

# *“Christ’s Genealogy Theology”*

Matthew 1:1-17 (part 2)

January 28, 2024

**VIDEO:** *Reading of Matthew 1:1-17*

## **INTRO:**

Have you ever wondered or asked yourself...

*What difference is your dash going to make in eternity?*

What kind of return-on-investment (ROI) is God getting?

## **PRAYER**

## **CONTEXT:**

- 1st Book of the NT...
- *Biblos Genesis of Jesus Christ...*
- **Attention to detail...** Be sure to get right Abraham.
- **Dig deep...** go into the biblical numbers... **Gematria!**
- Today: *Christ’s genealogy theology*

**BIG IDEA:** You can learn a lot about someone thru their (faith) family.

**T/S:** With the first 3 sermons we saw:

\*\*\* multi perspective on a single message \*\*\*

FYI... today I hope to **Inform, Inspect, & Inspire** your theology & perspective!

### **PREVIEW:**

1. INTENSITY
2. CERTAINTY
3. CHRISTOLOGY
4. SOVEREIGNTY
5. DIVERSITY
6. CHARITY
7. ETERNITY

**T/S:** Let's start by focusing on definitions & perspective.

### ***What is theology?***

The word "theology" comes from two Greek words that combined mean "the study of God." Christian theology is simply an attempt to understand God as He is revealed in the Bible. No theology will ever fully explain God and His ways because God is infinitely and eternally higher than we are. Therefore, any attempt to describe Him will fall short ([Romans 11:33-36](#)). However, God does want us to know Him insofar as we are able, and theology is the art and

science of knowing what we can know and understand about God in an organized and understandable manner. Some people try to avoid theology because they believe it is divisive. Properly understood, though, theology is uniting. Proper, biblical theology is a good thing; it is the teaching of God's Word ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)).

The study of theology, then, is nothing more than digging into God's Word to discover what He has revealed about Himself. When we do this, we come to know Him as Creator of all things, Sustainer of all things, and Judge of all things. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of all things...

To study theology is to get to know God in order that we may glorify Him through our love and obedience. Notice the progression here: we must get to know Him before we can love Him, and we must love Him before we can desire to obey Him. As a byproduct, our lives are immeasurably enriched by the comfort and hope He imparts to those who know, love, and obey Him. Poor theology and a superficial, inaccurate understanding of God will only make our lives worse instead of bringing the comfort and hope we long for. Knowing about God is crucially important. We are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about God. The world is a painful place, and life in it is disappointing and unpleasant. Reject

theology and you doom yourself to life with no sense of direction. Without theology, we waste our lives and lose our souls.... All Christians should be consumed with theology—the intense, personal study of God—in order to know, love, and obey the One with whom we will joyfully spend eternity. - [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**VIDEO:** *Why Is Theology So Important?*

## **TEXT:**

### I. Christ's Genealogy Theology: INTENSITY

- 400 years of silence is being broken!
- **Think about how bad things were then & now...**

**VIDEO:** *Intensity of Brokenness (Intro)*

- *Spiritually speaking that's how things were/are!*

**God gave us His Bible cause we don't live in His bubble!** - JDP

- **Matthew is making a Stephen-like declaration!**
- Church is not a country club's divine waiting-room.
- Church is a worship-hall on the outskirts of heaven!
- Church is a war-room in the heart of the battlefield!
- Matthew is saying: **Missing The Christ = Go to hell!**

## II. Christ's Genealogy Theology: CERTAINTY

- ***Biblos***
- ***Genesis***
- ***Jesus***
- ***Christ***

## III. Christ's Genealogy Theology: Christology

- **Jesus IS "Messiah" AND "The Christ"**
  - John 1:41 & John 4:25
  - John 7:40-44 (great debate)
  - John 10:24 (high expectations)
  - John 1:17 & 20:31 (Christ's "work")
- ***Jesus IS The Son of David***
- ***Jesus IS The Son of Abraham***
- ***Jesus IS The holy I AM***
- ***Jesus IS LORD!***

## IV. Christ's Genealogy Theology: Sovereignty

- i. **ALL** - Omni-present
  - ii. **ALL** - Omni-knowing
  - iii. **ALL** - Omni-powerful
- \  
> = **LORDSHIP**  
/

QUOTE:

**DEFINITION:** The three “omni” attributes of God characterize him as all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present. Each of these involves the other two, and each provides a perspective on the all-embracing lordship of the true God. **SUMMARY:** Omnipotence means that God is in total control of himself and his creation. Omniscience means that he is the ultimate criterion of truth and falsity, so that his ideas are always true. Omnipresence means that since God’s power and knowledge extend to all parts of his creation, he himself is present everywhere. Together they define God’s lordship, and they yield a rich understanding of creation, providence, and salvation.

So the omni-attributes are like the other attributes of God, inseparable from each other and from him. As theologians say, **God is “simple.”** His attributes are not separable parts of him. Rather they are ways of characterizing God as a whole, ways of describing his nature.... Therefore, **the omni-attributes are ways of speaking of God’s Lordship.** “Lord” is the word that Scripture uses over 7,000 times to name him.

The theological term “sovereignty” is equivalent to lordship... Scripture typically defines God’s lordship as his “control, authority, and presence...” God’s omnipotence is his control over all things. His omniscience is his authority to declare what is true. And his omnipresence is his real existence in every time and place. So, **when we talk about God’s omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, we are talking about his lordship.**

- The Gospel Coalition

## V. Christ's Genealogy Theology: DIVERSITY

- Luke AND (not "vs.") Matthew
- Words AND numbers (Grammar & Gematria)
- **Inclusivity AND Exclusivity!**
  - 3 Sections of people groups:
    - Patriarchal path to David
      - They ALL had sin problems!
      - Pick one/some... ANY & ALL...
        - Abraham: *highs & lows...*
        - Jesse: *lacking perspective...*
        - Obed: *God's dad & grampa*
        - Boaz: *"kinsman redeemer"*
    - Worldly kings: **ALL were sin-filled!**
    - 4/5 "virtuously intriguing" women
    - Lots of average everyday sinners
      - Sounds a lot like Hebrews 11...
      - Sounds a lot like you & me :-)

## VI. Christ's Genealogy Theology: Charity

- God's love of sinners
- God's mercy (see every still-living lost sinner)
- God's grace (see all true Christians & 5 "solas")
- God's Gospel (miraculous missionaries)
- **God's Glory!**
  - We get-to BE God's FAMILY!
  - We get-to BE Christ's AMBASSADORS!
  - We get-to BE The Lord's SALT and LIGHT!

## VII. Christ's Genealogy Theology: Eternity

( = INTENSITY! )

- **What is most at stake eternally?**
  - **NOT** our heaven or hell...
  - That's **self-absorption**
  - That's **self-seeking**
  - That's **self-centered**
- **It is actually GOD's GLORY!**

**VIDEO:** *Lineage of Majesty (Ludy)*

*To know THIS Jesus THE Christ is to KNOW The ONLY true hope for ETERNAL healing the world has ever had!*

### **REVIEW:**

You can learn a lot about a person thru their family!

### **INTENSITY:**

[Ephesians 6:10ff](#)

If your view, faith, & belief in God's gospel, grace, and glory lack biblical intensity, I fear you are trusting in a false God, gospel, & grace. -JDP

**VIDEO:** *Intensity of Brokenness (2)*

*Too many professing Christians & churches are giving away bagged lunches, fresh socks, free hotel rooms, and clean needles... but NOT a bell-ringing, heart stopping, call for confession, repentance, & uncompromising surrender to Jesus The Christ!*

*The church needs to stop handing out the equivalence to spiritual clean needles to dirty, self-idolizing, sin-addicts... and start proclaiming the genuine, all-in, miraculous Gospel of Jesus Christ... all while biblically sending, sacrificing, & serving... all while sincerely exemplifying God's Word, will, & ways... selflessly serving and washing the feet of those whose feet are dirty... -JDP*

**We know and serve the Christ & CREATOR who can and DOES turn addicts into ambassadors!**

*(WE are proof! We are miracles on mission!)*

We know and serve the Christ & LORD  
who transforms misery into ministries!

