

A genealogy of blessing

Opening text: Matthew 1:1-2; 16-18

This is that time of the year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. It's that time when we revisit the first pages of the Gospels and find how Jesus entered our world.

I find it interesting that the NT opens with such a lengthy introduction to the genealogy of Jesus. Are all these names irrelevant information worth skipping so we could get to the real story of Jesus?

- a) For centuries, before the invention of the printing press, books were extremely valuable. Copies were done by hand in sheep's skin. You wouldn't waste any space when writing something. Whatever you wrote, it better be important: 1 page = 1 week's wages. 1 New Testament = 68 sheep's skins (more than 1 year's salary).
- b) Also, would the Holy Spirit inspire something irrelevant?

No. It is absolutely important that Matthew lists the generations before Jesus. Why? There are many reasons but here are three very important ones:

1. The concept of genealogy was extremely important to the Jews

It was crucial for those early Christians, especially those in a Jewish context, to be equipped to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah and that He had come from the lineage of David.

Paul alluded to the fact that the Jews paid a lot of importance to genealogies when he warned Timothy:

1 Timothy 1:4 “nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith”

2. God is a generational God

In the Scriptures God is often referred to as the “*God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*” – a multi generation God. The biblical worldview is definitely generational. In 34 verses of the Bible, we find the expression “*from generation to generation*”.

Psalm. 33:11 – “*The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.*”

Gen. 6:9 – “*This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.*”

Psalm 145:4 - *One generation shall praise Your works to another and shall declare Your mighty acts.*

3. **Jesus came out of a genealogy that was blessed**

The third reason for the inclusion of the genealogy of Jesus, was to demonstrate that Jesus came out of a genealogy that was undefiled and blessed

This is very important, and I will explain why:

In the Old Testament, one generation's obedience could result in blessing to 1000 generations and, at the same time, one generation's disobedience, could result in curse and trouble for up to 4 generations. Intertwined with a certain genealogy, there could be blessing or there could be curse.

Exodus 20:6 NIV - *"but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments"*.

Exodus 34:7 - *maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."*

There were generational curses and generational blessings.

For instance, Jacob was blessed but not his brother Esau (or Edom). For many generations to come, Esau's descendants, the Edomites, carried the same hatred, envy, in fact all the same character traits of Esau and therefore they were never blessed.

Generational curses could be cancelled through repentance though:

Leviticus 26:40-42 – *"40 'But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, 41 and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt— 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land)*

Psalms 112:2 – *"The generation of the upright shall be blessed"*

It was important to establish that Jesus had come from a lineage of righteousness and blessing.

Matthew 1:1 – *"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham"*

All of those received multi-generational blessings.

Conclusion

So now we know why Mathew didn't start his gospel with the nativity scene but with Jesus' genealogy:

- a) To convince the Jews of Jesus' royal lineage
- b) Because God's plan extends to generations and, finally

- c) To demonstrate that there was blessing and not curse, running in the lineage of Jesus

Application

What about you and me? What's in our DNA? For most of us, there isn't really much to boast about when it comes to our particular genealogy. All I know about the generations that came before me is that they were all sinners in need of a Saviour. There were generational sins, generational problems, generational divorces, generational addictions and I needed to be saved from that cycle.

But how do you escape your own natural, fallen genealogy? You would need to be born again in a whole new family.

John 1:11-13 - *11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Jesus took our tainted DNA and spilled His blood that we might have a clean slate and a new DNA in Him. We can never be defined again by our natural ancestry but only by the finished work of Jesus on the cross! Jesus came to break every curse, to save us from falling into the same trouble of our natural ancestors and to unleash a generational blessing into our lives!

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become **new**.*

1 Peter 2:9 - *But you are a **chosen generation**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

We belong now to the generation of Jesus. We have been grafted into His royal lineage.

Psalms 102:18-21 - *This will be written for the generation to come, that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord. 19 For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven the Lord viewed the earth, 20 to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death, 21 To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem,*

We are that generation the Lord created. Yes, we were prisoners, we were appointed to death, we carried the guilt of our Adamic lineage. However, Jesus came, was born into our world to set us free, to bring us into a new family and to cause us to inherit a blessing! We now belong in a genealogy of blessing!

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of our Saviour, our Rescuer, of the One who said we could be born again into a new family and into a genealogy of blessing!

Luke 2:11 - *“for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord”*