

# *Jesus' Family Tree*



Advent Devotions

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*These devotions were written by  
the Discipleship Team at Trinity.*

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# WHY THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS?

*"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ . . ." Matthew 1:1*

From now through Christmas, we will be spending time in the genealogy of Jesus found in Matthew 1:1-17. We will reflect on the stories of some of the individuals in Jesus' family tree, learn from their faith and their mistakes, and be pointed by them daily to their divine Descendent who came to save us all.

If we're honest, there are certain portions of the Bible we pay attention to more than others. For most of us, one of the areas we tend to skim more than read are the genealogies that appear in a few different places throughout Scripture. So, why an entire booklet of Advent devotions on the genealogy of Jesus?

Genealogies may be a bit foreign to us today, but in biblical times they were incredibly significant. They traced family trees, but their full purpose went far beyond just that. Genealogies served to validate one's standing in the community of his day by connecting him to the heritage of which he was a product. They often highlighted royal or priestly lines, and in doing so also made theological claims while demonstrating one's place in history.

As we explore the claims and connections in Jesus' genealogy, we will see how He is the fulfillment of the entire history of God's people, the priestly King who fulfills God's will. We will see that, all along, God was moving His people toward the goal of the salvation that Jesus would come to win for us. And we will be reminded that Jesus is one of us, a part of our history. In Jesus, God Himself chose to become a part of the human race. He joined our family so that we might be restored to His!

## **For more biblical genealogies, see:**

Genesis 5:1-32, 11:10-27; Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chronicles 1:1-9:24;  
Luke 3:23-38

**Prayer:** *Gracious Father, as we study the genealogy of Jesus in the coming weeks, help us come to know Him better and to appreciate more fully how He came to us in the flesh to restore us to Your family. Amen.*

November 28, 2022

## ABRAHAM

*“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac...” – Matthew 1:1-2*

Abraham is a great reminder that God’s promises remain true, even when our faith in Him waivers. God promises to Abraham, with the certainty that only God can provide, that He would greatly bless Abraham. God declares that Abraham will become a great nation and that through his line. He would enact His plan to save the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Gen. 12:1-3). When God makes a promise, it is as good as done. From Abraham’s perspective, the fear he faces throughout his journey leads him to doubt that truth. Abraham is seen often wandering from the instruction of God in times of fear. An example of this is seen in Genesis 12:10-20. Abraham fails to believe in the promise that God would protect him in Egypt and tries to ensure his own deliverance through deceit. This results in pain and suffering for Pharaoh, and Abraham ends up with a lot of newly acquired cattle and servants. We see God deliver Abraham despite Abraham’s clear failure to trust in God. Abraham receives blessings he did nothing to deserve.

Through Jesus Christ, we too have a promise of absolute certainty from God—that we are His children, promised eternal salvation and there is no power that can separate us from this promise. Like Abraham’s situation, we do nothing to deserve this great gift from God. Salvation is wholly and freely given to us out of God’s great love for us. We will all go through times when we doubt our faith in this promise, but just as God provided for Abraham, we remain beloved children of God. Our citizenship in heaven does not waiver, even when we do.

**For more on Abraham, see:**

Genesis 12:1-25:8

**Prayer:** *Lord, thank You for Your unyielding promise to keep us and love us despite our many failures. You are unchanging and steadfast in Your love for us. Let us not remain downcast when we fail, but turn our faces towards You and the forgiveness You grant us. Amen.*

November 29, 2022

## ISAAC

*“Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob...”*  
*Matthew 1:2*

The names “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” roll off of our tongue rather easily, but the middle name—Isaac—is one which does not elicit the vivid Sunday school memories of the other two. One story is an exception, of course: God’s command to Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Isaac, like our Lord Jesus, was the son to be sacrificed, and, like Christ, he walked that path to the altar willingly, even carrying his own wood. It is a powerful and memorable story of faith that points us to Christ.

However, Isaac holds significance beyond this story. In Genesis 26:24, we read: “And the Lord appeared to [Isaac] the same night and said, ‘I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham’s sake.’” In this moment, we discover that the covenant God established with Abraham, the promise that God would bless him and provide for him, persists beyond that single relationship. It continues on with Abraham’s son, Isaac, for the sake of Abraham. It eventually continues on to Isaac’s son, and his grandson, and well beyond, for the sake of the faith of their fathers. We know that the Abrahamic covenant, and all of God’s covenants with His people to bless them and restore them, find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, a direct descendant of Isaac. In Jesus, the final covenant is established: that God provides for the forgiveness and redemption of the world.

Isaac lived a long and eventful life and he did not always do so perfectly. But his steadfast faith in the promises of God lays a pattern for our own faith. The next time you say, “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” remember that it is in the second name that the covenants of God begin to journey through the generations, even unto us.

**For more on Isaac, see:**

Genesis 22:1-26:5

**Prayer:** *Fill our hearts with the faith of Isaac, that we may steadfastly cling to Your covenant with us, that Jesus Christ has redeemed us. Amen.*

November 30, 2022

## JACOB

*"...Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers..." Matthew 1:2*

When you grow up with five siblings, you have to learn to fight to be heard. When you grow up with five siblings and you are one of the youngest, you have to fight even harder. I often remember doing some pretty crazy things to get the attention of my parents! However, the things I did for attention don't even come close to the things Jacob did to try to win his father's favor and inheritance. Jacob came out of the womb fighting with his brother, grabbing his ankle trying to be the first one out. Later Jacob tricked his brother into giving him his birthright for a bowl of food. Jacob even went as far as to lie to his father on his deathbed and pretended to be Esau to steal his birthright. Jacob spent much of his life fighting for something that wasn't his; he was looking to earn something that he didn't deserve. Eventually Jacob is given the birthright, a double portion of what he should have gotten. Jacob began to fear his brother's anger and decided to get as far away as he could. Here, in a very Jacob-like fashion, Jacob wrestles with God Himself, demanding a blessing. God, out of His great compassion and love, blesses Jacob and gives him yet again something that he did not deserve.

