

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

2 Jesus, the Son of David, the son of Abraham,
the Son of God

Church November 21, 2021

Matthew 1:1-17

1 The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.

3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram.

4 Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon.

5 Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.

6 Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.

7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa.

8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah.

9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah.

10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah.

11 Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

12 After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.

13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor.

14 Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud.

15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob.

16 Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

To the Glory of God

Back in 2005, my eldest son, Joseph graduated from Ole Miss. And there were hundreds of people, who graduated with Joseph on that day. Now every year, the University of Mississippi alternates the way they give out the diplomas. One year, they start with students, whose name ends with an “A”. The next year, they begin with students, whose name begins with a “Z”. And as I made my way to my seat, I realized just how many students were going to graduate and I remember saying to Rhonda, *“As soon as Joseph gets his diploma- we’ll get out of here- because they’re going to be here all afternoon.”*

Well, as God would have it- that particular year- they started the Graduation with students, whose name began with a “Z”. So, we had to sit through around two hours of the Leaders of the College- calling out name after name after name of young men and women, who had nothing to do with our son- until finally- they got to the “B’s”.

But as I sat there- listening to all the whoops and whistles, when a child of some family received their diploma- I thought, *“You know, that Family is so proud. Their son or daughter worked hard to get that piece of parchment. They got up early and stayed up late- studying and working hard to graduate. And that moment- when they are given their diploma- is the culmination of several years of hard work- in addition to a whole lot of money. So, they deserve to be proud. And we should relish this moment with them and not get bored because after 1-1/2 hours- they’re only at the ‘M’s”.*

And that is sort of the way we need to look at the various lists of names that we find in the Bible. There is a lot behind these lists. And that means they’re important. God did something amazing with each and every one of these people- so much so- that the large and powerful Events that we all marvel at in the Bible would not have happened- if God had not used those people.

And that is the way it is with the Genealogy of Jesus. The people on this list matter. Now what makes it harder is that the Jews named their children with names that are, sometimes, hard for us to pronounce. But nevertheless, God moved on each person behind the name- so, they are in the Bible on *purpose*. And

that means these lists are inspired. They were breathed out by God- as much as **John 3:16** was. And so, they *deserve* our attention.

Now as I told you last time, there is *some* Evidence to suggest that Matthew's Gospel Record was the *first* Gospel to be written down.¹ And there is also *some* Evidence that it was originally written in Hebrew and NOT Greek. And part of that Evidence is the Passage that Brother Reese just read to you. **Matthew** began his Account of the Birth, Life, Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, the Christ with a Genealogy about Jesus' Jewish roots- from his legal father, Joseph's side.

Now ever since Matthew had been saved by Grace through Faith- he made it his life's Mission to reach his fellow- Jews with the Gospel. And his Passion for Jews to know the Truth about Jesus was, no doubt, driven by the fact that, for a time, Matthew had *betrayed* his kinsmen by being a tax collector. So, God used this man's former Sin as fuel that ignited his Passion to tell the Jews the "*Good News*".

Now we need to realize that back in the 1st Century- MOST of the Jews did NOT think about the Messiah in terms of him being God. MOST Jews thought that the Messiah would be a full bloodied Jewish Man- who would gather an army together to *militarily* and *physically* vanquish the pagan Roman occupiers; and who would then rule Israel- *politically*- as he sat on the throne of King David.

So, "*Salvation*" to the average Jew was being born Jewish and striving to keep God's Law during their lives. Because from the moment they were born- they had been told that God had chosen them to be His people. But this Knowledge didn't humble them and make them grateful. It had filled them with Pride; and had made them Arrogant and Self-righteous. So, in their minds- they were "*saved*" by Birth- because they could trace their natural bloodline back to "*Father Abraham*". And therefore, "*Sin*" was believing and acting contrary to their ethnic Jewishness.

So, for the Messiah to "*save*" them had NOTHING to do with rescuing them from God's Wrath because of their own individual Sins. To the Jews of the 1st Century- the Messiah would ONLY "*rescue*" them from the pagans. And the zenith of their Theology was a restored and glorified Israel with the Temple of God at the very Center.