*We know and serve the Christ & KING  
who is The Sovereign Savior & Loving  
LORD of lords!*

**CERTAINTY:** [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)

**CHRISTOLOGY:** [John 14:6](#)

**SOVEREIGNTY:** [Genesis 1:1 & John 1:1](#)

**DIVERSITY:** [John 3:16](#)

**CHARITY:** [Romans 5:8](#)

**ETERNITY:** [Matthew 1:1 & 28:18-20](#)

## **CLOSE:**

*I pray that none of us will ever look at another genealogy the same way ever again – especially the faith-family of Jesus Christ, and thus of ALL Christians!*

***Remember... and don't ever forget...***

Jesus Christ came thru a dysfunctional family...

Jesus Christ came to save & sanctify sinners...

Jesus Christ came to solve our sin problem...

Jesus Christ came to prove truth in love...

Jesus Christ came to give us assurance...

Jesus Christ came to begin end times...

Jesus Christ came to call us to arms...

Jesus Christ came to defeat death...

Jesus Christ came to give HIS life...

Jesus Christ came to glorify God!

We should do/BE the same!

May it be forever so...

**No matter what!**

**Amen & Amen**

## **PRAYER**

**WORSHIP:** *"I Can Only Imagine" & "Firm Foundation"*

## PREP NOTES:

# What is the definition of theology?

The word "theology" comes from two Greek words that combined mean "the study of God." Christian theology is simply an attempt to understand God as He is revealed in the Bible. No theology will ever fully explain God and His ways because God is infinitely and eternally higher than we are. Therefore, any attempt to describe Him will fall short ([Romans 11:33-36](#)). However, God does want us to know Him insofar as we are able, and theology is the art and science of knowing what we can know and understand about God in an organized and understandable manner. Some people try to avoid theology because they believe it is divisive. Properly understood, though, theology is uniting. Proper, biblical theology is a good thing; it is the teaching of God's Word ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)).

The study of theology, then, is nothing more than digging into God's Word to discover what He has revealed about Himself. When we do this, we come to know Him as Creator of all things, Sustainer of all things, and Judge of all things. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of all things. When Moses asked who was sending him to Pharaoh, God replied "I AM WHO I AM" ([Exodus 3:14](#)). The name I AM indicates personality. God has a name, even as He has given names to others. The name I AM stands for a free, purposeful, self-sufficient personality. God is not an ethereal force or a cosmic energy. He is the almighty, self-existing, self-determining Being with a mind and a will—the "personal" God who has revealed Himself to humanity through His Word, and through His Son, Jesus Christ.

To study theology is to get to know God in order that we may glorify Him through our love and obedience. Notice the progression here: we must get to know Him before we can love Him, and we must love Him before we can desire to obey Him. As a byproduct, our lives are immeasurably enriched by the comfort and hope He imparts to those who know, love, and obey Him. Poor theology and a superficial, inaccurate understanding of God will only make our lives worse instead of bringing the comfort and hope we long for. Knowing about God is crucially important. We are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about God. The world is a painful place, and life in it is disappointing and unpleasant. Reject theology and you doom yourself to life with no sense of direction. Without theology, we waste our lives and lose our souls.

All Christians should be consumed with theology—the intense, personal study of God—in order to know, love, and obey the One with whom we will joyfully spend eternity

## The Gospel Coalition:

# The Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence of God

AN ESSAY BY

**John M. Frame**

## *DEFINITION*

The three “omni” attributes of God characterize him as all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present. Each of these involves the other two, and each provides a perspective on the all-embracing lordship of the true God.

## *SUMMARY*

Omnipotence means that God is in total control of himself and his creation. Omniscience means that he is the ultimate criterion of truth and falsity, so that his ideas are always true. Omnipresence means that since God’s power and knowledge extend to all parts of his creation, he himself is present everywhere. Together they define God’s lordship, and they

yield a rich understanding of creation, providence, and salvation.

## Introduction

The prefix *omni* means “all,” so the three divine attributes in our title can be paraphrased by saying that God is “all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present.” Let us look at these individually.

## Omnipotence

Scripture affirms God’s omnipotence by saying that God does whatever he is pleased to do ([Psa 115:3](#); cf. [Isa 55:11](#) and [Jer 32:17](#)). Nothing is too hard for him ([Gen 18:14](#)). His word is never void of power, so when he speaks, everything in creation obeys him ([Isa 55:11](#)). Of course, creatures do disobey him in one sense; that is the essence of sin. But God has control even over sinful actions ([Psa 105:24-25](#), [Gen 45:5-8](#), [Exod 4:21](#), [Psa 105:24-25](#), [Rom 9:18](#), [Acts 2:23, 4:28](#)). He ordains sinful, disobedient actions for his good purposes. So his word always prevails, and we can trust that His prophecies always come to pass ([Deut 18:21-22](#)).

Often we infer from these passages that God “can do anything.” But that doesn’t quite reflect the full biblical teaching. There are things that God cannot do. He cannot lie ([Titus 1:2](#), cf. [Num 23:19](#)), nor, similarly, can he perform any immoral action. Since God is perfectly holy and good, he cannot do anything evil. And, since he is perfect truth, he cannot do things that are logically contradictory, like making

round squares. His truth is a perfect consistency of thought and action. Nor can God do things inappropriate to his nature as God, like buying shoes or celebrating his birthday.

So how should we define God's omnipotence more precisely? I think the most helpful definition of God's omnipotence is this: that he has complete and total *control* over everything. This includes the smallest details of the natural world, like the falling of a sparrow or the number of hairs that grow on your head ([Matt 6:26-30, 10:29-30](#)). Even the events we call random, that we ascribe to chance, are really God at work ([Prov 16:33](#)). That includes not only the small things, but also the big things (which, after all, are accumulations of small things). He determines what nations will dwell in which territory ([Acts 17:26](#)). He decides what king is to rule, and when, and where ([Isa 44:28](#)). He decides whether the purposes of a ruler will stand or fall ([Psa 33:10-11](#)). And he decided, once, that wicked people would take the life of his dear Son, so that we sinners might live ([Acts 2:23-24](#)).

God rules not only the important events of human history but also the lives of individual people. He knits us together in our mothers' wombs ([Psa 139:13-16](#)). He decides whether we will travel or stay home ([Jas 4:13-17](#)). He controls even the decisions of wicked people, as we saw above. But he also exerts his power to save sinners, to bring forgiveness and new life ([Eph 2:8-10](#)). Our salvation is *entirely* the work of God's power, not at all our own work. We believe in Christ because he has *appointed* us to eternal life ([Acts 13:48](#)) and because he has *opened* our hearts to believe ([Acts 16:14-15](#); cf. [John 6:44, 65, Phil 1:29](#)).

So his power is universal: it controls everything in the universe ([Lam 3:37-38](#), [Rom 8:28](#), [Eph 1:11](#), [Rom 11:33-36](#)).

## Omniscience

Now let us look at God's omniscience. God's power is not a blind power. Everything God does has an intelligent purpose, a definite goal. And since, as we've seen, God's power is universal, so also is his knowledge. In knowing his own intentions, God knows everything in himself, in his creation, and throughout history. Scripture often refers to the universality of God's knowledge ([Psa 147:5](#), [John 21:17](#), [Heb 4:12-13](#), [1Jn 3:20](#)). It often mentions that God knows detailed happenings on earth, even in the future ([1Sam 10:2](#), [1Kgs 13:1-4](#), [2Kgs 8:12](#), [Psa 139:4](#), [Acts 2:23, 4:27-28](#)).

