

Jesus' Family Tree

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening for a short while, we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. Gospel according to Matthew, Matthew chapter 1. Matthew chapter 1.

And if we just read from the beginning. But it says there in verse 1, The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. As you know from many people, genealogies and family trees, they're not only interesting to them, but they're also important to them.

Because when they study their genealogy or when they search their family tree, they find out who their relations are and also who they're related to. They also find out all that their ancestors encountered and experienced in their lives in the past.

And for that reason, many people, maybe you watch it yourself, maybe you watch that TV program, Who Do You Think You Are? or Long Lost Family, where they study these genealogies and they search all these family trees in order to discover the long family history.

[1 : 22] But they also trace and sometimes they track down different family members so that these family members can be reunited. And you know, in a similar way, Jewish culture is very interested in genealogy and ancestry and family history.

And it's important to a Jew because in Jewish culture, your family is important and your relations are important and your history is important.

It's important to you what line and lineage you're from, what tribe you descend from. And all the Jews, they love to learn about it. They love to learn about who they are and where they're from. It's something that they would investigate because it's something that's important to them.

Especially because they would want to know all about who they are related to.

And you know, this in many ways is why Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy of Jesus' family tree. He gives to us the family tree of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 27] But you know, often when we come to a section like this, and as we read it earlier, we list name after name and after name, all these endless lists of names.

And it's not the only one in the Bible because you go to the Old Testament and you find lots of sections throughout the Bible with lists, endless lists of names.

And when we come to a list of names like this, it's very easy for us just to skip over it and get to the more juicy parts of the Bible and think that, well, it's not really relevant to me.

It's tempting for us to skip over it and think that these names are not really interesting. And they're not as important, just like in Matthew's gospel. It's not as important as the rest of Matthew's gospel. But Matthew puts this right on the doorstep of his gospel for a reason. Matthew gives to us the family tree of Jesus because Matthew wants to remind us from the very outset who Jesus is.

[3 : 29] And Matthew tells us from the outset that Jesus is the Christ. That's not his surname, but his title. He's the Messiah. He's the Anointed One. He's God's king in God's world.

And Matthew uses this genealogy in order to prove to us, and not only prove, but also to promote to us the fact that Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus is who he says he is. Jesus is the Christ. And so I want us to look at Jesus' family tree. And I want to see three things from this family tree this evening.

I want to see, first of all, his family. Then I want to see his function. And then I want us to see his focus. So as we look at the family tree of Jesus, we see his family, his function, and his focus.

His family, his function, and his focus. So first of all, we see his family. That's what the tree is all about. We read there in verse 1, The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

[4 : 35] Abraham was father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah, and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez, and so on.

You know, in a previous life, before Jesus called him to be his disciple, as you know, boys and girls, Matthew was a tax collector.

Which, as you might expect, it was one of the most despised jobs in Israel. Because tax collectors, they were Jews. But they were Jews who worked for the opposition.

They worked for those who were overruling and oppressing them. The Romans. They worked for the Roman government. And like Zacchaeus, who was renowned for his cash flow and his corruption, Matthew would have also been someone who was also greedy for gain.

But one of the roles and responsibilities of a tax collector, other than collecting tax from everybody in the community, one of the roles and responsibilities of the tax collector was to be accustomed and also acquainted with public registers.

[5 : 43] They had to know who everyone was. They were to be familiar with all these lists of genealogies, lists of family trees, and all these family connections. They had to know who was who and who lived where in order to go to their door and demand some tax.

And so as a tax collector, Matthew would have had to know the family history of every household in Galilee that had to be taxed. He had to know who they were. And because Jesus, as you know, he was a Galilean, Matthew would have been familiar with Jesus and all his descendants.

He would have known the family tree of Jesus. Matthew would have known that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, that he was from the tribe of Judah, that he was from the line and lineage of King David.

