

December 6, 2009/ Ruth 4:13-17, Matthew 1:1-17 (ESV¹)

this morning we have a bit about the genealogy of Jesus, beginning with a small piece of Ruth ...

Ruth 4:13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

this is God's doing ... if you recall the story of Ruth, you know that she lived with her first husband, Mahlon, without being able to conceive ... but now GOD opens her womb ...

Ruth 4:14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel!"

the local women speak to Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law by marriage to her dead husband Mahlon ... blessed be the LORD ... this is an appropriate way of expressing thankfulness to God ...

Ruth 4:15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

this is prophetic ... the child is the redeemer for Naomi ... indeed it is the offspring of Ruth and Boaz who is the Redeemer for us all ... the Lord Jesus ...

more than seven sons ... seven sons, in the Jewish mind of the time would have been the perfect family ... Ruth's loyalty has been more to Naomi than the perfect flock of sons would have been ...

Ruth 4:16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

Ruth 4:17 And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

in the end, Naomi who in **Ruth 1:21** has said that she was empty, by the grace of God is made full ... her sons have died young, but her daughter-in-law has given her a replacement in Obed/"servant (of the LORD)" ... Obed, one who will stand in the physical genealogical line of Jesus ...

Matthew opens with the genealogy of Jesus ... most likely, this genealogy (which differs from that in Luke) is intended as the *royal* genealogy of Jesus, traced through his earthly father Joseph ... the Luke genealogy is rather the *legal* line (of physical descent) traced through his mother Mary ... the matter of genealogy was very important to the Jews ... it was important for establishing who was really a Jew and for establishing who was qualified for important offices ... priests were priests by descent (they had to be able to trace their line all the way back to Aaron and their wives had to be able to trace their descent at least 5 generations back in the tribe of Levi) ... legitimate kings were kings primarily by descent ... and the long-awaited Messiah was without doubt to be the descendent of David ... it's significant that this genealogy could be traced for Joseph, but much beyond Joseph the possibility was gone ... at this time, the genealogies were maintained by the Sanhedrin ... but Herod the Great was not a full-blooded Jew and was quite unhappy about grief he got for being a mongrel ... as a result, he had the records destroyed, so that no one could prove himself to be more of a Jew than Herod ... Jesus had a sound genealogy reaching back to Abraham ... no one today has that kind of verifiable pedigree ...

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Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew pegs Jesus as a descendant of Abraham, a true Jew, and absolutely essentially, in the royal line of king David ... one qualified by descent to be Messiah ...

Gen 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

Gen 12:2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Jesus, descendent of Abraham, is the One prophesied in the call of Abram, the One through whom all the families of the earth are blessed ...

likewise, Jesus descendent of king David, is the One God promised would sit eternally on the throne of King David ...

2Sa 7:11b ... I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

2Sa 7:12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

2Sa 7:13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

it is Jesus "Christ," Jesus "anointed One," Jesus "Messiah" whose genealogy Matthew is giving ... God, true to His promises, in due time and in a most amazing way, is sending His Son, His Messiah ...

Matthew 1:2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

Matthew 1:3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram,

Matthew 1:4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon,

Matthew 1:5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,

the first section of the genealogy links Jesus with the patriarchs, and does so in a most remarkable way ... here in this genealogy stand Tamar, Rahab and Ruth ... first, these are WOMEN! ... and not only women, but all of them are foreigners and two of them have less than perfect moral conduct recorded in scripture Tamar was a Canaanite who seduced her father-in-law, Judah ... Rahab was a prostitute in Jericho ... Ruth was a Moabitess ... in the Jew's mind, women didn't count as far as important things went ... and foreigners were absolutely outside the favor of God ... a standard morning prayer included thanks that one had not been born a pagan or a woman ... in the mind of

the Jew of this time, there would have been no reason to mention Tamar, Rahab and Ruth here ... but already in his account, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew is telling us something about the kind of Messiah God is sending in Jesus ... yes, this is a Messiah qualified to hold that office in the Jewish nation ... but He is also a Messiah for ALL people ... and He is a Redeemer who will deal with all of our sin and sadness ... the kind of sin and sadness that was well known in the lives of Tamar and Rahab ...

the next section of the genealogy covers (an abridged version of) the kings ... and it again mentions a woman and reminds us of the sinful situation of mankind ...

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

here's David, but here too reminder of our misery in sin ... Solomon, ancestor of Joseph, born through the adulterous act of the great king David ...

Matthew 1:7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph,

Matthew 1:8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah,

Matthew 1:9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

Matthew 1:10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah,

Matthew 1:11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

Ryle points out that this list reminds us of the corruption of human nature in that many in this list had Godly fathers, but were themselves prodigal ... Rehoboam (if you count the majority of Solomon's life), Joram, Manasseh (for most of his life), Amon (if you count the last of Manasseh's life), and Jechoniah all had Godly fathers, but were themselves awful ... Godliness is not hereditary, but must be chosen a person at a time ...

remember what God said about Jechoniah

Jer 22:30 Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

Barnhouse pointed out that if Jesus was physically descended from Joseph, this verse would disqualify Him as Messiah ... but He's not physically descended from Joseph ... and the Luke genealogy traces His physical descent through Mary back to David through Nathan who was never king ... no descendent through the line of guys that were kings of Judah could be Messiah ... Jesus was legally and physically the Son of David through Mary ... He was descendant of the kings of Judah through Joseph without being a son of the cursed Jechoniah ...

the last section concerns the period after the exile in Babylon and consists largely of apparently very ordinary people, most of whose names appear nowhere else in Scripture ... we are thereby reminded of the place that we common folk have in the plan and working of God ...

Matthew 1:12 And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

Matthew 1:13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor,

Matthew 1:14 and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud,

Matthew 1:15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob,

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

who is called Christ ... called Messiah, God's anointed one ... the long-awaited savior of Israel ...

Matthew 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

3 fourteens ... helpful for purposes of memorization ... people have also seen in this multiples of the "perfect" number 7 and some significance that the Jewish numerical values for the letters in David's name add up to 14 ... whether or not this matters, Matthew has opened his Gospel by placing Joseph (and his legal son Jesus) in the royal line of descent without making Him physically in the line of Jechoniah ...