So, the Jews had taken all of the Old Testament Prophecies concerning the Messiah and they had "*nationalized*" them; and "*politicized*" them; and "*personalized*" them. Kind of like we do here in the American Church- far too often.

But the end Result of centuries of the Jews being fed with the Lie

¹ Most scholars believe that **Mark** was the first Gospel Record.

that God was pleased with their “*Jewish ethnicity*” rather than a broken and contrite heart that delighted in God- had made the Jew of the 1st Century to be the most LOST of all the people of the Middle East at that time.

And as we go through **Matthew**- you will notice that Jesus made NO effort at all to *correct* their Theology. He never told them, “*I know you guys are trying so hard- but you’re just a little off base- so let Me help you correct your Belief System*”. Instead, the sweet Lamb of God categorically *condemned* what they believed. And God’s Love personified- *damned* their Man-made religion. And we will see that Jesus *attacked* what they passionately believed- at its two *strongest* Points:

1. The Temple in Jerusalem
2. Sabbath Worship

So, there was NEVER an Effort by Jesus to *fix* the Beliefs of the 1st Century Jews. The Jewish leaders were MORE wrong; MORE often; about MORE serious and eternal Issues- than anyone else. And so, all Jesus wanted to do was to *destroy* what they cherished the most. And by His sinless Life; His vicarious Death; and His bodily Resurrection- Jesus did that.

So, Matthew begins his Gospel Record with the *first* Reason for Jews to believe that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah: 17 verses of a Genealogy (from Jesus’ legal father’s side)- which serves as a “*Bridge*” between the Old and the New Testaments. And the son of Alphaeus begins this Genealogy with the profound- in-your-face- Declaration:

The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham

So, Matthew makes no bones about *publicly* and *boldly* declaring Jesus to be the Messiah- the *fulfillment* of the Old Testament Messianic Prophecies. And this startling Statement at the very beginning of his Gospel Record- is like what John Hancock did with the *Declaration of Independence*. Hancock signed his name in large bold letters- right in the center of the bottom of the Document- so that the king of England (and everybody else) would see it and know *exactly* where he stood on the Issue of American Independence.

So too, Matthew begins his Document about Jesus- by showing his Jewish friends, family, and countrymen *exactly* where he stood on the Issue of Jesus being God Almighty in human flesh; the Savior of the world; and the King of the Jews.

But Matthew’s Goal is NOT to merely *stagger* the Jews or *insult* them- but to help see them *converted*. So, he then quickly links Jesus to both David and

Abraham- thus equating the Birth, Life, Ministry, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus with the *fulfillment* of both the Davidic and Abrahamic Covenants.

Matthew's Gospel forces us to remember that since the Conclusion of the Prophet Malachi's "*Burden*"- God had not spoken to His people for over 400 years. Back then, God, the Holy Spirit had "moved" on the Prophet to promise this from **Malachi 3:1; 4:2&5:**

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts... But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall... Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord..."

Yet for over four Centuries now- this Prophecy had NOT been fulfilled. For more than 400 years- there had been no Sign; no Wonder; no Miracle; no Angel; no heavenly Voice; no Prophet; no Word from God; no "**sun of righteousness**"; and no Elijah! The sun had risen and set for around 150,000 days; 3,600,000 hours had come and gone; children had been born and had grown up; gotten married and then died for over 20 generations- and yet there had been nothing but hard, cold, deafening Silence! And many Jews had gone into complete despair. Some rabbis even publicly taught that, "*God was dead!*"

Now during the 400 years between the two Testaments, the vacuum created by the Silence allowed for several "false Messiahs" like *Theudas* and *Judas of Galilee*, to rise up, "**claiming to be somebody**". And these false Messiahs were allowed by God to deceive several hundred men. So, these wayward men took advantage of the Jew's Misery and taught that *they* were the fulfillment of Malachi's Promise. But the respected Pharisee, Gamaliel said in **The Acts 5:36**, that these men were all exposed as being frauds and they were all arrested and killed and,

... all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.