Some theologians<sup>1</sup> have referred to passages like [Gen 18:20-21](#) as teaching God's ignorance. But Scripture assumes God's omniscience pervasively, and it is far more likely that such passages should be interpreted consistently with that assumption. In [Gen 18:20-21](#), for example, God does not admit ignorance, but declares that he is gathering facts for an indictment, preparing the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for judgment.

Indeed, God's omniscience is based on his authority, for he is the supreme judge of all things, and he is the ultimate standard of what is true and false. Not only does God know what is true, but he is the very nature of truth. Truth is what he is (as [John 14:6](#)). So it is inconceivable that he could be wrong about anything.

God's knowledge is a precious blessing to God's people. [Psa 139](#) emphasizes how deeply God knows *us*, wherever we are. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it" (v. 6). God's knowledge of us pursues us wherever we may go: to heaven, to the grave, to great distances, to dark places (vv. 7-12). He knew us when he was forming us in our mother's womb (vv. 13-16), and he knew, even back then, every day of our lifetime on earth (v. 16). Wicked people should well be terrorized by this doctrine; but to the Psalmist God's knowledge of us is wonderful and good (vv. 17-18), and he prays that God will draw on this knowledge to lead him to repentance and forgiveness of sin (vv. 23-24).

## Omnipresence

Now, God's omnipresence—his presence in every place and time. To say that God is "present" is to say that he is here with us, really here, not absent. Sometimes we connect a person's presence with his body, as when a teacher takes attendance and says that Jimmy is "present" because his body is in his seat. But God does not have a body; he is immaterial. So how can we tell when God is present or absent?

Scripture's answer is that God is present everywhere, because, as we have seen, his power and knowledge are everywhere. If every event, everywhere, takes place by God's power, and if he has exhaustive knowledge of everything his power has brought to pass, then certainly he is not absent, but present in each event, though his presence is not quite the same as the presence of physical beings. So God's omnipotence and omniscience imply his omnipresence.

His omnipresence is a presence both in place and in time. [Psalm 139](#) indicates that God is present in every place. He is the creator of the heavens and the earth, and so he is in every location. He is also the creator of time,<sup>2</sup> the one without beginning or end. So he has been present in the world since its creation, and there will never be a time from which he is absent. In Scripture, he freely enters history and interacts with creatures. Supremely, he entered human history in Jesus Christ, where he died and rose again to save us from our sins.

So God's omnipresence is not just a theoretical conclusion. It is a precious truth of redemption. Although we have sinned and deserve God's judgment, God comes to his faithful people and declares to them "I will be *with you*." This means that God is here, wherever we are, but also that God is on our side. He is with us, not to destroy us, but to forgive and to save us from sin. So this "with you," this redeeming divine presence, is found often in Scripture as his gracious promise. To Isaac, God said, "I will be with you and will bless you" ([Gen 26:3](#)) and that language often forms the basis of God's redemptive covenant. The heart of the covenant, God's redemptive promise, is that "I will be your God, and you will be my people," a precious togetherness of God with his people ([Exod 6:7](#), [2Cor 6:16](#); cf. [Gen 17:7](#), [Exod 6:7](#), [29:45](#), [Lev 26:12](#), [Jer 7:23](#), [11:4](#), [24:7](#), [30:22](#), [Ezek 11:20](#), [14:11](#), [36:28](#), [37:27](#), [Heb 11:16](#), [Rev 21:3](#)). It should not surprise us that a biblical name for Jesus is *Immanuel*, God with us ([Isa 7:14](#), [Matt 1:23](#)). As the Old Testament tabernacle was a place for God to dwell with his people, so Jesus, the Son of God, "tabernacled among us" ([John 1:14](#)).

Of course, God also can be said to be present to the wicked, and that is a fearsome and awful thing ([Rev 1:7](#)). But whether for good or for ill, God is present throughout heaven and earth, to carry out his own purposes.

## Unity of the Omni-Attributes

We have seen that the three omni-attributes of God are quite inseparable. Since God's power is purposeful and universal, it implies his omniscience. And since God's omnipotence and omniscience are universal, we must conclude that he is omnipresent. We could note further that since God is omnipresent, all his attributes are omnipresent as well—his power and knowledge, as well as his truth, love, grace, eternity, infinity, and so on.

So the omni-attributes are like the other attributes of God, inseparable from each other and from him. As theologians say, God is "simple." His attributes are not separable parts of him. Rather they are ways of characterizing God as a whole, ways of describing his nature.

Therefore, the omni-attributes are ways of speaking of God's *Lordship*. "Lord" is the word that Scripture uses over 7,000 times to name him. The theological term "sovereignty" is equivalent to lordship. I have argued elsewhere<sup>3</sup> that Scripture typically defines God's lordship as his "control, authority, and presence." As we have seen, this triad is equivalent to the three omni-attributes. God's omnipotence is his control over all things. His omniscience is his authority to declare what is true. And his omnipresence is his real existence

in every time and place. So when we talk about God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, we are talking about his lordship.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See the discussion of this controversy in the article "Openness Theology and Divine Omniscience."

<sup>2</sup>See the article in this series on the eternity and aseity of God.

<sup>3</sup>John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishers, 2002), 21-115.

**C.S. Lewis Institute:**

Jesus, the Righteous King of Kings

**DECEMBER 03**

**[View the Full Advent Calendar](#)**

**“And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.”**

**- Matthew 1:6b-11**

In this middle section of the genealogy of Jesus is the chronological list of the kings of Judah. The list ends with the fall of Judah to Babylon in 586 BC. There are good kings on this list, and there are bad kings. Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah were good kings. Scripture tells us all three “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.” Rehoboam, Manasseh and for that matter most of the other kings were bad kings and Scripture tells us each “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.”

The emphasis on kingship in this section of Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus does more than establish that Jesus was of the line of David, fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies. It serves as a reminder that Jesus came from a line of mainly unrighteous kings to be the Righteous King.

The birth of Jesus was, however, anything but kingly. He was born in a stable beneath a family residence with the animals. His only worshipers were His parents and some low-class shepherds.

When He arrived in Jerusalem on a donkey a few days before He was crucified, He lacked the traditional trappings of kingly power many were hoping would be used to overthrow the Romans.

But the story does not end with His death. Unlike the earthly kings listed in Matthew’s genealogy who died, Jesus is the King of Kings, the Messiah or Christ, which means “Anointed One,” who rose from the dead. From His eternal throne, He will reign over the entire world, He will make His enemies His footstool and His kingdom will have no end.



## Prayer

*Lord Jesus, I worship You as the King of Kings who humbly came in the kingly line of David as foretold by the prophets to redeem humanity as the "Anointed One," the Messiah.*

## **R.A. Abell: Jesus' family tree full of kings, sinners and other ordinary folks**

**Staff Writer**

Ames Tribune

In this month of holiday cheer, centered on the celebration of the birth of Christ, have you ever thought about Jesus' family tree?

Of course, Christians believe that Jesus was born to a virgin, meaning that although he had an earthly mother, his father was God in heaven. But who was Jesus' earthly family? Who were the relatives of Jesus through his mother, Mary, and his stepfather, Joseph? And is it important?

If you believe the Christian Scriptures were inspired by God, as I do, then it seems the topic was important to God, for we have a detailed list of Jesus' family tree in the Gospel of Matthew and another one in the Gospel of Luke. I think that after hearing what they say, you'll be impressed and touched.