Matthew would have known all these things because that was part of his job. And you know, it's amazing when you think about it, that in the perfect providence of God, Matthew's past experience as a tax collector, a job that was despised by every other Jew, and yet Matthew's experience was used to the glory of God in presenting to us the opening words of his gospel.

And you know, the Lord always knew that when Matthew became a Christian, Matthew's knowledge of all these names and all these family connections, that they would be used here to explain who Jesus Christ really is.

[7 : 19] And you know, it ought to be a reminder to us that nothing is wasted with the Lord. Nothing is wasted with the Lord. All our past experiences, whatever we did or whatever we do, all our past experiences, all our past encounters, whether these past encounters were dark and difficult, whether they were full of sin or strife or sickness or even sorrow, none of it is wasted with the Lord.

The Lord uses all of it. The Lord uses all of our personal providences, just like He did with Matthew. He uses all that we go through in our lives in order to sculpt us and to shape us and even to sharpen us, to sharpen us for works of service.

And that was certainly through in Matthew's experience, because the Lord used Matthew, as you know, to write the first gospel that we meet in the New Testament. It's not the first gospel that was written. That was Mark's gospel.

But he writes the first gospel that we meet in the New Testament. And as you'd expect from a former tax collector, Matthew begins his gospel by introducing us to Jesus using his family tree. He uses the very thing he was so familiar with. It was part of his job every day. Now, to an extent, we're very familiar with what Matthew does here, because when we meet someone for the first time, I'm sure you do it all the time, when we meet someone for the first time, we always try and work out who they are, don't we?

[8 : 56] We always try and work out where they're from. And, well, if we don't know who they are, we ask who their parents were. And if we're of another generation that was before then, we ask who their grandparents were.

Or we ask what the family name was, or what the family nickname was, just to find out who they were. And in many ways, that's what Matthew is doing here with us. He's telling us and explaining to us who Jesus is.

Not was, because he still is. And he says to us that Jesus was from a particular family. He was a son of Abraham. He was a descendant of Abraham, whom the Lord promised would have a big family.

Jesus was a descendant of Abraham. You remember way back in Genesis chapter 12, the Lord said to Abraham, those wonderful words, wonderful words of promise.

Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to a land that I will show you. So Abraham was to leave Babylon. That's where he was living, out of the Chaldees.

[10:03] He was to leave Babylon, go to Israel, go to the land that I'll show you. I'll make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you, I will curse.

And in you, Abraham, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So the Lord promised to Abraham long ago that he would live up to his name, Abraham, father of many nations. And that through his promised seed, all the nations, all the families of the earth would be blessed. But you know the story of Abraham. When Abraham was given that promise of blessing, he was an old man.

And his wife, Sarah, she was old too. And it wouldn't be until Abraham was 100 years old that he would have a son called Isaac.

But the Lord was faithful to his covenant promise. He was faithful to the generations and the Lord remained faithful throughout every succeeding generation. And you know, when you look at Jesus' family tree, you look at this tree, you read through all these names.

[11:11] And if you were to stop at each name, you would see that each and every time, at some point and somewhere, there were obstacles to overcome in order for the Messiah to be born. Abraham's wife, Sarah, she became a mother for the first time at the age of 90.

And even then, their only son, Isaac, he was going to be a test of faith. Isaac was to be offered up as a burnt offering on Mount Moriah. But when Abraham was faithful, we see later, as you follow Isaac's life, it goes on to the next generation, Isaac's life.

Isaac married Rebekah. She was unable to have children. The Lord had closed her womb until the Lord providentially opens her womb. She has twins.

The first son is called Esau. The second is called Jacob. But the Lord says that the older shall serve the younger. So Jacob is going to be above Esau, which wasn't without its family difficulties and family disputes, as you see the narrative of Genesis unfolding.

And then you have Jacob. Jacob was the deceiver. He deceived his father for the blessing. And yet Jacob was the one who fathered 12 sons, 12 sons who would become the 12 tribes of Israel, and one of whom was Judah.