But with the ruination of each succeeding false Messiah- the believing Jews grew *more* desperate; *more* confused; and *more*- leery of the next one. And so, with the rise of all the fakes- a "*natural Disbelief*" and a "*hardness of heart*" was created, in even the saved Jews. And this served to make it all the *harder* for anyone- to believe and trust in Jesus as being *Immanuel* (God with us) when He

arrived. So Matthew sought to solve this Problem throughout his Gospel Record in at least five different ways:

1. By illustrating the Miracles of Jesus
2. By showing how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament Prophecy
3. By illustrating the sinlessness of Jesus' Own Life
4. Through Jesus' flawless Teaching
5. Genealogically

1. Matthew Illustrates the Miracles of Jesus

Now a “*Miracle*” occurs when God *temporarily* suspends the normal way that His Creation operates; and He sovereignly *inserts* a radical and dramatic Addition or Subtraction. And that means, by definition, that Miracles are always *rare*. But it also means that what we consider to be astounding- is NOT always a Miracle.

For example even though a natural Birth is truly a “*Marvel*”- it is NOT a “*Miracle*” because it occurs *naturally*. And getting a raise on your job may be a wonderful “*Blessing*” but it is also NOT a Miracle- because it too occurs *normally*.

Now of course, God is, *ultimately*, the Source of both natural Birth and financial Blessings. And we should praise God for both of them. But unless there were literally impossible aspects of these things in play- they are NOT usually considered to be Miracles.

But Matthew tells us that Jesus performed Miracles. For example, in **Matthew 8:1-3**, we read this:

**1 When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.
2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."
3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.**

Now back in the 1st Century, Leprosy was the single most feared and stigmatized disease. It was very contagious and when someone became “leprous”- their lives were over. The disease itself was very painful as their flesh was literally being dissolved inch by inch.

But the social Stigma was as bad or worse than the Disease itself. A modern equivalent would be the social Response that the modern world had to AIDS. And we are fast seeing the response to the recent Pandemic and the Vaccine as also being a social Stigma as well.

But when a person contracted Leprosy- they were fired from their jobs and cast out from their families. Nobody would hire them or get around them. And the common thought was that, obviously, Lepers were cursed by God for some Sin they had committed. And so, they were forced to live in “Leper Colonies” and scavenge for food.

So, here, the Leper says to Jesus,

... Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean...

... and Jesus replied,

... I am willing; be cleansed...

Notice that Jesus was never addressed the social Stigma part of the Disease. He never mentioned a single word about *why* the Leprosy had come upon this man in the first place. Our gracious Lord simply told the man that He was willing to heal him. And Matthew tells us,
And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

So, this is an undeniable Act of God. It is an irrefutable “sure- nuff” bona fide Miracle. It is a temporary suspension of the normal way in which Leprosy works in the body of individuals. And it was done publicly- in view of many witnesses. So, this is not about a man “thinking he feels better” after some “Faith-healer” prays for him. No, Matthew says, **“immediately his leprosy was cleansed”**. The Disease was *completely* removed from this man; the dead skin was given new life; and that area of his body which had already rotted off- was restored. And all this happened as a result of a spoken Word from Jesus.

But here is the Point of it all. The way Matthew recorded this Miracle draws attention AWAY from the man who was healed and puts it- *correctly*- on Jesus. And that is the Point of EVERY Miracle. This Miracle was performed for one reason: NOT to simply give this man a healthy body. Because even though he was healed from Leprosy- in just a few more years- this very same man would die from something else.

So, miraculous Healing is NEVER- *ultimately*- about the person who is healed. And it is NEVER permanent. ALL physical Healings re, at best, only temporary. This Miracle was performed to give “Divine Credibility” to Jesus.

But Matthew is NOT showing his Jewish readers (or us) that Jesus is a skilled military Leader, who will *overpower* the Roman pagans. No, Matthew is showing them and everybody who reads this Account that Jesus is God Almighty in human flesh. That He is “*Immanuel*” (God with Us). And by giving us the

Account of this Miracle- Matthew is showing us that Jesus has total and complete Authority over the Curse that God put on Adam after he fell (**Genesis 3:17-19**).

