

## The Family of Faith

Devotional Reading: Psalm 9:1–14

Background Scripture: [Genesis 38](#); [Joshua 2](#); [6:22–25](#); [2 Samuel 12:24](#); [Ruth 4:13–22](#); [Matthew 1:1–17](#)

[Matthew 1:1–17](#)

**<sup>1</sup> This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:**

**<sup>2</sup> Abraham was the father of Isaac,**

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

**<sup>3</sup> Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,**

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

**<sup>4</sup> Ram the father of Amminadab,**

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

**<sup>5</sup> Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,**

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

**<sup>6</sup> and Jesse the father of King David.**

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

**<sup>7</sup> Solomon the father of Rehoboam,**

Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

Abijah the father of Asa,

**<sup>8</sup> Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,**

Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,

Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

**<sup>9</sup> Uzziah the father of Jotham,**

Jotham the father of Ahaz,

Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

**<sup>10</sup> Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,**

Manasseh the father of Amon,

Amon the father of Josiah,

**<sup>11</sup> and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.**

<sup>12</sup> After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,  
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

<sup>13</sup> Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,  
Abihud the father of Eliakim,  
Eliakim the father of Azor,

<sup>14</sup> Azor the father of Zadok,  
Zadok the father of Akim,  
Akim the father of Elihud,

<sup>15</sup> Elihud the father of Eleazar,  
Eleazar the father of Matthan,  
Matthan the father of Jacob,

<sup>16</sup> and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

<sup>17</sup> Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

## Key Text

*This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:—[Matthew 1:1](#)*

Faith That Pleases God

## Unit 1: Profiles in Faith

[Lessons 1–5](#)

### Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Identify the “three 14s” of the text.
2. Explain the purpose of documenting Jesus’ lineage.
3. State a way to value personally his or her own genealogy in Christ while avoiding the danger noted in [1 Timothy 1:4](#) and [Titus 3:9](#).

### Lesson Outline

#### Introduction

##### A. The Big Business of Genealogy

## B. Lesson Context

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- A. Introduction to Jesus (v. 1)
- B. Pre-Nation of Israel (v. 2)
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*What a Mess!*

### II. From David to the Exile (Matthew 1:6b–11)

- A. Unified Kingdom (vv. 6b–7a)
- B. Kingdom of Judah (vv. 7b–11)

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- A. In Babylon (v. 12)
- B. In Judah (vv. 13–16)

*Family Legacy*

- C. Generational Summary (v. 17)

## Conclusion

- A. Jesus' Family
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

## How to Say It

Hezron *Hezz-ron.*

Jeconiah *Jek-o-nye-uh.*

Jotham *Jo-thum.*

Jehoshaphat *Jeh-hosh-uh-fat.*

Nahshon *Nah-shahn.*

Rehoboam *Ree-huh-boe-um.*

Shealtiel *She-al-tee-el.*

Zerubbabel *Zeh-rub-uh-bul.*

## Introduction

### A. The Big Business of Genealogy

Genealogical research has become big business worldwide. Tools for genetic testing can identify anyone's unique DNA sequencing. These tools, combined with vast computing power, have allowed for the compilation of an ever-growing database of millions of individuals' genetic information. The digitization of massive amounts of genealogical records going back many centuries allows individuals to trace family traits. One leader in this area claims to have billions of records in its database to help with any given search. For a price, individuals can learn details of their ancestors that were inaccessi-

ble even a few decades ago.

## B. Lesson Context

Biblical genealogies are not necessarily lists of ancestors in exhaustive detail. Differences within two accounts of the same family tree are born not out of error but instead of the writer's intention. We need only consider that Luke's genealogy of Jesus ([Luke 3:23–38](#)) contains 56 generations between Abraham and Jesus compared to Matthew's 42 generations (see [Matthew 1:2–17](#), below) to understand that something other than precise family history is intended in these lists.

