

## THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

Matthew 1:1-17

Key Verse: 1:1

“This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:”

Matthew’s gospel begins with tracing the family tree of Abraham and David and concluded that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of David and the son of Abraham. In this passage, we learn that God reigns over human history and God is gracious that He fulfilled his prophecies by sending Jesus the Messiah to the world.

1. Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham (1). Before Jesus’ coming, God established two ancestors of faith, Abraham and David. Matthew chose three persons--Abraham, David and Jesus--as three pillars and main characters in the genealogy, because God gave each of them special promises and made them covenant people (Ge12:2,3; 2Sa 7:12-16; Mt1:21).

Look at verse 1, ““This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:” What does, “Jesus the Messiah” mean? Here the word, “Messiah” is a Hebrew word. It is the equivalent of the New Testament word “Christ” which also means “anointed.” Jesus was anointed by God (Mt 3:16) as the Messiah to carry out his three-fold ministry of Prophet, Priest, and King. As the Messiah, he has delivered all the believers from the bondage of their sins and given to them eternal life. In order to fulfill God’s will and prophecy completely, Jesus had to die on the cross to take away the sin of the world. Down through the generations, all people without exception including Abraham and King David, lived in the darkness and yearned for the coming of the Messiah. Thank and praise Jesus the Messiah that He came to the world and justified us and saved us from the wrath of God! (Ro 5:9)

Let’s look at verse 1 again. Why Jesus was called “the son of Abraham”? After Adam’s disobedience to the command of God, sin and death came into the world. (Ro 5:12) It seemed like there was no hope for mankind and all were destined for lives of sin, guilt, fear and death. But God promised Adam and Eve that he would send a Savior from their offspring (Ge 3:15). Later, God continued this promise by calling an old man.

God called Abraham when he was 75 years old and his wife, Sarah was barren. It was impossible for Abram to have even a child. Contrary to his limitation, God had a great plan to make him a father of faith and a great nation. Let’s look at what God promised him in Ge 12:1-3. “The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all

peoples on earth will be blessed through you. "Abraham obeyed to God's calling and started a new life where God had lead him.

Abraham had ups and downs while he was following God's call. When Abram was 99 years old, God appeared to him again and made an everlasting covenant with him. God sealed the covenant not with signature but with Abraham's circumcision and giving him a new name Abraham never to forget the covenant with God whenever he went to the washroom or someone called his new name. God opened Sarah's dead womb and gave him a miracle son, Isaac as he promised. Sometime later God tested Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham's life of faith can be summarized with his attitude toward God, "Here I am". "Yes Yes, Lord." He believed that God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering. He believed that God was good and God was almighty that he could bring Isaac's life back even though he could sacrifice him. After this event, God promised him once again, "and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." (Ge 22:18) Abraham had an absolute faith to be a pillar of the history of God, and the coming of Jesus as his descendant fulfilled covenant of God with him.

Why Jesus was called "the son of David" in verse 1? Once two blind men called out when Jesus was passing by, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" (Mt 9:27) The Son of David was the messianic title of Jesus. Around 1,000 B.C. God called David, a shepherd boy and a teenager and anointed him to be a king. When God called him, God had a great purpose for him. It was to establish through him a holy nation and a model of the theocratic kingdom of God. He was the third king of the united nation and ruled the nation for 40 years. (1010-970 B.C.)

When David was running for his life as a political criminal, many needy people--around 400 of them--came to him for help. At that time, David was walking through the darkest valley. He confessed in 1Sa 20:3a, "there was only a step between me and death". Nevertheless he shepherded them as if they were his own children. He practiced our yearly key verse Mk 10:45 in his practical life before it was written. God promised with him, "I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom." (2Sa 7:12b)

However once, David abused his power and authority as a leader and destroyed a soul while he was justifying himself. In order to cover up his sin of adultery with a woman named Bathsheba, he killed her husband, General Uriah Hittite by using the third person, enemies' sword during the war. God intervened through the prophet Nathan who wisely pointed out his sins by telling him a story about a poor man's little sheep. Wicked king Manasseh and King Herod killed prophet Isiah and John the Baptist out of their grudge and anger when their sins were pointed out. But David was different. He confessed his sins and repented of his sins sincerely with tears until his sins were forgiven. He didn't kill or dismiss the prophet Nathan but used him as one of his mentors continually. King David was known as a man after God's own heart (Ac 13:22) and coming of Jesus from his family line fulfilled the promise of God with him.