Miraculous physical Healing *temporarily* suspends the normal Result of “*Original Sin*”- which is physical Death. And only God can do that. So, Death comes to all humans- through Disease; or a Malfunction of the Body; or an Accident. Here, Jesus heals a Disease- proving that He is the true Messiah.

And so, beginning with Chapter 8 and extending all the way to the bodily Resurrection in Chapter 28- Matthew recorded 23 separate Miracles attributed to Jesus- with two of them being *unique* to his Gospel.² And these Miracles were carried out by Jesus for three Reasons:

1. To prove Jesus’ Own personal Deity
2. To illustrate Jesus’ Divine Authority over all of Creation
3. To show us Jesus’ Ability to forgive Sin

... and as we get into the Miracles of Jesus- we will explore in depth *what* they were; and *why* Jesus carried them out the way He did.

2. Jesus Fulfilled Old Testament Prophecies

There are at least 18 separate Old Testament Prophecies that Matthew records for us that Jesus fulfilled. And in **Matthew 1:20b-23** the former tax collector begins to show his Jewish readers that Jesus was the *fulfillment* of these Prophecies- with the Account of Joseph having a dream and hearing the angel tell him:

20 ..."Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

3. Jesus’ Sinless Life

² Jesus healed two blind men (9:27-31) and a man unable to speak (9:32-34)

Without actually using the word, “*Sinlessness*”- anywhere in his Gospel Record- Matthew teaches *boldly* and *unapologetically* that Jesus was without any “*Moral Failure*”. For example, in **Matthew 3:17**, the Apostle Levi tells us that God spoke out of Heaven (audibly) and said,

This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.

Now, many times, we just pass over this- *usually* because we have heard it so many times- but also because we don’t understand Jewish Culture very well. But when God said that He was “**well-pleased**” with Jesus- this phrase means that Jesus had pleased God- PERFECTLY!

Now how does a person “please” God? We “please” God; we “honor” God; we “glorify” God; we make God to look magnificent and we make God “happy”- by being so changed (by what God alone has done for us) that we find the fullness of our *own* Joy- in *obeying* what He said. And Obedience results in Righteousness.

So, Matthew was telling us that Jesus obeyed God- *perfectly*. And His perfect Obedience is what made Jesus to be perfectly “Righteous”. And that pleased God.

Now normally, we think of Obedience as our “Duty” or our “Obligation”. We obey God- because we are “*supposed to*”. We obey- because it is the “*Right thing to do*”. But the Bible teaches a completely different dynamic.

The Scriptures teach that believers seek to obey God- out of a grateful and loving and humble heart- for what God has *already* done for us. So, our Obedience is a loving *Response* to what God has already done. And that means that our Obedience to God is NEVER seeking to earn any Favor with God. Christian Obedience ONLY seeks to *glorify* God. And so, by default- our Obedience is NEVER based on Duty or Obligation; and it CANNOT be driven by Human Will-Power. Our Obedience is based on Joy and Delight; and it is driven by Love.

We have to remember that we are commanded to *enjoy* God- NOT merely *obey* Him. For example, in **Hebrews 12:1&2a** we are told:

**1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith...**

So, in this Passage- we are told to “do” four things:

1. Lay aside every encumbrance

2. Lay aside the Sin which so easily entangles us
 3. Run with Endurance the Race that is set before us
 4. Fix our eyes on Jesus
- ... and what do we “see” Jesus doing?

Hebrews 12:2b

... who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So, Jesus did NOT endure the Cross out of any sense of Duty or Obligation- but for the “Joy that was set before Him”. And we should follow that perfect Example- and EVERYTHING we do- should be done in the same way.

Matthew says that Jesus brought God Pleasure- *perfectly!* In other words, Jesus *pleased* God- without any Fault or Failure. None. So, this is simply another way of saying that the audible Voice out of Heaven was God- acknowledging Jesus’ Sinlessness.