Through this blessing, Jacob, now Israel, continues the lineage of God's chosen people all the way to Christ. Through Christ, we are all like Jacob, recipients of something we do not deserve. Through Christ's birth, death, and resurrection, we have eternal life and God's favor!

**For more Jacob, see:**

Genesis 27:1-36:29, 37:1-36, 45:25-49:33

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the love that we don't deserve. Help us share that love with our neighbors this Christmas season. Amen.*

December 1, 2022

## JUDAH (and his brothers)

*"...and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah..." – Matthew 1:1*

Judah bears one of the most significant names in the Bible. The name appears over 800 times in Scripture, first in Genesis 29:35, where Judah is born as the fourth son of his father, Jacob. As Israel's history moves on, Judah's name will also be used to describe the tribe that descends from him as well as the Southern Kingdom that is created when Israel is split in two after the death of Solomon.

It is significant that, when Matthew's genealogy mentions Judah, it also departs from the direct line of descent to mention Judah's brothers. These twelve sons of Jacob are the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. As their story unfolds in Genesis, it becomes clear that the imperfections of the nation of Israel were there from the start. Judah and his brothers have moments of strength and honor, but more often than not their sinful nature is on full display. Jealousy, scandal, and even violence plague the family's relationship. From the start, Israel needs God to bring healing to their family dysfunction.

And so Matthew introduces us to Jesus, born as a child of the nation of Israel, come to right the wrongs of Judah and his brothers and each one of us. This Son of Israel will prove to be the Lion of Judah who will bring redemption to the whole earth, to heal broken families, and to conquer death.

Tomorrow we will see that Judah himself had plenty of problems, that his righteousness could never come from himself. Today, let us rejoice that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is our righteousness and that we are His people, His family.

**For more on Judah and his brothers, see:**

Genesis 29:35, 35:22-26, 43:1-10, 49:8-12

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, You are the God of Israel and of the whole earth. Comfort us in our family troubles, and point us to Jesus, the Lion of Judah who has saved us from our sins. Amen.*

December 2, 2022

## TAMAR

*“...and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar...” – Matthew 1:3*

The story of Tamar is a reminder of the intimate love which Christ has for us. His love for us permeates even the most shameful areas of our lives. Tamar is initially the wife of the eldest son of Judah, Er. He was a wicked man and so God put him to death. As the Jewish law describes, Tamar must then be married to the next eldest brother so that she may still bear children for her former husband. Onen, Er's brother, was indeed wicked too, and was put to death as well. Judah, having only one son left, was afraid to lose his last son, Shelah. Judah refuses to give Shelah to Tamar as her husband, leaving her without a possible way to have a child. Judah is not yet aware of just how unrighteous this action against Tamar is. Tamar masks her identity and sleeps with Judah, so that she may bear a child. When it is learned Tamar is pregnant, Judah wants to accuse Tamar of being unrighteous and becoming pregnant out of wedlock and to punish her. Tamar then reveals that the child is indeed Judah's.

Judah has a sudden realization of his own unrighteousness. He responds to Tamar by saying “She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” (Genesis 38:26). His sin has created a shameful mess for all involved. Judah is in dire need for the righteousness of Christ, who would be born from the lineage continued through Tamar's child, Perez. The story of Tamar illustrates that God does not need to create another “cleaner” way to fulfill His will. When you feel that your life is too great a mess for God to want to use, remember the story of Tamar.

**For more on Tamar, see:**

Genesis 38:1-30

**Prayer:** *Thank You God for Your unyielding love for us. As we go through times, certain we are too unclean for Your love, You not only love us, but use us to forward Your Holy Kingdom. Thank You for meeting us where we are. Our most inner being is accepted and wholly cherished by You. Grant us confidence in Your great love for us. Amen*



December 3, 2022

## RAHAB

*"...and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab..." Matt. 1:5*

Matthew's remarkable mention of several women in his genealogy continues with Rahab. Surprisingly, this is not the only time in the New Testament that she is mentioned; in Hebrews 11:31, she is specifically commended for her faith and in James 2:25 for her works. How does this woman deserve such praise?

First, a reminder of her story: Rahab was a prostitute who lived in Jericho. When two Israelite spies lodging in her house were in danger of being discovered, Rahab made the courageous choice to hide them. In response, the spies pledged to protect her and her entire family during the invasion. The people of Israel were true to their pledge, and Rahab lived among them for the rest of her life. It is a thrilling story of a brave woman, but why does Rahab end up being one of four women specifically mentioned in Matthew?

The genealogy of Matthew is in its own way a clear expression of the Gospel. It is filled with sinful people. Rahab was no exception and, in fact, given her status in society as a prostitute, she may have been more aware of her unworthiness than most. Yet this broken woman had the faith and courage to be a blessing to the Israelite spies who found themselves in her care. Why did she have such faith? Because she believed all that she heard about the power of the Israelites' God. As she said in Joshua 2:11, "...for the Lord your God, He is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." Her faith in this foreign God was enough to inspire generations of believers to come.

God restores and protects this woman because of her faithfulness. What a beautiful hint of the redemption that is to come to us as well! We, too, are no more worthy than Rahab of restoration, but we, too, will find our protection from the consequences of sin in the work of God's Son, Jesus.

