

## THE GENIUS OF JESUS' GENEALOGY<sup>1</sup>

Ancestry.com is the largest for-profit genealogical company in the world, referring to itself as “the global leader in family history and consumer genomics.”<sup>2</sup> It boasts access to approximately 40 billion historical records from 80 different countries of origin, has 3 million paying subscribers, and over 25 million people in its DNA network. User-generated content has resulted in more than 131 million family trees and more than 1 billion photographs, scanned documents, and written stories. Needless to say, what used to be an elementary school project has now become big business.

Why are genealogies such a big deal? Genealogies matter culturally because they can be utilized to trace ethnicities as well as geographic movements of families. Genealogies matter medically because they contribute to diagnoses and preventative care due to the hereditary nature of many diseases. Genealogies matter economically because they can determine whether or not you are entitled to someone else's estate or qualify for particular types of government funding.

While genealogical research is growing in popularity today, it should be noted that it has always been popular in the Jewish culture. So, it should be no surprise that the genealogy of Jesus is recorded in two of the four Gospel accounts (Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). Both accounts consist of a list of names in keeping with the Jewish practice of ancestral records. Quite honestly, it is tedious reading and differs from the narrative style of writing to which we are accustomed in the Gospels. So, why is it preserved for us?

The primary reason Jesus' genealogy is preserved for us is because it reveals how He fulfilled Messianic prophecy. The Old Testament provides some specific prophecies about the family tree of the Messiah, and Jesus' genealogy proves that he fulfilled every one of them.

For example, it shows that He was the seed of Abraham. In Genesis 12:3, God told Abram, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” and He repeated this statement in Genesis 22:18, saying, “in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” Jesus is identified as the blessing for all the nations since He is “the Savior of the world” (1 John 4:14), and both genealogies recount the fact that Jesus descended from Abraham (Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34).

Additionally, the genealogies show that Jesus descended from the tribe of Judah. When Jacob blessed Judah in Genesis 49:10, he said, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet.” Later, Isaiah prophesied about the tribe of Judah saying, “the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward.” Both of these statements are taken as indicators that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah, and both genealogies recount the fact that Jesus was a Judahite (Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:33).

Finally, the genealogies show that Jesus was an heir to the throne of David. In one of Scripture's most popular Messianic prophecies, Isaiah associated the Messiah with David saying in Isaiah 9:6-7, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder...Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom.” Jeremiah also made the connection between the Messiah and David when he wrote, “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land” (Jeremiah 23:5). Both genealogies trace Jesus'

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<sup>1</sup> You may notice that there are some differences between Matthew's and Luke's genealogical accounts. For an explanation of these differences, check out this lesson <https://www.bufordcoc.com/sermons/jesus-genealogy/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ancestry.com/corporate/about-ancestry/company-facts>

lineage through David to indicate that He was a descendant of the King and heir to the throne (Matthew 1:6; Luke 3:31).

Thus, Jesus' genealogy is provided so that there will be no doubt that He meets the qualifications of a Messiah based on prophetic proclamations presented in the Old Testament. As a result, we can be confident that the son of Joseph and Mary was in fact the Son of God.

At Home Devotional:

1. Take time to discuss or record your spiritual heritage. Answer questions like: What generation am I as a Christian? Who was the first person in my family to become a Christian and what led to his or her decision? How has my family impacted my faith? When did I become a Christian and what led to my decision? How do I want to affect the spiritual health of my family?
2. Aside from Mary, 4 additional women are mentioned in Matthew's genealogical record: Tamar (Matthew 1:30; see Genesis 38), Rahab (Matthew 1:5; see Joshua 2:1-21; 6:1-25), Ruth (Matthew 1:5; see Ruth 1-4), and "the wife of Uriah" whose name is Bathsheba (Matthew 1:6; see 2 Samuel 11). After their stories, why do you think they were mentioned in Jesus' family tree?
3. Identify 3 practical steps you can take this year to leave behind a strong spiritual heritage for the people around you.