

# Advent: Week One Study Guide

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## The Genesis of Jesus — Matthew 1:1-17

Matthew opens his Gospel with a genealogy — something that may seem unusual to modern readers but was deeply meaningful to his Jewish audience. Genealogies in the ancient world weren't just family trees; they were theological statements. By beginning with a list of names, Matthew isn't merely tracing ancestry — he's declaring that God's promises are being fulfilled through Jesus.

The very first line sets the tone: “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (Matthew 1:1). Each name matters. Abraham represents God's covenant promise to bless all nations (Genesis 12:3), while David points to the royal covenant that a king from his line would reign forever (2 Samuel 7:12–13). In Jesus, those two streams of promise converge.

Matthew also includes names that might surprise us — Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Each woman's story carries brokenness and redemption, showing that God's grace works through unlikely people. By highlighting them, Matthew emphasizes that the Messiah's coming is for all — men and women, Jew and Gentile, sinner and saint.

For Matthew's Jewish readers, this genealogy would have sparked recognition and awe. The long-awaited hope of Israel, promised through generations of covenant and prophecy, had finally arrived. Jesus is the new beginning — the “Genesis” — of God's new creation story.

# **Cross-References for Matthew 1:1-17**

## **Prophetic and Theological Foundations**

- Genesis 12:1–3 — God’s covenant promise to Abraham: “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
- Genesis 17:1–8 — The everlasting covenant of descendants and nations.
- Genesis 49:8–10 — The promise that the scepter (kingship) will not depart from Judah.
- Ruth 4:13–22 — Ruth and Boaz in the lineage of David, connecting Gentile faith to God’s covenant family.
- 2 Samuel 7:12–16 — God’s covenant with David promising a throne that will last forever.
- Isaiah 11:1–2 — “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse...” a prophecy of new life from David’s line.
- Jeremiah 23:5–6 — The righteous Branch who will reign as King.
- Micah 5:2 — The ruler to come from Bethlehem, whose origins are “from ancient times.”

## **New Testament Connections**

- Luke 3:23–38 — Luke’s genealogy emphasizing Jesus’ connection to all humanity through Adam.
- Romans 4:16–25 — Abraham as the model of faith, fulfilled in Christ.
- Galatians 3:7–16, 29 — Believers as heirs of Abraham’s promise through Jesus.
- Revelation 22:16 — Jesus as “the Root and the Offspring of David.”

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## Genealogy Cross-Reference Guide – Exploring the Story Behind the Names

Matthew’s genealogy is not just a list of names — it’s a map of God’s faithfulness. Each person carries a story of covenant, redemption, or grace that ultimately points to Jesus. Use this guide to trace those stories through Scripture and see how God wove His promise across generations.

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### 1. From Abraham to David — The Covenant Promises

Name	Scripture References	Story Summary
Abraham	Genesis 12:1–3; 15:1–6; 17:1–8	God calls Abraham to leave his homeland and promises that all nations will be blessed through him.
Isaac	Genesis 21:1–7; 22:1–18	The child of promise, born through faith; God provides a ram in place of Isaac.
Jacob	Genesis 25:19–34; 28:10–22; 32:22–32	God renames him “Israel” after wrestling with Him; the father of twelve tribes.
Judah	Genesis 37; 38; 49:8–10	Though flawed, Judah becomes the tribe of kings; the line of the Messiah is promised through him.
Tamar	Genesis 38	A story of justice and redemption; God works through Tamar’s courage to continue the line of Judah.

Name	Scripture References	Story Summary
Perez	Genesis 38:27–30; Ruth 4:18–22	One of the twins born to Tamar; ancestor of Boaz and David.
Hezron → Ram → Amminadab → Nahshon	Numbers 1:7; Ruth 4:18–20	Early leaders in Judah’s tribe during Israel’s wilderness years.
Salmon	Ruth 4:21; 1 Chronicles 2:10–11	Married Rahab of Jericho, showing God’s grace to Gentiles.
Rahab	Joshua 2; 6:22–25; Hebrews 11:31	A Canaanite woman of faith who sheltered the spies and became part of Israel’s story.
Boaz	Ruth 2–4	A kinsman-redeemer who shows loyal love to Ruth; a picture of Christ’s redeeming grace.
Ruth	Book of Ruth	A Moabite woman whose faith brings her into God’s covenant people; great-grandmother of David.
Obed → Jesse	Ruth 4:13–22; 1 Samuel 16:1	Ancestors of David, fulfilling God’s promise to raise up a king from Judah.
David	1 Samuel 16–17; 2 Samuel 7:8–16; Psalm 89	The shepherd-king to whom God promises an everlasting dynasty.

