

Faith Pulpit

Tremendous Truths from Jesus' Family Tree

Some time ago my oldest sister became interested in our family tree. She dug into some old dusty records and family Bibles and traced our family line back to Holland where she found the names of our ancestors for several hundred years. When we turn to the first chapter of the book of Matthew, we find a much greater family tree. It covers not just 200 years, but 2000 years. It is the family tree of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Matthew was written for the Jews. It is also for us, of course, because all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. The Jews needed to realize that Jesus was the promised Messianic King and needed to receive Him as their Savior, and so do we. In order to be our Savior, He had to be the God-man. Matthew chapter one teaches us three things about the God-man, Jesus Christ, and about His coming to earth.

Jesus Christ took on humanity.

First, Matthew teaches that Jesus became a Man and was truly human. Matthew shows this humility in two ways.

One way is by **His genealogy**. Matthew starts his book with these words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Verse 1, then, serves as a title to Christ's genealogy.

In two big steps, Matthew takes us back from Jesus Christ to Abraham. In the genealogy of Christ found in Matthew 1 there are forty-one names. Of these forty-one, three names stand out. They are Abraham, David, and Christ. All three are mentioned in verse 1. All three are also mentioned in verse 17, though in reverse order. This verse serves as a summary and divides the names into three sections. There are 14 names in each section. The first covers Abraham to David, the second from David to the

Babylonian captivity, and the third from the Babylonian captivity to Christ. However, to get the 14 you must count David twice, and remember that this three-point division served mnemonic purposes. Some of the names of wicked kings in the line of David are left out. You have to go to the Old Testament to find them.

Abraham is important because he was the founder of the nation of Israel, the nation of the Jews. Jesus was a descendant of Abraham. Jesus was God, but He took on humanity, and He became a Jew.

The second name that stands out is that of David. David is important because he was the founder of Israel's royal family. He was the greatest king of Israel and started a dynasty that ruled for 500 years until the southern kingdom went into captivity to Babylon. But that royal line did not cease in captivity. The genealogy given to us in Matthew is the genealogy of Christ through Joseph. Jesus Christ has the right to rule as King of the Jews because He was the stepson of Joseph who was of the line of David. In Luke we have another line from David to Christ. That is the line of Mary. Jesus was a direct descendant of David through Mary as well. Matthew is presenting Jesus Christ as the King of the Jews. That is why He had to be in the line of both Abraham and David. That Jesus Christ was a man is seen in His genealogy.

This genealogy lists the people Christ chose to be His ancestors. How can you choose those who lived and died long before you were even born? How can you choose your own ancestors? We cannot, but Christ could because He is sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal God. This is a remarkable genealogy. In it we find Jews and Gentiles. We find men and women. We find saints and sinners. It is a human genealogy to be sure. Jesus Christ was a man. He was human. He took on sinless humanity. He was God in the flesh.

Christ's humanity is also seen by **His name**. When the angel came to Joseph to announce the coming birth of Jesus, the angel said, "She shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call his name Jesus: for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Jesus is His human name. It is the name that connects Him with us. It was not until He took on humanity that the Son of God received the name of Jesus. Jesus means "Savior," or better, "Jehovah saves." It comes from the Hebrew and is related to the Old Testament name "Joshua."

The name Christ comes from the Greek word *Xristos*, and it means "Anointed One" or "Messiah." Sometimes we use the term "Jesus the Christ." That is saying, "Jesus the Messiah" or "Jesus the Anointed One." In Judaism, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed. Jesus was the Anointed One because He held all three of these offices.

Jesus was His human name. Jesus—or Joshua—was a common Jewish name in those days. In fact, some say that it was one of the most common names used for boys in that day. Jesus was His human name. Matthew brings out the fact that Jesus Christ was a man, a Jewish man, who was born King of

the Jews. We see this very clearly in the first chapter of Matthew.

Jesus Christ retained His deity.

Jesus was not only fully man; He was also fully God. Matthew 1 bears this out in two ways.

To begin with, **His conception proves His deity. *It was a work of the Holy Spirit.*** The passage says, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (1:18). Jesus Christ was a man, but He was no ordinary man. He had a human mother, but no human father. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit of God. This truth is clear since Matthew explains that Mary “was found with child of the Holy Ghost.”

Jesus Christ was a Man, but He was the God-man. He was God incarnate, God in the flesh. The Bible says, “Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). The conception of Christ bears this out. It was a work of the Spirit.

Moreover, ***it was prophesied long ago.*** Matthew 1:22–23 reads, “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” The Old Testament contains many messianic prophecies. Each of these prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming has been fulfilled.

One of these prophecies came from the prophet Isaiah who clearly foretold that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. This prophecy literally came to pass when the virgin Mary brought forth her son, our Lord and Savior. He is God. His unique conception, the virgin birth, was a necessary part of His being the God-man. The Son of God existed from all eternity past, but in the incarnation, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, as Galatians 4:4 points out. His conception points to His deity.

His name points to His deity. The text explains, “They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us” (1:23). Jesus Christ is God. When doubting Thomas saw the risen Christ and talked to Him, Jesus said to him, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing” (John 20:27). And what was Thomas’s response? When He saw the risen Christ, the Bible says, “Thomas answered and said to him, My Lord and my God.” (John 20:28). He is Lord! He is God! Jesus Christ is rightly called Immanuel, which is translated “God with Us.” The Apostle Matthew and the Prophet Isaiah together clearly show us that Christ retained His deity when He became a man. In Matthew chapter 1 we see that Christ took on humanity and that He retained His deity. We also see another truth concerning our Lord.

Jesus Christ came to be our Savior.

Notice thirdly that Matthew 1:21 says, “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus: for He will save His people from their sins.” “Unto us a child is born” (Isaiah 9:6a)—that was His humanity.

“Unto us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6b)—that was His deity. His name *Immanuel* speaks of His deity. His name *Jesus* speaks of His work as Savior of men. The Bible says, “Christ died for our sins.” Jesus Christ was the God-man. Only God can save. Christ had to be God to be able to pay for the sins of all mankind. Yet only a man could die. Jesus had to be Man to die in our place, and He did die. Alone in agony on the cross, Jesus died. Forsaken by God and man alike, Jesus died. He suffered, bled, and died alone, for our sins.

That was real love in action. That was redemption in the making. That was the fulfillment of the purpose for which the Son of God became the Son of Man. He came to die that we might live through faith in Him. “Amazing love, how can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!”

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Dr. John Hartog II (D.Th., Grace Theological Seminary and D.Min., Central Baptist Theological Seminary), was a beloved professor, pastor, and scholar who faithfully served the Lord for over 50 years. He earned degrees from Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, Grace Theological Seminary, and Central Baptist Seminary. Dr. Hartog was a passionate teacher and pastor, spending much of his life at Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary, where he taught for 23 years.

Known for his deep love of Scripture and engaging teaching style, he made a lasting impact on students and congregations alike. Dr. Hartog’s legacy is one of unwavering devotion to Christ, a love for God’s Word, and a heart for ministry. He went home to Heaven on August 18, 2024.