

CALLED TO BE HEIR

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 102:12-22

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Matthew 1:1-17; Hebrews 1

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE: Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17; Hebrews 1:1-5

I. Wanderers to Kings Matthew 1:1-6

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.

1. The names *Jesus Christ*, *David*, and *Abraham* all represent turning points in Israel's history. Connecting Jesus to David foreshadows the rest of Matthew's Gospel, where we learn that Jesus fulfilled the promises to David.

2a. *Abraham* received the covenant that ultimately established the people of Israel. Despite Isaac's being the only son of promise, Abraham was faithful in preparing to sacrifice him on Mount Moriah. God showed His faithfulness to Abraham

by sending a ram to replace *Isaac* on the altar and then renewing the covenant.

2b. After Abraham's death, the covenant promise passed to *Isaac*. Little is said about Isaac, but his and Rebekah's parenting style of playing favorites blighted their sons (Genesis 27:19-41).

2c. God met *Jacob* at Bethel and promised him land and children, echoing promises made to Abraham. Of Jacob's 12 sons, *Judas* unexpectedly inherited the promise of a royal line; he wasn't the first-, second-, or even third-born son. Further, he was born to Leah, who was "hated" by her husband (Genesis 29:31).

3a. The rarity of women in this genealogy should draw attention to all five who are mentioned, as each was uniquely notable. *Thamar* is the first woman listed. She was widowed before bearing children for her husband, so *Judas*, her father-in-law, told her to wait until her brother-in-law was old enough to wed her. But detecting deception on the part of Judas, she tricked him into impregnating her. On learning the truth, he declared, "She hath been more righteous than I" (Genesis 38:26).

Phares and Zara were twins. During their births, Zara put out his hand first and thus had a scarlet thread tied to him to mark him as firstborn. But Phares was actually born first.

3b. Little is known of *Phares* outside of his birth story other than the fact that his house maintained a good reputation. *Esrom* (Hezron in Genesis 46:12) was born in Canaan and journeyed to Egypt with Jacob and the rest of the family. His name establishes a link between the beginnings of the 12 tribes in Genesis and their fertility and subsequent struggle described in Exodus.

3d. *Aram* was one of the children born in Egypt, evidence of Israel's fruitfulness in that land.

4-5a. *Rachab* is the second of four women mentioned in Matthew's genealogy. She hid the Israelite spies in Jericho, thereby saving their lives. Her inclusion here points not only to the importance of women in Jesus' lineage but also to God's love for non-Israelites. The way she honored God in speech and deed transcended both her deception and occupation. For this reason, she was welcomed without question into Israel despite being born in an unfaithful nation.

Like his father *Salmon*, *Booz* is often overshadowed by the remarkable woman he married.

5b. *Ruth* is the third woman listed in the lineage. She was from Moab, a nation that Israel was to avoid or else risk being led astray. Ruth represents an exception based on faithfulness: she took her mother-in-law Naomi's God and family as her own. Ruth met and later married Booz. Their son *Obed* became the father of *Jesse*, grandfather of David.

6. *David the king* comes with many stories of faithfulness to God. However, the story line Matthew reminds his readers about was ultimately one of God's faithfulness in the midst of human sin: God kept His promise even after David's sin against *Urias* and Bathsheba. She is the fourth woman listed, but referred to only as *the wife of Urias*. Bathsheba's

second son was *Solomon*. As a result of intrigue and violence in the royal family, this son inherited the throne.

II. Captives to the King Matthew 1:16-17

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

16. The final three names in the genealogy seem like history repeating itself as they remind us of others who bore the names before. *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. *Mary*, the fifth woman in this list, is a Greek form of the Hebrew name Miriam.

17. This verse highlights a pattern that Matthew wants the genealogy to portray, as the names are broken into three sections of fourteen names each. The phrase *from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations* summarizes the story of God's leading His people home again. That began with the return from exile in about 538 BC.

III. The King as the Son Hebrews 1:1-5

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the

word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

1-2a. In the past, God primarily communicated indirectly. Consider that the Old Testament is God's revelation through many writers over the course of many centuries *in divers manners*, including a burning bush (Exodus 3), dreams (1 Kings 3), and visions (Ezekiel 1).

The phrase *unto the fathers* refers to Jewish ancestors, the recipients of God's communication through *the prophets*. Unlike those prophets, however, Jesus is God's own *Son*. Attention turns from the prophets to Jesus and His message. The phrase *these last days* refers to the time that began with Christ's first coming and continues through our own days.

2b. Jesus, *the heir of all things*, has divine authority and ownership, far more than any created being. It is He who fulfills the promises of the Old Testament covenants. These certainly include God's promise to Abraham to bless all the nations (Genesis 12:3). Jesus is the one who brought *the worlds* into existence. Think about how foolish it is not to trust Jesus to bring God's message into the existence that Jesus himself created!

3a. The Father has *glory* of His own. At the same time, the Son has actual light—*brightness* or radiance. Thus the Son is not reflected light, as we see coming from the moon, but has light himself, as we see from the sun.

Moreover, the Son bears the image of God in ways we do not. The term for *express image* is used of the imprint stamped on coins. *Person* refers to God's real essence or actual being. These two terms make clear that the Son, though distinct as a person from the Father, is of the same divine nature as the Father.

3b. The Son sustains *all things*. The Son uses *the word of his power* to do this, recalling the power of God's word revealed in Genesis 1. The Son's role as sustainer is that which only the divine one can fill.

3c. The Son brought about the purging, or cleansing, from *sins* when He died on the cross. Jesus' ability to purge sins reinforces His deity, as only God can forgive sins. To be seated at *the right hand* is a position of honor given for the Son's completed work on earth.

4. In all the ways already mentioned so far, the Son is as superior to the *angels* as His *name* is to theirs. Whereas an angel is a created messenger, the Son is the divine, uncreated Creator.

5a. The word *he* refers to God. The phrase *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee* is from Psalm 2:7. It is used here to make a vital point: no angel is called *my Son*. That is a title reserved for the unique Son of God. Though the promises made by the Lord in Psalm 2:8-9 apply in part to David, they can apply fully only to Jesus.

5b. The author of Hebrews quotes 2 Samuel 7:12-16 where the Lord said He would raise up David's "seed" and establish his kingdom. It was that seed who would build His house; the seed, ultimately, is the Lord's Son. His house, unlike Solomon's temple, endures eternally. Solomon governed a nation in a golden age, but that kingdom did not endure. The Son's kingdom, by contrast, will never end.

INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

CALLED TO BE HEIR

Into the Lesson



What are a few known facts about one of your ancestors?

While knowing facts of one's ancestors can be interesting, Jesus' ancestry is more than that. Let's see why.

Into the Word

Read Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17.

Strike out the four names that are not found in the passage:

- Abraham / Ai / Aminadab / Aram /*
- Booz / David / Esau / Esrom / Gideon /*
- Isaac / Ishmael / Jacob / Jesse / Joseph / Judas*
- / Naasson / Obed / Phares / Rachab / Ruth /*
- Salmon / Solomon.*

What were some prominent ways God showed faithfulness to certain of these people?

In what ways do we see God's faithfulness today?

Which names are those of female Gentiles and which are female Israelites?

Why would Matthew have chosen to list Gentiles?

Read Hebrews 1:1-5.

What preceded Jesus' having the inheritance listed?

Why is that question important?

Into Life

On a scale from 1 (rarely) to 10 (daily), how often do you acknowledge your spiritual heritage in Jesus?

What are some ways to improve that score in the week ahead?

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Our future is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.