The chronology of the two (in reverse order of one another) further affirms that each writer had priorities beyond mere recitation of family facts. Differences between Matthew and Luke's genealogies of Jesus could be explored. But we will remain focused on Matthew's genealogy, keeping in mind that Matthew had valid reasons for organizing Jesus' genealogy as he did.

Considering who is included in Matthew's genealogy prepares the careful reader for important themes that recur throughout that Gospel (see commentary on [Matthew 1:1–2, 6](#), below). The curious inclusion of four women (plus Mary; see [1:3, 5–6, 16](#), below) introduces two other themes that will be found in Matthew's Gospel (examples: [9:18–25](#); [15:21–28](#); [28:16–20](#)). Furthermore, the episodes associated with these women (and others) highlight God's continued willingness to work through sinful people and imperfect circumstances (examples: [4:18–22](#); [16:13–23](#); [26:69–75](#); [28:16–20](#)).

## I. From Abraham to David ([Matthew 1:1–6a](#))

### A. Introduction to Jesus (v. 1)

#### 1. This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Right away we can sense Matthew's primary reason for writing this Gospel: to reveal who *Jesus the Messiah* is and why his life is significant. The Hebrew word for *Messiah* (which can be translated with the Greek word for *Christ*) means "anointed one" and referred at various times to both priests and kings (examples: [Exodus 28:41](#); [1 Chronicles 29:22](#)). Sometime after the fall of David's royal line, the phrase came to more explicitly refer to an anticipated savior of the Jewish people (example: [Isaiah 61:1](#)). This hope grew out of the expectation that God continued to care for Israel and would reverse the nation's painful circumstances (compare [Matthew 1:20–22](#), not in our printed text). All of the New Testament expands on what it means for Jesus to be the Christ ([Philippians 2:5–11](#); [Hebrews 9:11–14](#); [1 Peter 2:21](#); [Revelation 1:5–6](#); etc.).

As *the son of David, the son of Abraham*, we anticipate that Jesus is important to the nation of Israel (see [Matthew 1:2a, 6a](#), below). Matthew's original readers (likely Christian Jews who were still active in their synagogues) knew of promises made to Abraham and David. Jesus fulfilled these promises, though how he did so will take the rest of the Gospel to answer (example: [21:5, 9](#)). One subtle way Matthew emphasizes this point is by referring to Jesus as "son of David" 10 times, more than all the other Gospels combined.



## B. Pre-Nation of Israel (v. 2)

### 2a. Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob,

**Matthew 1:2–6a** is the first third of the genealogy, covering approximately 1,100 years. The three men listed here are Israel’s patriarchs and the subjects of **Genesis 12–50**. They represent the time following God’s choosing of *Abraham* to God’s creating the new nation of Israel. Perhaps most notable for themes found in Matthew, Abraham received the promise from God that “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (**Genesis 12:3**; see **Galatians 3:8**).

*Isaac* was a miracle baby, born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age when it seemed they would not have a family through which to establish God’s promise (**Genesis 21:1–3**). Unexpectedly, the promise was carried out through Isaac’s second son, *Jacob* (**25:23**). Jacob was renamed *Israel*, a designation meaning “struggles with God,” because Jacob “struggled with God and with humans” and overcame (**32:28**). This made Israel the namesake of the nation from which Jesus came.

### 2b. Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

The “founding fathers” of Israel were the 12 sons of *Jacob*, here presented as *Judah* (**Genesis 29:35**) and *his brothers* (**46:8–24**). These brothers became the ancestors of the tribes of Israel (**35:22–26**; **Deuteronomy 27:12–13**).

## C. Pre-Monarchy of Israel (vv. 3–6a)

### 3a. Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Despite not being the oldest brother, a descendant of *Judah* would fulfill the words Jacob spoke: “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet” (**Genesis 49:10**; see **Matthew 1:6**, below).

