

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (December 18, 2022)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Today is the final Sunday of Advent (Advent being the four Sundays prior to Christmas morning set aside to prepare for the miracle of Jesus' birth). Christian faith claims that at Christmas God voluntarily left heaven and entered human history. When we rejected God He did not reject us. When we walked away from Him He did not walk away from us. Instead, He came for a specific purpose. Several times He stated, "I came to seek and save the lost." That's us. His birth was the first stage of a rescue mission.

Our theme throughout these past weeks has been a line from the beautiful Christmas Hymn "O Holy Night" ... "Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth." When He appeared, and only then, did we begin to understand God's love, and our worth.

Today's sermon passage is another unusual choice for an Advent message (as has been the previous three). This morning we will read through a long list of names found at the beginning of Matthew's account of Jesus' life. Why would Matthew open his story of the greatest life ever lived this way? Why would he remind us, in this list, of all of the unsavory and questionable characters in Jesus' lineage? What does this list of names tell us about God, ourselves, our worth?

As we gain in years we often find a growing curiosity about our ancestors. Organizations, websites, DNA tests, are dedicated to helping us discover where we came from and who we are related to. Many hope to find a direct connection with someone famous, someone of influence, someone who helped change the world. When we find such a connection we can't wait to tell others. "I'm the great, great, great, great cousin of ..." Our past plays a role in defining how we see ourselves today. As we explore Jesus' ancestors we will find something there that will define us too. When He appeared ...

### **Love Down the Line** (Matthew 1:1-17)

"1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. <sup>2</sup> Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, <sup>3</sup> and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, <sup>4</sup> and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, <sup>5</sup> and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, <sup>6</sup> and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, <sup>7</sup> and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

and Abijah the father of Asaph, <sup>8</sup> and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, <sup>9</sup> and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, <sup>10</sup> and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, <sup>11</sup> and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

<sup>12</sup> And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, <sup>13</sup> and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, <sup>14</sup> and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, <sup>15</sup> and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, <sup>16</sup> and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

<sup>17</sup> 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."

### **What DOES IT SAY?**

1. How many names in this list do you know something about?
2. Do you notice anything unusual about those who are listed?
3. What names come with additional information? Why?
4. Who are the three or four most famous ancestors of Jesus?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

5. Why did Matthew include all these names?
6. How does this list help us understand who Jesus is?
7. Most scholars believe Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience. How does beginning with Abraham help?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

8. Have you explored your genealogy? Why or why not?
9. How would knowing you were related to a king, a queen, a famous historical figure change how you understand yourself?
10. Knowing an ancestor was evil, wicked, how would you feel?
11. Does knowing Jesus' ancestors change how you view yours?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural, easy, and empowering, part of your day. Prayer is talking to God, and God talking to you. Ask God to help you understand His love for you, and your true worth. Ask God for greater love for others. God will help you because He loves you.