

The Gracious King

Scripture: Matthew 1:1–17

Code: 2180

INTRODUCTION

The book of Matthew reveals Jesus Christ as King. It begins by presenting Jesus' family tree as a royal genealogy. If this King is to be heralded as King, then it must start with the proof that He comes from the royal line. There was a royal line in Israel, and it came through David. In 2 Samuel 7 God said to David through the prophet Nathan, that it would be through his loins that the King would come, who would ultimately reign in Israel and set up an eternal Kingdom. That was never fulfilled in Solomon, and so the Israelites waited and waited for one born of the seed of David to fulfill the prophecy. Now if Jesus is to be that King, it must be established that He has the right to reign because He descends from the genealogy of royalty. This royal genealogy appears in the first seventeen verses of chapter 1:

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac; and Isaac begot Jacob; and Jacob begot Judah and his brethren; and Judah begot Perez and Zerah of Tamar; and Perez begot Hezron; and Hezron begot Ram; and Ram begot Amminadab; and Amminadab begot Nahshon; and Nahshon begot Salmon; and Salmon begot Boaz of Rahab; and Boaz begot Obed of Ruth; and Obed begot Jesse; and Jesse begot David, the king; and David, the king, begot Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah; and Solomon begot Rehoboam; and Rehoboam begot Abijah; and Abijah begot Asa; and Asa begot Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begot Joram; and Joram begot Uzziah; and Uzziah begot Jotham; and Jotham begot Ahaz; and Ahaz begot Hezekiah; and Hezekiah begot Manasseh; and Manasseh begot Amon; and Amon begot Josiah; and Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel; and Zerubbabel begot Abiud; and Abiud begot Eliakim; and Eliakim begot Azor; and Azor begot Sadoc; and Sadoc begot Achim; and Achim begot Eliud; and Eliud begot Eleazar; and Eleazar begot Matthan; and Matthan begot Jacob; and Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations."

You say, "Why in the world do we have all of this in the Bible?" Well, let me tell you why. First of all, let's see if we can't answer this by considering...

A. The Importance of Genealogies in Israel

The Jews tenaciously valued their pedigrees. Consequently, if anybody was going to be presented to them as a king, it was absolutely essential that he have the pedigree to prove it. That genealogies were important to the Jews, is seen in the fact that they were used for the purposes of...

1. TRIBAL LOCATION For example, after the conquest of Canaan, it was essential to determine a family's place of residence according to its tribe, because all the land was divided into tribal boundaries. Numbers 26 and 35 explain how one had to know his tribe, his family line, and his father's house so that he could be identified in the right location in the land.

2. TRANSACTION OF LAND Under certain circumstances, according to the book of Ruth, chapters 3 and 4, transfer of property required accurate knowledge of the family tree, so that they could keep tribal land within the tribe. So there had to be a known pedigree in order to make some business transactions of land.

3.

TESTING OF LINEAGE Another interesting thing is indicated to us in Ezra 2:62: "These sought their registration among those who were reckoned by genealogy...." After the 70-year Babylonian captivity, many of the Jews started coming back to Israel. And many of them were claiming to be priests from the tribe of Levi. However, because God was very serious about having only Levites serving as priests (Num. 1:50-53; 1 Sam. 13:8-14), the people who claimed to be priests had to be proven on the basis of their genealogy. And if the necessary registration was not found, they were "put from the priesthood" (v. 62b). So, the Jews needed to know their pedigree for the exchange of land, for their tribal location, and for their priestly identification when they returned from captivity. Later, in the time of Christ, the Romans used genealogies for the purpose of...4. TAXATION LAWS It's most interesting to remember that even when the New Testament begins, Joseph and Mary are going to Judea to be registered according to their own ancestry: "And it came to pass, in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be registered. (And this registration was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be registered, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, to Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David)" (Lk. 2:1-4). Such genealogical identifications were still being made at the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. By the way, the writings of Josephus, the ancient historian, support the use of ancestral files as a part of Jewish culture around the time of Jesus Christ. So this was a very common practice. The Jews highly valued their pedigree. Even Paul, as he identified himself with Israel in Romans 11:1, said, "I say, then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." To the Jewish people, this was very important. And this accounts for the existence of at least fifty genealogies in the Old Testament. There were reasons for that as we have seen, not only for determining the royal and priestly lines, but also in terms of property transfer and so forth. Now, all of this has changed today, because Jewish people have absolutely no record of their tribal ancestry. And because such records have completely vanished, no Jew existent in the world today could ever prove himself to be a son of David. **Could anyone claiming to be the Messiah today, prove it?** I want you to know that if anybody comes along claiming to be the Messiah, they'll never be able to prove it. Though there are some orthodox Jews who still believe the Messiah is going to come, they are faced with the problem that there will never be any lineal way to prove that. Consequently, Jesus Christ is the last verifiable claimant to David's throne. And if He is not the Messiah, then nobody else could ever lay any believable claim to it.