Let's first consider why there are two genealogies and why they're different. The one in the Gospel of Matthew traces Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, back through the line of Jewish kings through Solomon and King David. This means that if Israel had had a Jewish king at the time of Jesus' birth, Joseph

was the rightful heir. And thus Jesus, Joseph's adopted son, would have been heir apparent.

But just in case you're unimpressed with the line of Joseph because Joseph wasn't Jesus' real father, or perhaps you're a student of the Old Testament and you know that the kingly line through Solomon was cursed by God, then the Gospel of Luke also traces the lineage of Mary back to King David, but through the lesser known of David's son's, Nathan. So the genealogies of Matthew and Luke present Jesus as not only the legal descendant of the Jewish throne but also as the biological one. And did you know that God promised David that the messiah would one day sit on David's throne?

We can also find, in the genealogies of Christ from Matthew and Luke, some interesting people in Jesus' family tree. For instance, you might be surprised that there were several gentiles, meaning that Jesus wasn't just a savior born for the Jews, but also, as Jesus stated in John 3, for "the whole world."

The Jews of Jesus' day traced the right to rule through the fathers, but all along the way, it seems that God introduced gentile blood into the line of Christ. There were Judah and Tamar, Salmon and Rahab, and the famous love story of Boaz and Ruth. And the Christian Scriptures were among the first chronicles of their time to go to the trouble to list women in someone's genealogy. Usually only the men were listed.

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And if you thought that your family tree had some sketchy characters in it, you should study the ancestors of Jesus. There were idolaters, prostitutes, polygamists, murderers, liars and thieves among them, along with all the

lesser sins. And, frankly, to think that Jesus volunteered to be born among men, live among us, be named with us and die for us still amazes me.

The Christian Scriptures teach that Jesus chose to leave the perfection of heaven and take a human body in order not only to bring the good news of redemption from God, but also to be born of us, so that he could die for us, literally in place of us.

So as you see the nativity scenes, the Christmas trees, hear the holiday songs and spend time with family and friends, don't just remember the baby who seemed to bring so much joy to the world. Think also of Jesus as the rightful king, who instead of being born in a palace, was born in a stable to an audience of simple shepherds. Jesus did not come to impress us, for he was humble in all he did. What he did come to do was to identify with the human race so that he could be our savior.

So perhaps this will make the words to "Joy to the World" more meaningful this year: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come; let Earth receive her King; let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing ..."

**The Rev. R. A. Abell** is the senior pastor at Heartland Baptist Church in Ames.

[AnswersInGenesis.com](http://AnswersInGenesis.com)

## Jesus' Genealogies in Matthew and Luke

## Why does Jesus have two different genealogies?

by [Liz Abrams](#) on December 23, 2022

At Christmas, we celebrate Jesus' birth. Church Christmas plays focus on the nativity and the visit of the wise men, but the two Gospel writers who include details about Jesus' birth and infancy also tie the account of Jesus' birth to the Old Testament with a genealogy. Matthew emphasizes Jesus' royal lineage, tracing his ancestry through David back to Abraham, while Luke emphasizes his common humanity by going all the way back to Adam.

### A Contradiction?

Anyone who studies the genealogies will immediately notice that the genealogies are stated to be of Joseph, *not* Jesus. [Matthew 1:16](#) reads, “and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ,” while [Luke 3:23](#) reads, “Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli.” Both genealogies clearly state Joseph as the last link of the genealogy, with some separation showing that Joseph was *not* the biological father of [Jesus](#).

But Matthew and Luke seem to disagree about who Joseph's father was—was Joseph the son of [Jacob or Heli](#)? In fact, Matthew's and Luke's genealogies split at David, listing Joseph as descended from two different sons of David, with completely different lines of ancestry.

There are a number of ways people have explained this, starting very early in church history. For instance, John Gill, writing in the 1700s, said, “It is true indeed that Joseph was the son of Eli, having married his daughter; Mary was the daughter of Eli, and so the Jews speak of one Mary, the daughter of Eli, by whom they seem to design the mother of our Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

One solution that seems very likely is that Luke is actually relating *Mary's* genealogy, and thus, is showing how Jesus is biologically linked to Adam. If Mary's parents had no sons, Joseph could have been reckoned as their adopted son.

These adoptive relationships were every bit as real as biological relationships. For instance, before Abraham had a biological heir, he planned to leave his property to Eliezer of Damascus. And a few generations later, Jacob adopted his grandchildren Ephraim and Manasseh as a way to give Joseph a double portion of inheritance. This is important, because Jesus is qualified to be David's heir because his adopted father, Joseph, was the next in line. Jesus, when he began his ministry some time after Joseph's death, was the heir apparent, even though Joseph went on to have biological sons with Mary.

So, a possible explanation for Joseph's two genealogies is that Matthew's genealogy reflects Joseph's biological lineage, which makes Jesus by adoption the heir apparent, while Luke's lineage is Mary's biological lineage (but is stated to be Joseph's through an adoptive process because Mary's parents had no sons). Because adoptive lineages are as real as biological ones, and because lineage is counted through the father's line, not the mother's, both legal genealogies of Joseph become the legal genealogies of Jesus. Though Jesus had no biological father, as he was conceived miraculously through the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary when she was a virgin, the [Bible](#) treats Joseph as the real father of Jesus by adoption.

## How Many Generations?

[Matthew 1:17](#) says, "So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations." But if you compare Matthew's genealogy to the actual list of kings in the Old Testament, there are some omissions.

The kings Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah have been deleted between Joram and Uzziah. Carson notes that they may have been omitted because they were particularly wicked and were connected with Ahab and Jezebel. “Two of the three were notoriously evil; all three died violently.”<sup>2</sup> Also, Jehoiakim was deleted between Josiah and Jehoiachin.

There are also not precisely 14 generations in each of Matthew’s groupings. If one counts Abraham, there are fourteen generations from Abraham to David. Then there are fourteen generations between Solomon and Jeconiah. But there are only thirteen generations between Shealtiel and Jesus. Creating three groups of fourteen requires counting someone twice. There are a couple possible ways to resolve this: see “[Problems With Basic Math?](#)” for one possible solution. Carson suggests this explanation:

The simplest explanation—the one that best fits the context—observes that the numerical value of “David” in Hebrew is fourteen. By this symbolism Matthew points out that the promised “son of David” (1:1), the Messiah, has come. And if the third set of fourteen is short one member, perhaps it will suggest to some readers that just as God cuts short the time of distress for the sake of his elect (24:22), so also he mercifully shortens the time from the Exile to Jesus the Messiah.”<sup>3</sup>

Is it a problem that Matthew omitted names, for whatever reason, from his genealogy? Genealogies exist in Scripture for multiple reasons, and it is important to examine what a given genealogy means to do in a certain situation. Matthew’s genealogy exists to trace the kingly line of David to Jesus through his adoptive father, Joseph. The genealogy would have been valid to his Jewish audience, or there would have been no point in including it. The point of Matthew’s genealogy is to show how Jesus is descended from Abraham and David, and it succeeds.

Does it imply that there may be missing generations elsewhere in biblical genealogies? Some genealogies primarily connect a person to his tribe through his immediate ancestors—it does not matter if there are missing generations in such cases. The genealogy may be *true* even if it is not *exhaustive*. Other genealogies stress the strict father-to-son progression of generations, such as

the Genesis genealogies that even include chronological information and leave no room for missing generations.

## Was Jesus the Biological Descendant of King David Through Mary?

One of the most common Messianic titles for Jesus was “Son of David,” but was he? Since there is no explicit biblical statement that Luke’s genealogy *is* Mary’s lineage, is there a way to tell whether Mary was also from the house of David?

