

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Arrival: A Study of Matthew 1–7

STUDY TWO

The Genesis of Jesus

Matthew 1:1–17

Hopefully, you will not see this genealogical passage as boring and uninteresting. It is in fact an essential document that has its purpose in being included in the pages of Scripture.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

FEW events spark more celebration than a parade with tickertape flung from windows and celebrities waving to cheering crowds. Matthew kicks off his gospel with a parade of sorts—a procession of Old Testament dignitaries who follow one after the other in the genealogy of Jesus.

Leading Matthew's parade is Abraham and his son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob, the family from whom all Jews trace their lineage. Partway along, riding in a royal coach, comes King David, the progenitor of the messianic line. Dozens more people pass in review, some famous and some lesser known but all from the same bloodline and all celebrating and pointing to Jesus, the Hero of the parade.

At first reading, we might yawn at Matthew's long list of names, but this royal rollcall was necessary to legitimize Jesus' messianic claim. Commentator N. T. Wright helps us understand the significance of Jesus' genealogy:

It is important not to think that this is a waste of time. For many cultures ancient and modern, and certainly in the Jewish world of Matthew's day, this genealogy was the equivalent of a roll of drums, a fanfare of trumpets, and a town crier calling for attention. Any first-century Jew would find this family tree both impressive and compelling.¹

Let's grab a curbside seat and join the adoring crowds who gaze with wonder at the people in Jesus' genealogy. After all, who can resist a parade, and this one is the best!



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

The Genesis of Jesus

Matthew 1:1–17



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Let the words of this prayer be your heart's expression to God as you embark upon this study.

Father, Your Words are more precious than gold—even more precious than all the benefits the finest gold can bring. Yes, more precious than honey, sweeter to my soul than the best of delicacies to my tongue. Thank You for speaking. Thank You for helping me understand. Bring me closer to You and increase my confidence in You to use me, ordinary and fallen me. For I am called by Your grace to walk in Your grace. In Jesus' name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Matthew penned his purpose for writing in the very first line of his gospel: “This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus *the Messiah*” (Matthew 1:1, emphasis added). Matthew was a Jew writing to persuade Jews that, indeed, Jesus was the Messiah the prophets foretold. Before Matthew could tell about the life of Jesus, he had to validate Jesus' royal pedigree.²



Observation: The Beginning

Throughout our studies, we'll use the same method for understanding and applying the Bible, as described in Pastor Chuck Swindoll's book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*.³ We begin with observation.

Read *Matthew 1:1–17*. Right away, you will notice the phrase, “the father of,” which is a standard formula in genealogies. As you read, mark any variations to the formula. Matthew intended these points to stand out. Note especially what Matthew repeated in 1:1 and 1:17.



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List the four key persons or events that Matthew uses to divide history.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

By tracing the pedigree through David all the way back to Abraham, Jesus' royal lineage is established. You know that's important because he mentions it more than once.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

List the five women mentioned in the passage.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Only two people receive titles in this passage. Matthew twice referred to Jesus as *Messiah*. And in 1:6, Matthew did not ho-hum through David but emphasized *King* David. The royalty and power and divine import that clothed David will also clothe his regal descendant, Jesus.



Interpretation: The Messiah

On the *Messiah*, or “Anointed One,” all the hopes of Israel rested. The advent of the Messiah would ignite a new work of God—a work of redemption and restoration, peace and prosperity.

In Matthew's short genealogy, He states, in effect, “Yes, the only God has been our God, the God of Israel, preparing us for such a time as this: the Messiah's arrival. *Get ready!*”



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Matthew specifically connects Jesus to Abraham and David. To understand the reasons, first, review God's call on Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3:

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:1–3)

In one word, summarize the promise God gave to Abraham: _____

Second, review God's promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:12–16:

"For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. . . . And I will secure his royal throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. . . . Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever." (2 Samuel 7:12–14, 16)

What did God's promises emphasize to David?

What did Matthew indicate, then, by stating that Jesus is heir to both Abraham and David?