B. The Implications of the Genealogy of Christ

1. THE REVERSAL OF THE RECORD

In this genealogy, we have a descending record starting from Abraham and descending down through David and Joseph to Jesus. In the third chapter of Luke, Jesus' genealogy is also recorded, but that genealogy is the reverse: It ascends, starting with Jesus and going back through Mary all the way to Adam. Whereas Matthew's genealogy is coming down through Joseph, Luke's traces Jesus back through Mary. One begins with Jesus, the other ends with Jesus. But regardless of their purposed variations, it's as if the Spirit of God says, "Any way you cut it folks, this is the one who should be King."

2. THE RIGHT OF ROYALTY

a. Through Joseph Another distinction between this genealogy and Luke's is that Matthew is showing the legal descent of Jesus as the King of Israel, and Luke is showing the lineal descent. In other words, Matthew shows us the royal line, whereas Luke shows us the bloodline. The difference is explained in that the royal line was always passed through the father. The father possessed the right to rule...they never had queens in Israel. But in spite of the fact that Jesus had no natural father, He has the right to reign that belonged to David, because Joseph was His legal father. So, Matthew follows the royal line, through David and his son, Solomon. b. Through Mary One of David's other

sons was Nathan, through whom Mary's line is traced. Therefore, Jesus was also a descendant of David through Mary. Whereas through Joseph He was legally an heir to the throne of David, through Mary He was in the bloodline of David.¹) The Child of Mary Jesus was only the legal heir of David through Joseph. Matthew 1:16a says, "And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary...." Isn't that interesting? What doesn't it say? The "father of Jesus." Joseph was not the real father of Jesus; he was the husband of Mary. The Bible never calls Joseph the father of Jesus. Furthermore, verse 16 says, "...Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." "...of whom..." in the Greek is in the feminine gender, clearly showing that He was born not of Joseph, but of Mary. He was Joseph's child legally, because if you were adopted into a family, you legally had all the rights and privileges that a natural child had. And so in every way possible, Jesus Christ had the right to rule. His father was the one who granted Him the royal line, His mother was the one who granted Him the royal blood. It's interesting that Luke's genealogy in 3:23 says, "And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli." Jesus was considered by everybody to be the son of Joseph, even though He was not his real son by birth. Now many people thought, at least at the time of His birth, that He was the son of some illicit affair. But they called Him the son of Joseph because Joseph constituted His legal father. There was never really any question about that at all. Even during His ministry, He was known as the son of Joseph: "And all bore Him witness.... And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" (Lk. 4:22).²) The Curse on Jeconiah There is a perfect fulfillment of prophecy in this genealogy that is very fascinating. Matthew 1:11-12 says, "And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel." Though Jesus was in David's line through Joseph, He would have been unable to reign because there was a divine curse that had been placed upon Jeconiah's offspring. In Jeremiah 22:30a, Jeremiah pronounced God's judgment upon Jeconiah: "Thus saith the LORD, Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David...." If Jesus had been the real son of Joseph, He never could have sat on the throne of David, because He would have been under the curse. And yet, He had to be the legal son of Joseph to have the right, so God had to devise a plan by which Jesus would be the legal heir to the throne, but, at the same time, would not be in the bloodline of David descending through Jeconiah. God did it by the virgin birth--bypassing the cursed bloodline of Jeconiah, and yet still maintaining Jesus' royal right to reign. It's a fantastic thing how God guarded every single detail without contradiction through the miracle of the virgin birth. So, the reason for the genealogy is to present the fact that this is the One who has the right to reign. It may take us a long time to unscramble the significance of this, but all that the Jewish people had to do was read it and they got the message. They knew their Old Testament: They knew about the curse on Jeconiah, the royalty of the Davidic line, and the importance of genealogies to establish one's right to reign. And Matthew utilized these very issues to show that Jesus had the right to be King.