Multiple biblical statements seem to confirm that Mary was a descendant of King David. When the angel Gabriel announced that Mary would bear the Son of [God](#), Gabriel said, “And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David” ([Luke 1:32](#)). This suggests that Jesus will be the biological descendant, not just a legal descendant through adoption. [Romans 1:3](#) also says that Jesus “was descended from David according to the flesh.”

If, as suggested above, Luke’s genealogy records Mary’s lineage, there is an explanation that would make sense of the biblical data. One adoptive relationship could occur when a couple had a daughter but no sons. When the daughter married, the son-in-law could be reckoned as an adoptive son for purposes of inheritance. When this happened, the woman also needed to marry someone within her own tribe so that the inheritance would not go from one tribe to another. The Bible doesn’t explicitly say whether this is the case with Mary and Joseph, but it is one possibility. That would mean that Joseph is the son-in-law of Heli, in which case Jesus would be biologically descended from David through his son Nathan and ultimately through Mary, though the line is traced through Joseph. This is important, because genealogies in Scripture never go through the mother—they’re always patrilineal, going through the father’s line. Inclusion of women in a genealogy at all is unusual. If

Joseph had been adopted by Mary's parents, then there's an "official" patrilineal way for Jesus' biological genealogy to be recorded as well as his kingly genealogy.

## Son of David, Son of Man

Two of the most common titles for Jesus were "Son of David," an overtly Messianic title, and his self-description as "Son of Man"—likely a reference to [Daniel 7:13](#). Matthew shows how Jesus is the Son of David—he is in the line of succession to the Davidic crown. Luke shows how he is a "Son of Man"—he is related to all of us through our common forefather, Adam.

There is a treasure trove of biblical history in the genealogies of Jesus. Matthew's genealogy, going through Joseph's line, presents Jesus the Son of David, the kingly Messiah who would deliver his people. Luke's genealogy, going through Mary's line, presents Jesus, the Last Adam, the Son of God who would succeed where Adam failed and undo the curse of death.

God intervened many times to ensure that Abraham's Davidic descendants survived until the ultimate Son of David arrived to fulfill God's promise that David's descendants would rule forever. As we celebrate Christ's birth, the genealogies of Matthew and Luke draw us to also celebrate God's love and provision for his people for thousands of years that prepared the way for Jesus' birth.

## Who was Jesse in the Bible?

Jesse in the Bible is father of [David](#) and thus an important part of the lineage of Christ, the [Son of David](#) ([Matthew 22:42](#)). We don't know much about Jesse as a person; most

of the Bible's references to Jesse come in the context of his relation to his famous son David.

In order to understand the rich history surrounding the name of Jesse, one might begin by tracing his lineage back to [Abraham](#). God chose Abraham and promised that through his seed all the nations of the world would be blessed ([Genesis 22:16–18](#)). Jumping forward several generations, we are introduced to [Boaz](#), a wealthy and God-fearing resident of Bethlehem. Boaz demonstrates God's redemptive character by wedding himself to Ruth the Moabitess, who forsook her ungodly heritage (see [Numbers 25:1–5](#)) and clung to the God of Israel ([Ruth 1:16](#)).

The book of Ruth is an incredible story of God's salvific nature. By faith Ruth is welcomed into the fellowship of God's covenant people, Israel. After her marriage to Boaz, Ruth gives birth to [Obed](#) ([Ruth 4:13](#)), and the Bethlehemite women rejoice in the blessing of God over her family (verses 14–15). Boaz and Ruth's son Obed later begets Jesse, who becomes the father of David (verse 22), God's choice for king for Israel ([1 Samuel 16:1](#)). Thus Ruth was granted a place of honor as the great-grandmother of David, who was a [type](#) of and faithful predecessor to the Christ-King

Jesse takes the stage with his eight sons in [1 Samuel 16–17](#). The prophet Samuel invites Jesse and his family to a sacrificial feast, but Jesse only brings his seven oldest sons, including Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah; all seven were rejected by God as king ([1 Samuel 16:6–10](#)). Jesse had chosen to leave David, his youngest son, to tend the sheep. However, it is this lowly shepherd boy whom, to the probable surprise of both Jesse and Samuel, God directs Samuel to anoint as the chosen king ([1 Samuel 16:11–13](#)). Although it is David's kingship that typifies and anticipates the reign of the Christ-King, Jesse's name still receives mention in a couple prophecies of the Messiah.

In Isaiah, Jesse is mentioned as the stump from which a Branch (Christ) would come forth to be a banner for all peoples; to this banner all nations would rally ([Isaiah 11:1–3, 10](#); cf. [Jeremiah 23:5](#)). Furthermore, [Micah 5:2](#) identifies Bethlehem—the little town of Jesse—as the source of the King of all kings. The Branch from the [root of Jesse](#) would eventually spring forth and bear everlasting fruit.

The New Testament begins with these words: "This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham" ([Matthew 1:1](#)). From God's promise to Abraham and all the way to God's promised Messiah, our vision of God's universal program of salvation expands as new narratives bring fuller color and understanding. Jesus' genealogy in Matthew references not only Israelites but also Gentiles, including Rahab, the God-fearing mother of Boaz and former prostitute from Jericho ([Joshua 2:1–](#)

[21](#)), and Ruth the Moabitess, grandmother of Jesse. From this mixed (Jew and Gentile) clan, Christ came to be the banner not just for the people of Israel but for peoples of all nations ([Romans 15:7–13](#)). Jesus was not the beginning of a message of salvation for all but the climactic expression and extension of the salvation God had already extended to all who believe.

Who is Jesse? Although a relatively minor character in the biblical drama, Jesse shares in a rich lineage essential to God's plan of redemption for all nations. May Jesse's name be to you a symbol of a grander narrative, a blessed lineage, a beacon of hope for all who choose to call upon the name of the Lord, young and old, Jew and Gentile, slave and free.

## Who was Obed in the Bible?

The name Obed means "serving" or "worshiping," and there are several men listed in the Bible named Obed. The most notable Obed in Scripture is the son of [Ruth and Boaz](#) ([Ruth 4:17](#); [Matthew 1:5](#)). Obed's mother, Ruth, was a Moabitess who immigrated to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Naomi. Boaz was a landowner who became Ruth's kinsman-redeemer. Their son Obed is a significant part of biblical history because Obed's son Jesse became the father of King David ([Ruth 4:21–22](#)). Obed's name is mentioned only in four genealogies, in Ruth, 1 Chronicles, Matthew, and Luke. We know nothing about the life of Obed other than his conception was directly ordained by the Lord: "The Lord enabled [Ruth] to conceive, and she gave birth to a son" ([Ruth 4:13](#)); he was cared for by his grandmother (verse 16); Obed's birth caused great joy in Bethlehem (verses 14–17); and he became the grandfather of a king (verse 22).

For all the lack of personal information we have concerning Obed, he is a vital link in God's plan to bring salvation to the world. When Naomi's husband and two sons died, it looked like her husband's family line had come to a dead end. But God choose a non-Israelite, a bachelor farmer, and a series of "coincidences" to eventually bring David into the world. Jesus is often referred to by the messianic title "Son of David" (e.g., [Matthew 9:27](#); [12:23](#)), and David is often titled "son of Jesse" ([1 Chronicles 10:14](#); [Psalm 72:20](#); [Acts 13:22](#)). Since Jesse was the son of Obed, Obed's name is forever linked with the promised Messiah of Israel ([Matthew 1:1](#)).

