

Finding Soul Rest in the Strangest Place

The Genealogy of Jesus

November 29, 2020

DAY 1: Christmas is rooted in history

1. It was a wonderful afternoon in our back yard. Ryan and Christi were having a gender reveal party. It was a celebration. It was a simple announcement about a baby coming, and what kind of baby was coming! We ate and celebrated in *anticipation* not just of the baby but the baby's announcement. We teared up at the announcement, and we celebrated after the announcement. This is the spirit of Christmas. An astounding announcement of what God was doing, and the anticipation of who that baby was and what He would do.

2. Matthew doesn't start the birth narrative with Jesus in the manger. He takes the story back several thousand years in a very long genealogy. Good practice for speed reading? Good reading for insomnia? It contains names you can't pronounce, most you've never heard of, and folks who seemed to disappear into very ancient history.

Christmas is not just about a birth. Christmas celebrates His coming.

*Matthew 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: ² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was **Tamar**, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram,*

*⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was **Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was **Ruth**, Obed the father of Jesse,*

*⁶ and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose **mother had been Uriah's wife** ...*

*¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of **Mary**, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. ¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.*

3. Matthew cites five women in the genealogy of Jesus. Which of the women do you recognize? Do you know who the woman Matthew names known as the "mother had been Uriah's wife"?

4. Why do you think God went to all this trouble to highlight forty-two generations to Jesus?

5. God's story of bringing a messiah began in the book of Genesis, and was promised to be a descendant of Abraham and King David. This contains over two thousand years of history! Jesus' birth was not a "one-off" event, but one foretold, promised and brought to fruition! Christmas is not just a "cute" story. It is God's story, rooted in human history!

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: The Christmas story is good news of a rescue operation.

1. We love hearing good news. We especially love hearing good news when we're flooded with bad news. Good news means something has *already happened*. It's no longer iffy or uncertain.

Luke 2:8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

*Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you **good news** of great joy that will be for all the people.*

¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

2. The angel tells the shepherds "good news" and then clarifies what it should engender in them? What should be the result of this good news in v. 10?

3. For whom did the good news come? (v. 10).

4. What is the good news? (v.11)

5. What do we learn about the savior in v. 11?

RESCUE OPERATION

6. The gospel is not a message about morality. The Christmas story is not a cute, quaint, feel good, warm and fuzzy story told around the hearth. It is real life history, the greatest rescue operation ever undertaken. God breaks into human history with the best news anyone needs to hear! It points to what God has done for us!

7. It begins with just the kind of news you need when you have come to the end of yourself.

8. God became a human being! He lived and suffered and died for you! He rose from the dead. His message of salvation is true, and it can be true for you! Hear the good news and heed it!

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: Real people, real failures (The unvarnished truth)

1. Imagine sitting down to update your resume, being dead honest about your work history.

- I was regularly late with completing my projects.
- I was fired from my first job for stealing from the company.
- At my next job H.R. found out I really did not get an MBA from Harvard.
- I was terminated for a moral failure—with the boss' wife.
- I was sent to prison for embezzlement from my last job.

2. In ancient history, famous people tried to “clean up” their ancestry list by omission in order to further their reputation. But there is no “Clean up on aisle 13” when it comes to the ancestry of Jesus. In addition, no famous secular person would have included women in his ancestry.

3. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus includes five women and a number of disreputable characters. Let's look at the five women Matthew lists.

*Matthew 1:3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was **Tamar** ...*

a. **Tamar** was the daughter-in-law of Judah! Judah had not treated her in accordance with marital laws. In order to “secure” her future she dressed up as a prostitute and had sex with her unknowing father-in-law.

*Matthew 1:5 ...father of Boaz, whose mother was **Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was **Ruth**, Obed the father of Jesse,*

b. **Rahab** was a harlot. Before Jericho was destroyed, she spared the two Hebrew spies, and later became a “member” of the “hall of fame of faith” recorded in Hebrews 11.

c. **Ruth** was a Moabitess. The Moabites were gentiles, which to the Jewish community was equivalent to dogs.

*Matthew 1:6 ... and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose **mother had been Uriah's wife** ...*

d. **Bathsheba** had been Uriah's wife, and committed adultery with David.

*Matthew 1:16 ...and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of **Mary**, of whom was born Jesus,*

e. **Mary** was accused of having a baby (Jesus) out of wedlock.

No “good” Jewish genealogy would have included one who committed incest, a harlot, a Gentile, an adulteress, and one accused of having a baby out of wedlock.

4. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: The gospel, an invitation ... to rest...

1. The genealogy stretches over a span of several thousand years! Why such a long stretch of time? One reason is the stacking up of evidence. In the history of mankind some men have claimed to be god. Anybody can make that claim. How could that claim be substantiated?

2. But the claim of Jesus being the Messiah is not only rooted in history as the genealogy shows, but it is also rooted in the promises and faithfulness of God.

3. A Messiah is foretold all the way back to Genesis 3, and then to Abraham in Genesis 12 and 15. Fast forward two thousand years. When the angel tells Mary about the baby to be born through her will be the Messiah, she remembers God's promises to Abraham!

Luke 1:54-55 "He has ... remember(ed) to be merciful to Abraham..."

4. Matthew's genealogy, Luke's genealogy and the genealogies in the Old Testament string together an unbroken string of generations who trace their roots back to Abraham, and Abrahamic covenant God made.

5. That string of generations was not broken by slavery, war, famine, drought, pestilence, siege, or exile. That string was not broken by moral failure, personal sin or national sin.

6. The story of God remains unbroken. It is true. It is indestructible, and these very facts invite us to **rest** in the faithfulness of God and the unfolding of His story.

*Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, since **the promise of entering his rest still stands**, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ² For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. ³ **Now we who have believed enter that rest**, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.*

7. The gospel story is an invitation for our heart to rest, to be at peace, to enjoy the promises and favor of God, and what He accomplished at the cross in our stead.

1 John 5:11 (RSV) And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life. ¹³ I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: Rest, invitation accepted, by faith.

1. This rest for our souls, what our souls need to find real peace can only come through Jesus.

2. The Hebrews wandering in the wilderness for forty years did not enter this rest. Why?

*Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ² For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; **but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.***

3. Instead of simply trusting God, His faithfulness, His love for us, and His work, they and we foolishly, proudly and rebelliously trust ourselves to produce the peace and rest we crave.

4. Inevitably this means

- Trusting our fallible and finite selves,
- Trusting fallible and finite people,
- Believing that what we really need lies outside us,
- Adding pressure and stress to ourselves to get it right,
- Adding pressure and stress to others to come through for us,
- Running on an incessant treadmill of experiences to feel satisfied.

5. The rest God provides and offers us is:

- Inward,
- Does not depend on my performance,
- Does not depend on others' performance,
- Has already been "bought and paid for" at the cross,
- Assurance of an amazing future in heaven. Those days are coming, ever closer... We are not just "optimistic" about heaven. We are certain about heaven. At the end of my life and at the end of your life if you're a follower of Christ, it will be said of me and of you, in heaven, "all is well, and all will be well."

6. Here are some of my favorite verses in continuing to turn away from self to God for rest.

2 Corinthians 10:18 For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

Prov. 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

John 7:24 (RSV) "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

John 2:24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men.

²⁵ *He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.*

7. God's story will continue to march on in and through my life, just as God's story continued to march on and through flawed people, panics, wars, defeats, and man's worst atrocities.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?