Jotham,

Jotham the father of Ahaz,

Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

10 Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,

Manasseh the father of Amon,

Amon the father of Josiah,

11 and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

12 After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,

Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

13 Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,

Abihud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

14 Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Elihud,

15 Elihud the father of Eleazar,

Eleazar the father of Matthan,

Matthan the father of Jacob,

16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Highlight "the...Christ" in v. 1.
- * Underline "son of David" in v. 1.
- * Underline "son of Abraham" in v. 1.
- * Circle each reference to a woman in this passage.
- * Place a bracket encompassing vv 2-6a.
- * Place a bracket encompassing vv. 6b-11.
- * Place a bracket encompassing vv. 12-16.

- * Box each occurrence of "David" in vv. 2-17.
- * Underline "King" in v. 6.
- * Highlight all of v. 16.
- * Underline "the husband of" and "of whom" in v. 16.
- * Assign a name for each bracketed section according to v. 17.
- * Circle each occurrence of "fourteen" in v. 17.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Read today's passage twice. What names or phrases stand out to you and why?
2. Verse 1 serves as a 'title' of the genealogy. Why do you think Matthew included the phrase "son of David" here?
3. Like question 2, why do you think Matthew included the phrase "son of Abraham" in the title?
4. Aside from Mary, identify each woman mentioned in the genealogy. Record what you can recall from their Old testament histories. Afterwards, refer to the notes on pg. 6 to compare with yours.
5. Verse 16 breaks from the pattern of using "*the father of*." How so? And why is this significant?
6. What truths about Jesus can we affirm from v. 16b? (See also v. 18.)
7. David is a key figure in Jesus' genealogy. How so?
8. For each grouping of names, there is a corresponding covenant God made relative to the salvation of his people. Before consulting the essay on pg. 4, try to identify each of these three covenants and their relevance regarding our redemption.
9. **Discussion:** How should this genealogy impact our hope and faith walk today?

day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Two of the four gospels (Matthew and Luke) contain a genealogy of Jesus Christ. And yet there exist marked distinctions between the two in many ways. Matthew's genealogy moves forward in time from Abraham to Jesus. Luke's conversely moves backward in time from Jesus all the way to Adam! Matthew's is partitioned in three distinct sections (2-6a; 6b-11; 12-16), whereas no such divisions can be found in Luke's. Furthermore, when the two genealogies are placed side-by-side, not all the names in the overlapping time periods match. In light of all this, how is a student of the Bible to reckon these differences?

First, we must recognize that these are genealogies from the ancient Near East. As one author concludes, "we must define and judge ancient genealogies in their own cognitive environment rather than imposing modern expectations on them" (Tremper Longman III, "Genealogy," from *Dictionary of Christianity and Science*, 301). Second, we must recognize that biblical genealogies differ because of the authors' intentions. "The purpose of the genealogies of the Bible are primarily theological and not historical, though they are *not* ahistorical" (302; emphasis mine).

Says another author, "Genealogies are not normally created for historical purposes. They are not intended to be historical records. Rather, in the Bible, as well as in the ancient Near East literature...genealogies seem to have been created for domestic, political, and religious purposes, and historical information is preserved in the genealogies only incidentally" (R.R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World*, 199).

As such, rather than getting bogged down in the minutia of divergences, we are best served to focus on the theological motivations for which each author was moved by the Holy Spirit to compose their respective genealogies. "Whereas Matthew traces Jesus lineage from Abraham to emphasize Jesus' Jewish heritage, Luke traces it back to Adam to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the hopes of all people (cf. Acts 17:26)" (*ESV Study Bible*, note 3:23-38, 1954).

Verse one serves as a 'title' for the genealogy to follow (vv. 2-16). Thereafter, the genealogy is divided up into three epochs of time (see v. 17). Furthermore, a covenant relative to God's redemptive purposes is contained in each of these three time periods. The first section begins with

Abraham and contains the advancement of the Abrahamic covenant (Ge 12:1-3). God gave this covenant to bless Abraham, to make his descendents into a great nation and so that "all the peoples [i.e. Gentiles] on earth will be blessed through [him]." Through the work of Jesus and through believers being equipped by the Holy Spirit to share the gospel, "every nation, tribe, language and people" (cf. Rev 14:6) will *indeed* be blessed through the Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20) of gospel proclamation.

