

# Son of David



## SABBATH—MARCH 26

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Matthew 1; Mark 12:35–37; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Romans 5:8; John 2:25; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 2:1–14.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘He will save His people from their sins’ ” (Matthew 1:21, NKJV).

**INSPIRED (LED) BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, MATTHEW BEGAN HIS BOOK WITH A FAMILY HISTORY.** It was not just any family history but the family history of Jesus Christ. And this family history included some past family members whom most people would not necessarily want to claim as their own.

Perhaps, as he himself was an “outsider,” Matthew could relate to that history. After all, Matthew was a Jewish tax collector who had sold out to the enemy and who actually paid Rome for the opportunity to sit there and tax his own people. Surely, Matthew would not be a man beloved of his nation.

But humans look at the outward appearance; God looks into the heart. And no question, looking into Matthew's heart, the Lord chose him, a hated tax collector, to be among His disciples. And, when called, Matthew accepted. He gave up the life he had before for a new life in Jesus.

So, Matthew followed his Lord, kept records, and one day he gave something back to his people and to the world. It was not a tax receipt but a valuable story of the life of Jesus.

**A BOOK OF GENESIS (BEGINNINGS) (Hebrews 1:1–3)**

This is “the book of the genealogy [family history] of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1, NKJV).

Right from the start, Matthew calls his work a “book.” The word *book* is from the Greek word *biblos*. This can mean a “sacred writing.” Matthew’s Gospel is a “book of the genealogy” of the family history of Jesus. In fact, the Greek word translated “genealogy” or “generation” is from a word that can be translated “genesis [beginning].” So, it could be said that Matthew started his Gospel with “a book of genesis.”

The Old Testament itself began with a book about the creation of the world. So in the New Testament, Matthew starts with a book about the Creator Himself and the work of salvation that only He could bring to a lost world.

**What do John 1:1–3; Hebrews 1:1–3; Micah 5:2; and Mark 12:35–37 tell us about Jesus?**

“From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father. He was ‘the image of God,’ the image of His greatness and majesty, ‘the outshining of His glory [great power and beauty],’ . . .

“By coming to live with us, Jesus was to show God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God—God’s thought made known to people.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 19.

The theme of Christ as God was not as important to Matthew’s mind as it was to John’s (read John 1:1–4). John starts out by writing about Christ as God before going into the human side of Jesus (read John 1:14). But Matthew focuses very much on Christ as a human and on Christ as “the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Matthew then shows the family line of Jesus from Abraham to the birth of Jesus. Matthew wants to show his readers that, truly, Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah (Chosen One) foreseen in the prophecies (special messages) of the Old Testament.

**Of course, family history is important. But, at the same time, the gospel shows that it does not matter who our parents or grandparents were. So, what is truly important, and why? Read Galatians 3:29.**



**By coming to live with us, Jesus showed God to men and to angels.**

## A ROYAL LINE (2 Samuel 7:16, 17)

Whatever the Jews thought about the coming of the Messiah, one thing was for sure. The Messiah would be from the house (family) of David. (Even many religious Jews today who await the Messiah believe that He must come from the house of David.) That is why Matthew began his Gospel as he did. He wanted to show Jesus as the Messiah. The Messiah was to be the seed (child) of Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16), the father of the Jewish nation, and from David's family line. So, Matthew right away shows Jesus' family line and how He was directly tied to Abraham. But Matthew also shows how Jesus was tied to King David. Many Bible thinkers believe that Matthew had Jewish readers in mind. And as a result, Matthew wanted to establish (prove) Jesus' authority as the Messiah. So, giving information about Jesus' family history was important in helping him prove his point.

**Read 2 Samuel 7:16, 17; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Isaiah 11:1, 2; and Acts 2:29, 30. How do these verses help us to understand the point that Matthew was trying to make?**

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**Jesus is the Root and the Son of David.**

All this helps us to understand why the Gospel of Matthew begins the way it does: “This is the genealogy [family history] of Jesus Christ . . . the son of David” (Matthew 1:1, NIV). First and foremost, Jesus Christ is described as the “Son of David.” The New Testament begins with this description of Jesus and continues to do so until the end. Jesus Himself says these words, too: “ ‘I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this witness for the churches. I am the Root and the Son of David. I am the bright Morning Star’ ” (Revelation 22:16, NIV). Even with all that Jesus is, He remains the “Root and the Son of David.”