Yet when *we* please God- we can ONLY please Him- *partially*. Why? Because *we* are fallen human beings- creatures of the dirt- who have been redeemed. And so, EVERYTHING we do- is tainted with Sin. And that is true- even with the “Good Things” we do. So, every time we praise God- we do so with Sin in our lives. Every single time we obey God- we DON’T obey Him- *perfectly*. There is always *some* area of our lives that exists in blatant Rebellion. And this has nothing to do with some lack of Effort on our part. Human beings simply CAN’T please God perfectly.

And that is because we do NOT love God- with all our heart; soul; mind; and strength. Now we like to say that we do. But the Reality is that there are other things we “set our love on” that we enjoy and take pleasure in- as much or even more than God. And that is the classic definition of Idolatry.

And yet God saves us; and blesses us; and uses us for His Glory. So, this Truth is NOT designed to bring us to despair- but to humble us and remind us that everything we do for God; and in His “Name”; and to His Glory- we carry out with flaws; and faults; and imperfections... and Sin.

But Jesus *pleased* God- *perfectly*. And that is because Jesus *loved* God- *perfectly*. Jesus was *perfectly* led by God the Holy Spirit. He was *perfectly* in submission to His Father. He never prayed amiss; all of Jesus’ Prayers were in perfect accord with God’s Will. And so, while we fight and struggle to find Joy in our Obedience- Jesus had *perfect* Joy in His. Jesus delighted in God- *perfectly*. Jesus worshipped God; and made God happy; and honored God- *perfectly*. Jesus never sinned.

And so, Matthew desires that we NOT merely read his Gospel Record- but that we *marvel* at this sinless Savior.

4. Jesus' Flawless Teaching

One thing that has become obvious to me as I struggle so hard to “get the Gospel Right” each week, is how *easy* it is to get off base. It is frightening to see how quickly the most devout and dedicated among us can veer off course and believe and teach things that are simply NOT true. Truly unless God sovereignly keeps us- NONE of us will remain faithful.

Now I think that we get MORE Truth here than most- but nevertheless- I am constantly repenting and constantly begging God for Mercy- as I study- because I know all too well how I can *emphasize* things that God never said; and I can completely miss things that God's Word emphasized.

Now, yes, expositional Preaching *minimizes* that Danger. But it does NOT *eliminate* it. We, who lead in the Church, must *constantly* talk about this Danger; and watch for it; and pray about it; and hope that we are not guilty of it.

One thing I am grateful for is that every five years or so- I go over my Radio Broadcasts. And in doing that- I can see how much I have personally grown in Grace and in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ. And so, I re-do the transcripts and re-record the broadcasts- because I am now able to teach certain things much better than before.

But I also run across some words or phrases that I used five years ago- or some logic I applied- and I see that it doesn't need to be improved or made better- it needs to be discarded and replaced. Why? It's wrong. It's unbiblical. It's false.

And so, I repent to God and, sometimes I even repent to the people on the Radio. Why? Because I taught something that wasn't true. God didn't say it. It isn't in accord with Scripture. I made a mistake and never should have said that.

But another thing that Matthew wants us to marvel at Jesus about- is the fact that Jesus NEVER had to do that. Jesus NEVER corrected the Record. He NEVER had to repent for teaching something that wasn't true. What Jesus taught- was ALWAYS Right and True and ALWAYS in perfect Accord with God's Will and God's Word. Jesus' Teaching was flawless.

Now, over the years, I have heard some really good Preaching. But I have NEVER heard *flawless* Preaching. Not once. I have NEVER heard *perfect* Teaching. Ever. Every single Lesson or Sermon I have ever heard or read- could have been done better. There are some weaknesses in them and, sometimes, even mistakes and areas where they are out of step with what the Bible actually says.

Not one single Sermon is inspired. Now many Sermons are *inspiring*. But none of them were breathed out by God. None of them is perfect. All of them have flaws in them.

And even though the Pope of Rome likes to think he is infallible- the Truth is that he has never known a single day of his life where he has been infallible. And that is true- even when he is supposedly sitting in the “throne of St. Peter”; and even when he is speaking about matters of Faith and Morals³.

But Matthew wants us to marvel at the fact that Jesus was and is- perfectly Infallible. And EVERYTHING Jesus said and taught- was absolutely flawless. Jesus was a perfectly sinless Man; Who preached perfectly infallible Sermons; and taught- without any flaws or faults!