2. Fourteen generations from Abraham to David (2-6a). Matthew not only recorded Jesus, Abraham and David, but also recorded 43 other names and grouped them into three. In verse 2, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and his brothers appeared in the genealogy. God called Isaac and promised him, "Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham." (Ge 26:3) Isaac blessed his son, Jacob in Ge 28:3, "May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples." Hebrews 11:9 summarized the life of patriarchs in a sentence, "By faith Abraham made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise." Three generations lived a tent life of strangers as the expression of their hope in God Almighty. Isaac and Jacob lived humbly like their father, Abraham, and they yearned for the Promised Land living as holy pilgrims and became a good influence on their descendants.

In verse 3, we see that a Gentile Canaanite woman, Tamar, is included. Ge 38 recorded details what happened with her and her father-in-law. Judah's actions showed that he was morally inferior to Joseph. But the grace and mercy of God was on his family. Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah. Judah had three sons by a Canaanite woman. His first son, the husband of Tamar, died. Following the customs of the levirate marriage, Judah gave his second son to Tamar. But the second was against the custom and behaved strangely. God put both sons to death because what they did was wicked in the Lord's sight. Judah was afraid that his remaining son might die too. So he cast out Tamar to wait for the growing of the youngest son. Tamar noticed that Judah had no intention to keep what he promised with her. So one day Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute and had a relationship with her father-in-law and conceived twin sons, Perez and Zerah. Judah publicly declared in Ge 38:26 that Tamar was more righteous than himself because he didn't give her his third son. In this strange way, not by Judah's intention but by the mystery of God, the lineage of Judah was maintained and a Gentile woman appeared in the glorious Jewish genealogy.

In verse 5, two more Gentile women, Rahab and Ruth appeared in the genealogy even though they were not men and not Jewish. Before Rahab acknowledged God, she was a prostitute who lived in the walls of Jericho. When people in Jericho heard how Israelites came out of Egypt crossing over the Red sea and destroyed the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, their hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of their God who is God in heaven above and on the earth below. But Rahab had a different fear not like her people. She feared God by opening her spiritual eyes. After accepting the Creator God in her heart, she was transformed from a prostitute to a courageous woman of God. I believe that anyone can be transformed to a holy and courageous person in Christ. She welcomed the spies of Israel and saved them when they came to Jericho to spy out the land (Josh 2:1-21; Heb 11:31). Because of her faith in God, the army of Israel could conquer Jericho, the first invincible fortress in the Promised Land. Later, by the grace of God, Rahab became King David's great-great-grandmother.

Ruth was a Moabite, the second daughter-in-law of Naomi, a Jewess who came to live in Moab. At the time of choice, instead of going back to her unbelieving parents' house, she firmly decided to follow the Lord. Ruth said to Naomi in Ruth 1:16-17, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." What a great confession it was! She showed us what we should choose when we're faced with the choice of leaving our faith. We see that Ruth's decision of faith changed her life. By the grace of God, she became King David's great-grandmother.

The first 14 generations from Abraham to David ends with verse 6a, "and Jesse the father of King David." In this chapter Matthew gives the title "king" only to David even though there were many other kings in the genealogy, in order to emphasize the fact that the Messiah would come through King David's line as the king of the world.

These 14 generations passed through the times of Patriarchs, Slavery in Egypt (430 years), Exodus and Wilderness training (40), Conquest and distribution of the Promised Land (40), and the period of Judges (410). God was gracious to Abraham that he kept his everlasting covenant with Abraham and protected his family line to be preserved during those vulnerable and critical times.

