

Who Do You Think You Are?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 December 2019

Preacher: Derek Lamont

[0 : 00] Okay, we're going to go on to begin a new series today. I mentioned this before that we're going to work through the book of Matthew right into New Year. I got willing that we'll look through the Gospel of Matthew. But leading up to the end of the year in Christmas time, we're going to look at the early chapters of Matthew. And so today we're going to be looking at Matthew chapter 1 and verses 1 to 17. And see if you... this is a genealogy, so it's the genealogy of Jesus. So see how many names you recognize. Lots of difficult names. If I get some of the pronunciations wrong, please forgive me. But we're going to read verses 1 to 17 of Matthew's Gospel. It's on page 807 of the Q Bible if you have that.

In the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nishon, and Nishon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rehab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. It's the first section. And then 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 Uzair, and Uzair 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 Jesiah and Jesiah the father of Jechinaea, and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon, that's the second section. And after the deportation to Babylon, Jechinaea was the father of Shealtale, And Shaltiel the father of Zerubbabel and Zerubbabel the father of Abihuud and Abihuud the father of Eliachim and Eliachim the father of Ezor and Ezor the father of Zedok.

Zedok the father of Achaem and Achaem the father of Eliod and Eliod the father of Eliezer and Eliezer the father of Mathan and Mathan the father of Jacob.

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

[3 : 01] So this is the Word of God and we give thanks and praise that we have time and freedom to read His Word together. So there's a series on UK TV called Who Do You Think You Are?

And it's a series which where celebrities trace their ancestry discovering secrets and surprises from their past. It's a fascinating program really and I think it's especially fascinating for the celebrity who's delving into their own past and into what their life was like.

Ainsley Harriot is a chef in the UK, he found out that his great-great grandmother was a slave. Matthew Pincen the great Olympian Roar descends from William the Conqueror and there's a scroll at that time which stated that that Norman King was related to surprise, surprise Adam and Eve.

And so the program made the connection that Matthew Pincen was related to God. Well, we could have told him that. And that's true of course of every one of us. So we find that these things are interesting and significant people's past and people's genealogy.

But in sermon preparation we've always been told, you know, in your university class maybe or in any presentation, the introduction is really important. Make the introduction gripping and convincing and interesting.

[4 : 27] And so here we have at the beginning of Matthew a genealogy, a list of difficult names to pronounce that you've probably already drifted away from and is boring and irrelevant.

Or you think it's boring and irrelevant to have that at the beginning. What a start to Matthew's gospel when he's talking about the most important person in the universe. But the reality is that a genealogy and this genealogy is hugely significant and hugely important. It's important because we know, every one of us know the origins matter. You know, who are you? Where do you come from? In Scotland and the free church people ask, who are your people? Who do you come from? Who do you belong to? And you know, it was one of the first questions we asked when we meet people in our lives. The media, when someone becomes famous, one of the first things the media do is delve into their past to find out maybe any skeletons in the cupboard that might be there that they can expose and embarrass the celebrity or the famous person with. Well, we worship in Jesus' name. Jesus is our Lord and Savior and we recognize that He makes huge and significant claims in His life.

[5 : 44] And so it's important that we also ask the question, well, who is He? What are His origins? What He says about us and what He says about Himself, what is it based on and where does He come from?

And it matters, you know, and it matters the promises He makes that they are based on something. You know, as I mentioned in the prayer, you know, we're getting bombarded just now with promises, aren't we?

Every time we turn on the television, the Tories and the Labour Party and the SMPs and the Greens and the Lib Dems, all of them, they're promising the world.

They're promising all kinds of things. And they're promising that they'll have all the money to do all these things. They are empty promises and I'm no politician, but I'm telling you they're empty promises.

They will very few of them be able to fulfill what they are promising to us. And so we lack trust in our politicians because they make these great claims, but we know they will not fulfill them, at least some of the most significant ones.

[6 : 46] Now Matthew was written to a Jewish audience, the original readers, the Jews, were learning and He wanted them to learn about Jesus.

And they wanted to know who Jesus was and they wanted to understand. If you go forward with me a little bit to Matthew chapter 13 and verse 55, we find that Jesus, when He's in His public ministry, goes to Nazareth and when they see Him, they say, isn't this the carpenter's son?

Is not His mother called Mary and are not His brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas and are not all His sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?

And I wonder when Matthew heard that, that he thought, well I'm going to need to put a genealogy at the beginning of my gospel so that people understand who Jesus is so that they can trust Him.

Therefore I want just this morning for a short time to look at two things that this genealogy teaches us about the living Savior, about Jesus Christ. The first is that He's an expected Christ and the second is that He's an unexpected Christ, or the unexpected Christ, the expected one and the unexpected one.

