

Isaiah's interactions with King Ahaz. King Ahaz was the most wicked king who ever ruled in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He regularly ignored God and actively and aggressively acted against God's law and rule. It's telling that when Isaiah goes and addresses him in Isaiah 7 (what we looked at last week), Isaiah identifies him as the House of David. It's a reminder (and wake-up call) that God's promises will not be thwarted even if the situation seems bleak.

Jecooniah was one who Jeremiah sentenced that even though he had descendants, he'd be as good as childless because he didn't honor God. God worked in spite of his sinfulness to fulfill His promises in Jesus Christ.

It's a good reminder that God's plan and fulfillment can't be compromised or undone by the person who is either ignorant or nonchalant to the person who is actively aggressive against Him. Even in the dark times where there was a small remnant, God reminds us He was at work.

Maybe you're facing challenges and opposition of your faith. Would you cling to the truth and promise that God's plan and direction will not be thwarted or sidestepped?

Interestingly, from verses 12 to 16, the family tree has a list of characters that seem ordinary and regular. It should be noted that from Abiud in verse 13 to the end of the records, they aren't listed or outlined in any other source. (not in Chronicles, or any other genealogy). They are men who lived in relative anonymity and yet would be vessels that fulfilled God's redemptive plan.

You may not know much about Achim, Eliud, or Eleazer. There's relatively little known about Joseph, but here's the point, Jesus did not just come for royalty or the scandalous with elaborate stories of rebellion. He also came for the regular and common man and woman – equally as dead in their sin. And while they may be unremarkable and unspectacular, the King of Fulfillment came to save them just as much as kings.

From the very beginning, there was a pattern that it doesn't matter how sketchy your past is – it's not beyond the scope of Jesus' reach. It doesn't matter how regular, common or unimpressive you think you may be (or you've been told you are)

– it's not beyond the scope of Jesus' attention. This is the message of hope this Christmas season. The free gift offered isn't based on status, title or validated by wealth or worth.

What Child is This? He was the rightful king who came to redeem, reconcile and save those who were lost, even within His own family tree. He is one who is worthy of our worship.

Maybe you don't know where you came from. Spiritually, you and I have the ability to be adopted into the family line as the son or daughter of the king. He saves royalty who have made a mess of things, he saves rascals and rebels who have made a mess of things, and he came for the commoner, not just the elite.

## “What Child is This?...The Genealogy of Jesus Christ”

Sermon Series: “What Child is This?”

NORTHVIEW BIBLE CHURCH



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Matthew 1:1-16  
Pastor David Hara  
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Have you noticed the ads from all of the DNA companies that are inviting you to give the gift this season to a loved one of finally figuring out or discovering where they came from, who they are related to and how they can fill in their family tree? There are different companies but they are all familiar in their offer of hope that you can know where you've come from. Each giving the tease that maybe you come from royalty and didn't even know it. Have you ever noticed they don't ever tease the idea that you come from a family of criminals or those who brought great embarrassment on themselves? I guess there'd be some boasting value if you could say you were related to Billy the Kid, the Hatfield or McCoys or Bonnie and Clyde. But, usually that's not their leading hook. Instead, it's that you may be related to royalty and you didn't even know it.

They are playing on the inherent need to belong, to fit in and know you can be a part of a family. Maybe you don't know where you come from – you were adopted or estranged from family members and it's a great way to try to reconnect. Others may experience the frustration of having a common name like Smith, where it's too difficult to trace and you can't go back many generations. Others, have shared how they can trace their family tree (their ancestry) back to the 1300's or 1500's. Maybe some of you would rather not know where you come from. This morning as we continue our study in the series, What Child is This?, we turn to the genealogy of Jesus Christ as we consider that the Christmas story is filled with the wonder that God came and dwelt among us. And it was when Jesus came and engaged with humanity that He came fulfilling promises made throughout history and meeting and giving hope to all.

Throughout the Old Testament there were promises of Messiah, and Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all those promises. As we heard, read and saw our Scripture this morning from Matthew 1:1-16, we see how Matthew detailed that Jesus Christ is the hope and fulfillment of the need not only of Old Testament characters, not only New Testament onlookers, but of all who will respond to Him today.