3. THE REVELATION OF THE ROLES

Matthew begins his genealogy with these words: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The word book (Gk. biblos) can mean "a book, a list of names, or a record." This list of names is literally "the book of beginnings (Gk. geneseos) about Jesus Christ." This is the story of how Jesus Christ came to be, the record of His origin and ancestry. The name "Jesus Christ," beyond being just a personal identification, also conveys the roles in which He serves. a. Jesus In the Greek, this name would be Iesous, the New Testament equivalent to the Old Testament Jeshua or Jehoshua, meaning "Jehovah is salvation." His name describes what He was sent to do, as noted in Matthew 1:21: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins." b. Christ This name would be rendered Christos in the Greek, which means "the anointed." He was the anointed (divinely commissioned) prophet, priest, and King. So this genealogy is the book about the beginnings of the One who will save, and

who was anointed as prophet, priest, and King. Now, it was so important to know that Christ had the right to reign by virtue of His genealogy. But in spite of who He was, the pure and spotless Lord Jesus was mocked, maligned, and slandered as to His origin.

4. THE RESPONSE OF RIDICULE

a. Matthew 13:54-57a -- "And when He was come into His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, From where hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? From where, then, hath this man all these things? And they were offended in Him...." b. John 7:27 -- When Jesus came down to the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews became upset at Him because of what He had said, and they responded, "Nevertheless, we know this man, from where He is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth from where He is." "We know this Jesus. He can't be the Christ, because we know where He came from...He's a hayseed from Nazareth, up north. After all, it's hard to believe that the Messiah would come from any place other than Jerusalem. Such a thought is intolerable. He's a nobody from a nowhere place." In verses 40-41, we find a mixed reaction to Jesus: "Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet [prophesied by Moses in the Pentateuch]. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" c. John 8:41, 48 -- Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to Him, We are not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.... Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" "You're a demon-possessed result of fornication that came from a nowhere town, and a nobody family; so don't lay any of your Messianic credentials on us!" So Matthew looks back on all of this confusion regarding Christ's origin, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes down the book of the beginnings of Jesus Christ, so that there never needs to be a question about where He came from. Now, there's an emphasis in this genealogy that just thrills me. Jesus Christ is a King unlike any other king: He isn't a King who rules by law; He is a King who rules by grace. And as you look at this genealogy, you find the theme of grace everywhere. This theme unfolds like the budding of a beautiful flower. First of all, I see the King of grace in...

I. THE CHOICE OF ONE WOMAN (v. 16)

"And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Just look at the grace bestowed on that one young woman, Mary, who became the mother of the Messiah and the Son of God. Nobody knew about Mary before this. And I don't want to shake you up too much, but Mary was a sinner. You say, "Well, I'm a Catholic...I don't believe that!" Well, the Bible tells us that Mary had to be a sinner, just like everybody else. She was probably better than most, and no doubt a deeply devout and religious person. But she was a sinner who needed a Savior, and the Lord Jesus Christ had to be a Savior to her as well as a son to her. Yet God in His wonderful mysterious grace chose her, even though He didn't have to. He could have just formed Jesus right out of the dust of the ground, just like He formed Adam. But He chose Mary. What grace!

Unbiblical Exaltation of Mary

The Roman Catholic Church has elevated Mary to a place of incredible loftiness, and I'm sure if Mary knew about it, she would be very upset. Some of the things that it has taught about her are the following:

- Mary was sinless.
- Mary maintained perpetual virginity (which is quite difficult to believe, seeing that the people who knew her were able to recite all the names of her children).
- Mary was immaculately conceived. In other words, her mother also had a virgin birth.
- Mary is co-redemptrix with Christ; that is, she is His equivalent in saving us.
- She is co-mediatrix, which would mean that there is not "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5), but there are two: Mary and Jesus.