## 2. From David to the Exile — The Kings of Judah

Name	Scripture References	Story Summary
Solomon	1 Kings 1–11	David’s son by Bathsheba; known for wisdom and the temple’s construction, but later led Israel into idolatry.
Bathsheba (the wife of Uriah)	2 Samuel 11–12	Her story reveals both sin and grace; through her, the royal line continues.
Rehoboam → Abijah → Asa	1 Kings 11:43–15:24	Early kings after Solomon; some faithful, some rebellious.
Jehoshaphat → Joram (Jehoram)	1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 8	Jehoshaphat sought the Lord; Joram followed idolatry.
Uzziah (Azariah)	2 Kings 15:1–7; 2 Chronicles 26	A prosperous yet prideful king who was struck with leprosy.
Jotham → Ahaz → Hezekiah	2 Kings 15–20; Isaiah 7–39	Hezekiah trusted God during the Assyrian threat; Isaiah’s prophecies are set in their reigns.
Manasseh → Amon → Josiah	2 Kings 21–23	Manasseh was one of Judah’s worst kings; Josiah led major reforms and rediscovered the Book of the Law.
Jeconiah (Jehoiachin)	2 Kings 24:6–17; Jeremiah 22:24–30	Carried into Babylon; God preserved the royal line even in exile.

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## 3. From the Exile to the Messiah — God’s Preserving Grace

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Name	Scripture References	Story Summary
Shealtiel → Zerubbabel	Ezra 3:1–8; Haggai 2:20–23	Leaders of the first return from exile; rebuilt the altar and the temple.
Abiud → Eliakim → Azor → Zadok → Akim → Eliud → Eleazar → Matthan → Jacob	Matthew 1:13–16	Lesser-known descendants preserving David’s line through generations of waiting.
Joseph (the husband of Mary)	Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 2:1–7	A righteous man chosen to protect and raise the Messiah.
Mary	Luke 1:26–56; 2:1–20	The humble servant who said “yes” to God; through her, the Word became flesh.
Jesus (Yeshua)	Matthew 1–2; Luke 1–2; John 1:1–14	The Messiah, Son of David, Son of Abraham, Savior of the world — the fulfillment of every promise.

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## How to Use This Guide

- Choose one or two names per week during Advent and read their stories together.
  - Notice how God’s promise continues through both faithfulness and failure.
  - Discuss as a family: *How does each person’s story point to the coming of Jesus?*
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## **Reflection Thought**

Matthew's genealogy is not a list of perfect people — it's a lineage of grace. Through every generation, God was weaving redemption's thread until it led to Jesus. The same faithful God who worked through their stories is still at work in yours.

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## Word Study “Genealogy”:

**Key Verse:** *“This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”* — Matthew 1:1

The first word of Matthew’s Gospel sets the tone for everything that follows. In Greek, the word translated “**genealogy**” is **γενέσεως** (*geneseōs*), which comes from the root **γένεσις** (*genesis*), meaning *origin, beginning, or birth*. This is the same word used as the title of the first book of the Bible—**Genesis**.

So when Matthew begins, *“This is the book of the genealogy (biblos geneseōs) of Jesus Christ,”* he’s doing far more than listing ancestors. He’s deliberately echoing **the story of creation itself**. Just as Genesis tells of the first creation, Matthew announces a **new creation**—the dawning of redemption through Jesus, the Messiah.

### 1. Echoes of Genesis

Matthew’s opening phrase (*biblos geneseōs*) appears in the Greek version of Genesis (the Septuagint) in two key places:

- **Genesis 2:4** — *“This is the book of the genesis of the heavens and the earth.”*
- **Genesis 5:1** — *“This is the book of the genealogy of Adam.”*

By using this same phrase, Matthew signals that **Jesus is the beginning of a new humanity**. Where Adam brought sin and separation, Christ brings reconciliation and life. The story of Jesus is not a continuation of human failure—it’s the beginning of divine renewal.

### 2. The Book of the “Beginnings” of Jesus

In the ancient world, genealogies were used to establish identity, inheritance, and legitimacy. For Jewish readers, a true Messiah had to trace His lineage back to **David** (the royal promise) and **Abraham** (the covenant promise). Matthew intentionally highlights both to show that Jesus fulfills every expectation of the promised King and Redeemer.

Yet Matthew’s genealogy doesn’t simply look backward—it looks forward. The word *genesis* also means “*birth*” or “*origin*,” and Matthew will soon use it again in verse 18: “*Now the birth (genesis) of Jesus Christ was as follows.*” In other words, **this genealogy is the bridge between old creation and new creation—between promise and fulfillment.**

### 3. The Theology of Beginnings

By opening his Gospel this way, Matthew is declaring that in Jesus, **God is starting something entirely new.**

- A new people—no longer defined by ethnicity, but by faith.
- A new covenant—sealed not in law, but in grace.
- A new kingdom—ruled not by force, but by love.

Matthew’s first word is an invitation to see the birth of Christ as **the beginning of God’s re-creation of the world.** Everything that was lost in Adam is being restored in Jesus.

#### Reflection

When Matthew wrote “*the book of the genealogy of Jesus*,” he was proclaiming more than history—he was announcing hope. The God who began creation in Genesis has begun again in Christ. The long-awaited promise has come, and through Jesus, **we are invited into the new beginning God always intended.**