**For more on Rahab, see:**

Joshua 2:1-24 and 6:17-25

**Prayer:** *Lord, like Rahab, we stand before You as a broken people. We ask that You give us faith as strong as hers, and that You rescue us from certain death as well, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

December 4, 2022

## BOAZ and RUTH

*"...and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth..." Matthew 1:5*

Now that the Christmas season is here, we are probably spending time shopping for Christmas presents. One thing most of us enjoy this time of year is finding a good deal on something we are shopping for. We spend so much money even a 10% off coupon is met with welcoming arms! Redeeming a coupon is pretty satisfying; even though we are still giving the store our money, it feels like they are coming alongside us and helping us buy it!

The story of Boaz and Ruth hints at a much greater redemption. Ruth married into the Israelite nation, she was a Moabite woman which meant that it was not appropriate for her to marry an Israelite. Eventually, Ruth's husband dies, and she is left with her mother-in-law, Naomi, whose husband also died. The two widows travel to Judah and live very poor lives. They lived off of collecting leftover crops in fields. Here is where Boaz, a wealthy man, takes notice of Ruth and is kind to her. Naomi tries to set the two up to be married, but Boaz knew that due to Jewish custom, there was another man who had priority to marry Ruth. Boaz seeks out and buys the land and the right to marry Ruth. Boaz's love for Ruth causes him to redeem her; he paid the price to marry her.

Through Boaz and Ruth, an even greater Redeemer will come. Jesus Himself loves us so much that He bought us from our sin, He redeems us through His death and resurrection. I'll take this kind of redemption over a 10% off coupon any day!

**For more on Ruth and Boaz, see:**

Ruth 1:1-4:22

**Prayer:** *Jesus, thank you for being our Redeemer. When we are slaves to sin, You have paid the ultimate price to buy us back! Amen.*

December 5, 2022

## DAVID

*"...and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon..." – Matthew 1:6*

In the opening verse of his gospel, Matthew mentions three people: Jesus Christ, David, and Abraham. David is of such significance that he is mentioned not just in Jesus' genealogy, but in the outline of Jesus' genealogy. When it comes to Jesus' family tree, David is one of the main branches. This should come as no surprise. David is one of the main characters in the entire Old Testament, Israel's archetypal king whom God described as a man after His own heart, the one whose line God had promised would extend on into eternity, the monarch whose descendent would ultimately prove to be the Messiah. When Matthew calls Jesus "son of David" in his opening verse, it is the first of ten appearances of the phrase in Matthew's Gospel.

David was born in Bethlehem, anointed as king against everyone's expectations. He would defeat a giant in a seemingly unwinnable battle. After dodging numerous attempts on his life, David would take the throne and go on to lead his people to victory and peace. But he was not without his faults. David would fall prey to the sins of adultery and murder. His family life was often dysfunctional. He suffered betrayals and wrote often about the sorrows of his soul. But through it all, the Lord was David's rock. When David sinned, he repented, and found God's forgiveness every time.

David's son and David's Lord is our rock—in Him we find our forgiveness. Through David's line comes to us another royal Son born in Bethlehem whose Kingship defies expectations, who wins a seemingly impossible victory over sin, death, and Satan. May Jesus Christ, the Son of David and the Son of God, forever be our hope and our King.

### **For more on David, see:**

1 Samuel 16:11-31:13; 2 Samuel 1:1-24:25; 1 Kings 1:1-2:12; 1 Chronicles 11:1-29:30

**Prayer:** *King of all, we thank You for Your faithfulness to David and Your faithfulness to us by sending Jesus, Your Son and David's Son, to rescue us from our sins. Amen.*

December 6, 2022

## The WIFE of URIAH

*"...and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah..." – Matthew 1:6*

The wife of Uriah is a woman named Bathsheba. Bathsheba was the wife of one of David's best men. While Uriah was off fighting in the war, King David noticed Bathsheba, gave into his lust and arranged for her to be brought to him so he could sleep with her. This led to Bathsheba becoming pregnant. David wanted to cover up this great sin and tried to have Uriah come back from battle to sleep with his wife. Uriah was a very righteous man and would do no such thing while his brothers were in the thick of battle. This led to David ordering Uriah's death on the battlefield.

King David is thought to be a "prototype messiah". Essentially David is known for his incredible righteousness. In this story, however, Uriah is far more Christ-like. Uriah is righteous and is killed because of this commitment to righteousness. We see God reward that dedication of Uriah by Uriah's name being included in the genealogy of Christ. Bathsheba is the only woman in the genealogy that is not mentioned by name. This is done to include Uriah's name so that his legacy may continue, despite the wickedness of David.

This entire story reminds us of the necessity of the perfect Messiah in Jesus Christ. While God brought good out of the failures of Jesus' ancestors, Jesus was perfect from birth to death and resurrection, the only truly good king. The preservation of Uriah's name reminds us of the care God has for all of His children. Uriah was not part of the lineage of Christ, yet he was still beloved by God. Uriah was robbed of the chance to yield offspring by David and so God made Uriah a part of the most historic lineage of all time.

**For more on Uriah, see:**

2 Samuel 11:1-27; 2 Samuel 12:1-25

**Prayer:** *Thank You Lord for showing us through broken people Your great care for us. When we feel unseen and trampled by the world around us, You remind us of Your great and unchanging love for us. When the world doesn't leave us feeling valued, You remind us that we are part of Your royal family. Let us not forget this truth as we face the voices of the world. Amen.*

December 7, 2022

## SOLOMON

*"...and David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam..." Matthew 1:6-7*

King Solomon was many things: a king, an author, a builder of the temple, and a man of great wealth and prosperity. Perhaps most of all, Solomon is remembered as having been a wise ruler.