[8 : 06] And if we know anything about the Jewish past, the Jewish people, they were a people from the Old Testament who were expecting a Messiah. They were expecting a Redeemer. They were expecting someone to come and redeem them, the great Redeemer.

And so what you find in this passage, the 18 verses, the beginning of Matthew, is basically a name check that goes right through the Old Testament. It goes through famous people in the Old Testament because the Old Testament is the history of God's revelation to His people about who He is and about what His purposes and plans were.

And it reminds us even in this short section that we have that all of the Old Testament and all the names of all the people in the Old Testament are pointing to the fulfillment of the promises that were made in the Old Testament to bring a Messiah, to bring a Savior.

And you see at this point, it all seemed that God's promises had collapsed and failed. This was a poor minority people in a land that had been invaded and taken over by the Roman Empire and had been scattered all over the place, and it seemed that God's promises seemed a million miles away from being fulfilled.

I will talk about that for a moment. So is the expected Christ. And this genealogy is a selective genealogy, okay?

[9 : 44] It's very highly stylized and it's formed in a kind of literary way. So there's three very distinct groups of fourteen names, which Mark, I kind of pointed that out in the reading, the three

stages of the Old Testament history, the time really three major stages of redemptive history, from Abraham to David, then from David, the King to the exile, and then from the exile when the people of God who were disobedient were taken into exile to Babylon.

From the exile then to Jesus coming. So there's these three sections and we don't have time, there's lots of interesting little things that we could find out and speak about and share from this section, but we don't really have time to do it.

But what we do notice, I'm going to just pick out a couple of names and look at some names just to see why it's significant. Because what Matthew is doing is setting out the royal and the messianic claims of Jesus.

And these claims revolve around Jesus being the greater son of Abraham and of David. You know, it starts off with a line of Abraham and then it goes on to speak about the line of David.

And they both had promised sons. Remember Abraham was an old man and he had a son and this was a son of promise and it was a promise that he would inherit the land and great mountain nations would come from him.

[11:13] It's in Genesis 15.4, I think that is maybe on the screens. And behold, the word of the Lord came to it, that's to Abraham. This man shall be your heir, your very own son shall be your heir.

It was Isaac. And David also had a promised son and that son was Solomon, that's in Psalm 89. And David speaks, I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love for him forever. My covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. Great promises to their sons. But neither of them really fulfilled these promises.

Solomon died. Isaac's died, they were both failed in many different ways. But we also recognize that in the Old Testament what God was saying in terms of these physical sons of Abraham and David were to be fulfilled in a greater son that was to come, Jesus Christ in Galatians 3 verse 16. Paul says, the promises that were spoken to Abraham to his seed, the Scripture does not say unto seeds, meaning many people, but unto your seed, meaning one person who is Christ.

[12:27] And so there's this link between the sons that were promised to Abraham and to David, not finding their fulfillment in history up to that point, but finding their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

So what Matthew is reminding the Jewish people to whom he first read unto us, that Jesus is the coming of the King better than Solomon, coming to establish a kingdom better than the promises given to Abraham and to his seed and to the land that he was to be given.

And we know that both of these promises up to this point, the messianic hopes, had been, it seemed to have failed, that God had failed in His promises.

The kings were just a shambles over a long period of time. And also that the land that they had been promised, they were exiled, we'd talk about the exile, they'd been exiled from it and they were scrambling around and it was now, it was occupied by the Roman powers.

God had abandoned them, God had left, they were vassals unto Rome. But I think what their reminder to us is that the Old Testament is a preparation for a promise that was yet to find fulfillment and found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

[13:48] In chapter 2 and verse, Matthew chapter 2 and verse 14, it says, when Jesus fled to Egypt after he was born, this was fulfilled what the prophet had been spoken by the prophet and that's the prophet Hosea out of Egypt, I have called my son.

And that son is spoken of in Hosea as the greater Israel, as the true Israel. And so the coming of Jesus is pointing towards a blessing for all nations.

The fulfillment and the great promise to Abraham and also in the great commission, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And it's pointing not only to that but it's pointing to Jesus as the everlasting King, King and a Kingdom. And that, is that relevant?

Well, that's all very interesting maybe, but is that relevant? Is that relevant to me today? Of course it is. Of course it is because Jesus comes as God, he comes as God for every person to bring hope and salvation, to be the Messiah for every individual and for every individual in every nation.

[15:04] And he comes and he will return to finally bring fulfillment in the new heavens and the new earth. His offer then, the offer of Jesus is the offer of the belonging that we crave, belonging in the land, belonging with identity who lordship over our lives, the identity and the lordship that we

need.