We note Matthew’s first deviation of the pattern from male to male (so far, father to son). *Tamar* was Judah’s daughter-in-law, assumed to be a Canaanite given Judah’s own marriage and his physical location when Tamar married into the family (**Genesis 38:1–6**). She was left a childless widow when her husband, Er, died and his brother, Onan, refused to fulfill his duty according to what would come to be known as Levirate marriage (**38:7–8**; **Deuteronomy 25:5–10**; see **lesson 1**). When Judah proved unwilling to care for his daughter-in-law, Tamar devised a plan to become pregnant by Judah himself (**Genesis 38:11–18**). The result was twin boys, *Perez* (**38:29**) and *Zerah* (**38:30**).

From this spotlight, we can anticipate two themes in Matthew: God’s concern for Gentiles (any non-Israelite) and for women. This hints at the hope of salvation beyond Israel, as well as the need for a more robust understanding of salvation than mere political independence (see **Matthew 1:5–6**, below; compare **Acts 15:7–11**). Furthermore, we see God’s care and concern in the mess of this real human family. The juxtaposition between the Christ and his family cannot be missed. Nor can we miss God’s willingness to work through sinful people to fulfill his promises.

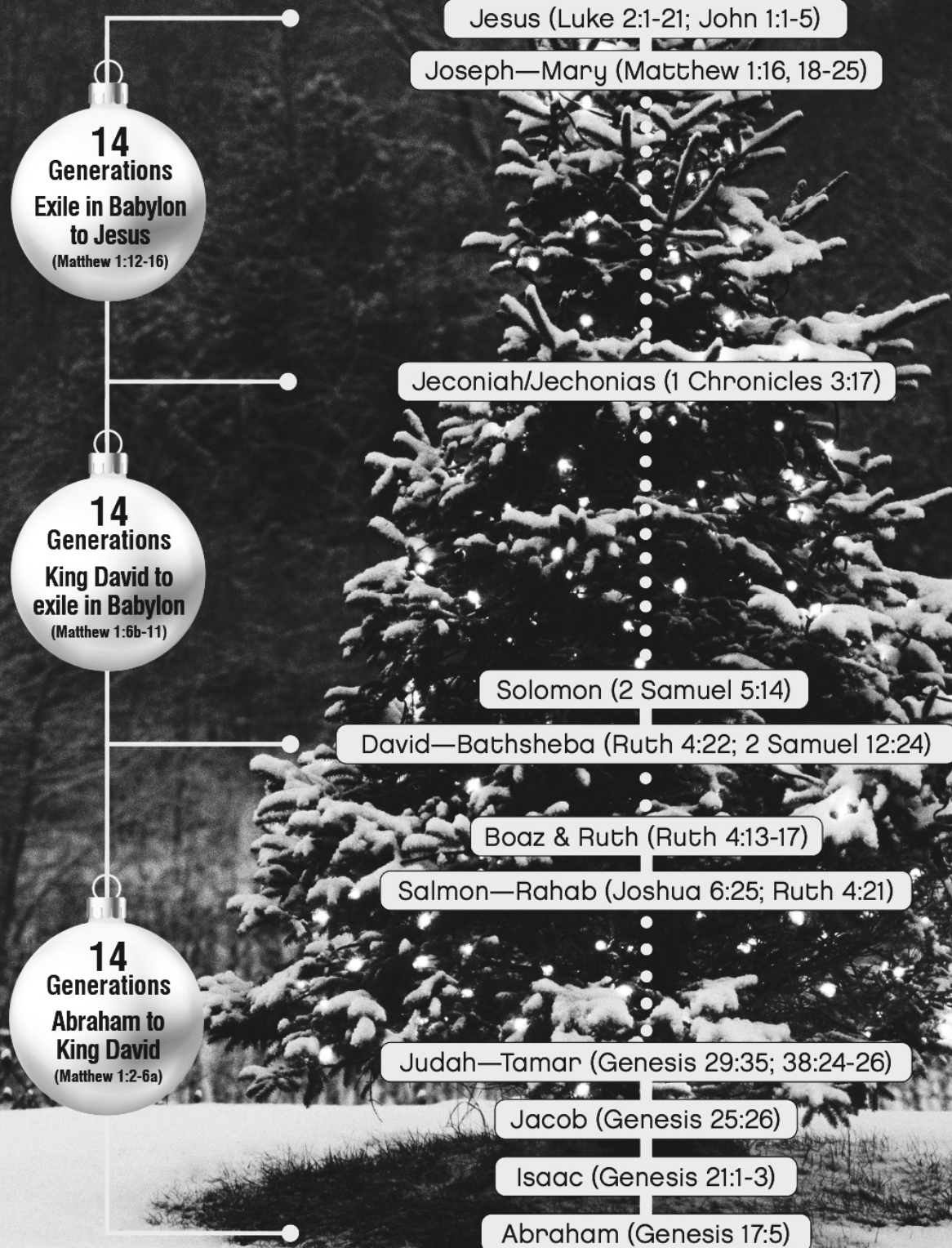
## What a Mess!