[12:32] And it was on Jacob's deathbed that Judah was promised that he would have this special line, a line and lineage of royalty. Because Judah, the scepter shall not depart from you.

The scepter shall not depart from you, Judah. But that also wasn't without its problems. Because we're told in verse 3, Judah, the father of Perez and Zerah, by Tema, who was Judah's daughter-in-law.

And you know, what becomes glaringly obvious as you go through this genealogy is that sin and moral failure makes this family tree more and more complex.

And you look at this family, and you see it's no different to the families we see today. But Tamar wasn't the only woman mentioned in Jesus' family tree.

We're told in verse 5 that Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab. Rahab, as you know, she was the prostitute from Jericho whom the Lord spared because she hid the spies in her loft.

[13:42] More than that, Boaz, he married Ruth, the Moabites. She was from Moab. She was from outside of Israel. And we all know the love story of the book of Ruth.

Wonderful book in our Bible where Ruth and Boaz, they get together, they finally get married by the end of the story, and they have a son called Obed. And Obed, he has his own son called Jesse. And Jesse also has his son, one of many sons, but one of his youngest sons, even his youngest son, was called David. And so Ruth was David's great granny.

And you look at it, it's amazing. But there were even more obstacles to overcome in this family tree because David was the father of Solomon. And as you know, Solomon was born as a result of adultery.

David's adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband. And you know, when you look at Jesus' family tree, when you actually stop and go through all these names, you not only see the obstacles, you also see that this family tree, it's actually something, like something out of EastEnders or Coronation Street.

[14:55] You go through it, there's barrenness, there's incest, there's prostitution, there's adultery, there's murder. And yet even though there are so many obstacles, even there's so many obstacles

to this and opposition to this Messiah all the way through, what should shine out of it all is that the Lord was faithful to every generation.

The Lord was faithful to every single generation. His promise was being fulfilled all the time. More than that, it should show us how human Jesus was. Jesus was born into a family. Like we're all born into a family. We can't choose our family, but we're all born into a family. And even Jesus' family was full of division. Jesus' family was full of difficulties. It was full of people of disrepute. That's his history.

And even though Jesus was without sin, Jesus' family was a family full of sinners. And of course, what Matthew wants to remind us is that the gospel is for sinners.

[16:08] The gospel is for sinners. The gospel is for families, divided families, difficult families, damaged families. The gospel is for broken families, and bereaved families, and bereft families.

Because, you know, the reality is, and we say it so often, we are all broken people living broken lives in this broken world. And the church is not a museum of good people.

Never think that. The church is not a museum of good people. It's a hospital for the broken. It is a hospital for the broken.

And there is one great physician. And they called his name Jesus. And you know, my friend, the gospel is for your family. The gospel is for my family.

The gospel is for all families in our community. Because that was the promise given to Abraham. Through your seed, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

[17:07] That was the great promise. A blessing to families. And that promise has come to us through the person of Jesus Christ.

It's a wonderful promise to all the families in our community. To your family. This wonderful promise that Jesus is for your family.

And so we see, first of all, his family. It's the first thing we see about Jesus in this genealogy. But then secondly, we see his function. So his family and then his function.

Look again at verse 1. Matthew introduces us. He says, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. So as Matthew explains, Jesus is family three.

He not only emphasizes that Jesus is a Jew who is descended from Abraham. Matthew also explains that Jesus is a king. He's a king who has descended along that royal line and lineage of King David.

[18:13] And when you look at Matthew's gospel, the whole emphasis of Matthew's gospel is that Jesus is king. If you want to know what Matthew's gospel is, that's what he wants to tell you.

Jesus is king. The emphasis of Mark's gospel is that Jesus is the suffering servant. The emphasis of Luke's gospel is that he is the son of man.

And the emphasis of John's gospel is that Jesus is the eternal son of God. But for Matthew, this Jesus, he is king.

