

Introduction:

- A. Illus.: The movie, *A Knight's Tale*, is full of exciting scenes of jousting from medieval England. The custom at those tournaments was for a knight's squire to introduce him to the audience before the jousting match. Customarily, it would be a grandiose recitation of his royal lineage, because only the well-born could be knights. The star of this story, however, is a pretender named Ulrich. He doesn't have a drop of royal blood in him! He is not really a royal knight at all, but no one knows that except his team of 'handlers.' His squire Chaucer (a take-off on the English author) comes off as a modern-day promoter and PR man. In one of the deleted scenes on the DVD, Chaucer is introducing his knight. People in the audience smile as he cranks up the hype like a modern-day puffmeister.

"I cannot look upon my Lord Ulrich for I weep to see his shining face. My Lord is a gift to your eyes for we shall never, ever see his like upon this earth again. I would list his lineage if it served to honor him. Most men here—it's sad, but it's true—they look to their past to prove their worth; they look to the deeds of their fathers. Now Sir Ulrich has great ancestors—make no mistake about that—Sir Chirard von Richbach, Duke Guelph of Saxony, Van Misch IV out of Brunswick—but these great, great men pale into insignificance next to him. I do not list them to honor him. I list him to honor them!"

That was all hype, of course, but I thought of that last line as I came to the genealogy in the first chapter of Matthew. ***"I do not list them to honor him. I list him to honor them!"***

- B. Matthew felt we could not properly understand Jesus without a reminder of his genealogy. For Matthew's largely Jewish audience this first chapter was especially important, but this long list of names is Matthew's way of introducing all of us to the glory of Jesus Christ. Matthew would say, without hype, *"My Lord is a gift to your eyes for we shall never, ever see his like upon this earth again."*

I. JESUS CHRIST INAUGURATES A NEW BEGINNING

- A. The very first words of Matthew's gospel carry a link to the past. "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ." A literal translation would be, "An account of the origin of Jesus Christ." To Jewish readers that had a familiar ring: **Gen. 2:4:** "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created." **Gen. 5:1:** "This is the written account of Adam's line." Matthew is saying that **Jesus inaugurates a new beginning.**
- B. Matthew begins as if he's writing a new book of Genesis but when it comes to the way he arranges his genealogy there is a striking difference. This is the typical OT pattern in genealogies: "This is the account of Japheth; now these are Japheth's sons, and their sons, etc." The focus is on the founding father of the line. **But Matthew starts with the end of the line, Jesus Christ.** One Bible teacher, Craig Keener, put it this way: "Matthew's point is profound: so much is Jesus the focal point of history that his ancestors depend on him for their meaning." Illus.: Like that introduction in the movie: "**I do not list them to honor him. I list him to honor them!**"
- C. There's one more curious thing about this genealogy. Matthew breaks it into three unequal parts. From Abraham to Jesus was about 2000 years. Matthew's three parts are the 1000 years from Abraham to David, about 580 years from Solomon to the exile and about 420 years from the exile to Jesus.

Each group lists 14 generations even though they're not equal length. There are far too few names in Matthew's genealogy to span 2000 years so many generations are not listed. When the text says "*Ram the father of Amminadab,*" the word can also mean ancestor.

Matthew shows that Jesus is the son of Abraham in the first group; the son of David in the second group. In the third group, from the exile, he shows that the royal line was continued and recorded even tho' there was no king. None

of these names are in the Bible so Matthew must have found them in the temple records. His point is that Jesus was king *legally*—a direct descendant of King David.

Furthermore, he shows that during those long centuries of national insignificance God had not forgotten his promise, as if to say, “*God was working even through that dark time to bring you his Messiah. And he still works through crushing defeats and colossal failures to bring Christ to you.*”

SUMMARY: From the very first words of his Gospel Matthew is telling us that Jesus inaugurated a whole new age, a new genesis story, but it is rooted in the faithful working of God across 2000 years, and now (Matthew is saying) we are about to see what God has been moving toward all that time. Matthew’s genealogy ties Jesus to his two great ancestors, David and Abraham. Let’s take David first:

II. JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF DAVID, REIGNS OVER THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A. To Matthew, it is crucial that we see Jesus as the Son of David. The reason goes back to God’s mega-promise to David in **2 Sam. 7:16**: “*Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.*” When David was chosen by God to be the king, God had Samuel anoint him with oil as a symbol of God’s presence upon him. It is from the Hebrew word for ‘anoint’ that we get ‘Messiah’ in Hebrew and ‘Christ’ in Greek. For the Jew to say someone was the Messiah meant that person was anointed King as the son of King David, in keeping with the promise of God. And such a King he would be! Listen to the familiar promise from **Isaiah 9:6-7**:

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace*

*there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.*

- B. And this is what **Jer. 23:5-6** said,
*“The days are coming,” declares the Lord,
“when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.
In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.
This is the name by which he will be called:
The Lord Our Righteous Savior.*
- C. From the very beginning of his story, Matthew takes pains to connect Jesus to David. Look at the first verse again,
“This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham.” The title, Son of David, is one of Matthew’s favorite titles for Jesus. Matthew uses that name **10 times**. He also alludes to David other times without mentioning his name. For example, look at the next page in your Bible—the story of the wise men. Both they and Herod find out that the King of the Jews is to be born in Bethlehem. **2:6**, *“Out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.”* In three of Matthew’s stories of Jesus healing, those suffering cry out, *“Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”* After one healing, **Matt. 12:23** says, *“All the people were astonished and said, ‘Could this be the Son of David?’”* And what did the crowds shout at the triumphal entry? *“Hosanna to the Son of David!”* Finally, near the end of his story, Matthew brings all this talk of the Son of David to a stunning conclusion. **Matt. 22:41-46:**

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,

“The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.”

If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

The point of that nifty piece of exegesis: **The Son of David is David’s God!**

- D. The wonderful thing about Jesus Christ as the royal Son of David is that he ushers in the Kingdom of God. That’s the great theme of this whole book, starting when Jesus says, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” Jesus talks about who is least and who is greatest in God’s kingdom, he tells parables of the kingdom, he teaches us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done.” He tells us “Seek first [God’s] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” And he left us with this great hope: “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’”
- E. **At the heart of Matthew’s story is the Good News that God has sent us Jesus, the Son of David, the King we have all longed for to establish the kingdom that will never end.**

Jesus has a second great ancestor:

III. JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF ABRAHAM, OFFERS GOD’S BLESSING TO ALL PEOPLE ON EARTH

- A. Matthew traced Jesus’ lineage back 2000 years to Abraham. That is the essential Jewish pedigree, of course.

But it is not only about Abraham’s bloodline. It wasn’t Abraham’s genes that were so important to Matthew’s Good News story, but **Abraham’s God-given promise**. If you know only one thing about Abraham, it must be the extraordinary promise God made to him in **Gen. 12:3**, “*all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*” Paul writes in **Gal 3:8**, “*The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All the nations will be blessed through you.’*”

- B. Matthew sets out to show us that God has been blessing the Gentiles all through Israel’s history. He does it first through that genealogy. Mixed in amongst all those names are some significant Gentiles—and they are all women. **Oh, how precious women are to the Lord!** There are four women named in this list before Mary. They were all Gentiles. They were victims and they were sinners. Tamar, a rape victim from Canaan; Rahab, the prostitute from pagan Jericho; Ruth, the Moabite widow (and remember, the Moabites were *personae non gratae* in Israel going back to Lot’s daughters); and Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite whom David had killed and who became Solomon’s mother.
- C. Throughout his story, Matthew shows that Jesus, the son of Abraham, is fulfilling God’s promise to bless the world through him. Jesus said, in **Mt. 8:11**, “*I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*” The very first story in his book is about Gentiles—the **wise men** who find and worship Jesus as the king of the Jews. Later Jesus healed the son of a **Roman centurion** whose faith in Jesus astonished the Lord. Jesus also healed the daughter of a **Canaanite woman**. Matthew reminds us that it was a Gentile—the **Roman centurion—at the crucifixion** who exclaimed, “*Surely he was the Son of God.*” And Matthew concludes his book with Jesus’ Great Commission, which gives feet to God’s great promise to Abraham, “*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the*

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

- D. **And what blessings Jesus gives!** To the childlike and humble he gives the kingdom of heaven, the comfort of God, the earth as our inheritance, being filled and satisfied with righteousness, the mercy of God, seeing God, and being called the children of God. Jesus invites those weary and burdened by religion and sin to come to him for rest. He feeds the hungry, quiets the storm, delivers the demonized, blesses the children, and promised, *“I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”*
- E. **There are greater blessings in Christ than Abraham could have ever imagined, and they have extended further than anyone could have ever seen.** *Illus.:* This has been so vivid to us during these last three weeks away. We were in Cyprus where, on his first missionary journey, Paul led the governor, Sergius Paulus, to Christ and now there are still believers throughout Cyprus, and there are still missionaries there as well. We were met there by a **Russian film crew**—all believers. We were invited to tea by our neighbors, **Georg and Elizabet**, a German pastor and wife. Two Sundays ago we worshiped in the Int’l Evangelical Church of Lemosos—maybe 30 people, including a Russian pianist, Philippino singers, a British pastor, an Irish missionary pastor and his Scottish wife, French sailors and their chaplain from Madagascar, and a Syrian refugee couple. Our guide in Israel was a Messianic Jew from Siberia and we were among believers from China, Korea, Kenya, South Africa, Brazil, and all over our own country and Canada.

We were all kin; all subjects of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David, all blessed beyond measure by Jesus Christ, the Son of Abraham. What was it the man said, *“My Lord is a gift to your eyes for we shall never, ever see his like upon this earth again.”* As the centurion said at the cross, *“Surely he was the Son of God.”*