Early in his reign, after he has placed a thousand burnt offerings before the Lord, Solomon is approached by the Lord in a dream. Yahweh says to Solomon, "Ask what I should give to you." (1 Kings 3:5) As we often retell the story, we depict Solomon as asking for wisdom and we remember that this request pleased God. But a more accurate translation of the request that Solomon made is that he asked for a "perceptive heart...to discern between good and evil." Solomon is making the request in order that he might faithfully and effectively carry out the kingly duties that God has given him. His request for a perceptive heart is humble and practical; his concern is for the welfare of God's people of Israel. The Lord grants Solomon's request and more: Solomon had wisdom beyond that of anyone before or after him, save Christ alone. As a result, for most of his reign, Solomon's wise teachings and examples turn his people towards Yahweh.

The gift of a perceptive heart is something we should ask for as well. As Solomon himself writes in Proverbs, "The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death." (13:14) When we read in Luke 11:31 that Jesus says, "...something greater than Solomon is here," we know He is speaking of Himself and His teachings. He is "wisdom incarnate." He is the fountain of life. God Himself can grant us the wisdom to see from whom life truly flows. God freely gives us a faith-filled and perceptive heart to see and know Christ.

**For more on Solomon, see:**

1 Kings 1:28-11:43; 2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31

**Prayer:** *Lord, lead me to ask for wisdom and perception as Solomon did, not only that I might discern what is good and evil here on earth, but that I might see clearly the salvation given to me through Christ Jesus. Amen.*

December 8, 2022

## REHOBOAM

*"...and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father Abijah..." Matthew 1:7*

Christmas is a time that comes with many traditions. We keep traditions to tie us to our past, bring back memories, and pass them down for generations to come. Some traditions are simple but many can be much more elaborate. Some traditions may feel like we have some big shoes to fill.

One person who had some pretty big shoes to fill was King Rehoboam. Not only was his father the great King Solomon, his grandfather was the even greater King David! Both David and Solomon made some pretty bad mistakes, but they both led Israel as kings who feared and followed the Lord (from time to time). Now it was time for Rehoboam to lead. Rehoboam had a pretty big problem to deal with though: the kingdom's factions were at odds and on the brink of splitting. After a tough decision, Rehoboam decided not to listen to the wise council of his father's regime and he ended up being harsher on the people. This of course led to the split of the people. Rehoboam split up a once united kingdom; talk about not living up to the traditions of his fathers. The kingdom would never be united again, until one of Rehoboam's descendants would bring a different type of unity.

Jesus Christ brings back the unity of all His people, and includes even us! Those of us not born into the Israelite family and tradition are now adopted into the family. Jesus took separation from God and each other and brought us together in perfect unity.

**For more on Rehoboam, see:**

1 KIngs 12:1-24, 14:21-31; 2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank you for adopting us into your family through our baptisms. Help us live in your family with love and unity. Amen.*

December 9, 2022

## ABIJAH

*“...and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph...” – Matthew 1:7*

By most measures, Abijah was a disappointment. This grandson of the great King Solomon would reign only three years, and those three years consisted of willful disobedience of the Lord's commands, just as the reign of his father Rehoboam had. How quickly the mighty nation of Israel had fallen apart under Rehoboam, and Abijah continues down this sinful and divisive path, continuing the wars of his father. Though God does grant Judah a great victory over Israel under Abijah's leadership, it is not because of Abijah's faithfulness. Abijah's 14 wives show us both that the power of the Davidic king has diminished significantly since the days of Solomon not so long ago and that Abijah has not learned from the sinful excesses of his fathers. In the end, Scripture gives us the verdict on Abijah's reign: "His heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God." (1 Kings 15:3)

And yet, for all this, the LORD does not remove His favor from the house of David. For the sake of David, Abijah's great-grandfather, God continues the royal line and allows Abijah's son to succeed him upon his death. Despite Abijah's unfaithfulness, God remains wholly faithful to Abijah and to his family.

About nine centuries after Abijah's death, a newly-born member of Abijah's family would come to display God's faithfulness to David for all eternity. Abijah's reign lasted three years; Jesus' three-year ministry would give way to His death and resurrection and eternal reign. Though it can be said of each of us that our hearts are not wholly true to the LORD our God, in God's faithfulness He gave us His own Son to sit on the throne, and through Him we are saved.

**For more on Abijah, see:**

1 Kings 15:1-8; 2 Chronicles 13:1-22

**Prayer:** *Gracious Lord, thank You for redeeming us even though our hearts have not been wholly true to You. Thank You for being wholly true to us through Jesus, who has won forgiveness of all our sins. Amen.*

December 10, 2022

## ASAPH (ASA)

*"...and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat..." – Matthew 1:7-8*

King Asa was regarded as one of the more godly kings that Judah ever had. He was born from a wicked king and received the influence of wickedness through his family in the form of his grandmother. In many ways, Asa rose above the pressure and teachings of his wicked family and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Asa trusted in the Lord to deliver him from an Ethiopian army that outnumbered his kingdom greatly and God delivered Judah. King Asa also cast out many of the idols and perpetrators of idolatry within the kingdom. Asa restored sacrificial worship of God and had a great resume up to this point.

Unfortunately, King Asa did not finish his reign as he began. King Asa later in his life did not trust the Lord to deliver Judah from Israel and so made deals with the Syrian king to betray Israel. When Asa became ill with a disease in his feet, he chose to trust in physicians rather than seeking help from the Lord who promised to take care of him and had in the past.

Looking forward to the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, we are given the perfect King. Jesus faced many similar challenges as the kings of the past such as King Asa. However, where kings like Asa may have failed, Jesus succeeded perfectly. Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead to deliver us from death into eternal life with God.

