



May 2, 2018

### ***BIBLICAL GENEALOGY***

It's understandable that most people skip the genealogy sections of the Bible, but they are great sources of wisdom. The gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy that traces a family line from Abraham all the way down to Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born. Unlike modern genealogists who strive for historical accuracy, the genealogies of the Bible are intended to show theological connections.

The genealogy is broken into three sections. In the first, we move from Abraham to King David. Abraham was a "wandering Aramean" to whom God promised the land of Canaan and many descendants. His family became the nation of Israel, and Matthew wants us to know that we cannot understand Jesus without understanding his Jewish heritage. A reading of Genesis quickly reveals how the ancestors of Jesus were both gifted and flawed. Jacob tricked his brother out of their father's inheritance, and Judah sold his brother Joseph into slavery. The message here is that God's grace is sufficient for all of us. For all of our flaws and failings, God can use us to bring about something as wonderful as the birth of the messiah.

The second section takes us from King David, the height of the kingdom of Israel, all the way to Israel's ruin, when the people were conquered and taken to exile in Babylon. All the names in the second section are kings, and they did a mostly bad job of it. Again, God's grace is in it all.

The third section is full of unknown people. Of all these names, only the first two (Shealtiel and Zerubbabel) and the last two (Joseph and Mary) are known to us. You won't find any of the others in any other part of the Bible, so we are left to assume that they were regular people, much like you and me.

Do you see what this means? Even regular people like us, with weaknesses, flaws, and skeletons in the closet, can have a part to play in the good news of Jesus Christ. Raymond Brown, the Biblical scholar, suggests that the story continues like this: "Jesus called Paul, Paul called Timothy ... someone called you." This is our turn to live the next part of the story.

I'll see you in church!

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster  
Senior Minister