Why does the genealogy of Jesus emphasize the fact that he is descended from Perez, born after

Tamar posed as a prostitute to entrap her father-in-law ([Genesis 38](#))? Several possibilities come to mind, all indicative of God's love. No matter how serious our sins, or how they compound with one choice after another, God can redeem those situations and offer grace. None of us are doomed to follow our parents' flawed paths, nor guaranteed that we will follow their faithful examples. And we can find comfort in the pain of our own messy families because Jesus' family was also a mess—and look what God did through them!

# Jesus' Family Tree

## Matthew 1:1-17



Allow students to refer to this image as they reacquaint themselves with Jesus' family tree.

When you read about Tamar and Judah and the other messes up and down Jesus' family tree, what encouragement do you experience? Who else will benefit from that encouragement and meeting Jesus in the middle of his messy family?

—A. W.

**3b. Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram,**

*Perez* and *Hezron* journeyed to Egypt during the famine in Canaan ([Genesis 46:12](#)). Their father's complicity in the sin of selling his own brother Joseph into slavery ([37:12–36](#)) was redeemed through Joseph's God-given work of mitigating the effects of a transnational famine ([45:4–8](#)).

**4. Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon,**

*Ram* and *Amminadab* represent generations born in Egypt who experienced part of the 430 years there, culminating in the exodus from slavery in 1447 BC (see [Exodus 12:40](#)). *Amminadab* is further associated with the 40-year wandering in the wilderness, as is *Nahshon* (see [Numbers 1:7; 7:12; 10:14](#)). *Salmon* represents the first generation that was tasked with conquering Canaan in the days of Joshua, about 1400 BC ([Joshua 1](#); see [Matthew 1:5a](#)).

**5a. Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,**

*Rahab* is the second Gentile woman to be named. Specifically, she was the Canaanite prostitute who became a heroine in Israel's conquest of Jericho ([Joshua 2; 6:25](#); compare [Hebrews 11:31](#)). Her inclusion reinforces the reality of sinfulness in Jesus' family tree as well as God's continued redemptive work through this less-than-ideal family.

**5b. Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse,**

The story of *Boaz* and *Ruth* comprises the four chapters of the biblical book named after this Moabite heroine (see [lesson 1](#)). She is the third Gentile to be named in this genealogy. The birth of her son, *Obed*, relieved her mother-in-law of her great sorrow ([Ruth 4:13–17](#)).

**6a. and Jesse the father of King David.**

*Jesse* originally offered his older sons as candidates for kingship. But the Lord chose Jesse's youngest son, *David*, instead ([1 Samuel 16:7, 11–13](#); see [lesson 2](#) for more on David).

Referring to *King David* and emphasizing his position in Jesus' family tree (see [Matthew 1:1, 16](#)) calls to mind promises God made to David. Chief among these promises was that David's throne would be established forever ([2 Samuel 7:5–15; 1 Kings 2:45; Psalm 89:35–37](#); see commentary on [Matthew 1:11](#), below).

**What Do You Think?**

How might a family's faith be enriched by the perspective of believers from other cultures?