- She was bodily assumed into heaven and never died, because she was sinless and virgin born.
- The Roman Church literally mirrors in Mary every single thing that is true about Christ...and unfortunately, none of it is true about Mary.

Beloved, let me say again that Mary was a typical woman, who was in need of a Savior like all other ladies, as several verses in the New Testament show:

A. Mark 3:31-35

"There came, then, His brethren and His mother, and, standing outside, sent unto Him, calling Him. And the multitude sat about Him, and they said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren outside seek for Thee. And He answered them, saying, Who is My mother, or My brethren? And He looked round about on those who sat about Him, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother." Jesus minimized the place of Mary, as if she was a face in the crowd. Mary had no privileged position when it came to the issue of a spiritual relationship with God. Mary had to come to Jesus as Savior the same way anybody else had to come. Her physical relationship to Jesus did not release her from her obligation to do the will of the Father. That's the way it had to be.

B. Luke 11:27-28

"And it came to pass, as He spoke these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts which nursed Thee. But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Jesus saw the real issue, didn't He? There was nothing especially worthy of veneration about Mary. The real issue was obedience to God's Word, and Mary needed that as much as anybody else.

C. Luke 1:28, 46-47

"And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou who art highly favored, the Lord is with thee...." In the Greek, "highly favored" means that she was one "endued with grace." Mary needed grace, and grace is simply unmerited favor given to sinners. And when she prayed in verses 46-47, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior," Mary demonstrated the fact that she knew that she needed a Savior for her sins. Now, Mary was a wonderful lady, I wouldn't deny that. She was probably a very devout, pure virgin. But she was a sinner who needed a Savior. Do you see God's grace in that He chose a sinner to be His own mother? Secondly, the gospel of grace is expressed in...

II. THE SEED OF TWO MEN (v. 1)

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

Let me ask you a simple question: Were both David and Abraham sinners with whom God graciously dealt? To find an answer, let's look at...A. Their Sinfulness

1. DAVID

The great King David was the one who sinned so vilely with Bathsheba, and even had her husband murdered (2 Sam. 11-12). David was also a polygamist (2 Sam. 12:8), a rotten father (2 Sam. 13-14), and one who slaughtered multitudes of humanity, so many that his hands were too bloody to build the Temple of God (1 Chr. 22:8).

2. ABRAHAM

The great patriarch, Abraham, lied about his wife in Egypt and brought them both into shame (Gen. 12:10-20), disbelieved God's promise of a son and committed adultery with Hagar (Gen. 16:1-4), and lied again about Sarah being his sister at Gerar (Gen. 20:1-18). Here we find two sinners, and yet, their seed was the Son of God. That's grace. God still used these two: one to father the nation of Messiah and the other to father the royal line. So, Jesus is descendant of both David and Abraham, and His connection with the Hebrew people is consequently racial and royal, with the emphasis upon the latter. Furthermore, grace was extended to these two men even in...

B. Their Sons

1. SOLOMON

The son to whom David looked for the next step in the marvelous fulfillment of Messianic promise, turned out to be a terrible tragedy. The life of Solomon was a disastrous failure, for in spite of his peaceful nature and unmatched wisdom, Solomon lived a life of appalling stupidity and folly. He sowed seeds of disruption by marrying foreign wives, going far beyond his father in having hundreds of wives and concubines, who turned his heart from the Lord (1 Kgs. 11:1-13). The son of David's flesh was a disappointment, which led to the shattering of unity in Israel. And God would have had every right to cancel His promise right then, but He didn't, because someday there would come a greater Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ, who could overcome the failures of David and Solomon. With infinite wisdom, that Son would build a temple that would never be destroyed (Mt. 16:18).