This morning we're struck by the truth that the child who came was the rightful King who was the promise fulfiller and he was born out of difficult and messy circumstances, but that He had the unique ability to save and redeem even the difficult and messiest of stories.

It's interesting that Matthew would start his entire letter with a genealogy. If you've been a part of any writing class or public speaking, you've been taught to start with a hook – something that will grab the attention of the audience. At first glance, you wouldn't think a genealogy would do it – just reading through a list of who begat whom, who begat, who begat. That is until you realize Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience who were well-studied in their Old Testament history, of God's prophecy of people and things to come and there were covenant promises that He'd made that they were intimately aware of and they were anxiously waiting to be fulfilled.

From the very first lines, the Jewish audience ears would have perked up – with familiar names and reminders of covenants. The very first line – for the Jewish audience, is a great claim that would grab their attention: Jesus Christ's genealogy – He was the Son of David, the son of Abraham.

Two names connected in covenant promises that Matthew says, the fulfillment of all that is wrapped up in those promises can be found in Jesus Christ.

What we see when we look at the text in Matthew 1:1-16 is first, **Jesus Christ Legitimately Fulfilled the Promise**. All the promises that God had made through the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

As the book of Matthew begins we are reminded that God is the keeper of covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12 and 15 promised that Abraham would be a father of many nations as God described a salvific relationship with His chosen people. Later, the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 detailed how David would have one in his family line that would rule as King on the throne.

By the first century, “Son of David” became

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the title for the messianic deliverer who would rightfully fulfill the promise and assume the throne of David. It's a popular title Matthew uses to refer to Jesus throughout the rest of his book.

If you break it into the three sections in verses 1-6 we see that from the very beginning of Genesis through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through the history and chronicles of the nation God made promises that were waiting to be fulfilled. Verses 6-11 take an interesting turn as Matthew traces through Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah and the minor prophets. It follows the royal line of David – but not with triumph and grandeur but to the Babylonian exile which happened in 586 BC. The Babylonian exile becomes a central point of emphasis in the genealogy. That's a peculiar area to emphasize – when the nation suffers greatly and questions how the promises of God would be fulfilled. Still, even as the thread thins and times seem perilous, God promised that He was still at work and would remain faithful to His people, even when it was a small faithful remnant.

Then, verses 12-16 trace the return from the exile, through the relative years of quiet between the Old and New Testament until the birth of Christ. In relative quiet, when they may have been tempted to question what God was doing, there was a line running from Abraham through David that faithfully flowed towards Jesus Christ.

It's interesting in verse 16 that Joseph is identified and would have been accepted by rabbinic thought as the legal parent of Jesus – but Matthew is quick to correct and explain that Joseph didn't father the Christ-child, but Jesus was born of Mary. Jesus was not begotten – but He was born of Mary. The following paragraph explains how that supernaturally occurred. We looked last week at how Mary was the fulfillment of the promises in Isaiah 7 that a virgin would bear a child, Emmanuel – which would be God with us.

What you see is the fulfillment of the promise that started in Genesis and weaved like a thread through the entire Old Testament – sometimes with grandeur and royalty, sometimes thinly veiled through hushed whispers of shame, rebellion or despair. Through the pain of an exile the promise remained that God would be faithful. He had not forgotten the promise or proved incapable of fulfill-

ing it – and then there was the return with relative anonymity from Abiud to Joseph. Still – God's promise was unbroken. And now in Christ after 400 years of relative quiet...the awaited and promised one would arrive and fulfill all the promises of the first 39 books.

What the audience was encouraged to see (what you and I are encouraged to see and respond to) is God keeps and fulfills His promises. Maybe not on our timing, or in the way we may expect or demand, but He is faithful and trustworthy. You can trust Him with your life, situations, struggles, sorrows and successes. What are you facing during this season, where you need to be reminded that God keeps His promises?

It may not be the way you expect, or in the timing you'd want, but God promises to be a present help in the time of trouble, a comforter to the one needing comfort, a place of refuge for the one who is scared or uncertain, and a place of refreshment for the weary. Maybe you need to see God for who He is and trust His character – I'd love to talk with you about what He's done in my life and hear from you what He's doing in your life.

**What Child is This?** He was the King who was the rightful heir to the throne. Therefore, He can be trusted.

If the religious leaders could have disproved him – they would have and there was no need to keep reading Matthew's book. But, but they weren't able to discredit Jesus' rightful place to the throne, as the Son of David.

