

(Matt. 1:1) - As recorded in *Matthew 22:42*, the Lord Jesus Christ posed the following question to the Pharisees - *"What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?"* They answered, *"The son of David."* The Lord then asked them, *"How then doth David in Spirit call Him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?"* (*Matt. 22:43-45*). Showing their ignorance of the Scriptures, it states that *"no man was able to answer Him a word"* (*Matt. 22:46*). The answer to this question is one of the most important truths of the Gospel message of salvation by the sovereign grace of God in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. If Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah promised and prophesied in the Old Testament, and if we put our trust in Him as the true and only Savior of sinners, then we must be clear on this matter. The answer to the question that the Lord posed is that He is both God and man in one Person. He was prophesied by Isaiah to be the son given (His deity) and the child born (His sinless humanity) (*Isa. 9:6*). He had to be both to accomplish the full salvation of His people by righteousness through His obedience unto death. Only God can create and give life; only man can die. Christ, the Godman, can and does both. It is recorded in *Matthew* - *"Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins"* (*Matt. 1:21*), and *"they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us"* (*Matt. 1:23*).

Genealogies were very important to the Hebrews, and rightly so when we consider how that the priest of Israel had to come from the priestly line of Levi, and the king had to come from the royal line of Judah. It was (and is) especially important when we consider that the promised Messiah also had to come from the line of Judah. Like all other matters, sinful man made this a matter of self-righteousness and pride (ex. *Php. 3:4-5*), as if one's pedigree could be part of making one right or righteous with God. Of course, this is not true (*John 1:12-13*). Being a Jew meant nothing in making a sinner righteous and accepted with God (*Gal. 3:26-29*; *Col 3:11*). So why is Matthew concerned with a genealogy?

In this Gospel narrative, Matthew is concerned with proving to Jewish readers that all of the prophecies and pictures of the Messiah in the Old Testament have been realized and fulfilled in the man named Jesus of Nazareth Who is the only way of salvation and righteousness with God. Therefore, Matthew begins his narrative with the human genealogy of Jesus. All the animal sacrifices slain on Jewish altars pictured Jesus Christ as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of God's elect, spiritual Israel, both Jew and Gentile. Matthew's genealogy presents undeniable evidence that Jesus of Nazareth is who He professed to be - the promised Messiah, the seed of Abraham, and the son of David. Why is this so important? If He is truly the Messiah sent of God, the King of the Jews, there must be verifiable proof that, in His humanity, He was the seed of Abraham (*Gen. 12:3*; *Gal. 3:13-16*; *Heb. 2:16-17*) and that He came through the royal line of David (*Isa. 11:1-5,10*; *Psa. 132:11,17*; *Rom. 1:3-4*).

(Matt. 1:2-16) - There are actually two genealogies here - paternal and maternal. Both Joseph and Mary were of the tribe of Judah as it was prophesied that Messiah would descend humanly from that tribe (*Gen. 49:8-12*). This is the royal or legal lineage of Jesus. The royal lineage always passed through the father, but Jesus had no earthly father. He is the eternal Son of the eternal Father. But in order to reign as man, His royal or legal lineage had to be traced back to King David, which it did through His adopted father Joseph whose lineage is traced back to David through Solomon (*Matt. 1:6*). Notice, however, that the Bible never says that Joseph "begat" (procreated, conceived) Jesus. *Matthew 1:16* says, *"And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."* The humanity of Jesus Christ was not the offspring of Joseph, else He would have been a sinful man and, therefore, incapable of being the Savior of sinners. Jesus was born of Mary. He was

conceived by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit upon her (Luke 1:35). He was that “holy thing,” unique, sinless, and undefiled (1 Pet. 2:22-25), the Son of God. But even though Joseph was not His biological father, by adoption he was the legal father of Jesus.

We see that Christ’s human genealogy is made up of sinful and weak human beings, yet Christ Himself was sinless. God’s purpose and plan was (and is) not conditioned on sinful people but on His own power, goodness, and grace in Christ Jesus. God has accomplished His purpose in spite of the sinfulness of the people whom He used to bring it to pass. It also emphasizes that salvation is totally by God’s grace based on the righteousness of Christ and not on any supposed goodness of sinners. Christ came into the world to redeem His people by establishing a perfect righteousness, the righteousness of God, that God has imputed to His people for their justification (Rom. 1:16-17). Christ was “made sin” by the imputation of the sins of His people to His account. They are made the “righteousness of God” by the imputation of His righteousness to them (Rom. 4:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:19-21). And from His work of righteousness, all of His people, given to Him by the Father, are given spiritual life (Gal. 4:4-6). This is the Gospel of God’s grace in and by the Lord Jesus Christ Who is God manifest in the flesh.

We may have never heard of many of the names recorded in this genealogy, but there are some with whom we are all familiar. Obviously, Abraham is known to us all. Jesus Christ is identified as the specific single seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). The blessing of Abraham is the blessing of salvation by God’s grace which comes to His chosen people in and by the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:10-14; Eph. 1:3). All who are brought to God-given faith in Christ are the spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:26-29; Heb. 2:16-17). Isaac, the son promised to Abraham and Sarah, was the child of promise through whom the humanity of Christ would be born. The birth and life of Isaac demonstrates God’s faithfulness to His promises. God had made a covenant with Abraham and would continue to uphold it with Isaac, with Isaac’s son Jacob, with Jacob’s son Judah, and on through this earthly lineage unto Jesus of Nazareth.

There are five women who are specifically mentioned. There is Tamar, a seducer and adulteress. There is Rahab, a public harlot, the wife of Salmon and mother of Boaz. There is Ruth, a stranger from Moab, and the wife of Boaz and mother of Obed the father of Jesse who was the father of David the king. Christ is identified in prophecy as the Messiah who would “*come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots*” (Isa. 11:1). And then there is the virgin Mary, the human mother of Christ. It is mentioned in verses 11-12 that Christ’s human genealogy was preserved by God in spite of the fact that “*they were carried away to Babylon*” as God’s judgment upon them for their unbelief and idolatry. Since the sceptre would not depart from Judah until the Messiah would come, God preserved Judah until the time of Christ.

(Matt. 1:16-17) - From the history recorded in the last part of the Old Testament and from that which we read in the Gospel narratives, we see what a low condition the family of David had come to be. Jesus of Nazareth was truly born “*a root out of a dry ground*” (Isa. 53:2). Having traced the human genealogy of Jesus Christ from Abraham, Matthew divides this whole time span into three parts because of the threefold state of the Jews. From Abraham to David, they were under patriarchs, prophets, and judges. From David to “*the carrying away into Babylon*,” they were under kings. From Babylon unto Christ, they were under priests and princes. “*Fourteen generations*” are multiples of seven which is the number of a perfect completed work. As the Mediator of the covenant of grace, Christ is the perfect fulfillment of all three - Prophet, Priest, and King. Christ is the great Author and Finisher of the salvation of His people - “*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*” (Rom. 10:4).