

The Grace Of The King!

(Adapted from a study book by John MacArthur Jr.)

Our Text: **Matthew 1:1–17** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

At the outset of our four week study, we need to understand that one of Matthew's major purposes in his gospel, and the primary purpose of chapters 1 and 2, is to establish Jesus' right to Israel's kingship. As anyone would read through the gospel of Matthew, and especially through these first two chapters, there is substantiation to Jesus' claim as He stood before Pilate:

John 18:33-37 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, **"Are You the King of the Jews?"**

Jesus answered him, **"Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"**

Pilate answered, **"Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"**

Jesus answered, **"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."**

Pilate therefore said to Him, **"Are You a king then?"**

Jesus answered, **"You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."**

Was Jesus the King? ABSOLUTELY . . . That is why He came! Sadly, as we will discover, many were mistaken and did not recognize Him as the Messiah and the King of the Jews. This is why Matthew, as moved by God, begins his gospel by showing Jesus' lineage from the royal line of Israel. If Jesus is to be heralded and proclaimed king there must be proof that He comes from the recognized royal family WITH GOD AS THE SUPREME KING!

Jesus Kingship was prophesied through Nathan:

2 Samuel 7:12–16 “*When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.*” ’ ’ ”

But this was not fulfilled in Solomon, David’s son who succeeded him, or in any other king who ruled in Israel or Judah; and the people waited for another one to be born of David’s line to fulfill the prophecy.

- Therefore, ***Matthew’s genealogy presents a descending line***, from Abraham through David, through Joseph, to Jesus, who is called Christ.
- ***Luke’s genealogy presents an ascending line***, starting from Jesus and going back through David, Abraham, and even to “Adam, the son of God” (Luke 3:23–38).
- ***Matthew’s intent is to validate Jesus’ royal claim by showing His legal descent from David through Joseph***, who was Jesus’ legal, though not natural, father.
- ***Luke’s intent is to trace Jesus’ actual royal blood ancestry through his mother***, thereby establishing His racial lineage from David.
- Matthew follows the royal line through David and ***Solomon***, David’s son and successor to the throne.
- Luke follows the royal line through ***Nathan***, another son of David.
- ***Jesus was therefore the blood descendant of David through Mary and the legal descendant of David through Joseph***. When comparing these two we see that genealogically, Jesus was perfectly qualified to take the throne of David and be the KING!

It is absolutely pertinent to note something here . . . Although Jesus was considered the son of Joseph, that the fact that He was born of a virgin was not only a miracle in conception, but through that miracle Jesus was protected from regal disqualification because of Joseph’s being a descendant of Jeconiah. (What?!)

Because of that king’s wickedness, God had declared of Jeconiah (also called Jehoiachin or Coniah) that, though he was in David’s line:

Jeremiah 22:24-30 “*As I live,” says the LORD, “though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear—the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return. “Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol— A vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, And cast into a land which they do not know? O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the LORD: “Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, And ruling anymore in Judah.’ ”*

This curse would have prevented Jesus' right to kingship had He been the natural son of Joseph, who was in Jeconiah's line! Absolutely AMAZING! Jesus' legal descent from David, which was always traced through the father, came through Jeconiah to Joseph. But His blood descent, *and His human right to rule*, came through Mary, who was not in Jeconiah's lineage. Thus the curse on Jeconiah's offspring was circumvented, while still maintaining the royal privilege.

But this genealogy is listed here for much more than just Jesus' lineage . . . In it we can also see the beautiful reflections of God's grace. Jesus was sent by a God of Grace to be a King of Grace.

We will look at this in four short sections to see the King's Grace in four ways:

The King's Grace In Choosing A Woman!

Matthew 1:16 *And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.*

God showed His grace to Mary by choosing her to be the mother of Jesus. Although descended from the royal line of David, Mary was an ordinary, unknown young woman and was just as much a sinner as all other human beings ever born. She may have been better, morally and spiritually, than most people of her time, but she was by no means sinless.

Because of this, Mary needed a Savior, as she this:

Luke 1:46–49 *And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name.*

To begin with, God had saved her! Look again at verse 47:

Luke 1:47 *And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*

This shows clearly that Mary was a sinner like all of us and needed to trust the Lord for her eternal salvation.

Not only had He saved her, but He had also chosen her to be the mother of the Messiah:

Luke 1:48 *For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*

God had also "regarded" her, which means He was mindful of her and looked with favor on her. No doubt there were others who could have been chosen, but God chose her! The Lord had indeed showered His grace on her:

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. **But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.**

Not only was God mindful of her, but He was also mighty for her, working on her behalf:

Luke 1:49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name.

Mary would have no problem singing “great things he hath done” because she believed God and yielded to His will, He performed a miracle in her life and used her to bring the Savior into the world.

The Bible says nothing else of Mary’s grace except that which she received from the Lord. Therefore, we must be clear, she was never a source of grace . . . but rather, it was God’s grace in choosing a woman, even though she had sinned, to have the unequalled privilege of giving birth to the Messiah!

The King’s Grace In Choosing Two Men!

Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

To follow Mary, we have both David and Abraham, who were sinners, yet by God’s grace they were ancestors of the Messiah, the Christ.