He's the son of David. He's of royal descent. And because Jesus is from this royal line and lineage of King David, he is the Messiah.

There's no disputing it. He is the Messiah. He's God's king in God's world. He is the anointed one. He is the Christ. Because that's what was promised to David.

[19:11] This is what was promised to David a thousand years before Jesus was born. David also was given a covenant promise. Just like Abraham before him in Genesis 12, Abraham was given a covenant promise of blessing.

And so the Lord also gave David a covenant promise of blessing. He said to David in 2 Samuel 7, the Lord promised David, he said, I will raise up your offspring after you who shall come from your body and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son.

And this is why Matthew, this is why he follows this royal line and lineage. Because the covenant promise that was given to David, it was all about one of David's descendants that would sit upon his throne and establish his kingdom forever.

But it wasn't going to be an earthly kingdom. It was going to be an eternal kingdom. A kingdom of God. A kingdom of heaven. And you know, Matthew brings us through all the generations.

[20:28] He goes through all these generations of this royal line and lineage and he points us to Jesus right at the end of it. And he says, this is him. This is the one you've been waiting for.

This is the son of David. This is the one of royal descent. This is the Messiah. This is the Christ. This is God's king in God's world. You know, Matthew is saying to them and to us tonight, Jesus is king and he is king in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus is king and he is king in the kingdom of heaven. And you know, the very reason, as we said, the very reason Matthew wrote his gospel about King Jesus is because for the Jews, Jesus wasn't the king they wanted.

They would not have this man to rule over them. He wasn't the king they wanted. They wanted their Messiah, as you know, to be a conquering king.

They expected their Messiah to be a warrior king, to kill thousands thousands and ten thousands like King David did. They wanted their Savior to overthrow the oppression of the Romans and restore the nation of Israel again, to be the great nation that it was in David's day.

[21 : 54] The Jews assumed that Jesus was going to be this earthly king with an earthly kingdom and have political powers to rule and reign the nation of Israel.

But as you know, Jesus came to establish not an earthly kingdom, but an eternal kingdom, a kingdom of heaven.

And for the Jews, that's not what they wanted. They didn't want this man to rule over them. They didn't want Jesus to be their king. And you know, what you see even from the beginning, right from the beginning of Matthew's gospel, is that that rejection of Jesus, it was all part of his humiliation. The rejection of Jesus was all part of his humiliation. In fact, that's how Matthew presents Jesus in his gospel. He doesn't present Jesus as this ruling and reigning king who sits upon his throne in Jerusalem.

No, Matthew presents Jesus as a king who humbled himself and was humiliated. And Matthew explains that his first act of humiliation was when Jesus humbled himself by taking to himself our nature.

[23 : 11] Because as soon as this genealogy, this family tree is complete, down in verse 17, Matthew says, verse 18, now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.

Matthew gives to us straight away the birth narrative of King Jesus. But as you know, the birth narrative, it's not a royal coronation. It's an act of humiliation.

Where King Jesus, we're told, he's born in a lowly stable in Bethlehem. He's placed into a feeding trough. And as the narrative of Matthew's gospel progresses, it's not a progression of exaltation where Jesus is heading towards the throne in Israel.

No, it's more humiliation. It's down, down, down. where the entire life of Jesus becomes an act of humiliation. And you go through Matthew's gospel and it's always going down, down, down.

Where Jesus, he's tempted by the devil, he's rejected by his people, he's chased out of cities and synagogues, he's opposed by the religious elite, even his family reject him and refuse him and disown him.

[24 : 23] The entire life of Jesus becomes this act of humiliation down, down, down, all the way down and Matthew keeps on going with this humiliated king but he's still king, Matthew says.

He's still king. Everything Jesus is doing, he's doing it as king but he's going all the way down to the cross. And you know the amazing thing is Matthew all the time keeps emphasizing this one point, Jesus is king.