5. Jesus’ Genealogy

Matthew is also very quick to link Jesus with Jewish heroes from the Old Testament with whom there was absolute Trust: David and Abraham. But then the Question always comes up: “*Why didn’t Matthew link Jesus to Moses?*” At the time of Jesus’ Birth- Moses was *more* revered than even Father Abraham. So, why didn’t Matthew link Jesus to Moses? Two reasons:

1. Moses was born from a different Jewish Tribe and was NOT linked to Jesus *genealogically*⁴
2. Matthew’s Goal in this Gospel was to illustrate Jesus as being the “*2nd Moses*” or the “*New Moses*” through His *Teaching* rather than through His *Bloodline*.

... and this followed the Path that the Apostle Paul took in **Romans** by reaching over Moses to link his Teaching of “*Justification by Faith Alone*” to Abraham rather than to Moses- which proved that this Truth *predated* the Law.

But also notice that Matthew doesn’t carry the Genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam- like Luke’s does. And this is NOT an Error or an Omission. Now this is a little tedious, but it is important.

Matthew is concerned with evangelizing the Jews. And so, his primary Goal was to show that Jesus was the “legal heir” to David’s Throne- NOT necessarily who Jesus’ real grandfather was (as Luke’s genealogy did). And this is *why* the Genealogies of **Matthew** and **Luke** are different from King David to Joseph (Jesus’ legal father).

In Dr. Luke’s inspired, inerrant, and infallible Genealogy we read that it goes backward from Joseph to: “Heli”; then to “Matthat”; and then to “Levi”. But

³ The Roman religious System false Teaching of “*Ex-Cathedra*” or “*from the Chair*”.

⁴ Aaron and Moses were brothers; and both were of the Tribe of *Levi*. Jesus was of the Tribe of *Judah*.

Matthew's inspired Genealogy says that from Joseph, Jesus' Bloodline goes from "Jacob"; to "Matthan"; and then to "Eleazar". So, *why* the difference? Is this an Error in the Bible?

No. this is best explained as "Eleazar" (who was listed in Matthew's Genealogy) was the "*legal heir*" of David's throne. But he died without either widow or son. Now, customarily- a close relative would then be counted as his "*legal descendant*". And a "*legal descendant*" would be said to have been "begotten" by him- even though he was NOT his real father. And that is why, in Luke's Genealogy, it says that Joseph's great- grandfather was "Levi" rather than "Eleazar".

We need to remember that Dr. Luke was concerned with actual physical bloodlines (his Gospel Record was written primarily to the Greeks); while Matthew was concerned with who is the "legal heir" to David's Throne (which would have been of interest to the Jews).

The next difference is in who was Joseph's grandfather. Matthew says, "Matthan" while Luke says, "Matthat". This is also NOT an Error as "*Matthat*" and "Matthan" are probably just different spellings of the same person.

And this would mean that "Heli" (from **Luke's** Genealogy) and "Jacob" (from **Matthew's**) were probably brothers. Then we can *assume* that "Jacob" also died before he had any sons. And according to the "*Custom of Levirate Marriage*" (**Matthew 22:25**) the brother of the deceased man is to marry and raise up descendants for the sake of the "name" of the dead brother.

So, "Heli" would then have married "Jacob's" widow and they gave birth to "Joseph"- Jesus' legal father. So, in this way "Joseph" is the "legal heir" to David's throne- through "Jacob's" line; but is the actual physical son of "Heli"- which makes BOTH Genealogies to be correct.

Again, we need to remember that Matthew was concerned with converting the Jews to Jesus. So, his Goal in having his Genealogy is tracing the descendants of Jesus back to David- *in the area of who is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant*- in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. Luke was concerned with converting the highly educated Greeks. And so, his Goal in his Genealogy is in tracing the "actual bloodline" of Jesus' earthly descendants.

And by proving that Jesus was a literal descendant of both King David and Father Abraham- Matthew *disarmed* the "*natural Disbelief*" that many Jews had developed due to all the false Messiahs that had risen up during the 400 years of Silence.

