

The Genealogy of Jesus

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 29th Nov 2009

Intro

- Seen 'Who do you think you are?'. Interest in genealogies & family trees especially since internet. I tried & didn't get far- need to start paying for birth certificates to find extra info needed.
- Out of blue had email from a Stuart Wheatman, married to a Sarah Wheatman. It turns out we are related- our grandfathers were brothers. He has a publishing company called Tonto books.
- People get bored by lists of names in Bible, but they are there for a reason- the promises of God. God promised various things to various people's descendants and so the lists are necessary to prove a person's right to their inheritance from God, and to prove God's faithfulness.
- We are going to look at the most important family tree- that of Jesus, and see what is significant about it and see what lessons we can learn to apply to our lives.

Read Matt 1:1-17

Gentile women's names

- Not normal Jewish practice to mention women
- The names were Gentiles-

Tamar (v3). See Gen 38. Judah, after prompting his brothers to sell Joseph, like wayward Esau marries a Canaanite and has 3 sons from her- Er, Onan & Shelah. He obtains a wife for Er named Tamar. But Er is evil and so God strikes him dead. It was then Onan's lawful responsibility to produce a child with Tamar to continue his brother's name. Onan has sexual relations with her but deliberately spills his semen because he knows the child will not be his, so God strikes him dead also. Judah thinks to himself 'I don't want Shelah to be struck down too', so he suggests Tamar waits until Shelah is much, much older (hoping she will forget about it, or be passed the age of having children). Meanwhile Judah's Canaanite wife dies and Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and manages to have sexual relations with her father-in-law, thus producing a son and ancestor to Jesus.

Rahab (v5) Native of Jericho. Worked as a prostitute in Jericho, but allowed Joshua's 2 spies to lodge with her and hid them when the king of Jericho searched for them. She let them out of her window by rope on the understanding that she and her family would be spared, and she was and produced an ancestor of Jesus.

Ruth (v5) A Moabitess. The Moabites and Ammonites were Gentiles born from Lot's daughter's incest with their father in order to keep the family line alive. They worshipped Chemosh and Moloch, and extreme aspects of worship included human sacrifice. However, Ruth converted to the Jewish faith, married Boaz and produced an ancestor of Jesus.

Bathsheba (v6). She was the wife of a Hittite (so was probably a Hittite herself). King David saw her bathing naked whilst he was walking on the walls of Jerusalem. Her husband Uriah was away fighting on behalf of David. David slept with her and she became pregnant. David tried to get Uriah to come back and sleep with her to cover it up, but Uriah refused, so David arranged for him to be killed in the heat of the battle. The child died, but she became pregnant later with Solomon- he was to be an ancestor of Jesus.

- Matthew doesn't mention the more important women- Sarah, Rebecca, Leah,

Rachel- seems to be flagging some of the names associated with issues. There are skeletons in each of our families. God loves family and loves to bring restoration to broken families through His transforming love. Bring your situations to God and ask Him to move. In time you will be amazed what He can do. Judah was so changed by God that he offered to serve the disguised Joseph in Egypt as a slave if only he would let Benjamin go- it was this change in Judah that resulted in Joseph revealing his true identity to his brothers.

- God knows you inside out. He knows the things you are ashamed of, and wants to cleanse you and use you for his glory. Bring Him the muck, warts and all, and let Him cleanse you. He delights in taking people who consider themselves failures and using them for His glory. You are significant. GRACE GRACE GRACE! Unmerited Favour! Faith from first to last! Stepping into your mantle that you don't deserve- royal robes I don't deserve!
- In an old DENNIS THE MENACE cartoon, Dennis and his little friend are leaving Mrs. Wilson's house, their hands full of biscuits. His friend says, "I wonder what we did to deserve this." Dennis answers, "Mrs. Wilson gives us biscuits not because we're nice, but because she's nice."
- "Grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us more — no amount of spiritual calisthenics and renunciations, no amount of knowledge gained from seminaries, no amount of crusading on behalf of righteous causes. And grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us less — no amount of racism or pride or pornography or adultery or even murder. Grace means that God already loves us as much an infinite God can possibly love." Philip Yancey in "What's So Amazing About Grace"