**Digging Deeper**

What opportunities exist in your community to experience enrichment from different groups of Christian believers?

## II. From David to the Exile

([Matthew 1:6b–11](#))

### A. Unified Kingdom (vv. [6b–7a](#))

#### **6b. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah’s wife,**

[Matthew 1:6b–11](#) represents the second third of the genealogy, covering about 400 years, from 1000 to 586 BC. We can hazard some educated guesses as to why Bathsheba is referred as *Uriah’s wife* instead of by name. Given that the other women in this list were Gentiles, it’s possible that giving this title to Bathsheba highlights that she was likely a Hittite as was Uriah ([2 Samuel 11:3](#)). And the designation emphasizes her first marriage that was destroyed after David called her to his house ([11:4–27](#)). Reminding the reader of David’s grave sins serves to temper any hero worship that the king’s status—especially having been handpicked by God and received incredible blessings from him (see [Matthew 1:6a](#), above)—might otherwise inspire.

#### **7a. Solomon the father of Rehoboam,**

David had several wives and many children ([1 Chronicles 3:1–9](#)); at his death, *Solomon* became king ([1 Kings 1:31–34](#)). He was the last king of the united monarchy of Israel, due in large part to his own faithlessness later in his reign (see [11:9–13](#)). His son *Rehoboam* ([11:43](#)) acted foolishly by listening to his friends instead of wise advisors (a warning to us all!). This precipitated the division of the kingdom that the Lord decreed following Solomon’s faithlessness. Even so, God left a remnant to David’s family in light of God’s promise to that man ([12:1–24](#)).

#### **What Do You Think?**

What takeaway should believers have from Solomon’s life of early faith and late apostasy?

#### **Digging Deeper**

What other biblical texts affirm or challenge that takeaway?

### B. Kingdom of Judah (vv. [7b–11](#))

#### **7b–8. Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah,**

This verse and a half lists the names of King *Rehoboam* and his successors who ruled over the southern kingdom of Judah in Jerusalem from 931 to 740 BC, following the revolt of Israel’s 10 northern tribes. *Abijah* was not a righteous king ([1 Kings 15:1–3](#)). But his son *Asa* and grandson *Jehoshaphat* were righteous ([15:11](#); [22:42–43](#)). *Jehoram* stepped out of his father and grandfather’s footsteps and “did evil in the eyes of the Lord” ([2 Chronicles 21:5–7](#)). *Uzziah* was again characterized as doing “what was right in the eyes of the Lord” ([26:1–4](#); contrast [26:16–21](#)). Matthew skipped three kings and a queen between Jehoram and Uzziah.

#### **9–10. Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah,**



The kings listed here represent some of Judah's best—*Jotham* (2 Kings 15:32–34); *Hezekiah* (18:1–4); and *Josiah* (22:1–2). Assyria conquered Israel during the reign of Hezekiah (722 BC). Judah's survival of that crisis is attributed in part to Hezekiah's continued faithfulness to the Lord (19:14–36). Later, Josiah was credited with reinstating the worship of the Lord and teaching the book of the law (probably a copy of Deuteronomy; see 2 Chronicles 34:15).

These kings also represent some of Judah's worst—*Ahaz* (2 Kings 16:1–4); *Manasseh* (21:1–9); and *Amon* (21:19–22). The prophet Jeremiah attributed the eventual fall of Jerusalem in part to the disastrous reign of Manasseh (Jeremiah 15:4).

#### What Do You Think?

Why isn't a God-fearing parent like Hezekiah guaranteed to have a God-fearing child (consider wicked Manasseh)?

#### Digging Deeper

What support can you offer parents whose children have rejected godly living?

### 11. and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

Josiah's wicked (grand) son *Jeconiah* (2 Kings 24:8–9) and his brothers were exiled in the first wave of captives (24:15–16). Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in the final Babylonian siege in 586 BC (25:8–12). Many residents were killed; most survivors were carried away to *Babylon*. The exile marks the end of the second set of 14 generations (see Matthew 1:17b, below).

