

# CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 30 2023

# the fathers God chose for His Son

**Scripture Story:** 2 Samuel 7; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:21-38.
**Commentary:** *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 70; *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 1–4.

## PREPARING TO TEACH

### I. SYNOPSIS

Since this Sabbath falls around Christmas, the lesson merges the seven lessons preceding it on the life of David with the Christmas story. The confluence of these two topics showcases the significance of Jesus as the Son of David.

The Christmas story recorded in both Matthew and Luke include the genealogy of Jesus. Usually when the Christmas story is shared, however, that slice of the story is completely ignored. No doubt the Bible writers did not intend for the reader to skip "the begats." The details of Jesus' background are critical to understanding the full story of the Incarnation. Listing the ancestry of Jesus underscores the fact that He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of David. In the 17 different verses in the New Testament where Jesus was referred to as the Son of David, it was primarily meant to refer to His Messianic title as the Old Testament prophesied concerning Him.

There are many relevant talking points in this lesson. For example, by highlighting some of the unsavory characters in Jesus' family tree you may wish to emphasize the unconditional love of God. No matter how spectacular our sin, God is not afraid to include every one of us in His family.

Whatever elements you choose to feature, the lesson should be all about Jesus—His ancestry, His birth as the fulfillment of prophecy, His life and claims to be the Messiah (i.e., the Son of David), and His death as our only hope of salvation. Focus on and lift up Jesus!

### II. TARGET

The students will:

- See the importance of genealogies in the ancient world. *(Know)*
- Sense the validity in Jesus' claim of being the Messiah. *(Feel)*
- Be challenged with the question Jesus put to His disciples: "Who do you say that I am?" *(Respond)*

### III. EXPLORE

**The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 9:** "In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. . . . (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:1; Isa. 53; John 3:16; 14:30; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 2:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.)"

## TEACHING

### I. GETTING STARTED

#### *Activity*

*Refer the students to the* What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, grade the quiz and have each student share briefly their family history.*

As an alternate way to introduce the topic, instruct

each student to write a catchy, gripping opener to a book about Jesus' genealogy and life story. Remind them that they want their sentence to catch people's attention and make them want to read more about who Jesus is. Give them the option of texting the assignment to you. Share the following examples:

- "Born to die that I might live."
- "A King is born."
- "A long line of fathers ends here."
- "It is just the beginning."
- "It's who you know that leads you home."
- "Do you know the forever King?"
- "Is the newborn King your Father?"

### *Illustration*

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

After sharing catchy openers, transition into the lesson by saying something like "Now that's the way to start a book. Grab the reader's attention. This begs the question, What was Matthew thinking? Clearly his introduction would land him at the top of a list called '100 Worst First Lines of Books.' Just listen to his opening [for effect, read all of "the begats"]:

" 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; and Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; and Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; and Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; and Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; and Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; and Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; and Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: and after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; and Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ' [Matthew 1:1-16, KJV]."

There you have the first *two* sentences in Matthew's book.

## II. TEACHING THE STORY

### *Bridge to the Story*

*In your own words explain:*

In ancient Israel, they loved genealogies. Imagine their world: no ipads, no game devices, no television. At night people would sit around the fire and tell stories. One of their favorite methods of storytelling was listing names. This gave people a sense of identity, passing from one generation to another. Hearing the lists they would conclude, "I'm not just a rootless nomad. Ask me who I am, I'll tell you about my people." Still today in the Middle East there are tribal nomads who can spend hours just reciting the names of ancestors.

### *Out of the Story for Teachers*

*After you read the* Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

Jesus lived in an oral culture. For the most part, they did not keep written records. This meant that the only way to establish legal status, financial standing, vocational credibility, and property rights was to depend on their memory of genealogies. For example, if you wanted to be a priest in Jesus' day, you had to prove that you were in a line of descendants dating back to Aaron from the tribe of Levi.

So it's not surprising that Matthew would begin his book in the manner that he did. People would have loved that. To establish the identity of the Messiah—this rabbi who spoke with unrivaled authority—and show that this Anointed One came from the right line was not only captivating but also very important.

From the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew is establishing the fact that this baby "born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod" (Matthew 2:1, NIV) was indeed the Messiah, the Son of David.