You want to know who Jesus is? He's king and he needs to be your king. Even when Matthew, when Matthew records Jesus' first sermon, Jesus' first sermon, as he puts it, he calls sinners to turn from their sin and to turn to him for salvation.

And Jesus says, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. This king, says Matthew, needs to be your king. When Matthew records the sermon on the mount, he teaches what it means to live in the kingdom of heaven because this king needs to be your king.

When Jesus tells all his parables, the parable of the sower and the parable of the pearl of great price and the parable of the weeds and the wheat and all these different parables, they all begin with the same phrase.

[25 : 48] The kingdom of heaven is like. You want to know how to live in the kingdom of heaven? You need to follow this king. But as you know, the humiliation of King Jesus, it's going down all the way, all the way down to the cross.

In fact, you know, it's Matthew. The idea where I often say Jesus humbled himself from the crown of glory down to the cradle in Bethlehem, all the way down to the cross of Calvary, from the crown to

the cradle to the cross, that is Matthew's gospel.

That's where it all comes from. That's where he begins, the crown. Then he moves to the cradle and you follow the life of Jesus.

Matthew's saying, Jesus is king, but he's going to the cross. He is king, but he's going to the cross. But as you know, that's not the end of the story.

The cross is never the end of the story because King Jesus, we're told, he's highly exalted. He's come all the way down from the crown to the cradle to the cross, right down to the grave.

[26 : 56] And then he's highly exalted. He's raised from the dead, given a name that's above every other name because it will be at the name of Jesus that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess in heaven and on earth and even in hell.

They will all confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. You know, my friend, Matthew is reminding us that King Jesus entered our world in humiliation and he exited in exaltation.

King Jesus entered our world in humiliation and exited in exaltation. And tonight, King Jesus, the wonderful thing is he is enthroned on high.

That's where he is tonight. enthroned on high. The Bible says he has put all his enemies under his feet and with all authority in heaven and on earth, he commands us on the pages of Scripture to repent.

Why are we to repent? Because Jesus is King. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. My friend, his function as King and he has done it.

[28 : 15] His function was to crush sin, to conquer the grave and to call sinners to repentance. That's his function as King. He has crushed sin.

He has conquered the grave but he is still calling sinners, still calling you to repent and believe in the gospel. And because Jesus is King, you know, the thing is we need to abdicate the throne of our heart.

The throne of our heart is precious to us and I know it's precious to us. We love being King or Queen over our own lives but because Jesus is King, because Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, we need to abdicate the throne of our heart.

We need to surrender our heart. We need to submit our life to this King, to King Jesus. We need to come on bended knee before him and confess that he alone is Lord and Savior.

You know, there's a lot in this family tree. So as we study and search Jesus' family tree, we see his family, his function, and lastly and very briefly, his focus.

[29 : 33] His family, his function and his focus. Look at verse 17. So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations and from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And as we read on, verse 21, she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. Matthew concludes Jesus' family tree by explaining there in verse 17 that there were 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 generations from David to entering into Babylon and 14 generations from the exile in Babylon towards the birth of Jesus.

And to be honest, no one knows why Matthew mentions this or what its significance is. Because when you look into the actual number of generations, there were actually more than 14 generations from Abraham to David and David to the exile and the exile to the birth of Jesus.

Matthew would have to actually admit some of the numbers to get his numbers or he's chosen certain people for a particular reason. There's a lot of speculation about its significance but no one really knows about verse 17.

[31 : 10] In fact, New Testament theologian Leon Morris, he writes in his commentary, he says, the number 14 must have been significant to Matthew but he forgot to share its significance with us.

So number 14 wasn't really Matthew's focus and it certainly wasn't the focus of Jesus because, you know, as we search and as we study this family tree, we see Jesus' family first and foremost, we see his function as king but we also see his focus.

What is the focus of Jesus? What is the focus of Jesus? And you know, the beautiful thing that you see in chapter 1 of Matthew's gospel is that the focus of Jesus is you.

