

The King's Family Tree

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[0 : 00] It would be great if you could grab a Bible and you'll need your outline in particular today. Well, with Charles becoming king this year, we've heard a whole lot more about the royal family, haven't we?

I mean, Megan and Harry have also helped us hearing a whole lot more about the royal family. But with hearing a lot more about the royal family, we've also been seeing royal family trees, perhaps like this one, where we've got those who have passed away who have slightly greyed out. And the reason we see family trees, of course, this is selective, it's just got the main players, but the reason we see family trees like this is the line of succession. That's what really people are interested in.

And that's the purple line going down the left-hand side of the screen. Sometimes, in fact, people even put numbers next to them to know which order the next person is going to be king or queen in. And poor Harry is number five after little Louis, his nephew. Well, today we're actually looking at another king's family tree. As we head into Christmas this year, I thought we'd look at Matthew, because we've not looked at Matthew's gospel for some time, and Matthew will later quote Micah, which was the series we just finished.

[1 : 18] So I thought it would follow on well. But it begins with a successive line, or a line of succession rather, to Jesus the king. And we know it's selective because there are actually names missing from the genealogy.

Plus, despite saying there are 14 generations in each section, the last one actually only has 13. So Matthew's focus is deliberately not on historical details.

He wants to make theological points. He wants to make points about God and particularly about Jesus. And he kicks off with a big, bold headline in verse 1.

He says, This is the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. And so immediately we are told that Jesus is the Messiah.

Now, you might remember Messiah is the Old Testament Hebrew name for the anointed one, king. Christ is the New Testament Greek version of anointed one and king.

[2 : 26] For some reason, our NIV uses Messiah, even though it's the New Testament, perhaps because people today think that the name Christ is Jesus' surname. But it's actually a title that means king.

Either way, it's already a bold headline, isn't it? Jesus is the king. But then Matthew drops the two biggest names in Jewish history, David and Abraham.

It would be like if you were a tennis player, it would be like saying son of Federer and son of Rod Laver. Or perhaps if you're a soccer player, you know, son of Rinaldo, son of Beckham.

Although Rinaldo is in all sorts of troubles at the moment, isn't he, at the World Cup? But you get the idea. This is big. But these names just aren't the biggest in Jewish history. They also have worldwide implications.

At first, to be the son of David not only implies you have royal blood, but the blood of God's forever king who would rule the nations.

[3 : 30] And so in 2 Samuel chapter 7, God said to David that he would raise up his own offspring, a child. He would take over. And then God says, I will be his father and this child will be my son.

So every king from David's line was also known as the son of God. And he says, your house and your kingdom will endure forever. Your throne, that is the person who rules, will be established forever.

Ever. And this king who is known as God's son is the same king in Psalm 2, who says, I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth, your possession.

You see, the point is this king from David's line will end up ruling the world. I remember reading a primary school's wish list of what he wanted to do in the future.

And he had three there. I don't know if you can see it, but first, get a girlfriend. Second, kiss her.

And three, rule the world. But he's not a son of David.

[4 : 36] And so I don't think he's got much chance, but Jesus is. And what's more, he's also the son of Abraham. Which doesn't just mean he's an Israelite like everyone else who was descended from Abraham.

After all, being a son of David meant that as well, that you were an Israelite. Rather again, Matthew is making the point that Jesus is the one descendant.

The one offspring of Abraham through whom God would bless the world. Remember, sin had caused our world to be fallen.

It's caused the curse, if you like, of disease and disaster and death. And we're all too familiar, sadly, with those things in this world. But it's also caused, after our own death, the curse of judgment for our own sin.

But as we heard in our first reading today from Genesis, God promised that through Abraham, all the peoples of the earth, instead of being cursed, would be blessed.

[5 : 41] And later in Genesis, God reaffirms that promise to Abraham. And it says at the top of the screen, Through your offspring or seed, child, all nations on the earth will be blessed.

And the New Testament makes clear that this offspring or seed is one person, who is Christ, the King. For God's blessing was always going to come through God's King.

And so Matthew is making this point here in verse 1, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the King. And not just any old King, the son of David, the forever King, who will rule the world.

And the son of Abraham, the King who would bring God's blessings to the world. Do you see how big a headline verse 1 really is? I mean, King Charles may be king now of the Commonwealth, but he doesn't really have worldwide impact, does he?

In fact, the headlines for him have been asking, which countries does he reign over at the moment? And then the article goes on to list 15 countries like ours, where he is the head of state.

[6 : 50] But even then, he doesn't impact us much, does he? I mean, does Charles shape your life? But Matthew's headline is, Jesus is King, the forever King.

