

Faith-builders Bible Studies

The Gospel of Matthew

by Mathew Bartlett &
Derek Williams

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Dedicated to all those who are hungry for God's Word.

Faith-builders Bible Studies

The 'Faith-builders Bible study series' has been developed a useful resource for today's students of God's Word and their busy lifestyles. Pastors, home or study group leaders and indeed for anyone wishing to study the Bible for themselves will benefit from using Faith-builders studies.

Each volume is the result of many years of group Bible study, and has been revised again and again to be relevant, challenging and faith building whilst remaining clear and easy to understand. What is more, we aim to keep our costs to an absolute minimum, helping more people to discover the blessings of God's Word.

Mathew Bartlett and Derek Williams are both experienced pastors in the Pentecostal movement in Great Britain, and have over 65 years of ministry experience between them.

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Matthew Chapter 1

The Genealogy of Christ

1:1 This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew's purpose in writing his gospel is clear from the very beginning: he intends to reveal to his own nation of Israel, and to all God fearing persons, that Jesus is the Christ, the long awaited anointed One promised by God, and to demonstrate this fact by showing how all the promises of Scripture relating to the coming of Christ are fulfilled in Him. The titles "son of David" and "son of Abraham" describe Christ in this way, for it was both to Abraham and to David that God revealed His promise that one of their descendants would be the Christ.

To David, God said "I will set one of your seed upon your throne" (1 Chron. 17:11 and Psa. 132:11).

To Abraham, God said "Through your seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen 22:18). The apostle Paul explains the meaning of this promise in Galatians, that "seed" is singular, referring to One of Abraham's offspring, not all of them (Gal. 3:16). Matthew's aim throughout his gospel is to reveal Jesus as that One.

The word genealogy means the line of natural descent. Although Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who pre-existed his manifestation in the flesh, yet he became flesh as part of Abraham's family by his incarnation and was born a Jew (2 Tim, 2:8).

Christ's genealogy reveals how Christ truly became one of us by entering the human family and the

Jewish family in particular. Of this family's history much could be said, which would be superfluous to our understanding of this gospel. But since the inspired writer particularly highlights several features of this genealogy, so we shall consider them in greater detail.

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

Christ's descent from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob makes him a Jew. This was a vital qualification for the Christ, since Moses said "The Lord your God prophet like me from among your own people" (Deut. 18:15). God had made it clear that it would not be through Ishmael (Abraham's child born in natural way, albeit to a slave) but through Isaac (Abraham's child born by the power of the Spirit in fulfillment of God's promise) that the lineage of Christ would come. This illustrates for us that it is not by the works of the flesh but by God's miracle working power that He brought Christ into the world, and through that same power he brings salvation to our hearts by faith.

Furthermore, God later revealed that the Christ would be descended from Judah (Gen. 49:10).

1:3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah (by Tamar), Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram.

The devil had many times tried to frustrate God's purpose bringing Christ into the world. One such occasion was in the days of Judah. Judah's oldest son married a girl named Tamar, but died without leaving children. Judah's younger son, Onan, according to custom, was to take her to wife and raise up children to inherit his brother's estate. But Onan knew that the child would not be his heir, so whenever he had sex with Tamar, he pulled out in order to

deliberately spill their semen outside her, to prevent her getting pregnant (Gen. 38:6-10).

This scripture does not teach that contraception is wrong, but that it was wicked since behind it was an attempt to end the family line of Judah. Judah had still one son, Shelah, whom he promised to give to Tamar when he was old enough, but when Judah did not keep his promise, Tamar made her own plans. She dressed up with a veil and waited near Judah's place of work posing as a prostitute. Judah's wife had already died and he paid Tamar to let him have sex with her, and made her pregnant, but he did not know that she was his daughter in law. Since he had no money with him at the time, Judah left his personal seal as a pledge that he would return with payment. But when he sent a friend to pay the girl and get his seal back, the girl had disappeared. (Read the whole story in Genesis 38).

Later it was told Judah that his daughter in law, although a widow, was pregnant. He was about to order her execution when the girl announced that she was pregnant by the owner of a seal she showed. It was Judah's. So he did not execute her, but said she is more righteous than I. Tamar had twins, and through one of them Jesus Christ is descended from Judah according to the flesh.

This whole sordid lesson reveals that neither the devil nor the wickedness of men could prevent God bringing his only begotten son into the world.

1:4-5 Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz (by Rahab), Boaz the father of Obed (by Ruth), Obed the father of Jesse.

Matthew notes that Boaz's mother was Rahab, who by the faith which she showed when she hid the spies that Rahab was accounted righteous before God (Heb. 11:31) and became not only numbered among the people of Israel, but included in the family tree of the Lord Jesus Christ. We too are accounted as righteous by God through faith in Jesus Christ, a faith which expresses itself in good works (Rom 5:1).

Boaz married Ruth, the Moabitess, even though the law had said that a Moabite could not enter the congregation of the LORD until ten generations (Deut. 23:3). Matthew highlights that Jesus Christ is the One who breaks down the middle wall of partition and makes it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to enter into God's kingdom (Eph. 2:14).

1:6 And Jesse the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon (by the wife of Uriah).

If Jesus is truly the Christ then he must be a descendent of David, and Matthew is at pains to stress that this is the case. When David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the child born from that unholy union died. But later, Uriah being dead and God having forgiven David's sin, David and Bathsheba were married, and Solomon, the result of their legal union, was loved by God, and it is through him that the future Kings of Israel came, even up to the time of Christ, for when God forgives, he forgives fully.

This inclusion of Bathsheba in Jesus' family tree reveals God's ultimate purpose in sending His Son, for Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15).

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