But there is something very odd and seemingly out of place as we read the Genealogy that the Apostle Matthew was "moved" by God the Holy Spirit to give us. Basically, Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus is what is called a "*Patrilineal Genealogy*". It is a Record of "Fathers and Sons". But buried inside this

genealogical Record is a deep and profound Treasure: Five Women. But even though the inclusion of these Women is a Treasure of immense Value- it is also very notable. Because these Women were among the most notorious Women in all of biblical History. So, let's look at them:

Tamar

Now the first Woman mentioned in Jesus' Genealogy is Tamar (**Matthew 1:3**). Tamar entered the royal Bloodline of the Messiah by disguising herself as a Prostitute and seducing her father-in-law, Judah, so he would make her pregnant. Now between you and me and the fence post- Judah was a scoundrel and had it coming- because he had purposely denied Tamar any Justice. But this was an ugly and sinful Affair all the way around (**Genesis 38**).

Rahab

Now the second Women is Rahab (**Matthew 1:5**). And unlike almost everybody else in the Bible- we know Rahab by what the biblical writers wrote about her- immediately after they wrote her name down: ... the harlot. So, she is known forever as, "*Rahab, the harlot*" (KJV/ NKJV/NASB) or "*Rahab, the prostitute*" (CSB/ESV).

Now, unlike Tamar, Rahab didn't have to disguise herself. She had been a well-known prostitute in Jericho for several years. And, in addition to being a Prostitute- Rahab was also a Gentile! And a Canaanite, to boot! So, this is certainly NOT a good pedigree. But Rahab and her family were the only survivors of Israel's conquest of Jericho because she hid the Jewish spies and helped them escape. And once integrated into Israel, she married "Salmon" (I would love to know about that Story) and became King David's great, great grandmother.

Ruth

Ruth is the *third* Women mentioned in Jesus' Genealogy (**Matthew 1:5**). And she was also a Gentile. But Ruth was a Moabitess. And that means that her ancestors came forth from the Incest committed between Lot and his oldest daughter- immediately after God rained down Fire and Brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. And the inclusion of Ruth is interesting since this is what God said about the people of Moab from **Deuteronomy 23:3&4**:

3 “No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the Lord,

4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

Ruth’s people were all God-hating polytheistic pagans- who periodically sacrificed humans and even babies- to the idol/god of *Chemosh* (**Numbers 21; Judges 11; 1Kings 11; 2Kings 23; Jeremiah 48**). The Moabites all hated the Jews and vice-versa. The Moabites were vicious and barbaric people, who stuck bones in their skin and had many different kinds of tattoos- which God said for the Jews NOT to emulate.

Now back in 2017, God led us through a verse-by-verse “Journey” through the **Book of Ruth**. And we saw that through both personal Tragedy and deep Loyalty- Ruth ended up in Bethlehem; and in the arms of Boaz.

And so, even though in **Ezra 9:10-12**- the Jews were *prohibited* from intermarrying with Moabites (unless a Moabite renounced all that being a Moabite meant and became all that it meant to be a Jew)- God the Holy Spirit moved on someone to write an inspired Book that bears her name. So, the fact that one Book of the Old Testament Cannon- is named after a Moabite woman- we can see that God is shouting something powerful about His Grace.

Bathsheba

In **Matthew 1:6b**- the Apostle infallibly wrote:

... David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.

This Woman endured sexual Abuse (rape?) by the most beloved King of Israel- David. So, as King- David’s word was law. And when he saw Bathsheba bathing on the roof and lusted for her- he sent for her. Now by refusing his advances- she would have, no doubt, been killed for refusing the direct Order of the King. But by acquiescing- Bathsheba was guilty of Adultery.

This is an example of the great Damage that Men can inflict on Women. And this is why Men have a tremendous Opportunity to be Men of great Integrity and Godliness. What David *should* have done was to honor God- by emulating the Old Testament Joseph and refusing to violate the sanctity of Uriah and Bathsheba’s Marriage.

