



Matthew 1:1–6a

1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

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

3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah,
whose mother was Tamar,
Perez the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,

4 Ram the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,
5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose
mother was Rahab,
Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother
was Ruth,
Obed the father of Jesse,
6 and Jesse the father of King David.

Now I know what you're thinking. Nothing but a long, boring list of names. Some kind of family tree, with lots of names I've never heard of and can barely even pronounce. So how about we just flick past this section and start down at verse 18 where the story really starts. I think that's the temptation isn't it? But in your hands you're holding one of the most treasured writings of the Christian faith. The first book of the New Testament, the first

gospel, the first biography of Jesus, handed down over the centuries as the very words of God, and these very words of God begin with this list, they begin with this genealogy.

But why begin with a such long list of names? Surely there could have been a punchier beginning? A more compelling opening to catch our attention? A more exciting opening like the beginning of one of those best-selling novels that you just can't put down. Well can I tell you, there couldn't be any more exciting verses than these to introduce the story of Jesus.

You see these verses, if you like, form a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament. As they work through key figures in the Old Testament, they recall promises that God has made to these key people, promises about a coming King who will deliver God's

people and reign forever on the throne of David. These verses are basically saying that all of the Old Testament, all of the history of God's people, all of human history is leading to this very moment – and the moment is now here.

And so the first verse is like a thunderclap overhead. It couldn't be more compelling; it couldn't be more exciting. Verse 1 reads: 'This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham.' Jesus, the name means 'God saves.' Jesus 'the Messiah' – we usually think of Jesus as Jesus 'Christ,' Jesus is his name, Christ is his title, but Christ and Messiah are the same word, one is Greek, one is Hebrew, they both mean 'anointed one.' Jesus, Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Messiah, God's anointed one; God's anointed King is here, he's finally here.

And you have to understand that for more than a thousand years, since 2 Samuel 7, God's people had been waiting for God's promised King – a descendant of Abraham, a descendant of David, God's promised King who would deliver God's people and reign forever on the throne of David. Can you imagine, father to son, father to daughter, year in year out for 1000 years, through war, and slavery, and exile, and persecution, a father saying to his children 'one day my son, God will send us his King, who'll save us, and rule on the throne of David forever;' 'one day my precious daughter, one day God will send us his King.' And a mother to her son, a mother to her daughter, 'don't fear my little ones, one day God will send us his King and he'll make everything right again.'

And so for the first readers of Matthew's gospel with every next line of this genealogy the

excitement would have grown. Not a boring list of names, more like a drumroll, a fanfare of trumpets, or a town crier calling out for attention – and getting it. You might think of it like the most impressive CV ever written, that goes on and on and on, until you can't believe whose presence you're in. Or like a great procession coming down a city street, we watch figures at the front, and ones in the middle, many heroes of the faith, but all eyes are waiting for the one who comes in the position of the greatest honour, right at the end – the Lord Jesus Christ, God's promised King, he's finally here.¹

You can imagine the excitement, you can imagine how gripped the first readers of Matthew's gospel would have been by these opening words. How eager they would have been to read on. How excited they would have been

¹ Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone*. (London: Spck Publishing, 2014), 2.

about the coming of the Lord Jesus, God's King, come to rescue them. How thankful they would have been to God for his faithfulness to all his promises. God is faithful to all his promises and 2 Cor 1:10 tells us that all of God's promises find there 'yes' in Jesus. Jesus is finally here.

And so the question for today is 'have you invited Jesus to come into your life? And if you have, then are you excited? And are you thankful to God for his unceasing faithfulness to his promises? God always keeps his promises – he's been faithful to his promises for thousands of years. You know, God has never made a promise he has not kept – except one. There's only one left to be fulfilled – and that, that's Jesus coming again. How do you feel about the Second Coming of Jesus? Do you think about it much? How often do you tell your children about it, how often do you

say to them, 'one day my son, Jesus is going to come again?' One day soon my daughter, God's King will come again in glory.' And if not children, then do you tell your friends? Do you long for that day? Does it excite you? Are you motivated to live each day for *that day*? How can you live today, for *that day*?

Why don't you take a moment now and think deeply over this passage of Scripture. Think through its message and into your day. What does it mean for your home, for your workplace, for your friendships that God is faithful to his promises? What does it mean for your children, for your friends, for the people you're yet to meet? And for you personally, what difference has the Lord Jesus' coming into your life made? What difference will it make today? And after you've spent a moment thinking about the passage

and your day ahead, why not commit these words, and your day, to our Lord in prayer?