**For more on Asa, see:**

1 Kings 15:9-24

**Prayer:** *God, thank You for Your reminder that we are made wholly new in Jesus Christ. Our histories are not to determine who we are and will be. You make ways for our weakness to glorify Your strength. Lead us not to be afraid of our histories, but to eagerly look forward to who You are making us in you. Amen.*



December 11, 2022

## JHOSHAPHAT

*"...and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father or Joram..." Matthew 1:8*

We find the history of Jehoshaphat's reign of Judah predominantly in 2 Chronicles, where a beautiful phrase is written of him, "His heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord." Wouldn't that be a wonderful description of each of us?

Jehoshaphat's reign was not perfectly smooth. He made some foolish alliances with Ahab and Ahaziah, kings of Israel who were not faithful to the Lord. He strived but failed to remove all of the places of idol worship in his kingdom, and though he sent teachers of God's law throughout the land to teach the people, he failed to pass his faith along to his son, Jehoram.

And yet, we can find in Jehoshaphat's life examples of how he "walked in the ways of his father David." (2 Chronicles 17: 3). When faced with enemies all around (2 Chronicles 20), Jehoshaphat called together all of Judah to seek the Lord. He prayed, "O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations...We are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." In response, a prophet of God told Jehoshaphat that the Lord would be with them in the fight to come. Jehoshaphat therefore placed at the front of his army a contingent of singers who cried praises to the Lord even as the battle began. And the Lord delivered Judah.

We also experience failures in life and, at times, make foolish decisions. Yet we should remember to emulate the courageous heart of Jehoshaphat by placing our confidence in the Lord, for He will deliver us.

**For more on Jehoshaphat, see:**

1 Kings 22: 41-50; 2 Chronicles 17:1-21:1

**Prayer:** *Lord, grant us the courageous heart of Jehoshaphat. May we, too, sing praises to You in the face of danger, knowing that You have already declared our salvation! Amen.*

December 12, 2022

## JORAM (JEHORAM)

*"...and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah..." Matthew 1:8*

Have you ever watched children make a promise? A lot of times these promises are pretty empty or they are far too easy to break. Maybe your own children have made you a lofty promise that they didn't end up keeping. I remember promising my parents that I would clean their car once a month if they let me get a cell phone in high school. Eventually they got me the phone, but I don't remember keeping my end of the deal too often.

Every time I see a promise being broken I am so thankful that our heavenly Father always keeps His promises! King Jehoram was the next king in line after his father Jehoshaphat. Jehoram did not walk in the ways of his father and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. After Jehoram became king, he killed all of his brothers and led the kingdom into idol worship. God used Elijah to warn Jehoram, but he didn't care. Eventually, God would take him out in a pretty agonizing way (read 2 Chronicles 21 if you want the details). During Jehoram's evil reign, God was still reigning on a much higher throne and never forgot His promise He made to David that through his lineage a Messiah would come. Even though there is evil in this world and we often do wickedness in God's eyes, God is still reigning on His throne and keeps His promises. The Messiah did come through David's line, and Jesus' promise of salvation still reigns in our lives today!

**For more on Joram, see:**

2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chronicles 21

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for always keeping Your promises and giving us the assurance that the promises You've made that we have yet to see will come true! Amen.*

December 13 2022

## UZZIAH

*"...and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham..." – Matthew 1:8-9*

The legacy of Uzziah, also known as Azariah, is a bit of a mixed bag. On the one hand, both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles give Uzziah high praise in declaring that "he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD." Uzziah wins several great military victories, expanding Judah's borders back to what they had been under King David over 120 years before. He greatly increases Judah's defenses, and he promoted the land's agriculture both in the plains and in the hills.

At the same time, Uzziah did not remove the high places that had been set up to rival the temple in Jerusalem as the place where the Lord had commanded for worship to take place, and he ends up letting his great, God-given success go to his head. "But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction." Uzziah takes it upon himself to burn incense in the temple as only the priests were allowed to do, and as a result the Lord strikes him with leprosy, a disease Uzziah bears until his death. His leprosy leads to his exclusion from the temple, and his son Jotham ends up having to rule in Uzziah's place in his final years. Uzziah is buried in a royal graveyard instead of the tombs of the kings because of his leprosy.

Truth be told, each one of us is a bit of a mixed bag. By God's grace, we find successes in life. But we have all given in to pride as well. We have sinned against the Lord. Most of us have not been struck with leprosy as punishment, but our sin isolates us from others. Thanks be to God that Jesus was born in Uzziah's line. He would come to heal lepers and to heal us from the leprosy of sin. Praise be to God!

**For more on Uzziah, see:**

2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26:1-23

**Prayer:** *Mighty Healer, through Your Son Jesus You have healed us of the leprosy of sin. May we boast in nothing but in Jesus our Savior. Amen.*

December 14, 2022

## JOTHAM

*“...and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz...” – Matthew 1:9*

King Jotham is another one of the kings regarded as “good” for the kingdom of Judah. While he was not perfect, Scripture tells us that “...Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God” (2 Chronicles 27:6). King Jotham had a godly example to follow in his father, King Uzziah. King Uzziah, however, suffered an unfortunate end as he let pride get the best of him.

Scripture specifically tells us that Jotham never repeated that same mistake his father did. Jotham learned from the error in his father’s way. Jotham’s story is a great reminder that God’s goodness will bring purpose and good out of our mistakes.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate example. The mistake of our ancestors, Adam and Eve, led to the introduction of sin into the world. God, through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection, works a good through even such a significant mistake as Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit. No matter how big a mess-up we may have, it is not so great that God cannot still bring forth goodness and further His kingdom. Jesus’ act of salvation on our behalf guarantees we will have a restored relationship with God. This relationship is one of endless love and forgiveness.

