



Study of Matthew

*The Way of the  
Kingdom of Heaven*

## Table 2

## Season 4 Episode 2

Let's talk about this family tree! Matthew has composed a list of names of some but not all of the ancestry of Jesus. Let's be thankful for the abbreviated version. Just think about all the names you're not struggling to pronounce right now!

Why did Matthew choose some names and leave off others? Good question! I'm so glad you asked. First, he's not sanitizing the list of names. There's no coverup. **Every name on this list carries baggage — broken, messy, and even scandalous.** It wasn't uncommon for ancient genealogies to skip generations, so Matthew's omissions weren't out of the ordinary.

Matthew chose enough names to form three groups of fourteen. Here's why: in Hebrew, letters doubled as numbers. The consonants of each word added up to a numerical value — a practice known as *gematria*. David has a numerical value of fourteen. David also is the fourteenth name on the list. That's what Matthew's getting at, because the title "*Son of David*" meant everything to his Jewish audience. Matthew's genealogy was to prove the royal line.

On the podcast, I said that for Matthew's audience, if he couldn't connect Jesus to Abraham and David, then he'd lose them before he even got started.

I'm obsessed with the first section because these names represent stories we can all connect with—this is where we find ourselves in the story. These familiar names capture the full human experience. **Jesus came from a long line of broken people to bring hope to broken people. His family tree reflects His mission.**

I'll admit it: I am a messy woman. Every year I pick a word to sit with, and one year I chose *brokenness*, so that probably tells you everything you need to know about me. I'll also admit that I need to know the people in the family tree of Jesus needed grace upon grace just like me. Reading the name *Jesus*—the Greek form of *Joshua*, meaning "the LORD saves"—tells me everything I need to know about Him.

Jesus' mission was to save: broken people estranged from God, ordinary sinners and the more colorful sinners. He is more than familiar with all types of sinners. Let's just look over His family tree. Think about what you know about these individuals and their stories. If you're not very familiar with a lot of these names, let that be your invitation to dive into a Bible reading plan. Reach out to me if you want some help picking a plan. I'm happy to help.

Abraham is a key person in Matthew's genealogy. (Genesis 12-22)

- Before Abraham was the father of the faithful, he was an idol worshipping man from Ur of the Chaldeans.
- Before he knew the LORD as a friend, he worshiped a multitude of gods in his polytheistic culture.
- After he followed the Lord to the promised land, he occasionally lied saying his incredibly beautiful wife was his sister to save his own neck.
- And then there's the complicated mess he and Sarah got themselves into when they took matters into their own hands to have a child. I get it. From their limited viewpoint, it seemed like God needed their help to build a family and jumpstart the promise of becoming a great nation that would bless the world.

These are a few examples from Abraham's "before" story— and some less-than-stellar moments in an otherwise remarkable life of faithful walking with the LORD. I love to study Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There's so much to learn from their messy, beautiful, broken stories.

Let's talk about Rahab and Ruth. My mind is racing with details from their stories. *Rahab and Ruth are mind-blowing — and in very different ways.* Both come from the margins, both are Gentile outsiders, and both become central threads in the lineage leading to David... and ultimately to Jesus.

Rahab was a prostitute living in Jericho, a city doomed for destruction. Her profession placed her at the bottom of society, yet her astonishing faith in Israel's God became the catalyst for God's table-flipping work in her life. She risked everything to protect the spies. They depended on her for their safe escape, and she in turn depended on them to keep their promise to rescue her and her family. What a picture of redemption the scarlet cord in her window provides: her house standing firm while the city's walls collapse around it. The scarlet cord echoes Passover imagery — she becomes a "house marked for rescue."

It's only fitting that she appears in the family tree of Jesus, the true *Passover Lamb* — the One whose blood marks a far greater rescue. Her story, once defined by shame and fear, becomes woven into the very line through which *the Redeemer* enters the world.

This is a story where every detail seems to outdo the last. And you *cannot* miss the detail of her placement in the family tree of Jesus. Rahab marries Salmon and becomes the mother of Boaz — the very Boaz who would one day marry Ruth, a Moabite widow from a nation explicitly barred from Israel's assembly. Making Ruth the great-grandmother of King David.

I *LOVE* that the son of an outsider married an outsider.

Only God could write this kind of *TABLE FLIPPING* story!

The place in Israel where this whole section of the genealogy merges is in Bethlehem, at a place called Shepherds Fields. I was undone, dissolving into tears.

Standing there, taking in the view—let me tell you some of what I see...

I see Ruth gleaning in Boaz's fields—the Gentile (Moabite) widow caring for her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi's family had left Bethlehem, the "*House of Bread*," because of famine, yet in those very fields God was preparing a harvest of redemption beyond anything they imagined.

I see David tending his father's sheep, the son so overlooked they didn't even bother to call him when Samuel came to anoint a king from Jesse's household. Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, *Surely this is the one*. But we tend to look at the outside; God looks at the heart.

This brings us back to David—a man Scripture calls "a man after God's own heart." A shepherd. A warrior. A king. Oh, and an adulterer. A murderer.

Standing in the ruins of King David's palace overlooking the City of David evokes in me a different response to David. (But I still love David. And seek to be like him in a lot of ways.)

*"I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel." (2 Samuel 7:8)*

King David may have led at times from his fallen humanity, but he was never the one who could uphold the weight of the glorious scepter he held—not until its rightful Owner came. And neither could any of the kings listed in Matthew's final two sections of the genealogy.

The crown kept passing from head to head, generation after generation—yet *none* of them could bear the weight of the kingdom they were meant to represent. The throne waited. The promise waited. Until the Name above every name was born. The King who is worthy to wear the crown and every other crown under heaven!

The family line of Jesus is full of unexpected twists and turns. There's no shortage of sin and scandal. (Having just read through 1 & 2 Kings and Chronicles...it's a rollercoaster of bad to worse with a few bright spots.) No one walked a straight path. No one lived the perfect life.

- Every individual story is marked by the fallout of the fall.
- Everyone listed invited sin to their table.
- Everyone struggled with walking out their calls.

What are we supposed to do with all of this? Remember...Jesus is the hope for our broken stories.

*"Jesus understands our broken families – even when we're the ones doing the breaking. He doesn't turn us away. He invites us to sit at the table and tell Him our stories. He knows how to help us find the good way forward, and He will walk with us."*

We mentioned briefly in the episode that Tamar and Judah's son Perez's name means "breaking out." Let's take a cue from Perez.

Break out of the belief that your past disqualifies you.

Break out of the patterns that have held your family captive for generations.

Break out of the shame that keeps you silent.

Break out of the fear that tells you God can use anyone but you.

Break out of the assumption that your story is stuck, fixed, or finished.

Perez's very name became a reminder that God brings **breakthroughs** right in the middle of stories that feel broken beyond repair.

## Let Jesus into the places you'd rather hide.

The genealogy of Jesus is crowded with people who carried shame, regret, rebellion, scandal, trauma, and failure. And Jesus chose to weave His story through theirs.

If He can redeem *that* lineage, He can redeem yours.

### Application:

Name the places in your story that feel "too messy," "too ruined," or "too late."

Bring them honestly to Jesus.

He isn't embarrassed by you.

He isn't surprised by you.

He's waiting for you.