He rules and brings God's blessing to the world. He does shape billions of lives now, and will judge every life in the world later.

That's worldwide impact, isn't it? It's a pretty big, bold headline to start. And what Matthew then goes on to do is trace the line of succession leading to Jesus.

And in the first section, he starts with Abraham to David. And as he does, he makes these little additions or variations to the genealogy. And so what I've done is I've highlighted them on the back of your outline.

It might be handy to follow this from now. So the back of the outline, I'll put them in bold. And often when a Bible writer breaks a pattern, he's subtly making a point.

[7 : 57] Otherwise, why break the pattern? And so I think he's making points as we go through. So for example, in the first big paragraph where he goes from Abraham, the first addition is Judah and his brothers.

Do you see that? The tribe of Judah was the tribe that was promised to have kingship. That was David's tribe, Joseph and Jesus' tribe. But he adds, and his brothers.

Because again, the king would always impact others. Like the nation that came from Judah's brothers, the 12 tribes from the 12 brothers.

But then Matthew adds even more variations, like including these three foreign women in the line of succession. Do you notice those in bold? It says, by Tamar, then by Rahab, then by Ruth.

Again, this is unusual, particularly for that ancient time when women weren't sadly included. And while it might point to the inclusion of Gentiles into the Messiah's family, I think Matthew's point is that God works through, often through the lowly, to bring forth his purposes like a king.

[9 : 13] You see, a foreigner would have been seen as lowly in the eyes of Israel, and a foreign woman even more so. What's more, each of these three women had a stigma attached to them.

They carried some dishonor. For example, Tamar was considered to be a bit of a black widow. Both her first two husbands died, to the point that Judah didn't want to give his third son to her in case he died.

And so she was forced to pretend to be a prostitute. Rahab was a prostitute. And Ruth was often referred to as a Moabite.

And they were enemies of Israel. They all had a stigma and carried some sort of dishonor. And yet each one, by faith, acted rightly.

At Tamar sought to obey God's word about continuing the family line, without which David, the king, would not have been born. And Judah even ends up declaring, at the top of the screen there, he recognised these things that Tamar presented, and said that she, Tamar, is more righteous than he is.

[10:23] This lowly foreign woman is more righteous. Rahab, at the bottom there, believed that the Lord, your God, Israel's God, is actually the true God of heaven and earth.

She had faith in Israel's God and so acted rightly by hiding the spies in Jericho, if you remember that story. And, of course, Ruth said to her mother-in-law, Naomi, look, wherever you go, I'm going to look after you, because your God is going to become my God.

You see, here are these lowly in the eyes of the world, yet by faith acting rightly in the eyes of God. And God uses them to bring, at the end of that first paragraph, David, notice, the king. And Matthew doesn't need to add the king.

Every Jew knew David was the king. But he, again, highlights it to show how God works in history to bring forth his king who would bring blessings to the world.

[11:33] And for a moment in history, it looked like David did. He brought rest to Israel. There was peace and prosperity. But then this king sinned, and so came the curse of exile.

See the rest of verse 6 in the next paragraph, the second big one. And we've got, and David became the father of Solomon. And then Matthew adds another variation, from the wife of Uriah. Now, we all know Uriah's wife, if we remember the story, was a lady called Bathsheba. And people will often add her to the list of foreign women as well.

But Matthew doesn't actually name her. And she wasn't actually a foreigner, either. Rather, Matthew deliberately unnames her, and names Uriah, because he wants to highlight David's sin. Do you notice? David became the father of Solomon, from the wife of another man. Well, that's adultery. It's an affair, isn't it? And then, if you remember the story, he had Uriah killed.

[12:45] And because of this sin, as we read in 2 Samuel 12, things began to unravel. God said, look, the sword is not going to depart from your house.

And things slowly began to unravel. And so what follows in this middle big paragraph is a list of kings. Some good, some bad, and some just plain horrific.

I mean, in verse 8, towards the middle of verse 8, Matthew mentions Joram, who did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and was so hopeless a king, that we're told in 2 Chronicles, when he passed away, he passed away to no one's regret.

Can you imagine going to a funeral where no one regretted them dying? That's how hopeless that king was. But it went from hopeless to horrific, because in verse 9, he mentions Ahaz, who were also told in 2 Chronicles, actually sacrificed his own children to foreign gods.

I mean, is that not horrific? And of course, it gets even worse, because verse 10 mentions Manasseh, who did the same thing, sacrificed his own kids, but he also led the people astray so that they did more evil than the nations around them.