Jesus descended from David through both parents, fulfilling the requirement for inheritance of the throne through Joseph, and fulfilling the prophecy of being the seed of David through Mary.

### *Sharing Context and Background*

*Explore with the students the scandalous background of the women that Matthew includes in the opening paragraph of his book. Explain to the students how the inclusion of these women in the lineage of the Messiah would have been a shocking attention-grabber to any reader in the ancient world.*

**Tamar.** The first names mentioned in Matthew's Gospel—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah—would have been expected. But then he mentions "Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar" (Matthew 1:3, NIV). To include the name of a woman was shocking. To mention the name of Tamar was downright reprehensible.

Check out Genesis 38 for this R-rated scandal: Judah was going to choose a wife for his son, and he found a Canaanite woman named Tamar. He married her to his oldest boy, Er, who was then put to death because of his wickedness. Judah was then obligated to care for Tamar because he had taken her away from her homeland. But he abandoned her.

Being a woman in that day meant that Tamar had no legal rights. So she disguised herself as a cult prostitute and got business from her father-in-law. It was dark, she was veiled, and he didn't recognize her. He slept with her and then gave her his staff as a pledge to pay her.

A few months later Judah was told that his widowed daughter-in-law Tamar was pregnant. He got all self-righteous, and he said: "Bring her out and have her burned to death!" (Genesis 38:24, NIV). Tamar brought the staff with her, and Judah was busted.

**Rahab.** Matthew continues: "Salmon, the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab" (Matthew 1:5, NIV). Here's another pagan Gentile. She didn't just pretend to be a prostitute; she was one. In the ancient world, if a woman was not married and she wasn't under the care of a family, she basically had three choices: she could starve to death, she could beg, or she could be a prostitute.

**Ruth.** Next, Matthew mentions "Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth" (Matthew 1:5, NIV).

You may remember the story of Ruth, but there is something about her you may not know. Ruth was not just a Gentile; she was a Moabite. According to Genesis 19:37, the Moabites were the product of an incestuous relationship between Lot and one of his daughters. Moabites were considered by the Israelites to be so unclean that the law said: "No . . . Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, not even in the tenth generation" (Deuteronomy 23:3, NIV). The Israelites considered the Moabites to be the vilest people on the planet.

**Bathsheba.** Matthew is not done yet. "David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife" (Matthew 1:6, NIV). Remember Uriah's wife, Bathsheba? Once again Matthew includes another sordid story. Uriah was a Hittite, which means Bathsheba was a Gentile by marriage.

It's as if Matthew searched the Scriptures for the most unsavory folk he could find and then connected



## Teaching From . . .

*Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.*

- **Key Text**
  *Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  *Read the* Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Patriarchs and Prophets. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  *Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.*
- **Further Insight**
  *Ask them how the quote in* Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

### *Tips for Top-Notch Teaching*

RABBI 101

*Connecting the Dots*

Judith Kieff writes, "One of the most important functions of a teacher is to help students make important connections between the subject matters they study."* The lesson this week offers an ideal opportunity to help students connect the following dots:

- Connecting David and Jesus
- Connecting the Old Testament and the New Testament
- Connecting scandalous women and God's amazing grace
- Connecting the story of David and the story of Christmas
- Connecting the ancient world and the modern world

Take advantage of this chance to help students get a wholistic perspective of the bigger story. By connecting the story of Tamar to David to Jesus to today the young people can gain a deeper appreciation for the story of salvation.

them to Jesus. This made for some riveting reading indeed!

## III. CLOSING

### *Activity*

*Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.*

Give each student a scarlet ribbon as a Christmas gift. Wrap each one individually and let them open the present at the end of class. See the summary below to connect the ribbon with the stories in this study. Close with an appeal to accept Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

### *Summary*

Consider the scarlet ribbon that weaves its way through the genealogy of Jesus:

Tamar gives birth to twin boys. One of them reaches his hand out of her body first and the midwife ties a scarlet cord around his wrist. In this way they could identify the firstborn—indicating which boy would receive the inheritance. You see, there is a blessing that is being passed down from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Judah. The ultimate blessing, our inheritance of eternal life, will be the Deliverer who will come from this line.