**For more on Jotham, see:**

2 Kings 15:32-38, 2 Chronicles 27:1-9

**Prayer:** *God, You are a wonderful and loving God who is all powerful. Your goodness is not affected by the mistakes we make. Thank You, for providing us a way to learn from our mistakes, so that we may avoid them and not suffer the consequences of those mistakes repeatedly. Remind us moment by moment today, that You are shaping our hearts to be more like Yours, moment by moment. Amen.*

December 15, 2022

## AHAZ

*"...and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah..." Matthew 1:9*

By all accounts, Ahaz was a very foolish and evil king. He made idols for worshipping Baal. He burned his own sons as sacrifices to false gods. He stole the silver and gold from the temple of the Lord and gave it as a gift to the king of Assyria. He chose to take the wrong path at every point in his life.

The stubborn refusal of Ahaz to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord is evident even in one of the more remarkable opportunities to obey God depicted in Scripture. During the reign of Ahaz, Isaiah answered God's call to serve as His prophet. God sent Isaiah to Ahaz to exhort the king to be firm in his faith. The Lord then said to Ahaz, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God." Ahaz refused to do so! How stubborn could a person be? In response, the Lord issues one of the most hopeful prophecies found in the Old Testament: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14) The Lord is so good in His steadfast love! In the midst of the evil that Ahaz had wrought among God's people, the Lord still finds the compassion to promise that He will send "God-with-us."

Ahaz surely did not understand that a prophecy of the Savior had just been spoken—it was rather ambiguously and quickly presented—but we know exactly what was meant and to whom the words referred. Matthew tells us clearly that the birth of Jesus to the virgin Mary happened in fulfillment of this very prophecy. (Matthew 1: 22-23)

Are we any better than Ahaz? We are no more able to meet the law of God than he was. Yet our Lord is so good to us in His steadfast love! Even we, sinful as we are, are given a Savior in Jesus Christ, our Lord Immanuel. Praise God!

**For more on Ahaz, see:**

2 Kings 16:1-20; 2 Chronicles 28:1-27

**Prayer:** *Lord, thank You for loving Your people so much that even in the midst of their sin, You promised salvation. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, as fulfillment of that promise! Amen.*

December 16, 2022

## HEZEKIAH

*"...and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh..." Matthew 1:9-10*

Christmastime is a time of togetherness. People come from all over the world to be home with their families on Christmas. With that, of course, comes every host's need to make their houses look clean enough to be on the cover of the Hobby Lobby Christmas catalog.

King Hezekiah had some major cleaning that he did when he became king too. Hezekiah's father, King Ahaz, was yet another king that took the nation's focus off of God and put it onto idols and false gods. When Hezekiah took the throne, he cleaned house. Pagan altars, idols, and temples were destroyed and he reopened God's Temple and reinstated the Levitical priesthood. Hezekiah helped the people realize who the true God was, the only God worthy of their worship. Hezekiah even showed the people that God was an all-powerful God who shouldn't be mocked when he battled with Assyrians and God killed 185,000 of them in their sleep. Hezekiah knew that Judah was stuck in this everlasting cycle of fearing God and then forgetting Him.

As outside observers of this, we tend to get frustrated with the people in the Bible who just don't seem to get it, but often we are stuck in this cycle as well. How often do we need our eyes to be turned back to our one True King? While it can be frustrating how many times we realize we need to clean house in our own lives, we can be so thankful that we have a Savior who does all the cleaning for us. Through Jesus' blood on the cross, our sins can be as white as the snow we all hope to get on Christmas morning!

**For more on Hezekiah, see:**

2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, we have sinned against You and we desperately need Your forgiveness. Thank You for cleansing us of our sins and loving us! Amen.*

December 17, 2022

## MANASSEH

*"...and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos..." – Matthew 1:10*

Manasseh holds two distinctions that set him apart from the rest of the kings of Judah. First, his rule was the longest of any of Judah's monarchs, lasting 55 years. Second, his rule was the most depraved of any of the kings of Judah. He took idolatry to a new level, not only rebuilding the high places his father Hezekiah had broken down but openly promoting the worship of false gods, even setting up idols in the temple in Jerusalem. He made use of fortune-tellers and sorcerers and mediums and necromancers, and he sacrificed his own sons to false gods. He filled the streets with the blood of the innocent. Jewish tradition holds that it was Manasseh who martyred the prophet Isaiah. After the reforms of Hezekiah, Manasseh caused everything to come crashing right back down, lower than ever before. Despite his long reign, Manasseh was an idolater who turned his heart and his nation away from the Lord.

For this, the Lord brought harsh punishment down upon Manasseh. He was carried off by a foreign king and utterly humiliated. Yet in his humiliation, Manasseh learned humility. Manasseh's story takes a blessedly unexpected turn when he repents. "When he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." (2 Chronicles 33:12) Remarkably, God restores Manasseh to Jerusalem and his kingdom, and Manasseh's final days are spent restoring the worship of the Lord he had previously worked so hard to snuff out.

What a just and forgiving God we have. As He heard Manasseh's prayer of repentance, He hears ours as well, and we are restored through the Son of Manasseh, Jesus Christ, who sacrificed Himself for us to win forgiveness and eternal life.