2. ISAAC

The son to whom Abraham looked for the fulfillment of the amazing promise of God, was born when Abraham was a hundred years old. This son in whom his hope was resting was named Isaac, meaning "laughter," because of the joy in Abraham's heart when he was born. Though he was to be the seed to carry on the promise of God, he typified the failure of Israel, who God set aside as He cut out a new channel, the church. The story of Isaac and his seed is a story of weakness, failure, apostasy, idolatry, and sin. But Jesus Christ, the ultimate son of Abraham, came to fulfill everything that Isaac couldn't do, and from Him sprung forth seed "as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore" (Gen. 22:17b), and they will carry out the purposes of God forever. So Jesus Christ, the son of David and Abraham, came to overcome the failures of both of those lines and their seeds, and to accomplish what they couldn't. But God's grace isn't only seen in the choice of one woman and the seed of two men, it is also seen in...

III. THE HISTORY OF THREE ERAS (v. 17)

"So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations."

A. From Abraham To David

The first period that Matthew mentions is the period of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) and the judges (e.g., Deborah, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah). It was that great period of heroism when Israel was made famous! It was a period of the birth and firm establishment of Israel as a nation.

B. From David To Babylon

The second period is a period of decline from the pinnacle of national success in David's reign and the beginning of Solomon's. Whereas the first period is one of ascendancy as Israel goes from non-existence at Abraham's time to fame because of its great heroism as the judges lead the nation through victory after victory, the second period is one of the monarchy, which started to go downhill after the glorious days of David and Solomon. Basically, it was a period of tragedy, although every once in awhile you get a glimpse of good kings like Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, who were relatively godly men. But what seems to dominate this period are the Rehoboams, the Ahazes, and the Manassehs, who were evil men. It's a period of apostasy and degeneracy that ultimately ended up in the devastating destruction of Israel and her captivity in Babylon. C. From Babylon To Christ

Do you know what is significant about this period? Almost nothing. We know very little about this period, which was essentially shrouded in darkness. It's six hundred years of datelessness with names we don't even know, like Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, and Jacob. It was a near return into oblivion for Israel.

So the story of Israel is the story of three eras. The national genealogy of Jesus is one of mingled pathos and glory, one of heroism and disgrace, one of renown and obscurity. But all along, even though the whole nation was "going down the tubes," until finally they cursed and spit on their own Messiah, it was nevertheless through that nation that the Messiah came as a King of grace. Finally,

God's grace is evident in...

IV. THE INCLUSION OF FOUR OUTCASTS (vv. 3, 5-6)

The fact that four women are mentioned in this genealogy is unusual in itself. And the fact that these women were purposely listed, in spite of the nature of their sins or status, is even more intriguing.

The first woman mentioned is...

A. Tamar (v. 3a)

"And Judah begot Perez and Zerah of Tamar..."

What kind of a lady was Tamar? Let me introduce you to her from Genesis 38. Judah had given Tamar as a wife to his oldest son, Er. But after Tamar had become a childless widow when her husband was judged by the Lord for his wickedness, she had decided to do a little family planning on her own: "And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnah to shear his sheep. And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him as his wife. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Come, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law). And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave them to her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him" (vv. 13-18). This is Tamar...committing harlotry and incest. You say, "Mercy, what is she doing in the Messianic line--a harlot?!" But that's not all. Out of that conception came twins: Perez and Zerah, who, amazingly enough, are the next people in the genealogical line of the Messiah.

Let me introduce you to the next lady: B. Rahab (v. 5a)

"And Salmon begot Boaz of Rahab..."

When you say Rahab, does the word harlot come to your mind? Rahab was a Canaanitess. As a Gentile, she was considered to be an unclean, outcast, and idolatrous pagan. But beyond that, she was a bad lady...a professional prostitute. Joshua 2 tells us about the story of the spies she hid in her house in Jericho. But look! From that prostitute came Boaz, a very godly man.

Thirdly, is listed...

C. Ruth (v. 5b)

"...and Boaz begot Obed of Ruth..."