The spies informed Rahab, "We're coming back, and the city is going to be destroyed. Because of your kindness to us, however, you can just tie a scarlet cord to the window where you let us out, and we will spare you and your family. When we see the scarlet cord, it will be a sign, and you will be saved. The scarlet cord will be a sign of salvation" (see Joshua 2:17-21).

"Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him" (Matthew 27:27, 28, NIV). Indeed, the scarlet robe is a symbol of our inheritance. It is a symbol of our blessing. And it is a symbol of our salvation.

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**As quoted at www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst;jsessionid=D2F03EA9AFE85ACB0955170D7D48B861.inst3_2b?docId=5010937268.*



Remind the students about the reading plan, that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 70 and *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 1–4.

# CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

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## STUDENT LESSON

**Scripture Story:** 2 Samuel 7; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:21-38.
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Photo © Luis Guerra, Jr.

## flashlight

"The Pharisees had gathered close about Jesus as He answered the question of the scribe. Now turning He put a question to them: 'What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?' This question was designed to test their belief concerning the Messiah—to show whether they regarded Him simply as a man or as the Son of God. A chorus of voices answered, 'The Son of David.' This was the title which prophecy had given to the Messiah" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 608).

## keytext

"Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli, . . . the son of David."

**(Luke 3:23, 31, NIV)**

# what do you think?

**Here's a quiz to see how well you know genealogy:**

1. You have the names of three siblings born between 1884 and 1887 and need to know the names of their parents. Which census would be the best one to start with?

___ 1880 ___ 1900 ___ 1910

2. The best place to start your genealogical research is . . .

___ Internet ___Grandma ___Library

3. Your grandfather's sister's daughter is your . . .

___ great-aunt ___ second cousin

___ first cousin once removed

4. You found several records that give your ancestor's birth date. Which source is most reliable?

___ 1834 baptismal record

___ 1850 census

___ 1902 death record

Answers:

1. 1900; the siblings were not born yet in 1880, and by 1910 they were probably not living with their parents.
2. Grandma; start with your relatives. The biggest regret family historians report is that they didn't interview relatives when they could.
3. First cousin once removed.
4. The baptismal record, because it was recorded when the event occurred—the closer the record to the event, the more reliable.

# did you know?

**There are 17 verses in the New** Testament that describe Jesus as the "Son of David." But how is it possible for Jesus to be David's "son" if David lived approximately 1,000 years before Jesus? Matthew 1 outlines the genealogical proof that Jesus was a direct descendant of David through Joseph, Jesus' legal father. The genealogy in Luke 3 gives Jesus' lineage through His mother, Mary. Thus, Jesus is a descendant of David, both through Joseph by adoption and Mary by blood.

# INTO THE STORY

**"I will be his father, and he will** be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

"This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

and Jesse the father of King David.

"David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

" . . . and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah."

"Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph,

the son of Heli, the son of Matthat,

the son of Levi, the son of Melki,

the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,

the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos,

the son of Nahum, the son of Esli,

the son of Naggai, the son of Maath,

the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein,

the son of Josek, the son of Joda,

the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa,

the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,

the son of Neri, the son of Melki,

the son of Addi, the son of Cosam,

the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,

the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer,

the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat,

the son of Levi, the son of Simeon,

the son of Judah, the son of Joseph,

the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,

the son of Melea, the son of Menna,

the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan,

the son of David, the son of Jesse,

the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, . . .

the son of Seth, the son of Adam,

the son of God."

**(2 Samuel 7:14-16; Matthew 1:1-6, 16; Luke 3:23-32, 38, NIV)**

# OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think God tells David that He will be a father to his son and will punish him when he does wrong? Do you think this is a promise or a threat? (See Proverbs 3:12 and Hebrews 12:3-11).

_____
_____
_____

How does the knowledge that God loves you too much to allow you to continue to do wrong and harm your relationship with Him, others, and yourself give you hope as you face life's difficulties?

_____
_____
_____

Scan through the genealogies (Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38) and *underline* all the names you have heard of.

*Circle* all the people who have stories with which you are familiar.

*Star* the names of the people whose story you know very well.

Both Matthew 1 and Luke 3 contain genealogies of Jesus. Read through each one and note how the two lists are similar and how they are different. For example, when the genealogies arrive at David, they split with David's sons: "Nathan," who is on Mary's side, and "Solomon," who is on Joseph's side.

