

CHRISTMAS AT THE MOVIES

CHRISTMAS AT THE MOVIES, PART 1: CHRISTMAS VACATION

In the movie *Christmas Vacation*, Clark Griswold is determined to have a perfect Christmas. After faulty lights, neighbor conflicts, a house full of wacky relatives? He is on the verge of a break down. During the holiday season, it is easy for our family to drive us to the edge of a break down. We all have some Cousin Eddie's in our family!

Jesus had some knots and nuts on His family tree as well. Could the Savior of the world be descended from liars, adulterers, criminals, prostitutes, and murderers? Absolutely. And that's what makes God's promise of grace even more amazing.

BIG IDEA: Jesus came from messed up people for messed up people.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about your family genealogy. Do you have any famous ancestors? Do you have any family members that you *conveniently* forget to mention?
2. What do you know about your genealogy? What would you like to discover about it?
3. Why do you think that Matthew started the story of Jesus with a genealogy?

Matthew was a Jew writing to Jews, to prove to the Jews that Jesus was their King (Messiah, or Christ). He does this by talking about His genealogy. In ancient times, it was common for biographies to begin with a genealogy, because a person's genealogy was his "claim to fame," so to speak; his credentials. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus serves that purpose, because it traces Jesus' bloodline back to King David, showing that Jesus did have a claim to the throne of Israel.

4. With your Bible or YouVersion, [read Matthew 1:1-17](#).

This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamarⁱ). Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram. Ram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon. Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahabⁱⁱ). Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruthⁱⁱⁱ). Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David^{iv}. David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah^v). Solomon^{vi} was the father of Rehoboam^{vii}. Rehoboam was the father of Abijah^{viii}. Abijah was the father of Asa^{ix}. Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat^x. Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram^{xi}. Jehoram was the father of Uzziah^{xii}. Uzziah was the father of Jotham^{xiii}. Jotham was the father of Ahaz^{xiv}. Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah^{xv}. Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh^{xvi}. Manasseh was the father of Amon^{xvii}. Amon was the father of Josiah^{xviii}. Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin^{xix} and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon). After the Babylonian exile: Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel^{xx}. Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud. Abiud was the father of Eliakim. Eliakim was the father of Azor. Azor was the father of Zadok. Zadok was the father of Akim. Akim was the father of Eliud. Eliud was the father of Eleazar. Eleazar was the father of Matthan. Matthan was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah. All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah. [Matthew 1:1-17 \(NLT\)](#)

5. Chris said, "God's plan is bigger than your past mistakes."

Jesus' genealogy is filled with scandal. You have prostitutes and egomaniacs and evil tyrants in the mix. One of the less savory stories involves Judah and Tamar. I'll spare you the sordid details, but a father-in-law propositions a daughter-in-law who he thinks is a prostitute, and a child is conceived. You could call her children, Perez and Zerah, a mistake. In fact, in our culture, this pregnancy would have been a prime candidate for abortion. But they

were more than that. They were part of God's master plan. They were part of the genealogy of Jesus. Can I offer a simple reminder from the genealogies? God is bigger than your sexual mistakes.

6. What titles does Matthew assign Jesus in verses 1 and 16? What is the meaning of each title?
7. What do you know about Jesus' genealogy? What people do you recognize in Jesus' genealogy? What surprises you about his ancestry?
8. Who are the most despised characters in modern society? Which ones do you think Jesus would *not* spend time with?
9. Why do you think some women were named when it was not the Jewish custom to include women's names in genealogies?
10. Chris said, **"Who goes before you isn't as important as who you leave behind."**

I think many people who come from dysfunctional families are afraid that they are destined to make the same mistakes their parents made. You wonder if it's in your genes. Let me remind you that you aren't your parents and your parents aren't you. You can break the cycle. You can rise above the mistakes they made. You can leave a legacy. Jesus had some messed up ancestors!

11. Chris said, **"One Generation can make all the difference."**

With God's help—no matter what you're family legacy is today—one generation can make all the difference! Isn't that good news? No matter what family legacy you inherited. With God's help. With God's presence. With God's power—one generation can make all the difference. You look at Jesus' life and you see that. One generation changed everything! Not just for Jesus' family, but with every family! The same can be true in your life. The same can be true in your family.

12. Chris said, **"You can be part of His genealogy."**

I love this promise in John 1:12: "To as many as have received him, to them he gave the power to become children of God." When you put your faith in Christ, you become part of His family, His genealogy, His legacy!

MOVING FORWARD

Jesus came from an imperfect family. Jesus did not come from the nice middle class. You don't have to have a perfect family for God to use your family. Jesus' lineage is filled with shady characters, people with less than stellar pasts—none of whom could have come to God on their own merits. But a relationship with God has never been based on our own goodness.

ⁱ Tamar is the first woman mentioned in this genealogy. She pretended to be a prostitute and then seduced and slept with her father-in-law (Genesis 38).

ⁱⁱ Rahab is the second woman mentioned. She was a professional prostitute. Her name means "pride & savagery". She was a Gentile who lived in Jericho (Joshua 2; 6:17, 25).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ruth is the third woman mentioned. Ruth was a Moabite, and the Moabite race was a product of incest (Genesis 19:30-38).

^{iv} A Man who loved God with his whole heart. Israel's favorite and most successful king. His name means *Beloved*. David is the king that all other kings will be compared.

^v David has Uriah murdered. Sleeps with Bathsheba and gets her pregnant. Story found in 2 Samuel 11.

^{vi} Solomon was Israel's most prosperous King. His name means *Peace*. Solomon loved God half-heartedly. He loved God, but also loved women. He had 300 wives and 700 concubines, which are basically sex slaves. Because he loved God with only half his heart, after he died the kingdom of Israel split in half in a civil war between the North (10 tribes, called Israel or Ephraim, the capital being Samaria) and the South (2 tribes called Judah, the capital being Jerusalem). The following kings in this list are all part of the Southern Kingdom of Judah

^{vii} Rehoboam - bad king. Name means *who sets the people at liberty*. 1 Kings 14:21-31.

^{viii} Abijah - bad king. Name means *The Lord is my Father*. 1 Kings 15:1-8.

^{ix} Asa - good king. Name means *physician; cure*. 1 Kings 15:11.

^x Jehoshaphat - good king, but "Did not take down high places." Means *the Lord is judge*. 1 Kings 22:42-45.

^{xi} Joram - bad king. 2 Kings 8:16-19.

^{xii} Uzziah - good king, but struck with leprosy because he burned incense. 2 Chronicles 26:16-21.

^{xiii} Jotham - good king, but "Did not take down high places." 1 Kings 15:32-36.

^{xiv} Ahaz - bad king. Sacrificed his sons to the fire." 2 Kings 16:1-4.

^{xv} Hezekiah - good king. 2 Kings 18:1-7.

^{xvi} Manasseh - extremely evil; the most wicked King of Judah. Ran from God for 55 years and sacrificed his sons to the fire. 2 Kings 21:1-9.

^{xvii} Amnon - bad king. 2 Kings 21:18-23

^{xviii} Josiah - good king. 2 Kings 22:1-2.

^{xix} Jehoiachin or Jeconiah - bad king, and last king of Judah before the nation fell under occupation of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar sets up another dummy king, and then the capital Jerusalem is destroyed in 586B.C. 2 Kings 24:6-25:9

^{xx} Zerubbabel, governor of Judah after the deportation, rebuilt the altar of the Lord and helped rebuild the Temple and reinstated the priests. (Ezra 2:2, 3:2-8, 4:1-4, 5:1-2, Haggai 1:1-14.)