And that would have been bad enough. But in order to cover up his Sin- David then arranged for Uriah to take time off from the war and be with his Wife. But the amazing loyalty of Uriah to the very man, who betrayed him only added to David's great Sin. And when that didn't work- David arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle – so he could sinfully take his Wife.

The Result of this great Wickedness accomplished several wonderful things. For example:

1. By not hiding the “dirty laundry” of its heroes- the Credibility of the Bible is pristine.
2. Bathsheba becomes an ancestor of Jesus

Mary

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is the fifth Woman mentioned in Jesus' Genealogy (**Matthew 1:6**). And Mary became pregnant by an amazing Miracle. But she became “with child” BEFORE her Wedding- thus forever casting aspersions to her own godly Integrity in the minds of many God-hating people throughout History. So, the glorious Act of fulfilling the Old Testament Prophecy from **Isaiah 7:14b**:

... Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

... created and caused the Scorn and Ridicule that Mary bore for the rest of her life.

And this is a microcosm of what happens to us in Salvation. The glorious Act of saving our souls- many times- causes great Persecution and Hardship- even among otherwise loving Families.

The Scandal of Mary's pregnancy lingered like a cloud in the whispers and suspicions of her wider family and fellow Nazarenes until the day she died. And again, this illustrates an amazing aspect about how God moves on His people. The very Act that causes great Wonder and Admiration with believers also causes great Persecutions among the Lost.

So, all five of these Women share a common Issue: Disgrace. These Women either committed disgraceful Acts themselves or suffered Disgrace- unfairly. But they all had tainted Reputations. And this resulted in all of them enduring the Contempt of others- especially among the very people they loved.

And while Mary held great Agony in her heart- the first four of these ancestors of Jesus struggled their entire lives with very painful, and even sordid Memories of the Sins they committed.

But here is the strange thing about Jesus. Most of us hide what we are ashamed of. We try to conceal the more disgraceful Events of our lives and we seldom mention the people in our families, who may have committed horrible Acts.

But not Jesus. He goes out of His to draw Attention to these Women, whose very names call to mind scandalous activities. Now why is that? Is Matthew teaching his Jewish readers that Sin doesn't matter? Is he lowering the bar as to proper behavior to further bring in a collapse of moral behavior? No. Matthew is seeking to remind us why Jesus came- BEFORE he begins the Account of His Birth.

Matthew is quick to tell us what the angel told Joseph in his dream. That the REASON Jesus was born. The REASON God took on human flesh. The REASON Matthew wrote this Gospel is the REASON of it all. The angel told Joseph, "*Don't stone Mary to death. And don't even 'divorce' her...*"

... for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:20b&21)

Jesus will NOT remove the pagan Romans from Israel. Jesus will NOT fix all of the political and national Problems of the 1st Century. Jesus will NOT restore Israel to her former Glory that she enjoyed under King David. But Jesus will,

... save His people from their sins.

... and THAT is why He came.

So, even in the long and boring Genealogies and long lists of names that are hard to pronounce- God is displaying His amazing Grace. Because the God of the Bible *loves* to redeem guilty sinners- by what He alone does for them. God *loves* to make something beautiful out of ugly and sordid family backgrounds. God *loves* to make Children out from Foreigners and Strangers. God *loves* to reconcile His enemies. And God *loves* to CAUSE all things to work together for the greater "Good" of the Glory of God- for those who love Him and who are called by Him- according to His Purpose (**Romans 8:28**).

Each of these Women are beautiful Old Covenant Illustrations of what God would later say to Peter when clarifying that His Grace is extended to all whom He has chosen to save- *regardless* of how wicked they have been:

The Acts 10:15b

... What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.

... and that is why Jesus came. Not to merely be *studied*; or *analyzed*; or *examined*; or *argued about*; or *debated*. No, Jesus came to be worshipped; and adored; and marveled at; and loved; and enjoyed- by Who He is and What He alone has done. Because there is no one like Jesus. And that is why Matthew wrote this Gospel- NOT so we would simply get smart about the Bible. But so we would see and delight in Jesus- as He looks at all our Sin; and all our Faults; and all our Failures; and says to us,

“Clean!”

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.