What a powerful testimony to the human nature of Jesus! Our Creator has joined Himself with us humans in ways that we cannot imagine.

**JESUS' EARLY FAMILY TREE (Matthew 1:2, 3)**

**Beyond David, who else do we find in Jesus' family tree? Read Matthew 1:2, 3.**

Women usually were not listed in family histories of that time; so, why would a woman named Tamar be listed here? Who was she?

Tamar was a Canaanite woman. She had been married to two sons of Judah. First, she married Judah's oldest son, his firstborn. And then, when the first son died, she married his younger brother. Both of these sons died in wickedness while Tamar was childless. Her father-in-law, Judah, promised Tamar that he would give her his third son in marriage when the son got old enough. But this never happened.

So, what did Tamar do? She covered herself up as a prostitute and got together with Judah himself. Judah had no idea it was Tamar. Months later, when Tamar's pregnancy became known, Judah took action to have the wicked Tamar put to death. But Tamar showed Judah that he was the father of her baby.

This might sound like a cheap soap opera. But it is still part of the family history of Jesus.

**Read Matthew 1:4, 5. Who else is listed that is somewhat surprising?**

Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute? After helping to protect the Israelite spies in Canaan, Rahab joined the people of God and married into the family history of Jesus.

**Who else was in the line? Read Matthew 1:5, 6.**

Ruth was a pure woman. But through no fault of her own, she came from the hated Moabites. The Moabites were the children of a sexual relationship between a drunken Lot and one of his daughters. Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, was, of course, the woman that King David selfishly called to come to him while her husband, Uriah, was out in battle. David, too, was a sinner who needed a Savior. David had many wonderful talents, but he was not always a very good husband or father.

**If God accepts us with our faults and weaknesses, how can we learn to accept others with their faults and weaknesses?**



**Jesus' family history mentions many women, which is unusual for that time.**



**David selfishly called Bathsheba to come to him while her husband was out in battle.**

**WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS**  
(Romans 5:8)

**What do Romans 3:9, 10; Romans 5:8; John 2:25; and Jeremiah 17:9 say about human nature? What powerful proof do we have about the truth of these feelings?**

The Bible does not paint a pretty picture of humanity or human nature. From the Fall in Eden (Genesis 3) to the fall of Babylon in the last days (Revelation 18), the sad condition of humanity is easily seen. In the same way, we might like to paint a pretty picture of the early days of the church before the great “falling away” began (2 Thessalonians 2:3). But that is a mistake (read 1 Corinthians 5:1). We are all fallen, broken people, and that includes the family line out of which Jesus Himself arose.

A Bible thinker, Michael Wilkins, writes: “The true story of Jesus’ family line must have shocked Matthew’s readers. Jesus’ past family members were humans with all the weaknesses and strengths of everyday people. God worked through them to make His plan of salvation happen. There is no pattern of righteousness [holy living] in Jesus’ family line. We find adulterers,<sup>1</sup> harlots,<sup>2</sup> heroes, and Gentiles [non-Jews]. Wicked Rehoboam was the father of wicked Abijah. Abijah was the father of good King Asa. Asa was the father of the good King Jehoshaphat . . . who was the father of wicked King Joram. God was working throughout the generations, both good and evil, to bring about His purposes. Matthew shows that God can use anyone, good or bad, to serve His purposes. These are the kinds of people Jesus came to save.”—Adapted from *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), page 9.

That is the point we need to remember, not just when we look at others but when we look at ourselves, too. What Christian, at some point in his or her walk, does not get discouraged, does not question his or her faith, does not wonder whether or not he or she is really converted (a new person in Christ)? So often, too, what causes this discouragement is our fallen nature, our sins, our weaknesses. So, among these seemingly hopeless problems, we can and should receive hope that God knows all these things. And for people just like us, Christ came into this world.