Why is that significant? Because sin in our hearts means we are adrift from the living God, that without Christ we have a broken identity, without Christ we are people who are autonomous but find that desperately disconnecting but yet we can't let go of it.

We want to be lords in our own lives, yet our lives so often without Christ are in a mess because we take authority and we take direction ourselves. We want to save the world.

Rowan was speaking about the book and about the environment and we see that just now. We see so many people just wanting, desperately wanting to save the world and the environment but we really can't.

We can't do that. We can't save the world, we can't save ourselves, we can't live forever in that great longing that we have. We can't do that because we die. And so we find that in this genealogy Matthew is pointing to Jesus as the only answer to every one of our shadowy longings, to every one of our deepest hopes and the answer to all of our greatest fears.

[16:48] He's utterly and completely and passionately relevant to our everyday lives as human beings as that is exposed and explained here in this genealogy.

So is he expected Christ? Then secondly, he's also the unexpected Christ. God breathes this genealogy.

Remember that. God breathes this genealogy. All of God's Word is God breathed. It's His living Word. He inspired Matthew to include this dull and boring genealogy this morning that's sending you all to sleep.

Isn't he? He does that. And every name that's included in this is significant. And we don't have time to look at that.

We've looked at Abraham and David and Jesus Himself. But I just want to pick out another five names altogether because the inclusion of these five names is highly unusual in a Jewish genealogy.

[17:49] Highly unusual. But it's also very important because what we are reminding ourselves is not just for the inclusion of these five names but also with all the names that Christ is unexpected because He comes from a messy line.

The two giants of the faith, Abraham and David, great men, men of courage, men of grace, men of God. Hebrews says that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.

The Old Testament speaks about David as a man after God's own heart. And Abraham laughed at God's promise of a son and he was deceitful about being married to Sarah, being his wife.

He lacked faith, he was afraid. And David, of course, we know he stole another man's wife and covered it up with murder. These great pillars of the faith were frail and failed in their own strength and they needed a Messiah.

They needed a helper. But there are also five women on this list. That would not have been expected in a Jewish genealogy of the day.

[18:58] Women would not have been included in that line. And therefore it's highly significant that God includes these women in Jesus' genealogical line.

There's Tamar, look up her story in Genesis 38, who acted as a prostitute to trick her father-in-law Judah, who had broken promises to her about a future husband.

And who, when he's exposed for his sin to her, says that she is more righteous than I. Ruth is the second one who comes from a Moabite people, Moabite line, a people who are incestuous and a sexually brutal people, but who she herself came to faith in God and who said to Naomi her mother-in-law that, you know, you are, your God will be my God, your people will be my people.

And there's Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute that we looked at her story not that long ago, who lived in that hugely brutal and violent and sexually destructive city of Jericho, but by faith put her trust and relationship in the living God.

And Bathsheba, the fourth woman who's actually not even mentioned by name here, but it's called Uriah's wife, because that's who she was, because it's just that constant reminder that it was Uriah that was killed so that David could have an affair with Bathsheba.

[20:27] And the great king that came from them was Solomon. And the ignominy of David being exposed as the guilty one, you're the one, said Nathan the prophet, you're the one who's done this terrible thing.

And then Mary, the mother of Jesus, the ignominy of Mary being labeled an immoral slut, a teenage unmarried and pregnant in that society, the mother of our Lord.

So we have, and we could go through all these names, but it's really significant. These, these lives are recorded for us, and they are proudly included in the genealogy of Jesus, because the genealogy is God's great leveler.

And it reminded the Jewish, particularly the Jewish religious people of the day, who were intensely nationalistic and racist and moralistic, believing in their own goodness, that God's line in Jesus Christ was a messy line and was filled with people who needed to be redeemed, and women who they had, they would have had no time to include in any part of Scripture in many ways other than as reprehensible examples.

The genealogy is a great leveler. It's a great leveler to remind us that we are equally precious to God. We are in His genes.

[22 : 07] These people are in Jesus' genes. Galatians 3 verse 28 reminds us in a sense what that genealogy is speaking of.

There's neither dune or Greek, there's neither slave nor free, there's no male or female, for you're all one in Jesus Christ. Now that's what the genealogy is saying. I think I've said this before in Scottish parlance, it would be we're all Jock Tampon's Burns, it's a great leveler, we're equally precious to God.

There's no place, particularly within the Christian church, within the church which has embraced and taken Christ as Savioural place for inequality, for racism, for that unrelenting obsession with division and with separation and with discrimination.

