

The Genealogy of Jesus

Message 1 of 6 in the series: "Hidden Gems: Things You've Never Noticed About Christmas"

A. The genealogy of Jesus matters because it shows us that the story of the birth of Jesus is not a fable or fairy tale. It is a real, historical account of how the Son of God became human and was born into a real family with a real family history.

"This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. **Jacob was the father of Judah** and his brothers. **Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar)**... Salmon was the father of Boaz (**whose mother was Rahab**). Boaz was the father of Obed (**whose mother was Ruth**). Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon (**whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah**)... Jacob was the father of **Joseph, the husband of Mary. Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah**. All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah." Matthew 1:1-3a, 5-6, & 16-17 (NLT)

Messiah (ancient Hebrew) = anointed one = Christ (ancient Greek).

1. Jesus' genealogy verified to Matthew's original readers (who were primarily Jewish) that Jesus came from the right family line to be the Messiah. The Old Testament prophets had predicted that a descendant of David, a man chosen/anointed by God and filled with God's Spirit just as David had been, would come to redeem God's people. **"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord."** Isaiah 11:1-3a (NIV)

2. Jesus' genealogy reminds us that God keeps His promises.

- God kept His promises to Abraham. "The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. **All the families on earth will be blessed through you.**'" Genesis 12:1-3 (NLT)
- God kept His promises to David. "For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And **I will secure his royal throne forever... Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.**" 2 Samuel 7:12-13 & 16 (NLT)

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. **The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!**" Luke 1:31-33 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! God keeps His promises in His time. "But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and **a thousand years is like a day.**" 2 Peter 3:8 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! God's timing is always perfect. "But **when the right time came, God sent his Son**, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him **to buy freedom for us** who were slaves to the law, **so that he could adopt us as his very own children.**" Galatians 4:4-5 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! A personal relationship with God will often require us to wait on His timing. "The Lord is good to those **who wait for him**, to the soul who seeks him." Lamentations 3:25 (ESV)

3. The genealogy of Jesus reminds us that sinful, flawed people can be brought into Jesus' family.

- Jacob was a schemer and deceiver who stole his brother Esau's birthright and blessing. (Genesis 25:19-34 & 27:1-40)
- Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law and the widow of two of his wicked sons. Tamar tricked Judah into sleeping with her by pretending to be a prostitute. (Genesis 38)
- Rahab was a prostitute who ran a brothel in Jericho. (Joshua 2)

- Ruth was a descendant of Moab, the son born to Lot and his oldest daughter after they escaped from Sodom. Moabites were viewed as “unclean” and were not allowed into the Tabernacle or Temple to worship. (Genesis 19:30-37, Numbers 25:1-3, Deuteronomy 23:3-6, Book of Ruth)
- David committed adultery with a beautiful woman named Bathsheba causing her to become pregnant. In an attempted cover-up, David ordered Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband and one of David’s finest soldiers, to be placed in the front lines of battle so he would be killed. (2 Samuel 11)

IMPORTANT! Jesus came into our world to save sinners. Matthew knew this as well as anybody. “As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me and be my disciple,’ Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him. Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with such scum?’ When Jesus heard this, he said, ‘**Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.**’ Then he added, ‘Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: “I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.” **For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.**” Matthew 9:9-13 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! God still chooses to use imperfect, flawed people like us, sinners saved by His grace, to tell the whole world the Good News about Jesus, the Messiah. “Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. **God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.**”

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NLT)

B. Joseph and Mary faced difficult decisions and challenges because they became part of Jesus’ family.

“This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.** As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. ‘**Joseph, son of David,**’ the angel said, ‘do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and **you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.**’ All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet: ‘Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means “God is with us.” **When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.** But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.” Matthew 1:18-25 (NLT) (*Isaiah 7:14*)

IMPORTANT! Since we live in a fallen world, we will face difficult decisions and challenges because we have become part of Jesus’ family. “**Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven,** for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:11-12 (NIV)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. Read Isaiah 11:1-3, 42:1, 53:1-10, & 61:1-3. What do we learn about the Messiah from this OT prophet? In what ways did Jesus fulfill these prophecies?
2. Read Matthew 1:1-17. Then familiarize yourself with the stories of Jacob (Genesis 25:19-34 & 27:1-40), Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38), Rahab (Joshua 2), Ruth the Moabitess (Genesis 19:30-37, Numbers 25:1-3, Deuteronomy 23:3-6, Book of Ruth), and David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) Why do you think God allowed so many flawed people into the family line of the Messiah? (Matthew 9:9-13)
3. Why does God still choose to use flawed people like us to tell others about Jesus? (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

4. How does it make you feel to learn that Jesus' birth fulfilled promises made to Abraham 2,000 years earlier (Genesis 12:1-3) and to David 1,000 years earlier (2 Samuel 7:12-13 & 16, Luke 1:31-33)? Why is waiting on the Lord a necessary part of having a personal relationship with Him? (2 Peter 3:8, Lamentations 3:25)
5. Read Matthew 1:18-25. How did Mary's pregnancy put Joseph in a difficult spot? Have you ever been terribly misunderstood or faced rejection/ridicule for doing what God wanted you to do? (Matthew 5:11-12)
6. Discuss the following quotations:

"It is not the good people who are in and the bad people who are out. Everyone is in only by the grace of Jesus Christ. It is only what Jesus has done for you that can give you standing before God. There is no one, then, not even the greatest human being, who does not need the grace of Jesus Christ. And there is no one, not even the worst human being, who can fail to receive the grace of Jesus Christ if there is repentance and faith." Tim Keller discussing the genealogy of Jesus

"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it." Mark 8:34-35 (NLT)

Great Resource: *Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ* by Tim Keller, Penguin Books, 2018.