Similarities:

_____
_____
_____

Differences:

_____
_____
_____

Why do you suppose they are different?

_____
_____
_____

# punch lines

**"This is how the birth** of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

**"But after he had considered this,** an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit' " **(Matthew 1:18-20, NIV).**

**"Then Jesus said to them,** 'Why is it said that the Messiah is the Son of David?' " **(Luke 20:41, NIV).**

**"But he was pierced** for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" **(Isaiah 53:5, 6, NIV).**

# further insight

**"In the fields where the boy David had led his flock, shepherds were still keeping watch by night. Through the silent hours they talked together of the promised Saviour, and prayed for the coming of the King to David's throne. 'And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them. . . . And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' "**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 47.

## Sabbath

**Read Genesis 5 and 11:10-32.**

In a small group of friends, discuss the following:

• Share what you know about your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, et cetera. How far back in your family history can you go with knowing something about your ancestors?

• What is your family story? How does your family history color that story?

• What are the benefits of studying your family history?

• What are the benefits of studying the family history of Jesus?

• Numerous genealogies are listed in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Why do you think the writers of the Bible were so careful to include these lists? What can we learn from them?

_____
_____
_____

## Sunday

Matthew's genealogy of Jesus would have sent shock waves through the community because of his inclusion of women. In the ancient world women did not establish bloodlines. They had no legal rights. They were treated as property—much like one might own a horse or cow today. What was most explosive, however, had to do with *which* women Matthew included.

Read the following stories of the women that Matthew includes and jot down a few of the details.

*Tamar* (Matthew 1:3; Genesis 38) _____
_____
_____

*Rahab* (Matthew 1:5; Joshua 2; 6:22, 23; see also Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25)
_____
_____
_____

*Ruth* (Matthew 1:5; see also Genesis 19:37 and Deuteronomy 23:3 for background regarding Ruth's ancestors, the Moabites)
_____
_____

*Bathsheba* (Matthew 1:6; 2 Samuel 11–12:24; 1 Chronicles 3:5) _____
_____

What do these women have in common? What is Matthew trying to tell us by mentioning these women in the bloodline of Jesus? What does this tell us about Jesus?

## Monday

**Read Luke 3:23-31.**

Explain why Luke said *"so it was thought"* that Jesus was the son of Joseph and David. Does the inclusion of this statement cast doubt on the divine origin of Jesus? Why or why not?

_____
_____

## Tuesday

**Read Matthew 16:13.**

After reading the *Flashlight* section reflect on the question that Jesus put to the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?" Compare this question to the question that Jesus asked His disciples in today's reading—"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

Is this the same question? Explain.

_____
_____

Consider what the following verses say about the identity of Christ and then complete the sentence:

Matthew 16:16—Jesus is _____
John 3:16, 17—Jesus is _____
John 10:30—Jesus is _____
Colossians 1:13-23—Jesus is _____

## Wednesday

Read the three texts included in the *Punch Lines* section. How do Matthew 1:18-20 and Isaiah 53:5, 6 answer the question that Jesus poses in Luke 20:41?

_____
_____

## Thursday

**Read Matthew 1:1-17.**

Reflecting on Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, Martin Luther once said, "It is as though God intended for people to hear this genealogy and say to themselves, 'Oh, Christ is the kind of person who is not ashamed of sinners. See, he even puts them in his family tree.' "

Have you ever felt like Jesus was ashamed of you? The next time you feel that you have disappointed Jesus, remember that there is no sin that would cause Jesus to love you less. His love knows no boundaries. His family tree is loaded with bad apples like you and me—and that's precisely why He came!

## Friday

**Read Matthew 27:28.**

Matthew tells us that the soldiers put a scarlet robe on Jesus' body. Scarlet is a symbol of scandal. Toward the end of Jesus' life Matthew is saying, "Now you see the scarlet thread in the One who took on all of our sins. It is a sign of salvation, a symbol of grace, weaving all the way to a bloodstained cross. There's room in the family for you. Will you accept Jesus' invitation to join His family?"

## this week's reading*

*Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 70; *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 1–4.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.