## III. From the Exile to Christ

(Matthew 1:12–17)

### A. In Babylon (v. 12)

12. After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

Matthew 1:12–16 is the final third of the genealogy, covering just under 600 years. *Babylon* was the low point of Jewish history. The people had been forcibly removed from the promised land by God's own plan (Jeremiah 20:4–5; etc.). And the throne was never reestablished in Jerusalem.

This time also gave rise to the messianic expectations of a Davidic king to come, which Jesus fulfilled in unexpected ways (see lesson 5 on the importance of prophetic fulfillment in Matthew). *Jeconiah*, *Shealtiel* (1 Chronicles 3:17), and *Zerubbabel* (3:19) represent the 70 years of Babylonian exile. After Babylon was conquered by the Persians, King Cyrus allowed the people of Judah to return to Jerusalem in 538 BC (Ezra 1:1–4). Zerubbabel was instrumental in rebuilding the Jerusalem temple (3:2; 5:2; 6:13–18), completed about 516 BC.

#### What Do You Think?

In what ways does remembering family history, including successes and failures, help younger generations?

## Digging Deeper

Why might shared history of trauma (like exile) be especially important or instructive?

### B. In Judah (vv. 13–16)

**13. Zerubbabel the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor,**

With *Zerubbabel*, the Old Testament account of the kingly line ends. Matthew includes nine names in verses 13–15 that come from a source unknown to us.

**14–15. Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Elihud, Elihud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob,**

Again, nothing is available in the biblical record about these men, whose lives cover the time from the rebuilding of the temple (see [Matthew 1:12](#), above) to Jesus’ own adoptive paternal grandfather, *Jacob*.

### Family Legacy

Photos from the past help us remember tidbits about family we never met. Maybe Great-Grandpa Sam had a silver dollar collection, or Great-Great-Aunt Lucy was the first woman to leave the family farm for a job in town. An Uncle Deet (short for Dietrich) and his first wife (whose name was forgotten) passed down the German Bible they brought when they immigrated.

We may forget the details of their lives, but no doubt our ancestors’ influence continues in our families in myriad ways. If you can leave only one legacy for your descendants when you are only a photograph, what do you hope it to be? How can you live today so that this hope can come to be?

—A. W.

**16. and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.**

The final entries in the genealogy are carefully worded. Matthew breaks his pattern of “fathering” with *Joseph*. He is *the husband of Mary*, not a biological relative of Jesus ([Matthew 1:18](#), not in our printed text). Jesus’ belonging in Joseph’s family was a matter of choice, like adoption, instead of natural heritage.

Mary is the fifth and final woman in the genealogy. Unlike the others, she was not a Gentile and was a virgin when she conceived. Mary accepted God’s plan for her with faith and humility ([Luke 1:26–38](#); see [lesson 4](#)), demonstrating why he chose her to raise Jesus. Calling Jesus *the Messiah* book-ends the genealogy (see commentary on [Matthew 1:1](#), above).

### C. Generational Summary (v. 17)

**17. Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David**

**to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.**

Numbering *fourteen generations* between *Abraham* and *David*, *David* and *the exile to Babylon*, and the Babylonian exile to Jesus is an organizational tool that emphasizes the roles of Abraham, David, and the exile as formative people/events in Israel's history.

This summary serves to emphasize the fulfillment of God's promises. Abraham received the first promises specific to the nation of Israel and blessing through the nation for the world (see [Matthew 1:2a](#), above). David received promises for a kingly line in Israel (see [1:6a](#)). The Babylonian exile marked the end of kingship in Judah and seemingly of the nation itself, thus throwing into question God's continued intention to fulfill his promises, especially toward David ([Psalm 89:46–52](#)). But only 14 generations later *the Messiah* was born!