At first glance, Jesus qualifies for consideration as he passes all the scrutiny of being legitimately acceptable to fulfill the promise. But, it's interesting that almost immediately his birth will be questioned, whispers of illegitimacy and improprieties. Hushed whispers of what goes on in Nazareth (a Roman military base) with promises that Joseph and Mary had remained faithful. But, it's interesting that when you begin scrutinizing the family tree – you realize it definitely it is a history that can come under scrutiny.

Consider that Jesus came from the line of David – and yet at the same time, He was outside the line of David. The mystery and wonder of Christmas and the redemption story is that Jesus Christ being very God took on the form of humanity

– and became like us – while still in full humanity, keeping his full Deity ...and providing for humanity what humanity could not and cannot provide for ourselves. He became humanity – and yet at the same time, was much more than humanity – He was the God-man who came and dwelt among us.

What Child is This? **Jesus was the Promised King who would be a savior of difficult circumstances and stories** (even – maybe especially – within His family tree.).

Maybe you've sent or you're in the process of sending Christmas cards. You took pictures – if you have little ones, maybe you took a lot of pictures. And as you sifted through pictures with eyes that were closed, faces that still had food on cheeks, and hair that wouldn't stay in place, you finally found it. Maybe the only one – but a picture that worthy of going on a card to be hung on fridges and doorways throughout the city (maybe even the country). And many of the programs even have touch-up features you can utilize. It removes the blemishes, fixes red-eye, and depending on the program can even make the picture of you, not really even resemble you. We get it don't we – you want to make things look good, maybe better than normal. It's only natural.

Jesus' lineage is marked by royalty, rascal and rebels, and then a list of regulars. Verses one through six begin in Genesis through the commencement of the Kings in Samuel. There's a sense of royalty as the heroes of the faith are detailed, but they're detailed with all of their blemishes. It might have made sense to just gloss over failures, and try to introduce Jesus after Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or the kingly line of David, Solomon and Rehoboam – but even their stories are interweaved with brokenness and need of being saved from themselves. Consider the Genesis account of Abraham's failure at times to trust God would provide or protect. Then, the author mentions Judah and Tamar. You remember the twins Tamar gave birth to? Out of Judah's unrighteousness, Tamar took things into her own hands to ensure she'd have a child, even if it meant from her father-in-law.

There's Rahab – normally referred to as Rahab the harlot (or prostitute) whose faith in God was praiseworthy, but her previous profession was shameful. There was Ruth the great-grandmother of King David – but the Jews knew she was originally a for-

eigner. And then you get to David and for all his successes, 2 Samuel details his sinfulness. Uriah the Hittite was more honorable and the nation's king. And it was Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, who David would marry after murdering her husband and give birth to Solomon, the wisest king of them all.

Oh my. All the colorful stories of the first family of the nation – and yet, they needed help: needed saving. He came from within the line and yet at the same time came to save everyone in the line.

There are testimonies of people who loved God and obeyed Him: Abraham's faith, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Josiah and others. But, I'm thankful the list of characters isn't so elite and unapproachable that you and I would be left wondering if we could ever even approach this king.

God's plan would be carried out and is often carried out through unlikely events and people. There are five women who are listed that though Gentiles or harlots – they are receptive to God's work and His will.

I was reminded that if you are prominent and feel like you always have to have things put together, you can take heart that God has a place for you at the table. He can reach into your put-togetherness and meet you at your point of need. If you're not careful, instead of finding times to celebrate and worship this Christmas season, you may be tempted to make it look like you have everything together and don't need to be saved from anything. Would you find rest in the truth that Jesus has come to save and bring peace to all of us on earth. Peace can and should be found in Him.

From the royalty and through the royalty, there is sprinkled in the reminder of the rascals and rebels that God uses to fulfill His plans. As you march through Kings-Chronicles-Isaiah-Jeremiah, you have Judah and Tamar, Rahab, but you also have kings who never acknowledge or respond to God in obedience. The genealogy doesn't exclude men or women of questionable character. In the family tree, there is the surprise and reality that there is scandal in the Messiah's lineage. There are some who God uses in spite of their past. Others, God is working regardless of the individual.

Last week, we looked at Isaiah 7 and