

Matthew 1:1–17 — “A Name You Almost Skipped”

Episode Summary

Be honest—when’s the last time you actually read the genealogy at the beginning of Matthew? Most of us skip it. A long list of hard-to-pronounce names doesn’t exactly scream “must-read.”

But here’s the thing. Matthew didn’t open his Gospel with this list by accident. For his original Jewish audience, a genealogy was everything—identity, legitimacy, and a claim about where you fit in the story of God. And this particular genealogy? It’s making a massive statement before Jesus even shows up on the page.

In this episode, we walk through Matthew 1:1–17 and look at what Matthew is really doing: connecting Jesus to the promises made to Abraham and David, deliberately including women whose stories are anything but “safe,” and building a hidden structure into the list that weaves the name of David into the genealogy itself. We also talk about why the lowest point in Israel’s history—the Babylonian exile—sits right in the middle of this family tree, and what that might mean for anyone who’s ever felt like their own story was too broken for God to use.

Scriptures Referenced

Matthew 1:1–17 — The genealogy of Jesus Christ

Genesis 12:1–3 — God’s promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his family

2 Samuel 7:12–16 — God’s promise to David of an eternal throne

Genesis 38 — The story of Tamar

Joshua 2 — Rahab and the Israelite spies in Jericho

Ruth 1–4 — Ruth’s story, from Moab to Bethlehem

2 Samuel 11 — David and Bathsheba

Episode Timestamps

0:00 — Cold Open: The passage everyone skips

0:45 — What even is a genealogy, and why does Matthew start here?

3:00 — The names you don’t recognize—and the women you wouldn’t expect

5:30 — The hidden pattern: three sets of fourteen and the name of David

7:30 — The name at the end of the list—and why the grammar changes

9:15 — Close: The line of Jesus runs straight through the mess

Key Takeaways

Matthew isn't warming up—he's making a declaration.

By calling Jesus “the son of David, the son of Abraham” in his very first line, Matthew ties Jesus to the two biggest promises in Israel's history: a blessed family and an eternal throne.

The women in this genealogy aren't there by accident.

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary—each one carries a story that's complicated, unconventional, or outright scandalous. Matthew is telling us something about the kind of Savior this is going to be.

The structure is the message.

Three sets of fourteen generations, with the exile to Babylon right in the middle. The story descends into the worst moment in Israel's history—and then keeps going. All the way to Jesus.

Up Next

Matthew 1:18–25 — Things get very personal for Joseph. An angel, a dream, and a decision that changes everything. You won't want to skip that one.

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