

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2021

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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 23, 2021

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:1-17

1 An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, 4 and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, 8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

12 And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, 14 and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, 15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Gregory Steible '14

So many names! If you were to list out your own family of origin back to so many great-grandparents, you'd have quite a history represented there, too. But this history is more than just family myth and personal origin story. Jesus' genealogy tells us more than how closely related he is to Martha Washington or Kevin Bacon. Jesus' genealogy shares the history of God's people. It starts with God's covenant with Abraham and the promise of a great nation and land, briskly jumps to God's covenant with David and the promise of a united monarchy. It leaps in time to God's fulfilled promise of deliverance from Babylon and finally lands on God's new covenant in Christ.

Jesus' genealogy is one of God's promises fulfilled through moments and methods we would least expect. If you look carefully, you'll see some names associated with stories you know. Some of those stories are wild. And you'll see some broken people—people many of us might feel quite at home with, others we might feel scared to be around. And you'll also see names you may not recognize outside of their inclusion in this genealogy.

The story of God's covenant fidelity with God's people is a messy one, and yet continually God claims us as God's own. Despite, and often because of, our own faults, failings, and brokenness, God embraces us and pulls us into the bosom of the Lord. The strange and twisted family stories in this genealogy underline a key element of who God is and what makes the next few days so special. The holiday is about God coming to be with us even though, and especially because, we are messy. We are incomplete. But in Christ's coming, just like God's promises, we are made complete.

PRAYER

Eternal God, we thank you for this moment in history, right now, today. We look on former generations and toward future eras, and we know that in all of time you will be glorified. Be glorified, as well, in our own lives through all that we do. In the name of the one who is to come, we pray. Amen.

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