**For more on Manasseh, see:**

2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20

**Prayer:** *Forgiving Lord, we thank You for the undeserved forgiveness You have given to us through Your Son Jesus. Lead us daily to repentance, that we may find in You full restoration. Amen.*

December 18, 2022

## AMOS (AMON)

*“...and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah...” – Matthew 1:10*

King Amon is not one of the good kings in Judah's history books. King Amon descended from a wicked father and proved to be even more wicked in his short reign. Amon spent his reign exalting himself and worshipping false images. After only two years as king, Ammon was assassinated by his servants. There are not many kings seemingly as irredeemable as King Amon, and yet we see that his lineage is restored to the throne. After King Amon is assassinated, the people of the land killed his murderers and placed his son, Josiah, upon the throne as the new king. Josiah would go on to be a far more righteous king than Amon.

King Amon's great sin had great consequences. Despite the consequences of his sin, God still made good on his promise to preserve the lineage of Christ. The birth of the Messiah signifies a change in that promise from God. No longer would it be merely a lineage that is promised deliverance, it is each of us individually and wholly. Christ's death and resurrection on the cross paid the price of our sin and secured salvation for all. Not only was King Amon's lineage restored, but his son was for the most part, a very good king. Christ does not only grant us salvation for eternity, He also promises His Spirit to be with us, guiding us and restoring us. No matter our wickedness, there can always be healing and reconciliation through the Holy Spirit in us.

**For more on Amon, see:**

2 Kings 21: 19-26, 2 Chronicles 33:21-25

**Prayer:** *Holy Father, thank You for Your ever-present and guiding hand. We thank You for the restoration You bring from the destruction of our actions. Remind us when we feel overwhelmed that You will provide a way for us to heal. Let us have eyes to see the doors You open before us. Amen.*



December 19, 2022

## JOSIAH

“...and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers...” Matthew 1:10-11

Josiah was the grandson of King Manasseh and the son of King Amos, both of whom walked away from the faith of David. It might be safe to assume that the young King Josiah would have blindly followed in the evil footsteps of his father and grandfather. Surprisingly, that’s not what happened. Josiah turned away from evil and chose to walk in the way of the Lord. “Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might.” (2 Kings 23:25).

This turn occurred because God’s Word was shared with Josiah. The priest Hilkiah shared the “Book of the Law” with Josiah’s secretary Shaphan, who then read it aloud to the king. And the king, with awakened faith as a result of hearing the Word, turned away from evil. He burned the idols of the land and he killed the false teachers. Perhaps more important than all of these acts, Josiah reinstated the Passover (2 Kings 23:21).

In other words, Josiah didn’t grow in faith and then keep it to himself. His rekindled faith caused him to take action for the good of his people—he restored the sacred feast that was a sign of the covenant that God had made with the Israelites to protect and deliver them.

He did all of this in the face of the continuing anger of the Lord, who did not relent from punishing Judah for the sins of Manasseh. How persistent Josiah’s faith must have been! In the end, we know that the Passover meal that Josiah reestablished found its full meaning in the Lord’s Supper, in the body and blood of Jesus which protects us all and delivers us. In the end, we know that the God of David and Josiah brought to us, through their lineage, our Savior. May we also turn to God with all our heart, all our soul and all our might!

**For more on Josiah, see:**

2 Kings 22:1-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34:1- 35:27

**Prayer:** *Lord, You gave to Josiah a faith which bore fruit and which did not waver. Grant me such strong faith, that I will follow Christ all the days of my life as well. Amen.*

December 20, 2022

## JECHONIAH (JEHOIACHIN)

*"...and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos..." – Matthew 1:10*

Have you ever been to a family reunion and met some relatives you had never met before? You might have found yourself wondering exactly how you were related to some of these people. Family ties can be quite confusing, especially when families grow through marriages and births. It can be hard to keep track of everyone!

As we dig into Jesus' lineage in Matthew, it is pretty easy to follow, especially because so many of Jesus' ancestors played big roles in the story of the Old Testament; however, we eventually get to one that is obscure. Jechoniah (also known as Jehoiachin) doesn't have much written about him, but what we do know can be a little confusing. Jechoniah was only king for about three months before Babylon invaded and captured Jerusalem. He also wasn't a king that trusted in or feared God, which of course led Judah to be captured. We can read in Jeremiah that God cursed Jechoniah that he would be the end of the line of David. If this was true, how could Jesus come from the line of David and why was Jechoniah mentioned in Jesus' lineage? The problem is that the curse of Jechoniah seems to invalidate Jesus' right to the throne of David. We learn that later, God restores His promise of the Davidic line through Zerubbabel.

God has a way of showing us over and over again that He is a just God and sin does not go unpunished. But, He shows His mercy and grace time and time again. We are much like Jechoniah. We fall short of God's will for us—we sin and destroy that relationship we have with Him—but God is merciful, so merciful that He sent His Son to restore that relationship, a relationship that we could in no way restore ourselves. Praise Him!

**For more on Jechoniah, see:**

2 Chronicles 36:9-10; 2 Kings 25:27-30; Jeremiah 22:24

**Prayer:** *Jesus, thank You for the perfect loving relationship You have with us. We mess up all the time and don't deserve Your love, yet You still love us! Amen.*

December 21, 2022

## ZERUBABEL

“...and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud...” – Matthew 1:12-13

Zerubbabel is not one of the better-known names in the Bible, but he played a key role in the history of Israel and as a signpost to the coming of Jesus. His name most likely means “child of Babylon,” a reminder that Zerubbabel was born in exile after Judah had been carried away to Babylon. But, true to His promise, God would lead His people out of exile back into Babylon, and Zerubbabel was enlisted to govern the returning exiles and head up the project to rebuild the temple that had been torn down by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king.

It wasn't an easy task. Zerubbabel had to battle the indifference of his people and the opposition of his people's enemies. The project took years to complete and needed the prompting of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai to reenergize and get across the finish line. In the end, the temple was rebuilt. But even then, not all was perfect. Those who had been alive to see the temple built with all the resources of Solomon's kingdom wept at the sight of the new temple which failed to live up to its predecessor's glory. But these tears of sadness were intermingled with tears of joy at the rebuilding of the house of the LORD.

