

Gospel and Genealogy of Jesus

Outline

1. His Genealogy shows that God is faithful and true
2. His Genealogy shows that God entered our history
3. His Genealogy shows that God gives us Sabbath Rest
4. His Genealogy shows that God has no class or caste, or gender distinctions

Read Matt 1:1-17

1. His Genealogy shows that God is faithful and true

Matt 1:1 begins with, *"This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham."* King David ruled Israel around 1000 BC, and God promised him that one of his descendants would reign forever (2 Sam 7:11-13,16, Isa 9:6-7). Abraham lived approximately 2000 BC, and God promised Abraham that all the people of the earth would be blessed through his offspring (Gen 22:18, 26:4).

But God did not fulfil that promise for 2000 years. It seemed that God had forgotten. And David's descendants did much wrong and lost the throne. But the angel appeared to Mary and told her she would conceive a son and call him Jesus. He would be the Son of the Most High, ascend to the throne of David, and reign forever (Luke 1:32-33). Then, Mary realised that God had fulfilled His promise. She sang when she met her cousin Elizabeth in Luke 1:54-55, *"He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."*

The Genealogy of Jesus teaches that:

- i. God is faithful and true to His promises. God may take time to fulfil His promises, but He never forgets them. God fulfils His promises in His appointed time, not according to our expected time. But when He fulfils His promises, He does so in grand style in ways we can't imagine.
- ii. Some of you may be saying to yourself, "Yes, God is faithful to His promises, However, maybe He shouldn't be faithful **to me** because I have made a mess of my life. Even as a believer, I have done some foolish things and am reaping the fruit of those blunders. Maybe I'll never have all these great things God has promised. Maybe I missed my chance and now have to settle for less."

Matt 1:2. *"Jacob was the father of Judah."* But Jacob was cunning and lied and stole His brother Esau's birthright by deceiving their father, Isaac. Because of his deception, Jacob had to run for his life. He experienced terrible and long years of suffering away from home. What Jacob did was wrong, and he suffered the consequences.

But God does not give Jacob an inferior plan. Jacob loved Rachel. She was his first choice, and he married her. Rachel wasn't an inferior plan. The Messiah is not an inferior plan. Matt 1:2 shows that God works out His purposes through Jacob. *God will work all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes (Rom 8:28). Even if we are faithless; God is faithful because God cannot disown Himself (2 Tim 2:13). God is always faithful.* My dear brothers and sisters, I have made blunders, even as a believer, of which I am ashamed. Of course, I repent and move ahead in my walk with God, trusting His promises because He is faithful and true.

2. His Genealogy shows that God entered our history

The Hindu Brahmins of India can trace their genealogy for several centuries. The Hindu priests write Brahmin genealogies in ancient books kept in their holy city of Haridwar and update it when a Brahmin family pilgrimages to that city. The Jews of Israel could also trace their genealogy from ancient times to 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the Jerusalem Temple, and they lost all their records. But in both cases, Brahmins and Jews, the genealogy recorded is patriline—i.e. father to son. Their genealogy proves their history.

Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus. It proves that Jesus existed in human history. Unlike a myth or fairy tale that starts with, “Once upon a time, there was, etc.” Not so with Jesus. Matthew records His genealogy. The genealogy of Jesus proved that He was fully human. The Jewish leadership crucified Jesus because He claimed to be God (Matt 26:63-65). His resurrection after death on the cross proved His claim that He was fully God. The gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) show that Jesus is 100% fully God and 100% fully human.

The genealogy tells us that the eternal Creator God entered our history by becoming human. He has done something in history that changes everything. And we will be judged based on how we respond to it.

Non-Christians have no problem with Christians who say they believe in the gospel of Jesus. But they would have a problem when we say that Jesus, a historical figure who claimed to be 100% God, died and rose from the dead. Everybody has to believe if it's historically authentic. And if it's history, then rejecting it would be rejecting God's only offer of salvation.

3. His Genealogy shows that God gives us Sabbath Rest.

The genealogy given in Matthew's Gospel differs from that in Luke's. Matthew is a Jew, and his purpose was to present Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. Matthew traces Jesus's ancestry right up to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. Whereas Luke most probably was a Gentile, his purpose was to present Jesus as the Saviour of all humanity. Luke traces Jesus' ancestry right up to Adam, the father of humanity.

