

CHRISTMAS SURPRISES



Surprise Family Tree

Key idea:

Matthew's genealogy presents Jesus as the royal Son of David, the promised Seed of Abraham who will bless all nations, and the Savior who redeems a family tree—and a world—marred by startling sin and scandal.

Key text:

Matthew 1:1-17

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, ⁷ Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, ⁸ Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, ⁹ Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

¹² After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵ Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

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 Christ.

Key points:

1. Jesus is the promised Messiah - The genealogy is structured around David (3 sets of 14 generations, matching David's name in Hebrew) to show Jesus fulfills God's promise of an eternal king.
2. Jesus came for all nations - As the "seed of Abraham," Jesus came not just for Israel but to bring blessing to all peoples on earth.
3. Jesus identifies with sinners - The inclusion and highlighting of women who were thought to have scandalous backgrounds shows Jesus came to save and restore sinners.
4. Jesus redeems those hurt by sin - The women in the genealogy had suffered from others' sins, showing Jesus came to heal all brokenness.
5. Jesus is making all things new - This is a "new genesis" - everything broken is being restored through Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Matthew chose to begin his gospel with a genealogy? What might have been surprising to his original Jewish audience?
2. The teaching highlighted that Matthew structured the genealogy around the number 14 (the numerical value of David's name). What does this tell us about Jesus' identity and mission?
3. Read Genesis 12:3 and Genesis 22:18. How does Jesus fulfill the Abrahamic covenant mentioned in the genealogy?
4. How does Matthew's inclusion of four women in Jesus' genealogy challenge our understanding of whom God chooses to use in His redemptive plan?
5. How does the presence of Gentile women in Jesus' family tree speak to God's heart for all nations, and what does this mean for the church today?
6. Which of the women mentioned in the genealogy (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, or Bathsheba) resonates most with you and why? What does their inclusion teach us about God's character?
7. Bret said that "shame keeps many people from approaching God." Have you ever felt that your past or present struggles disqualify you from God's grace? How does this genealogy challenge that belief?
8. Bret said, "The effects of sin are never isolated to just me." How have you seen the ripple effects of sin—either your own or others'—in your life or community?

9. What does it mean that Jesus came to identify with sinners rather than distance Himself from them, and how should this shape how we treat others?
10. How does understanding that Jesus brings a 'new genesis' rather than just fixing individual problems change our perspective on redemption and restoration?
11. If your own picture were on God's mantle as part of Christ's family, how would that truth transform the way you view your past, present, and future?
12. The application spoke to two groups: those weighed down by their own sin and those hurt by others' sin. Which resonates more with you right now? How does Jesus' genealogy offer hope for your specific situation?
13. What does it mean practically that "Christ defines you, not your sin or your past"? How can you live out this truth this week?
14. How does understanding that Jesus came from a "long line of sinners" change the way you view: Your own failures and struggles? Other believers in your church community? People far from God?

Practical Applications:

1. Journal Exercise: Write out your own "spiritual genealogy"—the people (flawed and faithful) who have been part of your journey to Christ. Thank God for including you in His family.
2. Confession and Freedom: If shame has kept you from fully experiencing God's grace, confess it to a trusted Christian friend or mentor this week. Let someone speak truth over your identity in Christ.
3. Extend Grace: Think of someone whose past or present sin makes them seem "disqualified" in your eyes. Pray for them daily this week and look for an opportunity to show them grace.
4. Advent Practice: As you go through the Advent devotional guide this week, pay special attention to the stories of the women in Jesus' genealogy. What new insights do you discover?
5. Proclaim Hope: Share with one person this week how Jesus came not just for the "put together" but for the broken and hurting. Who in your life needs to hear this message?
6. Listen to the song [The Table](#) this week to meditate and reflect on the grace, forgiveness, and healing God extends to us as we come to His Table each week.
7. For a fun take on Matthew's genealogy, listen to the song "[Matthew's Begats](#)" by Andrew Peterson.