Through it all, God reminded Zerubbabel that it was not by his or Judah's might or power but by His Spirit that the task was accomplished. He declared that this temple would be greater than the first. He promised the restoration of the Davidic line to power. All of these promises were fulfilled in Zerubbabel's Descendent, Jesus, the Son of God who would talk the very courts of the temple rebuilt by Zerubbabel, the Temple destroyed and raised in three days, the eternal King in David's and Zerubbabel's royal line. Thanks to Him, we former exiles have been given an eternal home in the presence of God!

**For more on Zerubbabel, see:**

Ezra 3:1-4:3; Haggai 1:1-2:23; Zechariah 4:1-10

**Prayer:** *Faithful God, we thank You for restoring Your people to the land and rebuilding the temple through Zerubbabel. We especially thank You for restoring us through Jesus, Your Son. Amen*

December 22, 2022

## JOSEPH

“...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ” – Matthew 1:16

Joseph is the earthly father of Jesus Christ. Joseph is an incredible example to us of obedience to God. Joseph was courageous in his godly obedience as he trusted God to deliver him from the consequences of corrupt rulers as well as the consequences of the social pressures of his time. We first see Joseph’s plan to divorce Mary, the mother of Jesus, to avoid dishonor as she became pregnant out of wedlock (the virgin birth of Jesus Christ). After an angel speaks to Joseph in a dream, he takes heart and does not divorce Mary, instead he chooses to trust in God’s direction and providence. Another notable time of Joseph’s brave obedience of God is seen in Matthew 2 as Joseph listens to God and flees to Egypt to avoid the persecution of King Herod. After Herod passes away, Joseph obeys God and returns to Israel, finally settling in Nazareth. Joseph’s faithful obedience to God fulfilled much of the Old Testament’s prophecies surrounding the birth of the Messiah. God uses Joseph’s obedience to grant His people certainty that Jesus Christ is indeed the Messiah sent to free God’s children from the bondage of sin.

As Joseph was obedient, so too was Christ as Philippians 2:8 says: “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”. God understands the fear and sacrifice it takes to be obedient to Him. When we face fear or uncertainty of being obedient to God, we know God has complete understanding and awareness of our feelings and is with us. He has given us a perfect role model in Jesus Christ who was obedient through His death and resurrection on the cross.

**For more on Joseph, see:**

Matthew 1:18-25, 2:13-23

**Prayer:** *Lord, thank You for the courage You give us to follow and obey Your direction. Grant us continued courage and discernment to follow the guidance of Your Spirit. Lead us away from the snares of the world and guide us into Your loving embrace. Amen.*

December 23, 2022

## MARY

“...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.” Matthew 1:16

In Luke 1:46-55, we can read one of the most stunning declarations of trust in God that can be found in Scripture. Mary, a very young virgin women in her unexpectedly pregnant state, is surely scared and nervous. She describes herself as being of “low estate” which suggests a status without power or standing in society. This humble and innocent girl is being called upon by God to be a significant participant in His plan of salvation. Tamping down the fear would have been difficult for most of us if we were asked to do the same.

And yet she sings a hymn of praise to her God, thanking Him for blessing her. She says,

*“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...  
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for He who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is His name.”*

Can you imagine the amount of trust Mary had in God that she would claim He had done great things for her? Remarkably, her hymn goes well beyond expressing trust. She concludes her song with an absolute statement of faith in God’s promise that He would deliver His people:

*“He has helped His servant Israel,  
in remembrance of His mercy,  
as He spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”*

Mary, the mother of Jesus and the first Christian, knew that the Lord’s promise of salvation, made generations ago, was ready to be brought to life in the Child who moved in her womb. May we be as confident as Mary!

**For more on Mary, see:**

Luke 1:26-56, 2:1-51; John 2:1-10, 19:25-27; Acts 1:14

**Prayer:** *God, our Savior, grant us the trust and faith of Mary, that we may always be confident in Your promise of salvation. Amen.*

December 24, 2022

## JESUS, WHO IS CALLED CHRIST

“...of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.” Matthew 1:16

It's finally here! The waiting and the anticipation of Christmas morning is something we all go through! For most people Christmas is one of the best times of the year, for children especially!

Remember how as children we couldn't wait for Christmas morning? For most parents it may be the easiest day to get your kids out of bed, if they haven't come in and gotten you up already! Of course most children are most excited for the gifts that are waiting for them under the tree. But Christmas is the day when we celebrate the best gift ever given. The Messiah is here! Promised to us years and years ago through Abraham, God's promise of salvation has finally come, not wrapped nicely under our trees, but wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger.

Looking back at Jesus' lineage, it may seem shocking that our Savior could come from such a broken family line. There are some pretty interesting people in there: terrible kings, prostitutes, and even the people in His lineage who are often referred to as Biblical heroes had struggled with some messed up sin. How could such a broken family produce the promised Messiah? God and His perfect plan for our salvation used some pretty imperfect people, but that imperfection produced perfection. God has a way of taking broken things and not simply repairing them, but making them brand new. Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin, so that we may become the righteousness of God. Jesus' family line was far from perfect, and so are we, but Jesus is perfect and now God's judgment isn't upon us. We are forgiven and made new! And we know that one day we will be reunited with Jesus in His glory. I don't know about you, but I think that is something worth waiting for!

Merry Christmas! May Jesus be the true joy of the season!

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the best gift we could ever ask for: Your Son, Jesus, our Messiah! Amen.*