[14:07] And at the bottom of the screen, he also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem with it from end to end. I mean, that's really horrific, isn't it?

And so while their inclusion in Jesus' historical family may point to how sinners are included in Jesus' spiritual family, some of those kings never actually repented.

And so they weren't actually included in his spiritual family. Rather, again, I think Matthew's point here is to show how sin reigns and ruins.

Even good kings, because he starts the paragraph reminding us of David's sin by adding the phrase from the wife of Uriah. And notice how he ends the paragraph.

Is it happy times? No, no, it's deportation to Babylon in exile. You don't normally include your darkest time in your family tree, do you?

[15:13] You might name your aunt Ethel, but you don't normally then say how she went into exile down in Tasmania. I shouldn't pick on Tasmania or Ethel. I hope there's no Ethels here.

But the point is, Matthew does include the exile, the deportation, to another country to show how sin reigns and ruins even the good King David, which led to the curse of exile rather than blessing to

the world, as God promised to Abraham.

And yet sin won't stop God from blessing. God will have to deal with sin and we'll see that next week with the short talk when we think about Jesus' names.

But this week, nothing will stop God from providing his King who will bring his blessing to the world. And this is what we see in the third big paragraph.

Notice in verse 12 how Matthew adds, after the deportation to Babylon, and then he picks up the genealogy, so-and-so became the father of, became the father of, dot, dot, dot.

[16:16] In other words, there is an after. There is a coming out of exile. There is a movement or progress forward right down to verse 16 where Matthew talks about Jesus who is called Christ, Messiah, King.

You see, God is determined to keep working to produce this King, this promised King through whom he would bring blessing to the world. And again, working through lowly people who are lowly in the eyes of the world, but by faith act rightly, like Mary.

Notice how Matthew also highlights Mary. She's not called the wife of Joseph. Rather, Joseph is called the husband of Mary, which, you know, is unusual for that time to say it like that.

By whom? By Mary. Jesus is born. Mary herself said that she was humble or lowly. In fact, when the angel told her she was having a child, she called herself the Lord's servant.

And then she welcomed God's word. May it be fulfilled. And then she praises God for remembering her in notice her humble state, her lowly state.

[17:34] You see, God works through those who are seen as lowly in the world's eyes, yet by faith act rightly in God's eyes. I don't know if you've ever heard of a man called Edward Kimball.

Probably not. Because he was a lowly Sunday school teacher in 1858. So that's a while ago, right? But he was also a shy man and he was not much in the eyes of the world.

Lowly, if you like. Yet he faithfully taught the kids about Jesus at Sunday school, including a man called Dwight Moody who would leave his shoe store to become an evangelist in America, whom God in turn used to impact the life of Frederick Mayer, whom in turn God used to convert a man called Wilbur Chapman, whom in turn God used to convene some meetings at which a young 16-year-old man was converted called Billy Graham and through whom God used to call thousands upon thousands upon thousands into his kingdom.

I know people who were converted under Billy Graham. All because of this one lowly man, Edward Kimball, who though lowly in the world's eyes, by faith acted rightly in God's eyes.

faithfully teaching these kids and God used him to accomplish his purposes. Although for Mary, it wasn't just raising up a great evangelist of the 20th century, it was bringing forth the promised king, the saviour of every century.

[19:08] Which brings us to the end, to the summary of the king's succession. Do you see verse 17? He says, therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are 14 generations.

And from David to the deportation to Babylon are 14 generations. And from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ are 14 generations. Here Matthew summarizes the family tree and points to the 14 generations between each.

Again, I think the last one only has 13 unless you include Jeconiah twice. But again, Matthew's point is to make theological points about God and about Christ.

And the 14, 14, 14 is so neat and tidy that it couldn't be possible unless someone was working behind the scenes to make it so.

And that seems to be Matthew's point. That God is at work in the world. He's in control to bring forth this king. But the 14 represents an era, a big paragraph on your sheets there.

[20:16] One moment from Abraham to David or from David to the exile or from the exile to Jesus. And the implication is we are now in a new era of Jesus the king.

Because Matthew doesn't mention any other king after Jesus. It kind of stops. The family tree stops with Jesus, doesn't it? Matthew wrote this gospel after Jesus was crucified.

So he could have added another king if he wanted. But he didn't. For he knew Jesus rose and so remains the king.

There's no other one in the line of succession. We are in the era of this promised king who brings God's blessing to the world. It's kind of like a day.

How many hours does a day have? So make sure you're with me. Anyone? 24. 24 hours. Excellent. We've got five people with me. Thank you. So let's divide 24 hours into groups of three just like the

three paragraphs.