David sinned terribly in committing adultery with Bathsheba and then compounded the sin by having her husband, Uriah, killed so that he could marry her:

2 Samuel 11:2-5 Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king’s house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, “I am with child.”

2 Samuel 11:14-17 In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die.” So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men. Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

And, as a warrior David had also slaughtered countless men, and for that reason was not allowed to build the Temple:

1 Chronicles 22:7-8 And David said to Solomon: “My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight.

Now Abraham, though he was a man of great faith, twice lied about his wife, Sarah. Out of fear for his life and lack of trust in God, he told two different pagan kings that she was his sister:

Genesis 12:11–13 *And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, “This is his wife”; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.”*

Genesis 20:1–10 *And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.*

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, “Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man’s wife.”

But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, “Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, “She is my sister”? And she, even she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this.”

And God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. Now therefore, restore the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done.” Then Abimelech said to Abraham, “What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?”

In doing this, Abraham brought shame on Sarah, and on himself, and on the God in Whom he believed and Whom he claimed to serve.

Yet God made Abraham the father of His chosen people, Israel, from whom the Messiah would arise; and He made David father of the royal line from whom the Messiah would descend. Jesus was the Son of David by royal descent and Son of Abraham by racial descent.

In fact, if we look at the descendants both of Abraham and of David (Matthew 1:2–16) we will see people who were often characterized by unfaithfulness, immorality, idolatry, and apostasy. But God’s dealing with them was always characterized by GRACE! Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, was sent to overcome the failures of both those men and of all their descendants, and to accomplish what they could never have accomplished thus proving He was the King of Grace!

The King’s Grace In Using Three Era’s!

Matthew 1:17 *So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.*

From Matthew's summary of the genealogy we see God's grace at work in three periods, or eras, of Israel's history.

• **The First Period = Wandering!**

From Abraham to David, was that of the patriarchs, and of Moses, Joshua, and the judges. It was a period of wandering, of enslavement in a foreign land, of deliverance.

• **The Second Period = The Monarchy!**

From David to the deportation to Babylon, was that of the monarchy, when Israel, having insisted on having human kings like all the nations around them, discovered that those kings more often led them away from God and into trouble than to God and into peace and prosperity. That was a period of almost uninterrupted decline, degeneracy, apostasy, and tragedy.

• **The Third Period = Captivity!**

From the deportation to Babylon to the time of Christ, was that of captivity, exile, and frustration. Most of the men Matthew mentions in this period—from Shealtiel to Jacob the father of Joseph—are unknown to us apart from this list but it was definitely a period shrouded in darkness.

Nevertheless, God's grace was at work on behalf of His people through all three periods. The national genealogy of Jesus is one mixed with glory and disgrace. But God, the King of Grace, yet sent His Messiah *through* them.

The King's Grace In Using Four Outcasts!

Matthew 1:3–6 *Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.*

David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Matthew's genealogy also shows us the work of God's grace in His choosing four former outcasts, each of them women . . .

• **The first outcast was Tamar, the Canaanite daughter-in-law of Judah.**

Genesis 38:12-19 *Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law.*

So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock."

So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?!"

Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?"

So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

Despite prostitution and incest, God's grace fell on all three of those undeserving persons, including a desperate and deceptive Gentile harlot.

• **The second outcast also was a woman and a Gentile.**

She, too, was guilty of prostitution, but for her, unlike Tamar, it was a profession. **Joshua 2:1** *Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."*

*So they went, **and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab**, and lodged there.*

God's grace not only spared Rahab's life but brought her into the messianic line, as the wife of **Salmon** and the mother of the godly **Boaz**, who was David's great-grandfather.

• **The third outcast was Ruth, the wife of Boaz.**

Like Tamar and Rahab, Ruth was a pagan Moabitess. (read the entire Book of Ruth) Her people, the pagan Moabites, were the product of the incestuous relations of Lot with his two unmarried daughters. In order to preserve the family line, because they had no husbands or brothers, each of the daughters got their father drunk and caused him to unknowingly have sexual relations with them.

Though she was a Moabitess and former pagan, with no right to marry an Israelite, God, the King of Grace, not only brought Ruth into the family of Israel, but later, through Boaz, into the royal line! She became the grandmother of Israel's great King David.

• **The fourth outcast was Bathsheba.**

She is not identified in the genealogy by name, but is mentioned simply as the wife of **David** and the former **wife of Uriah**. And as we already discussed, she participated with David in adultery, and had her husband sent to the battlefield to be killed, and willingly became David's own wife. But, even though she sinned, because of the King of Grace, Bathsheba became the wife of David, the mother of Solomon, and an ancestor of the Messiah.

So why bring this all up? The genealogy of Jesus Christ is much more than a list of ancient names . . . It is a beautiful testimony to the **KING OF GRACE** and to the ministry of His Son, Jesus Christ, the Forgiver of sinners:

Matthew 9:13 *But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

At the start of this Christmas season . . . Have you met the King of Grace and His Son, the Forgiver of Sinners? Have you received the only gift of the season that truly matters . . . Jesus Christ, God's only Son?!