Matthew uses the Greek word **gennao** for “father of”. We could also use this word for “forefather of”. Matthew could have purposely selected Jesus's ancestors, skipping generations between a forefather and his descendant. Matthew puts Jesus' genealogy in three groups of 14 — Abraham to David, David to Jeconiah (in exile) and Jeconiah to Jesus.

Scholars say Matthew uses the number 14 to emphasise Sabbath Rest. 14 is two 7s. Three groups of 14 are 7,7,7,7,7,7, which is six sevens, and then the seventh seven is Jesus, who brings perfect Sabbath rest. (Count the generations, noting Jeconiah is mentioned twice, before and after exile in Babylon).

In the Old Testament, **seven** is a number that signifies resting in God's provision.

One day in seven was the **Sabbath day**, and on the Sabbath day, you rested from your work (Exodus 20:8).

One year out of seven was a **Sabbath year**. On the Sabbath year, the seventh year, God told the Jews not to till the land but to give it rest (Lev 25:3-5). Furthermore, they were to cancel the debts owed to them by fellow Jews (Deut 15:1) and were to set free any Jewish slaves they owned (Deut 15:12).

After seven Sabbath years (49 years), the fiftieth year is the **Jubilee year**. In the Jubilee year, you rested your land, cancelled your debts, and freed your Hebrew slaves. But also, any land you lost due to bad management or natural disasters that made you sell your land in the last 50 years — your family got that land back. The Jubilee year was a year of celebration and freedom. It points to the perfect Sabbath rest that Jesus offers in His gospel to set people free from slavery, guilt and shame of sin.

In Luke 4:18-21, Jesus went to the synagogue in Nazareth and read the scriptures, “*The Spirit of the Lord is*

on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.”²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him,²¹ and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (This scripture is from Isa 61:1-2). Jesus came to fulfil the Jubilee year and free us from sin, guilt and shame. I will give you an example below.

There are times when I ministered the gospel to people with memories of grave sin in their lives. The Holy Spirit would reveal that they could rest in Jesus's salvation. When they grasped this, they were free from guilt and shame, bringing spontaneous, joyful laughter from deep within. They were celebrating the year of the Lord's favour—the Jubilee year. They found rest at last in the perfect Sabbath that only Jesus brings. (Note: All have sinned and suffered guilt and shame. And all need the gospel that brings freedom.)

4. His Genealogy shows that God has no class or caste, or gender distinctions

Hindus are a patriarchal society, and to a great extent, so are the Jews. In a patriarchal society, genealogy records father to son as necessary. But in the genealogy of Jesus, we find five women mentioned—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Uriah's wife (Bathsheba) and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Why? For many reasons, as we shall see below:

- i. Jesus is proud of the women in His family. This should forever change the status of women in His Church.
- ii. Jesus is proud of the Gentiles in His family. Jewish society at that time wanted nothing to do with the Gentiles. But Rahab, a Canaanite from Jericho, was included in Jesus' genealogy. And Ruth was from Moab, who often were enemies of Israel.
- iii. Jesus is not ashamed of gross sinners like **Tamar**, who tricked her father-in-law, Judah, into sleeping with her and giving birth to Perez. Jesus includes Judah, Tamar and Perez in His genealogy, and **Rahab**, the prostitute. And then, we read of **Uriah's wife**, with whom King David committed adultery and murdered Uriah. She gave birth to Solomon. Jesus has David, Uriah's wife and Solomon in His genealogy.

Jesus' genealogy shows that your race, gender, class, caste or moral failures don't matter to Him. He died for men and women, high and low caste, even out-casts, all races and nationalities, and all gross sinners. He offers His gift of salvation to all. The love and grace of Jesus go out to everyone and anyone. Everybody needs it and can receive it — no matter what they are or what they have done. The Bible says in Hebrews 2:11, *“So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.”* He's not ashamed of you. *“Come to me,”* says Jesus, *“and I'll be proud of you. You will have an honoured place in my family.”*

John 1:12-13 *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*