[21 : 16] So that's eight hours each. And so the first eight hours say 9am to 5am are like the nice time between Abraham and King David. You know, you get to have a sleep in.

You don't start until nine o'clock. You know, it's the sunlight days, that kind of thing. And that was kind of the nice time under David. But then the evening comes with the next lot of eight hours from 5pm to 1am where things go dark just as they did with David and all those horrific kings leading down to exile.

But then comes the next lot of eight hours from 1am to 9am again where things begin to get light like the time between exile and Jesus.

And by 9am it's a new day, isn't it? It's a new era where the sun shines. Well, we're in that new day now.

That long day as we saw in Micah that begins in the morning with Jesus' first coming, not necessarily at 9 o'clock but you get the point, and ends in the evening with Jesus' second coming.

[22 : 23] We're in that time now and so now is the time to receive God's blessings through His promised King. You see, Christmas is all about remembering that, that the King who brings God's blessings has come.

So now is the time for the earth to receive Him. And so have you? Have you received Him? In a little while we'll sing a carol, Joy to the World.

Joy to the World, the Lord has come. Now is the time. And so let earth receive her King. And notice He comes to make His blessings flow just as God promised Abraham far as the curse is found.

He comes to bless instead of curse if we would receive Him and so have you. Have you turned to trust in Jesus as your King to receive God's blessings?

The blessing of being saved from judgment, the blessing of being part of His family tree, not historically but spiritually, plus the guarantee of every physical blessing to come in the new creation.

[23 : 36] Have you received Jesus as your King? That you may receive God's blessings through Him. And for us who have, then firstly, will we continue to follow Jesus as our King?

Perhaps from this passage it means continuing by faith to act rightly. More and more these days Christians are seen as lowly in the world's eyes, aren't we?

Mocked and ridiculed and the like but by faith we are to keep acting rightly in God's eyes that He might even use us to accomplish His purposes. The Friday night after my son's final VCE exam there was a Year 12 party somewhere out in Warrandyte.

It already sounds sketchy, doesn't it? And I think there was going to be plenty of alcohol and no supervision and the like. But he and a couple of mates, one from this congregation actually, decided to go to youth group instead.

Now, going to youth group instead of a party is pretty lame and lowly in the world's eyes, isn't it? But by faith they acted rightly, followed Jesus as King and they even encouraged some others to go with them from their year.

[24 : 54] God used them to encourage more people to come to youth group. I don't know what it looks like for you and following Jesus as our King will come up again on Christmas Day, but will you do what you can to follow Jesus as your King?

Even though in the world's eyes we may be lowly, but by faith continuing to act rightly in God's eyes and perhaps even being used by him to encourage others.

And second, will we do what we can to help others receive him, to become part of his spiritual tree? For now is the time. It's why Jesus famously says at the end of Matthew's gospel, all authority in heaven on earth has been given to me.

I am the King, the forever King, who rules the world. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, that God's blessing might come to all nations.

We spent some time last Wednesday night praying for our non-Christian friends and family at our monthly prayer night. I forgot to mention actually, sorry Gwyneth, that the afternoon prayer night, prayer night, the afternoon prayer afternoon is coming up this Wednesday at one.

[26 : 06] But we spent some time praying for our non-Christian family and friends. Why not take some time this week to do the same? Or pray for opportunities to invite them to a carols or Christmas service?

Or if they live far away, pray for God to raise up other Christians to invite them to a carol service near where they live. Or perhaps put a verse like John 3.16 on a Christmas card and call it God's

greatest present, Jesus.

In fact, you can even download things like this these days. Here's John 3.16 for God so loved the world that he gave his only son and it's in the shape of a Christmas tree. It's \$6.58 to download. Use it as many times you like on as many Christmas cards as you can. Whatever it is, will we do what we can in our own situation to help others receive him, to join his family tree and to receive God's blessings?

will have run out of time for the third point, but let me wrap up. This family tree of Christ shows us a whole lot more than that royal family tree, doesn't it?

[27 : 14] This one shows us the line of succession to the British royal family who reigns over head of state of 15 countries. But this family tree shows us how God often works through the lowly who by faith act rightly to bring forth the promised king who reigns over the world and through whom God's blessings come.

Let's remember that and celebrate that this Christmas. Let's pray. Our gracious heavenly father, we do thank you for this reminder this morning of how you've worked in history to provide the promised king, the one who impacts billions of lives now and will call everyone every life to account later, the one through whom you bring your blessings to the world.

And so help us we pray to do what we can to help others receive him and help us also father to keep following him as our king. We ask these things in his name.

Amen.