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Of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba (Uriah's wife), Pastor Chuck wrote in his commentary, *Insights on Matthew 1–15*:

All of them entered the messianic lineage through less-than-ideal means. Tamar feigned being a prostitute to sleep with her father-in-law. Rahab was a prostitute prior to being incorporated into the community of Israel. Ruth came from Moab, a country often at odds with Israel. And Bathsheba became the wife of David only after David committed adultery with her and arranged for her husband to be killed. Think about it. Each of these women would have been viewed by pious Jewish readers as “tainted” or “stained” in some way.⁴

Their inclusion signifies God's grace through their circumstances. Now think of the fifth woman, Mary. Imagine her pregnancy and the likely social stigma that accompanied it. By including the first four women in the genealogy, how did Matthew prepare his readers for God's work through Mary?

Everyone in this list are folks just like us. They're just sinners that made their way on the list. By His grace He includes all these sinful people, so in the list that leads up to Jesus, we don't have a list of perfection, we have a list of reality. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The dark years of waiting gave way to a new dawn of light that would bring good news of great joy for all the people.



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Matthew 1:1–17



Correlation: The Exile

Matthew's genealogy radiates excitement in contrast to the sting of exile. Many Israelites wrestled with God during their anguish in Babylon. Read [Psalm 137:1–4](#) and write down the psalmist's description of their desperate condition.

Contrasting the white flag of surrender in Psalm 137, Isaiah waves a banner of joy that will accompany Israel's return from exile. Read [Isaiah 52:7–12](#) and write down how God promised to turn Israel's wailing into singing. How did Isaiah prophesy the Israelites' joy at the end of exile? What would God do to end exile?

While God had returned His people to the land in the 500s BC, full restoration would have to come later. The Jews of Matthew's day awaited something spectacular, and that moment arrived when "Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah" (Matthew 1:16).



Application: The Call

Reflect on the rollcall of ordinary folks in Jesus' genealogy. They inhabited this world as we do—frail and foolish humans with lives spoiled by sin and marred by guilt. But God used them. Though believers have been adopted into Christ's family, had you lived back then, God might have selected you to be part of Jesus' lineage. *What a thought!*



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How can you find encouragement from this gracious, redemptive aspect of God's character?

Now, how can you let this truth empower you in your spiritual service?

Even a genealogy, mundane to our modern-day ears, sounds a trumpet to God's grace. No matter where we turn in the canon of Scripture, we find such grace sitting and waiting, bidding us to receive it, enjoy it, and share it.



The Genesis of Jesus

Matthew 1:1–17



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I find Your ways truly unfathomable. In people, short-lived and fragile, You work Your eternal, unshakable plan. I confess my own frailty. I acknowledge my wayward heart. By nature, I forget Your grace and narrow my vision, so keep me ever mindful of Your good gifts and global plan. Use me as You will. In Jesus' royal name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. N. T. Wright, *Matthew for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1–15* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 2. As quoted in Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on Matthew 1–15* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2020), 15.
2. Some in Matthew's audience may have doubted Jesus' pedigree, like the people in Nazareth who scoffed that Jesus was just the son of a carpenter (*Matthew 13:54–57*).
3. Learn more about Pastor Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* method on the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](https://www.insight.org/how-to-study-the-bible-for-yourself)" at [insight.org](https://www.insight.org). This page provides you an introduction to four important methods in Bible study—observation, interpretation, correlation, and application—along with other helpful study tips.
4. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on Matthew 1–15* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2020), 17.



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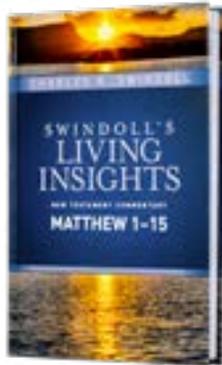
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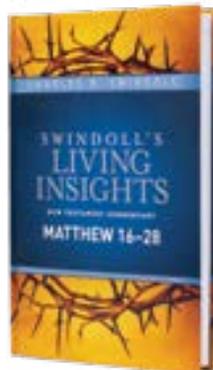
Matthew 1:1–17



Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2021 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Studies, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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