3. Fourteen generations from David to the exile to Babylon (6b-11). In this part of the genealogy, two gospel writers, Matthew and Luke traces Jesus's genealogy through different people. Matthew traces Jesus' genealogy through Joseph's line while Luke traces it through Mary's line in Lk 3. Look at 6b. "David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife." In this genealogy, David was counted twice, probably because he had two different lives, one as a civilian and another as a king or to fill up the shortage to make 42 generations.

Matthew recorded Solomon's mother as one who "had been Uriah's wife," exposing the amazing grace of God on David. When David was old and weak, his first son, Adonijah, plotted to seize the throne. At this crucial moment Bathsheba remembered what David had promised her. With faith she went to David and entreated him to make her son Solomon king, according to the promise God had made to David (2 Sa 7:8-17). Because of her faith, the promise of God was maintained, and she was included in the family tree of Jesus.

During the times of Kings, there was the tragic event of the division of the nation which caused miserable incessant war. The immediate cause of this division was Rehoboam the son of Solomon, who was insolent and treacherous to his people (1 Ki 12). But the root cause was in Solomon's immorality. At the beginning of his reign, Solomon obeyed God. But later, when he had firmly established his kingdom, Solomon began to indulge in corruption by having many foreign women through royal marriages and worshipping their idols (1 Ki 11:1-6). As a result, the leader of the nation and God's

chosen instrument became unfaithful to God and a bad influence to his people. Because of this, the nation stopped growing and eventually divided into two.

During the times of divided kingdom (208 years), there were 38 kings from Northern Israel and Southern Judah. Most kings were wicked in the sight of the Lord. Only five godly kings, Asa (1Ki 15:11-15), Jehoshaphat (1Ki 21:41-43), Jotham (2Ki 15:34-35), Hezekiah (2Ki 18:3-5) and Josiah (2Ki 23:25) did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Among them two kings, Hezekiah and Josiah kept the commands of the Lord and removed high places and got rid of idols and idol worship during their reign. So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace. (2 Ki 18:15) Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses. (2Ki 23:25)

The second set of 14 generations ended with the tragic event of the exile to Babylon. David's kingdom ended with the Babylonian captivity. Why did the chosen people lose their comfortable home and country? Whenever God blessed his people, they would abandon God and seek idols and strive for material prosperity and physical pleasure like the ungodly Canaanites (Jer 25:6-11). What they needed was the divine discipline to come back to God. So God sent them into exile in Babylon to purify them. It was God's tough and divine love to his beloved children.

4. Fourteen generations from the exile to the Messiah. From the exile to the Messiah, there were no prophets for 430 years after the last prophet, Malachi. It was the darkest time of God's history. However God kept his promise to Abraham and David and sent Jesus as a child of Joseph and Mary. Mary was a country girl. When she heard of God's great purpose for her (Lk 1:26-33), by faith she gave up her beautiful dream of marriage and obeyed God's words (Lk 1:38). God was pleased with her obedience and Joseph's faith, and made them to complete the genealogy of Jesus.

The history of God flew steadily, fulfilling God's promises, moving forward to the coming of the Messiah (22). To God, his chosen people were totally useless because of their unfaithfulness. But God was faithful and gracious. God never changed his promises. God kept his promise with his people with long patience for 42 generations and over 2000 years. Finally, according to his promises, God sent his one and only Son, as the Savior of the world. He is Jesus Christ. Although he is the Almighty God, he humbled himself and came to this world as a baby in a manger to save his people from their sins (Jn 1:14). Jesus came to the world 2000 years ago and opened a way for us to come to the kingdom of God. Still the history of God is on progress moving toward to the second coming of Jesus.

In this passage, we studied that God sent Jesus the Messiah to us out of his love and faithfulness. God and Jesus are the real stars in human history. Abraham, David, women of God and history of God showed us how to live by faith. May God bless all of us to have Christ in our heart and live for the glory of God and be included in the book of life! Amen.