**What Bible promises can you claim when you feel spiritually discouraged?**

### DEFINITIONS

1. adulterers—husbands or wives who are unfaithful to their marriage vows.

2. harlots—women or men who use sex for pay; prostitutes.

## THE BIRTH OF DAVID'S SON WHO WAS GOD (Matthew 2:1–14)

Somewhere in the night air between Matthew 1 and Matthew 2, Jesus was born. It was not on December 25. Based on the timing of the priest Zechariah's temple service, Bible thinkers suggest that Jesus was probably born in the fall while sheep were still out in the fields, perhaps in late September or October.

It is rather odd that some of the first people to look for and worship the Jewish Messiah were Gentiles. While most of Jesus' own people (and a suspicious half-Jew, King Herod) thought they knew what kind of Messiah to expect, it was these travelers from the East that had open minds and hearts. The magi (wise men) were respected thinkers, most likely from Persia, who devoted their lives to seeking for truth. No wonder, then, that they found themselves worshipping the One who really was "the Truth" Himself. Jeremiah's words, written hundreds of years earlier, could be used to describe the wise men: " 'When you look for me with all your heart, you will find me' " (Jeremiah 29:13, NIV).

**Read Matthew 2:1–14. What is the difference between these wise men and King Herod?**

These pagans (non-Jews; nature worshipers) fell down to worship Jesus. But King Herod of the Jewish nation tried to have Him killed.

This story should serve as a powerful reminder that a person's earthly title or church membership is no guarantee of being in the right relationship with God. This story should also be a reminder, too, that a correct understanding of truth is very important. If Herod and the priests had a better understanding of the prophecies about the Messiah, Herod would have known that Jesus was no threat to him. He would have understood that this "King of the Jews" was not anyone to worry about. And he would not have worried about his own political power.

**How can we protect ourselves as Seventh-day Adventists, a people blessed with much light, from believing that we are in a right relationship with God simply because we have this light? At the same time, how can having this light help us to have a deeper walk with God?**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Look at this quote from Ellen G. White: “Every sinner may come to Christ. ‘He [Jesus] saved us. It wasn’t [was not] because of the good things we had done. It was because of His mercy. He saved us by washing away our sins.’ Titus 3:5, NIV. When Satan tells you that you are a sinner, and cannot hope to receive blessing from God, tell him that Christ came into the world to save sinners. We have nothing to make us look good to God. But we can freely admit our very helpless condition. It is our helplessness against sin that makes Jesus’ saving power necessary.”—Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, page 317. What a powerful idea: it is “our very helpless condition” that makes Christ as our Savior necessary. This truth is no different when we first come to Jesus or if we have been walking with Him all our lives. Like those in Jesus’ family history, we are sinners in need of grace (forgiveness and mercy). Our obedience to the law, our victory over sin and temptation, and our growth in Christ are the results of salvation and never the cause. It does not matter whether we are the thief on the cross or a living saint going to heaven at the second coming of Jesus. We are all in a “very helpless condition” that makes His saving power necessary. How important it is that we never forget this foundational truth!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① As we saw this week, Herod had great misunderstandings about prophecy that caused him to do some terrible things. Think about some of the false understandings of prophecy today. For example, many believe that faithful Christians will be secretly and quietly taken up to heaven while family and friends are “left behind” to wonder why these people suddenly vanished into thin air. What are some of the dangers of having such a false understanding of prophecy? Or, what about the idea that the temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt and animal sacrifices restored<sup>3</sup> as one of the final events in earth’s history? What other misunderstandings about prophecy should help us to realize just how important a correct understanding of prophecy really is?

② So often in many cultures and societies, who your parents are and what class you were born into are very important. This is a tradition that seems to be found all through history and is deeply believed in many places, even today. Why is this worldly idea so different from everything the gospel stands for? Also, how should the idea of being “born again” influence the way we look at the whole question of into which class or social set-up we or others were born?

### DEFINITIONS

3. restored—to put or bring back something into use.