The second section begins with David and contains the advancement of the Davidic covenant (2Sa7:12-16). God gave this covenant to King David with the intention that descendents of his would always sit on his royal seat. "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." Despite David's dynasty fracturing after his son Solomon's death, Israel's future rebellion and subsequent exiles (of Israel by Assyria in 722 B.C. and of Judah by Babylonia in 586 B.C.), God's promise remained steadfast. Matthew makes it clear that Jesus Christ, the *divine* King will fulfill (Mt 19:28) this original promise made to David. "The promise of an everlasting kingdom for the house of David became the focal point for many later prophecies and powerfully influenced the development of the Messianic hope for Israel" (*NIV Study Bible*, note 7:16, 579).

The third section ends with Jesus - who embodies the fulfillment of the New Covenant (cf. Lk 22:20). "'The time is coming,' declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant...I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God" (Jer 31:31a, 33a). "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Eze 36:26-27, ESV). Fallen humanity will never be able to walk in true obedience before God. If a man is to obey God rightly, God, through the sending of his Son, would have to obey for him. Jesus' sacrifice and shed blood (cf. 1Pe 1:19) paved the way for the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:3-7; Eph 2:1-9) to make the dead alive forevermore!

Space here does not permit an elaboration on each name Matthew included in Jesus' genealogy, but many are noteworthy - and for good reason. "The names in Matthew's genealogy - like Judah, Ruth, David, Uzziah, Hezekiah, Josiah - would immediately evoke for Matthew's readers a whole range of stories they had learned about their heritage from the time of their childhood. By evoking great heroes of the past like David and Josiah, Matthew points his readers to the ultimate

hero to whom all those other stories pointed. For Matthew and his circle of Jewish Christians, Jesus was not an afterthought to Judaism...Jesus was the goal to which Israel's lovingly remembered history pointed (Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 77).

My present hope is that Jesus would not be an afterthought of *your* earth-bound history, but rather that he would be your *only* thought relative to receiving a heaven-bound destiny.

The Message of the Passage

Jesus is God's Son, the Christ and our King - sent to us in accordance with the promises given in the Abrahamic, Davidic and New covenant. Therefore, let us remain hopeful in Jesus' future return as we reflect on God's faithfulness to fulfill his promises.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 *living questions* to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living questions*:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **record of** "The first two words of Matthew's gospel [*biblos geneseos*] are literally 'book of Genesis.' The effect on a Jewish reader is comparable to that of John's opening phrase, 'In the beginning...!' [Note Ge 1:1 as well]. The theme of the fulfillment of Scripture is signaled from the very start, and these opening words suggest that a new creation is now taking place" (R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 28).

v. 1 **genealogy** Matthew likely draws on the genealogies of the Old Testament, with some omissions. He demonstrates Jesus' legal claim to the throne of David, emphasizing Jesus' legal descent from David and Abraham, while Luke's genealogical record (Lk 3:23-38) emphasizes Jesus' biological descent from David and Adam (*ESV Study Bible*, note 1:1-17, 1820).

v. 1 **son of David** "Son of David points to the Messiah's necessary lineage and royal role" (Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 52).

v. 1 **son of Abraham** "Son of Abraham traces Jesus' lineage back to the founding father of the nation of Israel, thus ensuring his Jewish pedigree from the earliest stage of his people's history" (Blomberg, 52-53).

v. 3 **Tamar** Tamar's story is found in Ge 38. In a desperate attempt to conceive after being widowed twice, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute to lay with Jacob's son Judah (Mt 1:2). She conceives and gives birth to two sons - Perez and Zerah. The ancestral line to Jesus the Messiah would continue through Perez.

v. 5 **Rahab** Rahab's story is found in Jos 2:1-21 and 6:17-25. Rahab was a harlot in Jericho during the time the Israelites were beginning their conquests of the Promised Land. She served as an accomplice to the two men sent to spy on Jericho by protecting them from harm. She and her family were spared when the attack on Jericho came. They were brought into the nation of Israel. Later, she married Salmon (Mt 1:5) and gave birth to their son whom they named Boaz (Mt 1:5). "Thus a Canaanite harlot became part of the lineage of King David out of which the Messiah came" ("Rahab," *New Nelson Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1065).