The focus of Jesus is you. His focus is you. And that's what Matthew affirms when he describes what the angel says, call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.

Boys and girls, call his name Savior. Call his name Salvation. Call his name Jesus because his focus to save you. His focus is to save you from your sins.

[32 : 30] That's his focus. Call him Jesus because his focus is you. His focus is to humble himself from the crown of glory for you.

His focus is to be born in the cradle in Bethlehem for you. His focus is to humble himself all the way down to the cruel cross of Calvary for you.

His focus is to go into the grave for you. His focus is to rise again from the dead for you. It's all for you to save you from your sins.

Call his name Jesus because he's going to save his people from their sins. And you know, the amazing thing about Matthew's gospel and Mark's gospel and Luke's gospel and John's gospel is that we are on first name terms with Jesus.

He's not Mr. Christ. He's not Rabbi to us. He's not even described as Lord of Lords. We are able to use his personal name because he is a personal Savior.

[33 : 39] He's on first name terms with us because he wants to deal with us personally. His focus is us personally. He wants to focus on you personally.

His focus is you. Call his name Jesus. Use his first name to save you from your sin. Because the Bible says to us there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved other than this first name that was given to God's Son call his name Jesus.

Do you know my friend this Christmas you don't need to focus upon anyone else or anything else because the beauty of the gospel is that this Jesus is focused on you and so you should focus on him and make sure that he is your saviour and your lord and that you're following him because he is the greatest gift.

As we said this morning he is the reason for the season. His focus is you. Call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins.

I wonder which one of you will call on his name and make sure that you're saved from your sins because he calls you personally to come to him and to confess him as lord and as saviour.

[35 : 23] Call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sin. May the lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O lord we look at thy word and we marvel at it that it's all there for us.

It's all there for us to read in our own language and it's all there for us to understand and for us to believe that Jesus is the Christ the only saviour of sinners.

we thank thee oh lord that he has a personal name and that we are able to call upon that name.

We're able to call upon the name of Jesus a name that is highly exalted a name that is above every other name and that there is no other name under heaven that we must be saved by except for the name of Jesus or that we would leave this place with the name of Jesus on our lips with the salvation of Jesus in our heart and to know the promises of Jesus that they are all ours in and through him and him alone.

Bless us Lord in the week that lies ahead a week Lord that is as we often say so unknown to us but Lord we commit ourselves into the hands of that shepherd the shepherd who knows us and loves us and promises to walk with us they called his name Jesus and Lord help us then to follow him keep us then we pray do us good we ask for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake amen we're going to bring our service to our conclusion this evening we're going to sing the words of Psalm 22 Psalm 22 in this did I write that I didn't write that on your one it is sing psalms I didn't write a little s on the thing so he didn't know it was sing psalms I'm just noticing that just now Ivan sorry so sing psalms Psalm 22 are you happy with that yeah so it's

Psalm 22 page 27 psalm 22 singing from verse 27 down to the end of the psalm although I forgot an s I won't forget the questions you'll all be happy to know question one what was Matthew's job before he followed Jesus good job in Matthew's gospel Jesus is described as a king how did Jesus enter into our world humiliation what does the name Jesus mean salvation look at that see you are listening if we had given the questions to the adults we wonder how they'd get on okay Psalm 22 singing from verse all peoples will bow down to him the nations of the world abroad from verse 27 to the end of the psalm to

[38 : 51] God's praise the whole earth will remember him and turn to war no sorry no the whole earth no the whole earth will remember the whole earth will remember him and turn towards the Lord their God all peoples will bow down to him the nations of the world abroad dominion to the

Lord belongs and over name nations he is king the rich of all the earth will feast and worship with an offering in all those whose destiny is dust will humbly kneel before his throne they cannot keep themselves alive for they depend on him alone him alone posterity will serve the Lord and generations still to come come will tell the people yet unborn the righteous acts that he has done done the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore. Amen.
Amen.