You say, "Ruth was not a prostitute; Ruth was a lovely lady. She was not guilty of incest." No, you're right. But do you know what Ruth was? She was a Gentile, an outcast, whose people were born out of an incestuous relationship, as Genesis 19:30-37 records: "And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. [He was so drunk that he didn't know what was going on.] And it came to pass on the next day, that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold I lay last night with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also [It's tragic that he didn't have enough backbone to defend himself against somebody making him drunk.]: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the first-born bore a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day." Ruth, a Moabite, was

herself a pure lady. She became the wife of Boaz, and even the great-grandmother of David. But she was born of a tribe of people who were begun as the result of incest. Furthermore, in Deuteronomy 23:3, the whole Moabite nation was cursed by God. In spite of that, God demonstrated His grace by choosing this lady, born in a tribe that was cursed and the product of an incestuous relationship! How is that for three interesting ladies? Let's meet the last one in the genealogy:

D. Bathsheba (v. 6b)

"...and David, the king, begot Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah"

According to 2 Samuel 11-12, when Bathsheba was up on a roof sunbathing, David happened to see her and said, "That's the one I want!" He brought her over, had a sexual relationship with her, and produced a child by her, making her an adulteress.

Of the four ladies listed here in Matthew 1, there are two harlots, one born out of incest, and an adulteress...and they are the only ladies mentioned in the entire genealogy of Jesus Christ. Now what do you think the message is? God is a God of grace! Are you glad about that? I sure am!

Conclusion

I think that this genealogy was a literal knockout punch by Matthew against the antagonistic, legalistic Jews, who were so concerned with pedigree and the line of purity. And to them he introduces the Messiah as descending from two harlots, one adulteress, one from a line produced of incest, and as born of one who was a sinner. The Messiah who came through a nation whose history was a degenerated one, and whose two greatest leaders were sinful men, was none other than the King of all kings. Let it be known to Israel and anybody who will listen, that Jesus Christ is the friend of sinners, who Himself said, "...for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mt. 9:13b).

Focusing on the Facts

1. What does the book of Matthew reveal Christ as?
2. With what does Matthew begin his Gospel so as to prove that Christ has the right to reign as the awaited King?
3. Were genealogies important to the Jews? What is one reason for which they were necessary?
4. Why could no Jew today ever prove himself to be a son of David?
5. Who is the last verifiable claimant to David's throne?
6. Where in the Bible is the other genealogy of Jesus recorded? What are the two main differences between the two genealogies?
7. In spite of the fact that Jesus had no natural father, why did he still have the right to reign that belonged to David?
8. Why is Joseph identified as the husband of Mary and not as the father of Jesus?
9. Though Jesus was in the line of David through Joseph, why would He have been unable to reign?
10. How did God bypass the cursed bloodline of Jeconiah and still retain Jesus' royal right to reign?
11. What are the meanings of the names Jesus and Christ?
12. What theme runs through the Messianic genealogy?
13. In relation to Christ, what has the Roman Catholic Church done with Mary?
14. Describe Jesus' view of Mary according to Mark 3:31-35 and Luke 11:27-28.
15. What fact did Mary acknowledge in Luke 1:46-47?
16. Who was the "son" of Abraham and David who accomplished what Isaac and Solomon couldn't?
17. Compare the three historical eras mentioned in the genealogy.
18. What is unusual and intriguing about the four outcasts mentioned in the genealogy?
19. What would have made each woman theoretically unqualified to be in the Messianic line?

Pondering the Principles

1. How good of a detective are you?

Do you get the facts straight before you draw your conclusions? On what evidence had many of the Jews concluded that Jesus was not qualified to be doing miracles, let alone qualified to be the Messiah? (see p. 6) Unfortunately, the narrow-minded ones allowed their familiarity with Jesus and their knowledge of His then present residence to distort their conclusions. Do you have a habit of speaking before thinking or of making decisions before you gather the necessary evidence and counsel? Meditate upon Proverbs 3:5-6; 11:14; and 18:13; and then evaluate how well you abide by those divine principles.

2. Are you desensitized to God's grace?

As those who have received it in abundance, it is easy for us to take it for granted, viewing it more as a right, rather than as a blessing. How was God's grace abused in the following instances: Exodus 32:1-14; Judges 2:10-23; Psalm 78; Acts 2:22-23; 2 Peter 2:1-2; and Revelation 3:14-18? Think back to the instances that God has been especially gracious to you. Even if you remembered to thank Him, did you find that you soon forgot His goodness? Spend some time after dinner with your family or a friend and have each of you enumerate as many things as possible that you can thank God for...past, present, or future.

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