The body of Christ, you know, unity is such a significant and important part of our understanding of being Christians, that we should display that unity with every fibre of our regenerate nature, because our unregenerate nature and its sinful residue fights against unity.

It wants to be divided, it wants to be separated out, it wants to judge, it wants to be better, it wants to say that we earn more favour from God. Think how quickly we judge and criticise and polarise and mock and ignore and care less.

[23 : 32] We need to read this genealogy more, because it reminds us of who we are and it reminds us that we are sinners saved by grace.

And maybe you're here today and you don't think you need a Saviour. I hope not. I hope not. Because as long as well as being equally precious to God, we are equally needy of God.

This is a broken picture. You know, it's like that series, Who Do You Think You Are? Some of the guys and girls that are on that get really nasty shocks about the kind of, the background that they come from, not what they expect.

And so when we read a genealogy like this, it's like a mirror into our own souls. It's like a mirror into who we are. You know, we see how the Old Testament faith equates truth and faith with a recognition of brokenness, need and failure.

I don't know how the Jews didn't see that, but I do, because so often I don't see it. And we can be self-righteous and proud. And don't really think we need, don't need prayer, don't need a Saviour, don't need Jesus, don't need these things.

[24 : 44] And we think we're fine, we're okay. But this genealogy reminds us that we are a people who are broken who need a Saviour. And I think it's interesting, I like to do a study on this, how much of it revolves around uncontrolled sexuality, that search in humanity for intimacy, for fulfilment, for pleasure and for power in all the wrong ways.

Taking God's gifts and abusing them, making autonomous decisions about freedom and ending up in enslavement and sadness in Missouri.

So the genealogy is a great leveler. And we finish with the last verse of the genealogy. And Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.

God the eternal Son, born of a virgin. We have this as a legal line of Joseph, the father of Jesus, his legal line.

But it says very specifically that he's, Jacob is the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, not the father of Jesus, the husband of Mary, whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.

[26 : 07] Jesus breaks into the cycle of human reproduction by the power of the Holy Spirit, entering our world, taking on human flesh, being identified with us in our brokenness and our sin, becoming one of us, but yet different from us in His perfection.

And He comes to be our representative. He comes to be the one who dies in our place, to redeem us, to beautify us, to bring us into His family line, to dignify us so that we become part of His genealogy, and to give us that belonging and that purpose and that forgiveness and that healing. And that's why it's great to be a Christian, because we are brought into the genealogy of Jesus Christ, into His family line, and we become the inheritors of His promise, promise of His loving Lordship over our lives, and also of a new heavens and a new earth, the land which we will inherit on that last great day.

What a Savior we have. And so the question for us is one of trust. That's really what it's all about. It's one of trust.

Do you trust Him? I said in that early prayer, do you trust His words? Do you only trust Him when they agree with your own thoughts, or with your own will?

[27 : 30] Or do you trust Him when things are happening you don't like, and that aren't an answer to your prayer? Do you trust Him? And do we face up to that that He is worth trusting? His promises are being fulfilled.

Jesus is the great promise of the Old Testament. We face up to that, and we live that. We live that particularly when things are tough. We trust Him that He loves us, that He is our best at heart, and He will take us home to be Himself.

What a great Savior we have. Amen. Thomas, maybe would you go down for the kids at this point and invite them to come back up?

And I'm going to pray just before we welcome some of our new members today. So let's pray.

Father God, we ask and pray that you would help us today to understand who you are.

It does seem like an incredibly boring and dull passage, just a list of names, but we remind ourselves that it's bedding the person of Jesus Christ in the history that goes before Him, and in the promises that lead up to Him, and in the redemptive story that God is telling in the Old Testament leading to the person of Jesus.

[28 : 43] We thank You that He didn't just drop from heaven in a kind of random expression, but He is the fulfillment of promise, and He is the Messiah who is expected but yet hugely unexpected.

And maybe today there are people here who have expectations of Jesus that aren't right, or who have been unexpectedly challenged by Jesus today, and we pray that that might be the case, that You'd bless and guide us and speak to us and challenge us from Your living word today and that we would know and understand the beauty of who You are, and Your relevance to us, and Your power, and the newness that You offer us in Christ, and the Lordship that is good for us, the parameters of following You that are good, and that we have been created to live within.

So help us today, God, we pray, and help us as we celebrate the Lord's Supper just to enjoy that time together, to know Your presence, for those who are vesting with us that they would enjoy the sacrament and the communion together with us, and that Jesus would have all the praise and all the glory.

We ask it in His precious name, amen. Now, before we celebrate the Lord's Supper, I'm going to welcome some new members to the congregation. Do this four times a year now, and we welcome new members, and we have 12 new members to welcome today into the congregation, and we ask them a few questions just to kind of seal their understanding of membership and ours, and also ask the congregation to a question just to remember them in prayers as well.