The number 14- God keeps a promise

- God promised 2000 years previously to Abraham that kings would come from him (Gen 17:6- see the many kings of Judah and Israel) but this is particularly true of the king of kings. Also that all the families on earth would be blessed through him (Gen 12:3). This would come through Jesus a physical descendant of Abraham 2000 years later.
- God's promised to David- 2Sam 7:12-16- an eternal throne given to the son of David, the one who would build God's house (partly fulfilled by Solomon, but ultimately Jesus- known as 'the son of David')-see Is 9:7-eternal reign on David's throne. In Lk 1:32-33 Gabriel promises Mary that Jesus would reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom would not end.- Jesus is even now reigning on David's throne in Heaven (Acts 2:29-33).
- Some names missed out- 'son of'=descended from. 'David'=14 in Hebrew-gematria. 666 gematria for the beast. In Pompeii 'I love her whose number is 545' scribbled on a wall.
- Weeding -chopping stuff up but not getting the roots. The deportation to Babylon and the remnant, the sprouting out from the stump of Jesse (Is 10:32b-11:1,10; Jer 23:5; Zech 3:8; 6:12-13; Rev 5:5; 22:16). God can bring fruitfulness to situations that seem hopeless to us- Jesus was a stump out of dry ground- Is 53:2. In Isaiah 7 the king of Israel (Pekah) and the king of Syria (Rezin) want to do away with the Davidic line in Judah and put their own king on the throne. The king of Judah, Ahaz panics because he doesn't trust in God, so God gives him a sign (Is 7:14)- 'the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel'- probably at the time Hezekiah son of Ahaz, but ultimately Jesus.
- There were family genealogical records in the temple kept up until it was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans. There were also family records kept in people's houses. People had to prove their right to be a priest or a king through their genealogical pedigree (Ezra 2:61-63 and Neh. 7:63-65, where certain priests were disqualified because they couldn't prove their Levitical ancestry). Josephus said they had a list of high priests going back 2000 years.
- Jacob prophesied over Judah that 'The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the

ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh (the messiah) comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.' (Gen 49:10). 23 years before the trial of Christ the Jews lost their judicial powers to pass the death sentence without consulting the Romans- they exclaimed 'woe to us for the scepter has departed from Judah and the Messiah has not come'

- When God says He will do something He will do it- trust in His promises, even if it takes time persevere & don't give up- the roots will grow first underground faith, but then it will sprout up.
- John McNeil was a British pastor. The church was heavily in debt. This worried him greatly and he prayed about it a lot. One day a perfect stranger came to his office. He said that he was aware of the church's financial problems and offered to help. He put a blank check on the pastor's desk and promised to come back later and sign it. McNeil couldn't believe what was happening. After the man left, he began to study the situation. "This can't possibly be true. Does this man realise that our debt is thousands of pounds? I don't think he would pay it in full, if he knew. Yet he told me to make the check out for the full amount. But that would be taking advantage of him. I'll make it out for half" After a great deal of thought, that's what he did. When the stranger returned, he signed the check with no hesitation whatsoever. He obviously had meant what he said. The church's benefactor was actually a well-known philanthropist. When the pastor realized who he was and that he was fully capable of paying the debt in full, he wished he had made out the check for the entire amount the church owed.

It's difference to Luke's genealogy (Lk 3:23-38)

- David to Jesus is different in both genealogies (one goes through Solomon, one through another son of David, Nathan), both end at Joseph. Why? Should we doubt the authenticity of scripture?
- 2 main solutions:
Levirate marriage? Joseph 2 fathers? Thus perhaps 1 natural and 1 adopted (legal).
- Mary's line in Luke. More probable solution. Matthew gives the royal line through Joseph, but then makes it clear that the real father was God by saying about the virgin birth. Luke then gives the real line through Mary (although makes it clear that Jesus was not really Joseph's son, with the words 'as was supposed' Lk3:23). This also avoids a promise God made that no descendant of Jeconiah would have the right to sit on David's throne (Jer 22:24-30). Mary traces her ancestry through Nathan, thus avoiding the Jeconiah problem. Also 2Sam 7:12-16 seems to indicate that the Messiah would come through the kingly line of Solomon. Matthews genealogy fulfills this as Jesus was legally the son of Joseph, but avoided the curse as he was not the physical descendant.
- God fulfills things in a way we could never imagine- a virgin birth! Let's never lose the awe and wonder of our great God.
- There will be much about God that we will never be able to understand this side of Heaven- we need to embrace mystery without losing the plot. There are answers to everything, but the bottom line is we need to trust God even when we don't understand- Bear Grills and actor Will Ferrell go off side of cliff together with just a stick holding their joint weight & Bear says 'you'll have to trust me'- (Will had just saved Bear's life holding onto his rope for 40 minutes whilst he plummeted over the edge of the cliff, so the trust was mutual).
- NASA estimates that if the 100 billion or so galaxies thought to exist contain about 100 billion stars each, the number of stars in the universe is about 10 thousand billion billion. That's 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 -- more than the number of individual grains of sand on all the world's beaches.

Summary

- God uses the ordinary to do the extraordinary, and those who have messed up to heal the nations. He always keeps His word, even though things sometimes take time- we need to be patient and continue to trust His promises. We need to keep our sense of the awe of God, and trust Him even when we don't understand situations.

Song: *O Lord You've searched me and You know me (wonderful, wonderful)*