v. 5 **Ruth** Ruth's story is found in the book of her own name, *Ruth*. As a widowed Gentile, she entered into the nation of Israel committed to honoring and serving their God (cf. Ru 1:16). Although Ruth was originally rejected by a suitor, Boaz stepped in and married her. Later she bore a son named Obed. Obed became the grandfather of David who would become king.

v. 6 **Uriah's wife** This is, of course, Bathsheba. Her story is found in 2Sa 11. While her husband Uriah was away fighting a battle on King David's behalf, Bathsheba was summoned by the king with impure motives. She conceived. Despite numerous attempts to cover his tracks, David was eventually 'outed' by the prophet Nathan (2Sa 12). Their first son would die shortly after birth. Their second son was Solomon who would be the first to succeed the throne of his father David.

[Women] Numerous suggestions have been made to categorize why the names of the women profiled above were listed in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. Some have argued that they were sinners of a more 'high-profile' nature. But, Tamar, Rahab and Ruth are regarded as heroines in Judaism. And it is David, *not* Bathsheba, who is the one stigmatized in Judaism for 'their' night of indiscretion. A second and stronger argument relates to the fact that each of these women were originally from Gentile descent: Tamar, a Canaanite; Rahab, a Canaanite; Ruth, a Moabite and Bathsheba, a Hittite - thus "preparing the reader for the coming of non-Israelites to follow Israel's Messiah" (France, 37). While this is a solid argument and perhaps contains notable merit, a third position points Matthew's readers to the last woman mentioned in this passage - Jesus' mother, Mary. Each of these Gentile women was joined in marriage to an Israelite man through either irregular means and/or questionable pasts. These would have likely cast shadows on the legitimacy of their offspring - much less would these children have been considered worthy of record in a royal familial line. "So the occasion for calumny by outsiders was present in each instance. One can easily see how Matthew might have intended this to prefigure the situation of Mary. The Christian story of Mary's pregnancy involved an extraordinary circumstance which no doubt engendered disbelief and ridicule on the part of those outside the church (and there may have been doubters on the inside, too)" W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, ICC, 171). This last consideration seems most likely in light of the context.

v. 16 **Mary, of whom** "The grammar of v. 16 makes clear that Joseph was not the human father of Jesus because the pronoun 'whom' is feminine and therefore can refer only to Mary as a human parent of the Christ child" (Blomberg, 56).

v. 17 **fourteen** Why is there a focus on "fourteen?" The answer lies in understanding that Israel's first king, David, is the central figure in Matthew's genealogy (note he is mentioned five times). David is the *fourteenth* name on the list. Further, there is an ancient literary device known as *gemartia* - which, when employed, ascribes numeric value to Hebrew consonants. David's name has three D (4), W (6), and D (4) totaling...14.

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

I love the rawness and truth of scripture. At first glance, our text this week is easy to skim over and wonder why in the world 17 verses are dedicated to a long list of people in Jesus' family tree. Does it matter? Actually it does. As we unpack these people and their stories we begin to see the redemption story unfolding throughout time. One common trait among Jesus' genealogy is that many of these people have broken pasts and hard stories. Like his ancestors, Jesus was born into hard circumstances as well. His unwed mother and earthly dad were away from home at the time of his birth, forcing the Son of God to be born in the most humble of all places. Shortly after His miraculous birth, they were compelled to flee the country because King Herod was looking for Jesus to kill him. Throughout his life, Jesus endured persecution, abandonment and many other hardships. One might want to worship a King who was born with a fine heritage in a beautiful castle with many servants and lovely surroundings. Not me. I want one who can sympathize with my weaknesses. I want one who has made beauty from ashes. I want one who uses broken people, like me, to accomplish His will on earth. This Christmas as you look around your celebrations filled with broken people, praise the One who makes all things beautiful in their time!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Matthew 1:1-17.

Read through the names of the people listed in Jesus' genealogy.

How many do you recognize?
What do you know about them?

What Do You Think

1. Why do you think it was important for Matthew to trace Jesus' family tree for the Jewish people?
2. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus used people who had made bad decisions in their lives to be a part of His story?

What R U Going To Do

With your parents' help, make a family tree. Go back as far as you can. Are there people with interesting stories? Are they all believers? Use the tree to pray for your family this week!

Core Comp

Hope - I can cope with the problems of life and death with the help of Jesus.

Memory Verse

Ecclesiastes 3:11 - He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

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30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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