CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

the fathers God chose for His Son

Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 7; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:21-38.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets,* chapter 70;
The Desire of Ages, chapter 2.
Key Text: Luke 3:22.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Jesus' birth recorded in Matthew and Luke includes the genealogy of Jesus. However, when the story of His birth is told, the genealogy is often overlooked. No doubt the Bible writers did not intend for the reader to skip over this important information. The details of Jesus' background are critical to understanding the plan of salvation. Listing the ancestry of Jesus underscores the fact that He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of David. In the 17 different verses in the New Testament where Jesus was referred to as the Son of David, it was meant primarily to refer to His messianic title as the Old Testament prophesied concerning Him.

There are many relevant talking points in this lesson. For example, by highlighting some of the characters in Jesus' family tree who had a questionable background you may wish to emphasize God's character of love. No matter how grievous our sins, if we repent God is willing to include every one of us in His family.

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Recognize that God is in control of our world's history as seen in the genealogies of the ancient world. *(Know)*
- Feel touched by God's love to send His only Son into our world to save us. *(Feel)*
- Be willing to share the realization that God sent His Son into our world to reveal His love for us and to save us from our sins. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

God the Father, Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs no. 3: "God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father." (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 4:11.)

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, grade the quiz and have each student share briefly their family history. Here are the answers to the quiz:*

1. 1900; the siblings were not born yet in 1880, and by 1910 they were probably not living with their parents.

2. Grandma; start with your relatives. The biggest regret family historians report is that they didn't interview relatives when they could.

3. First cousin once removed.

4. The baptismal record, because it was recorded when the event occurred—the closer the record to the event, the more reliable.

As an alternate way to introduce the topic, instruct

each student to write a catchy, gripping opener to a book (give them the option of texting the assignment to you). After the students share their statements, invite them to reflect on the way Matthew started his Gospel. Why did Matthew start his account with the genealogy of Jesus? Review the power text, Luke 3:22. Why is it important when we learn about Jesus' human ancestors to recognize that ultimately Jesus is the Son of God?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Now that you know how important it is to grab your reader's attention from the start, let's look at Matthew's introduction to His Gospel:

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ" (Matthew 1:1-16).

There you have the first *two* sentences in Matthew's book. Reading through the list can seem like a difficult feat, but once you understand the importance of Jesus' genealogy, you'll know why it was listed first.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

In your own words, explain:

In ancient Israel, people valued genealogies. Imagine their world: no ipads, no ipods, no TV. At night people would sit around the fire and tell stories. One of their favorite methods of storytelling was listing names. This gave people a sense of identity, passing from one generation to another. Hearing the lists, they would conclude, "I'm not just a nomad. Ask me who I am; I'll tell you about my people." Still today in the Middle East there are tribal nomads who can spend hours just reciting the names of ancestors.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

Jesus lived in an oral culture. For the most part, they did not keep written records. This meant that the only way to establish legal status, financial standing, vocational credibility, and property rights was to depend on their memory of genealogies. For example, if you wanted to be a priest in Jesus' day, you had to prove that you were in a line of descendants dating back to Aaron from the tribe of Levi.

So it's not surprising that Matthew would begin his book in the manner that he did. People would have loved that. To establish the identity of the Messiah—this rabbi who spoke with unrivaled authority—and show that this Anointed One came from the right line was not only captivating but also very important.

From the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew is establishing the fact that this baby "born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king" (Matthew 2:1) was indeed the Messiah, the Son of David.

There is some dispute about Jesus' genealogy in Luke. Some scholars argue that it is Mary's genealogy. Others explain that it is Joseph's *legal* genealogy as opposed to his *biological* genealogy, given that there was an adoption in Joseph's ancestry. In either case, since Joseph was a faithful Jew his marriage to Mary indicates that she was from the house of David as well, since it was against the law to marry a person from a different ancestry. What is important to know is that Jesus descended from David through both parents, fulfilling the requirement for inheritance of the throne

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching
Connecting the Dots

The lesson this week offers an ideal opportunity to help students connect the following dots:

- Connecting David and Jesus
- Connecting the Old Testament and the New Testament
- Connecting ordinary women and God's extraordinary grace
- Connecting the story of David and the birth of Jesus
- Connecting the ancient world and the modern world

Take advantage of this chance to help students get a wholistic perspective of the bigger story. By connecting the story of Tamar to David to Jesus to today the young people can gain a deeper appreciation for the story of salvation.

through Joseph, and fulfilling the prophecy of being the seed of David through Mary.

Sharing Context and Background

Explore with the students the stories of the women that Matthew includes in the opening paragraph of his book. Explain to the students how the inclusion of these women in the lineage of the Messiah would have been shocking to any reader in the ancient world.

"It is the exception, rather than the rule, to find women named in Hebrew genealogical lists. Even so, Matthew refers to them incidentally rather than specifically as genealogical links. The fact that the names of such honored women as Sarah and Rachel are omitted suggests that the four women mentioned were probably in each case included because of unusual circumstances. It is likely that all four—Thamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bath-sheba—were of Gentile origin. Herein lies an implied rebuke to Jewish exclusiveness, and a tacit recognition of the fact that Jesus belongs to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

"With the exception of Ruth, scandals were attached to the names of all these women. A merely human historian might have chosen to pass over their names in silence for fear that the honor of the Messiah be tarnished. But Matthew specifically quotes the Master as saying to the Pharisees that He came not 'to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Matthew 9:13, KJV). It may be that Matthew, himself a publican and therefore sometimes classed with harlots (see Matthew 21:31, 32), found in his heart a tender place for others who were generally shunned as living beyond the pale of respectability" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 5, p. 278).

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Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**

  Invite students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Flashlight**

  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**

  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

- **Further Insight**

  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Give each student a scarlet ribbon. Wrap each one individually and let them open the present at the end of class. See the summary below to connect the ribbon with the stories in this study. Close with an appeal to accept Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Summary

Consider the scarlet ribbon that weaves its way through the genealogy of Jesus:

Tamar gives birth to twin boys. One of them reaches his hand out first, and the midwife ties a scarlet cord around his wrist. In this way they could identify the firstborn—indicating which boy would receive the inheritance. You see, there is a blessing that is being passed down from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Judah. The ultimate blessing, our inheritance of eternal life, will be the Deliverer who will come from this line.

The spies informed Rahab that they were coming back and that Jericho would be destroyed. They told her that she and her family would be spared if she hung a scarlet cord out her window. The scarlet cord would be a sign to them, and she would be saved. This scarlet cord became the symbol of her freedom. Thanks to Rahab's great faith, the lives of those in her household were spared, and they joined themselves to the people of Israel.

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him" (Matthew 27:27, 28). Indeed, the scarlet robe is a symbol of our inheritance. It is a symbol of our blessing. And it is a symbol of our salvation.

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