## Conclusion

### A. Jesus' Family

Some of us learn very early, others later on, that it is challenging, sometimes heartbreaking, to belong in a family. For all of us, being reminded of the mix of righteous people (like David) along with those who famously fell in sin (also like David) in Jesus' own family line is a word of comfort: no matter who we come from, we can look for God's hand at work in our families.

More than this, Jesus' genealogy is a word of comfort because it is a word about our Lord Jesus Christ. In him, God fulfilled promises he made (by Matthew's count) as early as 42 generations prior! The lineage of Jesus shows how God moved beyond people's sin and selfishness to use them in his plan for his Messiah. This genealogy is the first evidence Matthew presents of Jesus' Messiahship, and certainly not the last (example: [Matthew 16:16](#)).

#### What Do You Think?

Who in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus do you most identify with?

#### Digging Deeper

What comfort do you find in God's working through that person for his promises to be fulfilled in Christ?

### B. Prayer

Lord God, may we be reminded that you use all sorts of people to accomplish your will. May you use us, in spite of our sins and weaknesses. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### C. Thought to Remember

God uses imperfect people to accomplish his perfect plans.



# Involvement Learning

Enhance your lesson with [NIV Bible Student](#) (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the [NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition](#)).

## Into the Lesson

Engage the class in a discussion of genealogy. Possible questions to ask are: 1—How have you researched your family heritage? 2—What ancestors are you most proud of? Why? 3—Which ancestors would you rather forget? Why? 4—What family legacy has been handed down to you from your ancestors? Guide the group to consider not only material inheritance but also family traditions, customs, values, educational legacies, occupations, and faith heritage that have been woven into the fabric of the family for generations.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Surprising Ancestors” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners work individually on the exercise as indicated for a minute or less before discussing conclusions as a whole group. *Option.* Read the exercise aloud and have the class vote on each statement.

Next, say, “Jesus’ genealogy includes a lot of characters who might surprise us—if we forget that God works through surprising people. Let’s see what we can learn from Jesus’ ancestry and how we can be encouraged by it.”

## Into the Word

Distribute a handout (you create) of [Matthew 1:1–17](#). After reading verse 1 aloud to the class, ask three volunteers to read the three genealogical divisions (vv. 2–6a, 6b–11, 12–16); close by reading verse 17 yourself. As you and the volunteers read, have the rest of the class circle names they recognize, write question marks by names they don’t recognize, and put stars by people they are surprised are named. Allow one minute for learners silently to reread the genealogy to complete their mark-up. Ask the class what themes they can identify from the genealogy that are present throughout Matthew’s Gospel. See the [Lesson Context](#) for possible answers.

*Alternative.* Invite the class to pick out any familiar names they know from the genealogy and tell biblical stories they remember about these characters. They may want to use their phones or the concordances or glossaries in the back of their Bibles to find some details. What good and bad qualities did Jesus’ ancestors have?

Divide the group into three groups: **Father Abraham** ([Matthew 1:2–6a](#)), **King David** ([1:6b–11](#)), and **Exile in Babylon** ([1:12–16](#)). Allow 10 minutes for the groups to explore the importance of their respective person or event in Israel’s history, as well as any names within their verses they identified in the previous exercise. Use the lesson commentary to find starting points for learning more about the men and women listed. When the class comes back together, ask each group to summarize their main

character/event and disclose one surprising or eye-opening fact they discovered. Ask whether this exercise yielded any new insight regarding themes in Matthew.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Genealogy Puzzle” exercise from the activity page. Have learners complete it as directed in groups of three.

Conclude with a discussion about why Matthew started his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus. What is Matthew claiming in [1:1](#) and again in [1:17](#)? Why is that important? Refer to the commentary as desired.

## **Into Life**

In pairs, have learners share themes in their own genealogies that show God’s work in their families. Then have each learner share ideas about how to value his or her own genealogy in Christ. After a few minutes, bring the class back together and ask one volunteer to read [1 Timothy 1:4](#) and another to read [Titus 3:9](#). Discuss how to avoid the dangers noted in these two verses.

Close the class in prayer, praising God for making us part of his family lineage.