So today we've got a lovely mixture of people coming into membership, some are transferring membership after being with us for quite a while, others are fairly new to the congregation, and some are members for the first time.

[30 : 46] They all love Jesus, and they've all put their trust in Him, they live for Him, and they see the important place of the local church in their lives and in God's purpose for His people.

They see that in terms of worship and community and support and friendship, and a place where they can learn and serve and be served, a place of spiritual oversight and pastoral care, a place of refining faith to live among fellow sinners saved by grace, all travelling towards heaven.

So, I'm just going to introduce them briefly, and we'll put their photo up on the screen so you know who they are, because some of you might not know who they are, and then after I've done that I'll just ask them to stand up and just, they can all together answer the questions in one really.

So, two are unable to come today, but I'll explain why. So, Callum Cameron, who you know, and Callum is a minister in training with us, but after a long time he's moving his membership from his previous Presbytery and previous congregation in Fentosh to be with us here in Edinburgh.

Lois Ferguson, who has been worshipping with us for a couple of years, never joined a church, and is now joining the church. She's a nurse in Edinburgh, and so as a nurse she is working today, and is unable to join us sadly.

[32 : 12] James Fowlergill, who moved recently to Edinburgh from Dingwall to work in the city, and we're very grateful to have James joining with us in worship.

We've got George and Sheena Innes, there we go, had a handsome couple coming to worship with us from Kirk Liston, that's where they live, and they've supported many churches over many years, and they've been believers for many years.

George travels the country as a lay preacher as well. Blythe McKenzie, who is studying in Galashiels, makes the effort of coming up to Edinburgh every Sunday for fellowship and to be among God's people and to worship with us.

Blythe is studying in Galashiels. Then we have George McKenzie, who is also a worship with us, who moved from Lewis to Edinburgh, having previously visited often with her beloved late husband Ian, who we also knew and loved when they came to worship and to be in holiday in Edinburgh. Cheryl Morris, who's marriage to David, has brought her to Edinburgh and is a move from Cambridge. And also Esgrid and Rachel Sycohal, and Esgrid and Rachel, Rachel looking very colourful there.

[33 : 36] They study and work in the city, they've been worshipping with us for a while and we're delighted they're coming into membership with us. And last but certainly not least, John and Becca Watson, who is also working with us, recently moved over from Nashville with her family.

John is a minister in training with us. He is at home this morning looking after a sick child, so can't be with us. He's preaching tonight, so we're very pleased that Becca is with us and able to join in membership.

So I'm just going to ask one or two of these questions. When I ask all those who are joined, just to stand up. You don't need to move from your seats, you're fine, just where you are. Spread throughout the congregation, that's what we like to see.

And just we can all answer together after these questions. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the only saviour of sinners in whom you put your personal trust and hope as a sinner needing forgiveness, grace and spiritual life?

Do you resolve in prayerful reliance on the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to live as a disciple of Christ? Do you promise to support this church family and its worship and work with your gifts and graces to the best of your ability?

[34 : 51] And do you submit yourself to the pastoral care, teaching and discipline of the spiritual leaders of the church and seek its peace and prosperity as we promise to love and care for you? Now the congregation, you can all answer this, we do.

If you're part of the congregation today, if you're visiting, feel free to say we do, but it will be a lot to remember. Do you promise to pray for our new members, welcome them warmly, love them as part of this church family as you've been doing and together help them grow in grace as we all seek to do?

Excellent. You may sit. Thank you. And I'm going to pray for you all now. Father God, we ask and pray that you would bless this welcoming of new members into the congregation.

Thank you for it and we pray your blessing on each of them, we know some have been part of the congregation for quite a while and some are new to the congregation. We pray that you would help us to integrate one another with one another, that we would love each other, that we would be patient and gracious and kind, that we would learn from each other, that we would support one another and that we would remember that huge and significant reality of the unity of the church and the unity of the gospel that so often we want to break and divide and yet is crucial to us all being indwelt by the Spirit of God.

So Father, we pray that you'd bless them and bless our time together this morning around the Lord's Supper. We pray that it would be a time of reflection and a time of blessing for us and we pray that you'd bless the bread and the wine that we have taken to be used today in the community.

[36 : 36] We thank you for it. We thank you for the symbolic supper that we eat together reminding us of your great work, not only of incarnation but especially of atonement on the cross of the death and resurrection of Jesus which is crucial and central to us and who we are.

So we pray that you continue with us and bless us around the table of the Lord at this time for we ask in Jesus' name, amen.