Other, lesser-known Obeds in Scripture include the following:

- [Obed-edom](#), the Gittite ([2 Samuel 6:10](#)). As David was bringing the [Ark of the Covenant](#) from Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem, a man named Uzzah was killed by God for touching the ark. The procession to Jerusalem stopped, and the ark was taken to the nearby house of Obed-edom for safe-keeping for three months. Obed-edom treated the ark with reverence, and the Lord blessed his entire household (verse 11).
- Obed, a son of Ephlal ([1 Chronicles 2:37–38](#)).
- Obed, a Judaite. This Obed was the father of Azariah, one of the captains who helped Jehoiada conquer the wicked queen [Athaliah](#) ([2 Chronicles 23:1](#)).
- Obed, one of [David's mighty men](#) ([1 Chronicles 11:47](#)).
- Obed, son of Shemaiah. This Obed is the grandson of Obed-edom. He was also a [gatekeeper](#) of the temple ([1 Chronicles 26:7](#)) and a “capable” man with “the strength to do the work” (verse 8).

## Who was Boaz in the Bible?

Boaz was a wealthy man from Bethlehem mentioned in the genealogy of Christ ([Matthew 1:5](#)). He is one of the main characters in the Bible book of Ruth, a sometimes overlooked masterpiece of Scripture full of life lessons and prophetic implications. The son of [Boaz and Ruth](#) was Obed, King David's grandfather. Everything we see about Boaz in Scripture is good. He shows himself to be a kind, generous, and honorable man of his word.

The [book of Ruth](#) opens with a sad narrative about a Judean family: Elimelek, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, move to the pagan territory of Moab due to a famine in Bethlehem, their hometown. Soon after that, Elimelek died, leaving Naomi with the sons, who had both married Moabite women. Tragically, after ten years had passed, the sons of Elimelek died, too.

The widow Naomi later heard that “the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them” ([Ruth 1:6](#)). She decided to return home to Judah, and one of

her daughters-in-law, Ruth, chooses to go with her. Notably, Naomi and Ruth turn up in Bethlehem just as the barley harvest begins ([Ruth 1:22](#)).

Ruth works in the fields as a gleaner, one who picks up leftover grain after the harvesters have moved through. "As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek" ([Ruth 2:3](#)). Boaz, who had already heard of Ruth's care for Naomi, speaks to her and assures her that she will be provided for in his field. Boaz then secretly tells his harvesters to leave behind some stalks of grain so that Ruth will have more to gather ([Ruth 2:16](#)).

That evening, when Naomi finds out that Ruth has been working in Boaz's field, she identifies him as a close kinsman and one of their guardian-redeemers. A guardian-redeemer, or [kinsman-redeemer](#), is a relative who had the privilege or responsibility to act on behalf of a relative in need. A guardian-redeemer was one to whom an Israelite could turn in times of trouble. The laws governing the guardian-redeemer are found in [Leviticus 25:25–55](#).

Ruth went to Boaz and let him know that she needed a guardian-redeemer. Boaz told Ruth that he was pleased to offer her redemption, which would include marriage to her, but there was one relative who was closer in line to be the guardian-redeemer. The next day, Boaz met with the other relative and presented the situation. The man declined to marry Ruth, and Boaz then made a commitment in front of the town's leaders that he would take Ruth as his wife ([Ruth 4:1–10](#)). Boaz and Ruth were married, and [Obed](#) was born.

In the role of guardian-redeemer, Boaz becomes a picture of Jesus Christ. The Quest Bible devotional explains: "The word guardian-redeemer finds ultimate fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah (see [Isa 59:20](#)). Jesus is our near guardian who came to buy us back into God's family. In the New Testament the concept is reflected in the various words for redeem, which suggest paying a ransom, making a purchase or saving from loss" ([www.biblegateway.com/devotionals/quest-bible/2012/07/17](http://www.biblegateway.com/devotionals/quest-bible/2012/07/17), accessed 6/21/2021).

We see the concept of redemption played out by Boaz throughout the book of Ruth:

In [Ruth 2:8–9](#), Boaz shows compassion and gentleness to Ruth. In [Ruth 2:11–12](#), Boaz, a man with superior leadership qualities, notes that Ruth is a hard worker. He compliments her for taking care of her mother-in-law. [Ruth 2:14](#) describes Boaz's courtesy toward the young woman. The generosity of Boaz is shown in [Ruth 2:15–16](#), in that he orders extra bundles of grain set out for her to find. He demonstrates his

commitment to Ruth by lifting her out of poverty, providing for her needs, and ensuring that Ruth's former husband—Naomi's son—had offspring to carry on the family name.

Boaz can be seen as a reflection of our Lord Jesus Christ, our guardian-redeemer. We were "outsiders" (sinners), impoverished, forsaken, and struggling to make it. The Lord showed us compassion, gentleness, and generosity. He lifted us out of spiritual poverty, provided for our eternal needs, and gave us a forever home.

It is interesting that Boaz is the name of one of the [two bronze pillars](#) in Solomon's temple ([1 Kings 7:21](#)). *Boaz* means "in him is strength." Since neither pillar was used to support the temple structure, Boaz and the other pillar, Jakin ("he will establish"), were symbolic of Israel's dependence on God's strength and presence.

## What is a kinsman redeemer?

The kinsman-redeemer is a male relative who, according to various laws of the Pentateuch, had the privilege or responsibility to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger, or need. The Hebrew term (*go el*) for kinsman-redeemer designates one who delivers or rescues ([Genesis 48:16](#); [Exodus 6:6](#)) or redeems property or person ([Leviticus 27:9–25](#), [25:47–55](#)). The kinsman who redeems or vindicates a relative is illustrated most clearly in the [book of Ruth](#), where the kinsman-redeemer is Boaz.

The story of Ruth and Boaz begins when Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, return to Bethlehem from Moab where they had been living. Naomi's husband and both sons, one the husband of Ruth, had died, leaving the women penniless and without a male protector. Upon arriving in Bethlehem, Naomi sends Ruth to glean in the fields of Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi to whom they, through a series of divinely appointed circumstances, appeal as their *go el*. Boaz acquiesces, willingly takes Ruth as his wife, and together they bear a son named Obed who became the grandfather of David, the forefather of Jesus.

Yahweh is Israel's Redeemer, the one who promises to defend and vindicate them. He is both Father and Deliverer ([Exodus 20:2](#)). There are numerous Old Testament appeals to God as rescuer of the weak and needy ([Psalm 82:4](#); [Daniel 6:27](#); [Jeremiah 20:13](#)) and

preserver of the sheep of Israel ([Ezekiel 34:10–12, 22](#)).

In the New Testament, Christ is often regarded as an example of a kinsman-redeemer because, as our brother ([Hebrews 2:11](#)), He also redeems us because of our great need, one that only He can satisfy. In [Ruth 3:9](#), we see a beautiful and poignant picture of the needy supplicant, unable to rescue herself, requesting of the kinsman-redeemer that he cover her with his protection, redeem her, and make her his wife. In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ bought us for Himself, out of the curse, out of our destitution; made us His own beloved bride; and blessed us for all generations. He is the true kinsman-redeemer of all who call on Him in faith.

## Who was Amminadab in the Bible?

The Bible speaks of three men named Amminadab. None of the three have much information about them provided in Scripture, but we can still glean certain details from the text.

The Bible's first mention of a man named Amminadab is in [Exodus 6:23](#). This Amminadab was of the tribe of Judah and the father of Elisheba, the woman who married [Aaron](#), Moses' brother and the first high priest of the Israelites. Later, the Bible references this same Amminadab in connection with his son Nahshon, who is called "the leader of the people of Judah" ([Numbers 2:3](#)). As we follow the line through Nahshon, we see that Amminadab was an ancestor of both Boaz and David and therefore an ancestor of Jesus Christ (see [Ruth 4:18–22](#); [Matthew 1:4](#); [Luke 3:33](#)).

Another man named Amminadab is a Levite mentioned in the Bible in conjunction with his more infamous son Korah ([1 Chronicles 6:22](#)). Korah was a clan leader during the Israelites' journey to the Promised land and is known for his [rebellion against Moses](#) and

his subsequent destruction by the Lord God (see [Numbers 16](#)).

The third Amminadab in the Bible was a Levite and the son of Uzziel. This Amminadab likely served in the tabernacle. He was one of 112 Levites who received the great honor of bringing the [ark of the covenant](#) to Jerusalem. Previously, the ark had been captured by the Philistines ([1 Samuel 4:1–11](#)) but was returned when calamity fell on the Philistines due to the ark's presence in their temple. David had constructed a palace for himself in the city of Jerusalem and, as in times of old, a tent for the ark of the covenant. David ordered the chosen men, including Amminadab, to consecrate themselves and carry the ark on poles into the city. Amminadab's exact role in this is not mentioned, but he was likely a part of the procession, which included sacrifices, choirs, dancing, and "a joyful sound with musical instruments: lyres, harps and cymbals" ([1 Chronicles 15:16](#)). David would eventually commission a temple to be built by his son Solomon, and the temple would be the permanent house for the ark.

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## 10 Lessons from the Dramatic Story of Judah and Tamar

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Sometimes the juiciest, most drama-ridden stories can be found in the most unexpected of places: the [Holy Bible](#). One case in point is the story of Judah and Tamar, a bizarre tale about a father-in-law who mistakenly impregnates his daughter-in-law—who'd concealed her identity from him on purpose.

Yet before we rush to judgment and incorrect assumptions, rest assured that God uses this story to illuminate some important lessons about deception, righteousness, and undeserved mercy.

### Who Are Judah and Tamar?

The story of Judah and Tamar is complicated, messy, and filled with trickery. Judah was one of the 12 sons of Jacob, and one of Joseph's brothers who sold him into slavery. Indeed, he was the brother who suggested they sell Joseph instead of killing him ([Genesis 37:26-27](#)).

After this, Judah left his brothers and ended up marrying a Canaanite woman, who bore him three sons. And this is where we meet Tamar, in [Genesis 38](#). Judah's oldest son, Er, married Tamar, and she became Judah's daughter-in-law. However, the Bible tells us, Er was wicked, so God had him killed.

Judah followed Jewish custom and gave Tamar to his second son, Onan. But Onan, too, was wicked, so God killed him, as well.

By custom, Judah should then have married Tamar to his youngest son, Shelah, but he didn't want to lose a third son. So he sent Tamar back to her father's house, promising to wed her to Shelah when he was old enough—but Judah did not do as he'd promised.

After many years passed and Judah's wife died, he was traveling and came to the town where she lived. However, she decided to take matters into her own hands. Recognizing him, she quickly disguised herself as a shrine prostitute, covered her face with a veil, and positioned herself along his path. Judah didn't recognize her as his daughter-in-law, and when he encountered her, he asked to sleep with her in exchange for one of his goats, giving her his seal, cord, and staff as a pledge. After this, she disappeared, keeping his items.

Three months later, when she was found to be pregnant, Judah was outraged to learn his daughter-in-law had engaged in prostitution, and he ordered her to be burned to death. But as she was being led out to her execution, she delivered some shocking news: She's pregnant by the man who gave her a seal, cord, and staff—that is, by him.

Immediately Judah recognized his items, halted the execution, and confessed that she was more righteous than he, for he didn't fulfill his promise to give her to his thirdborn son.

Tamar went on to birth twin boys, Perez and Zerah. King David and Jesus are descended from the bloodline of Perez, bringing special significance to this story—for in spite of the treachery and deceit, mercy and righteousness ultimately prevail.

We can learn much from this tale. Here, then, are 10 lessons God teaches us from the story of Judah and Tamar:

## 1. Transformation Was Necessary

We know from reading the rest of God's story that Judah went on to become the father of the southern kingdom. What Tamar did led to a fully necessary change in character for Judah. Confronted with the truth, and confronted with his sin, he chose to repent. Acknowledging Tamar's righteousness and his wrongdoing was the first step in Judah's transformation.

## 2. Confession and Repentance Are What God Wants

God knows we all are sinful creatures, but He wants us to rise above our nature and choose the better way: Him. When we do the wrong thing, we are to confess—to God and to others—what we did, then turn from that path and walk with Him. As Jesus many years later told the adulterous woman saved from a brutal stoning execution, "Neither do I condemn you. ... Go now and leave your life of sin" ([John 8:11](#)).

This was Judah's version of the adulterous woman's reckoning. While the Bible doesn't tell us what happened to her, we know that Judah went on to play a major role in reconciling with Joseph.

God blessed Judah when he did the right thing. He wants us all to do the same.

## 3. The Story Is Tied in with the Joseph Narrative

This isn't just a digression from the "main" story – that of what happened to Joseph, who was sold into slavery, rose to become so respected under the king of Egypt that he was appointed second in command, and ultimately saved the lives of God's chosen people. Judah's story is woven in with Joseph's. Joseph, too, experienced transformation. He learned much during his time in Egypt. Judah's transformation parallels Joseph's own.

## 4. God Cares about Widows

But the story isn't just about Judah and Joseph. God was outraged at what happened to Tamar and how she was treated. God cares about widows and others considered to be the "least" in the world, such as orphans. When God

later set forth laws for the people to live under, caring for widows was one of His provisions. We see in Tamar's story that she didn't do anything to cause her first husband's death. God put Er to death because he was wicked. God wanted Er's brother Onan to then be her husband and continue the bloodline, but Onan, too, was wicked and circumvented God's plan. When she took matters into her own hands, she's not condemned for this, but rather plays a significant role in Judah's transformation.

## 5. God Cares about Women

In the same vein, the story of Judah and Tamar shows us God cares about women. What happened to Tamar was an injustice. She was mistreated, and the death of her first two husbands, Er and Onan, was not her fault. Instead of showing her respect and caring for her properly, Judah chose to keep his third son to himself and send her away. In doing so, he essentially denied Tamar a life and a future. God allowed her to achieve triumph over this situation, not only because it helped transform Judah's moral character, but because God cares about women and doesn't want women to be treated poorly.

## 6. Out of Trickery Comes Mercy

Judah did wrong by Tamar. Yet, when confronted with his sin, he repented. Out of his trickery, God's great mercy is glorified. God works through all things, even messy, complicated sexual relationships, to redeem us.

## 7. Sacrificial Parallels

While Judah did the wrong thing initially, when confronted with his sin, he is willing to sacrifice his reputation for his daughter-in-law's. This foreshadows the later sacrifice Judah makes when he agrees to accompany his younger brother, Benjamin, and father, Jacob, into Egypt ([Genesis 44](#)), as well as the sacrifice Jesus makes for all of us when He, the unblemished lamb, pays the sin-debt for humanity on [the cross](#) ([Matthew 27](#)).

## 8. Redemption Is Possible for Everyone

None of us is ever "too far gone" for redemption. Judah found his way back to God after going astray, and so did his father, Jacob, and his future great-great-great grandson, King David. What is important is that when we are finally awakened to the reality of our evil through sin, we make a choice to stop living in our old way.

## 9. God Makes All Things Good

In [Romans 8:28](#), we're reminded, "In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." God had plans for Judah and Tamar. But first, Judah needed to learn important lessons and make an important choice. He made the right choice, and in this, God used the situation for good.

## 10. Taking a Risk Can Pay Off

Tamar is ultimately responsible for the continuation of the family line, but her dreams are shattered when first one husband and then the next are killed, and then her father-in-law doesn't come through on his promise to wed her to his youngest son. She risked everything—her reputation and her very life—to ensure the family line continued. Her risk could have backfired, but it did not, and because of her actions, she is part of the lineage of the Messiah himself.

In the story of Judah and Tamar, God produced much good out of what could have been a great evil. Likewise, he does the same in our lives today and has done the same throughout history, using wrongs to draw people closer to Him where they belong.

# Learning From the Sins of Abraham

July 21, 2022 [Ryan Essay Abraham, Genesis, resurrection, unbelief](#)



Egypt ([Gen 20:1](#)). Abraham passed Sarah off as his sister, and Abimelech (the local king) took her for his wife ([Gen 20:2](#)). God appeared to Abimelech in a dream and told him about Sarah, instructing him to return her to Abraham. If Abimelech did this, he would live; if not, he would die ([Gen 20:7](#)).

When I first studied this passage, I wondered why God didn't rebuke Abraham. It's a good Bible study question: How is the reader to know that what Abraham did was wrong?

I eventually realized that God *did* rebuke Abraham, but he did it through Abimelech ([Gen 20:9](#)). God called Abraham a prophet ([Gen 20:7](#)), and yet Abraham needed this Gentile king to play the role of prophet and bring the word of God to *him*. Abraham is an anti-prophet; that is the correction he needed.

## The Nature of Abraham's Sin

It's too easy, across the distance of history, to judge Abraham for this bad behavior. Even if what he was saying was technically correct ([Gen 20:12](#)), he was intending to deceive. I believe the sophisticated word that theologians use to describe Abraham's explanation is "weasly."

But because Abraham and Abimelech have an extended conversation, we learn why Abraham acted the way he did ([Gen 20:10–13](#)). Further, we see some of the ways Abraham sinned and how we might easily fall into his well-worn footsteps.

**Abraham believed God's influence was limited.** He said, "I did it because I thought, 'There is no fear of God at all in this place.'" Abraham feared falling into the hands of those who didn't fear God, and he assumed that was true of the people of Gerar. Of course, Abimelech ended up acting more like a God-fearer than Abraham!

**Abraham believed God needed help to keep his promises.** Abraham thought the people of Gerar would kill him because of Sarah ([Gen 20:11](#)). Yet God had promised Abraham an heir through Sarah ([Gen 17:16](#)) and this heir had not yet been conceived. This means that Abraham doubted that God could preserve his life

without this deception. He had to protect himself because God might not do it.

**Abraham doubted God's goodness.** We can hear some resentment and bitterness in the way Abraham recounts his calling: "And when God caused me to wander from my father's house..." ([Gen 20:13](#)). Abraham is not remembering God's provision, his protection, or his promises. He only recalls the inconvenience God caused him.

When we identify Abraham's sins this way, I suspect many of us can see our tendency to repeat them. We often doubt God's power and his extensive reign. We do not cling to his promises or trust him to keep his word. We wonder if God is as good as the Scriptures report.

## The Answer is Resurrection

There are many places in the Bible which address these three doubts and teach us what is true. But there is one event which addresses all three.

All the Bible points to Jesus. And Jesus's resurrection, in particular, is essential. It is the ultimate proof that God keeps his promises, that he is who he claims, and that we have a great hope.

**The resurrection proves that Jesus reigns.** Paul writes that the resurrection declared Jesus to be the Son of God in power ([Romans 1:4](#)). If we suspect that God is limited or that he cannot do the unexpected, the resurrection announces that Jesus is king with a megaphone.

**The resurrection proves that God keeps his promises.** Jesus taught many things and made many claims. Some of his boldest predictions were of his own suffering, death and resurrection. The truth of his resurrection, being the most audacious claim, verifies all of his teaching. (See [1 Cor 15:17](#) and [Acts 13:16–41](#).)

**The resurrection proves that God is good.** In [Acts 5:29–32](#), Peter explains that in his resurrection and ascension, God exalted Jesus as Leader and Savior, to give repentance and forgiveness to

Israel. What mercy and goodness is captured in this! Further, Paul famously writes that those who believe will enjoy a resurrection like Jesus's—in fact, Jesus's resurrection is the first fruits of the resurrection of the faithful which is to come ([1 Cor 15:20–23](#)).

## Prone to Unbelief

We are prone to doubt, to unbelief, to attributing ill motives to God. Any of our surface-level sins likely have a root in a heart which isn't believing what is true.

Notice the forbearance and goodness of God! He faithfully stays with us in our unbelief. And he provides what we need to grow: his Spirit, his Word, and his people.

We believe, and we need God to help us in our unbelief. And this is exactly what he does.

# Jesus is the Christ

SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 BY RYAN HIGGINBOTTOM



The Anointing of David – Veronese 1555, [Creative Commons](#)

All authors employ names and titles to convey meaning in their work. The biblical writers are no exception.

I'm nearing the end of a project examining the use of titles and names for Jesus in the Gospels. My first article laid out my methodology and looked at the [top 10 titles of Jesus in the Gospels](#). I have written about the [titles of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John](#). I will wrap up this project by looking closely at three titles of Jesus that were used frequently in the Gospels; today we'll examine what it means for Jesus to be called "Christ."

## Not a Last Name

"Christ" is used so often to refer to Jesus in the modern church that it may be his title with which we're most familiar. We use and hear the phrase "Jesus Christ" so frequently that we may think "Christ" is Jesus's surname. (I'm fairly certain I thought this when I was young!)

"Christ" is the transliteration of the Greek word *Christos*, which means "the anointed one" or "the chosen one" ([source](#)). This is closely tied to the Hebrew word "Messiah," and in the Gospel of John we see those terms identified ([John 1:41, 4:25](#)).

There are scenes in the Gospels where it is clear that the Jewish people were waiting for the Messiah—the Christ—to appear ([John 10:24](#)). It seems there was much debate over the lineage of the Christ and where he would originate ([John 7:40–44](#)).

## The Old Testament Background

Anointing happens in the Old Testament when specific people are set apart for specific tasks. Aaron and his sons were anointed to be priests ([Exodus 30:30](#)). Isaiah and Elisha were both anointed to be prophets ([Isaiah 61:1, 1 Kings 19:16](#)). And both Saul and David were anointed to be kings over Israel ([1 Samuel 10:1, 16:13](#)).

In the Old Testament, God gave many promises to Israel of a Savior to come. The expectation of this coming Redeemer, and the understanding of the need for this person to be sent and designated by God for a special purpose, produced the anticipation for *The Anointed One*. This notion of *Messiah* was carried into the New Testament.

## Usage in the Gospels

Matthew and Mark both open their Gospels by referring to Jesus as the Christ ([Matthew 1:1, Mark 1:1](#)). Luke writes that an angel appeared to the shepherds when Jesus was

born, telling them of a “Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). John uses “Christ” not only as a title near the beginning of his Gospel but also when disclosing the purpose of his work (John 1:17, 20:31). All four Gospel writers are eager to introduce Jesus as the Messiah.

Further, Peter’s confession of Jesus—his response to the question, “But who do you say that I am?”—rests on this title. “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (See Matthew 16:16, Mark 8:29, and Luke 9:20.) John also records Jesus referring to himself as “Christ” toward the beginning of his high priestly prayer, (John 17:3).

We also read of the connection between Jesus and the Messianic figure of the Old Testament. In Luke 4:16–21, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1–2 and told those who were listening, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” This Old Testament passage describes a prophet “anointed” by God and sent with his Spirit. And while it is not in a Gospel, Peter and John identify Jesus as the Anointed One of Psalm 2 in Acts 4:26.

## Conclusion

In the first century, the Jewish people were waiting for a Messiah. They knew that the Anointed One they sought would be sent and prepared by God for great things.

The title “Christ” is used for Jesus 35 times in the Gospels. These authors use this title to connect Jesus to all of the promises of God he fulfilled.