

## ***FPFWC Christian Development***



### **Profiles in Faith**

December 2023

Winter Quarter

*December 16, 2023*

### **Lesson #3 – The Family of Faith**

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Matthew 1:1-17

#### **ICE BREAKERS-**

1. How do ancestors and family histories affect who we are?
2. What takeaway should believers have from Solomon’s life of early faith and late apostasy?
3. What can you do to minimize your family’s past mistakes and maximize your family’s potential in the future?

***Key Verse: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”—Matthew 1:1***

#### **LESSON BACKGROUND –**

Biblical genealogies are not necessarily lists of ancestors in exhaustive detail. Differences within two accounts of the same family tree are born not out of error but instead of the writer’s intention. We need only consider that Luke’s genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23–38) contains 56 generations between Abraham and Jesus compared to Matthew’s 42 generations (see Matthew 1:2–17, below) to understand that something other than precise family history is intended in these lists.

The chronology of the two (in reverse order of one another) further affirms that each writer had priorities beyond mere recitation of family facts. Differences between Matthew and Luke’s genealogies of Jesus could be explored. But we will remain focused on Matthew’s genealogy, keeping in mind that Matthew had valid reasons for organizing Jesus’ genealogy as he did.

Considering who is included in Matthew’s genealogy prepares the careful reader for important themes that recur throughout that Gospel (see commentary on Matthew 1:1–2, 6, below). The curious inclusion of four women (plus Mary; see 1:3, 5–6, 16, below) introduces two other themes that will be found in Matthew’s Gospel (examples: 9:18–25; 15:21–28; 28:16–20). Furthermore, the episodes associated with these women (and others) highlight God’s continued willingness to work through sinful people and imperfect circumstances (examples: 4:18–22; 16:13–23; 26:69–75; 28:16–20).

#### **LESSON COMMENTARY**

**1:1.** Matthew introduced his gospel by emphasizing the legal right of Jesus of Nazareth to be the king of the Jews and of the entire world. Matthew included Jesus’ genealogy to argue for the validity of His claim to David’s throne. As the creation accounts began with

the phrase **record of the genealogy** (LXX Gn 2:4; 5:1), Matthew's description here of the fulfillment of God's plan begins with the same phrase, suggesting that He was beginning the "new creation" (2Co 5:17). In Christ's humanity, He was legally a son of David and was a rightful heir to the Davidic throne (2Sm 7:12–13).

**1:3–6.** What is the connection between **Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba**? Women were not usually included in Jewish genealogies (though cf. 1Ch 2). It is impossible to be certain, but perhaps the best view is that all four had unusual marriages through which God brought much good. He did the same through the unusual circumstances of the virgin birth. **Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth** were Gentiles, and **Bathsheba** was married to a Gentile. This may suggest Matthew's desire to indicate to his audience that Gentiles not only had a role in the ancestry of the Messiah, but should benefit from the sacrificial death of the Messiah as well (Mt 28:18–20).

**1:11. Jeconiah** (*aka* Jehoiachin) is Joseph's ancestor in the line of David through Solomon. Second Samuel 7:12–17 unconditionally promises the perpetuity of the Davidic kingdom through Solomon (vv. 12–13). But Jeconiah, who was in that line, was so wicked that God cursed him, not allowing his descendants to be king (Jr 22:30). This posed a dilemma. How can both the promise and curse be fulfilled? The answer is, "Through the virgin birth." Joseph was legally in that line through David, Solomon, and even Jeconiah. But Jesus is not a *physical* son of Joseph, and so dodges the curse while still fulfilling the legal requirement of being a son of David. Jesus, through Joseph, is in the *legal* line to David and Solomon without being under the *physical* curse.

**1:17.** Matthew structured the genealogy in three groups of 14 names, possibly to indicate that the Davidic kingdom dismantled in the exile would be restored by King Jesus. The importance of the number **fourteen** is unclear, but the name "David" (Hb. *dwd*) adds up to 14 on the basis of Hebrew numerology (4 ["D"] + 6 ["W"] + 4 ["D"]), and since there were three letters, this may account for three sets of 14. But Matthew left no clues for the significance in his thinking of this arrangement. This is not a pure genealogical record, but makes a theological statement about Jesus as son of David. In order to get 14-14-14, David should be counted only once, but Jeconiah twice (because of the break ending v. 11 and introducing v. 12, where Jeconiah is viewed both as the last of the kings of Judah before the exile, and the first of the kings of Judah during the exile).

**LESSON NUGGET** - What may be to some readers a boring list of difficult names is actually the record of God's working throughout the ages to bring His Son to earth. God ruled and overruled and fulfilled His great promises. In the same way, He will keep His promises and send Jesus back again.

***Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary***