



(Mat 1:1-17)

In ancient times, when a family adopted a child, they believed that child to have equally adopted their family tree. Though there would clearly be a physical difference between the adopted child and the one blood-born based on their differing gene pools, their “spiritual genes” would be the same. In other words, the adopted child was seen as possessing the same spiritual potential, obligations and purpose as found in their adopted family’s ancestral line. And this was good thinking, since it is also what the BIBLE teaches! Adoption changes the spiritual potential, obligations and purpose of that child to the family (and ancestry) they have been adopted into. In other words, they receive the “spiritual genes” of their adopted family.

### 1. The perfect example of what I am talking about (i.e. the Bible teaching this) = Mat 1:1-17

1.1. The genealogical list in these verses is Joseph’s – Jesus’ adopted dad (16). IOW: They are not Jesus’ blood-born gene pool. It is instead his “spiritual” gene pool.

1.2. Jesus’ physical gene pool (or family tree) runs through Mary and is found in (Luk 3:23-38, v23 – “son of Heli/Eli” – literally, the “son-in-law of Heli/Eli”, the father of Mary. Heli/Eli had only daughters (Mat 27:56; Joh 19:25) and so according to the Law, their husbands take the place as sons in carrying the family name. Hence why it is Joseph that is mentioned - yet it is Mary’s genealogical record that follows).

### 2. Why it is important to understand this distinction (3 reasons):

2.1. B/C it vanquishes the attacks of those who use this text to deny the Bible’s inerrancy (i.e. the Bible is w/o error)

2.1.1. What I am referring to is **(17)** = 42 generations

2.1.2. Their problem = There were more than 42 generations (i.e. gaps exist in this genealogy; e.g. 8-9 “Joram the father of Uzziah” = Joram was the great-great grandfather to Uzziah/Azaria -1Chr 3:11-12; 11 - “Josiah the father of Jeconiah” = Josiah was the grandfather of Jeconiah, the father of Jehoiakim – 1Chr 3:15-16).

2.1.3. How viewing this list as Jesus’ “spiritual gene pool” solves their issues (of supposed inaccuracies) = We understand that Matthew is not concerned w/providing an exhaustive genealogical record. That would make no sense any way since such a list would only be relevant if it were coming from His biological family (i.e. Mary’s bloodline). It is (again) however, his “spiritual bloodline (or gene pool) - His adopted family tree that Matthew is concerned with. This (btw) means that how we are to understand the phrase “son of” throughout this list is not necessarily referring to the direct child of prior person, but in more general terms; as referring to a descendant. So then, rather than being exhaustive, this list (in verses 1-17) is exclusive – EXCLUSIVE to those w/in Jesus’ adoptive family tree Matthew felt (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) BEST REVEALED Jesus’ potential, obligations and purpose. And the 3 divisions of 14 that make up these verses are according to these very categories (potential, obligation, purpose). This (IOW) is how he is making his selection as to who to include. The part (then) that is amazing in all of this, is the fact that the entire list (w/its 3 categories) remains chronological. IOW: In order to create these three sets, Matthew does not have to move names around or outside their correct genealogical order. God instead saw that historically, each of those within their particular scope of time, would share the same spiritual category based on who they were or what they did. An intention on the part of God (no doubt) to serve in what would later be revealed about Messiah – as the the One possessing all of the best aspects and attributes of the key individuals in the list. As the One Who all of redemptive history and these different heroes of the Faith were essentially serving through the acts of their life. They all existed (at least in part) to provide coming generations with an accurate picture of what to expect in the coming Messiah.

2.2. B/C it reveals the reason Matthew begins his gospel this way

Matthew understood that if his audience were going to accept that Jesus was indeed who he was claiming Him to be (1 – Jesus Christ” or “the Christ”), then it would mean more than simply sharing the events and teaching of His life. What first needed to be revealed was His origin (or to use my term, His “spiritual genes”). Matthew even goes so far to use the term which communicates this very thing as the title of this first section (1:1-17). He calls it in (1) “the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ” (“genealogy” = γένεσις = origin). This (His origin or spiritual genes) - as we shall see, was not only a pre-requisite to His identity as Messiah, but also a preview of what to expect from His life: His spiritual potential, obligation and purpose). In short, Matthew knew that Jesus spiritual genes mattered.

2.3. B/C it reveals how these verses are instructive to us.

According to the apostle Paul, all of Scripture exists with the end goal of providing vital instruction to us (as Christians) for living our lives in a way that is pleasing to God and leads to salvation (Rom 15:4; 1Co 10:11 and 2Ti 3:15-17). And so this we can expect to also be a purpose behind God giving us this list. Though it may look like some long, boring list of names simply meant to validate the heritage of the person in question, there is practical instruction for us (as well).

And we should already be able to see what that is. The NT teaches that we (thru faith in Christ) are also adopted. We have been adopted into God's family as children of Abraham (Rom 8:15; Eph 1:5; Gal 5:26-29, 4:5). Which means that we have a new set of spiritual genes. And like Jesus, they play a major role in defining/determining what our lives will be – or will look like in the categories of potential, obligation and purpose. IOW: Our spiritual genes matter as well (So much so that God Himself is shocked when His children do not live up to such potential, obligation and purpose – consider Jer 18:11-17).

### **3. What does Jesus' spiritual genes (or adopted family tree) tell us about Him in the categories of spiritual potential, obligation and purpose?**

#### **3.1. POTENTIAL (1-6)**

The one thing shared in common by the key names in this first list of 14 is that they all served a typological role in God's greater plan of salvation. IOW: Their lives - or certain aspects of their lives, were symbolic pictures of what the coming Savior would be - or accomplish. There are 6 total (the rest simply serve as the chain links needed to connect them together and ultimately to Jesus). As such they (again) represent Jesus' spiritual family and potential:

##### **3.1.1. David (1 – "Son of David", 6- "David the king")**

What this tells us about Jesus' potential = that He had the potential to become the Messianic king.

David is considered (in the Bible and by the Jews even today) to be Israel's greatest king, and a key link in the spiritual chain (or genes) of the One who WB Messiah. IOW: The Christ would be a kingly descendant of David – a Messianic king (e.g. Isa 9:6-7). Hence why (1) calls Jesus the "son of David", and in (6), the genealogy follows the path from David to Solomon, - i.e. the path of the kings. We see that also in (7-12) with the mention of the other kings that follow Solomon and the line of Judah. Here however we also see a problem.

What I am talking about = "Jechoniah" (11). B/C he was an evil king, God cursed him by promising that none of his descendants would ever take the Davidic throne as king (Jer 22:24-30). As such, this creates a problem. Before this curse (50-100 yrs), God had promised (as was already mentioned), that the Messiah would be a Davidic king. That He would follow David's kingly descent. But how – given this curse? Through the genius of God in adoption! Through adoption, Jesus was a part of David's majestic royal line. But b/c it was just that: adoption, Jesus was able to circumvent the curse upon Jechoniah (since the curse was only applicable to biological/bloodline descendants). At the same time, Jesus STILL qualified as a blood relative of David, since (according to Luk 3:31), Mary was from David's family as well. Her path (however) was through Nathan (versus Solomon). Hence Jesus could be both Davidic royalty and blood – a fulfillment of the Messianic requirements, while at the same time, never violating the prior curse. IOW: He had the potential to become the long-awaited Messianic king.

What God accomplished through Jesus' adoption however is more than just a demonstration of God's genius (in solving the dilemma created by the aforementioned prophecies...I believe there are 2 practical points that are borne out of this. And though we have just begun to dig in, I want to make sure that I send you away TODAY with some good application. So these TWO points are where I want to end our study – AND THEN next week we will pick up where we left off, and continue thru our study of these verses (and the subject of spiritual genes) –AND also (as I mentioned), I want to spend some time making connections as it relates to our own lives and these things. So then...

What else is demonstrated thru this particular problem w/Jechoniah:

##### **3.1.1.1. The Bible is a divinely inspired book.**

THINK ABOUT IT! Only a book that was written by an all-knowing and completely sovereign God could create the dilemma caused by the two opposing prophecies we just talked about and (then) over 500 years later make good on bringing about a Davidic Messiah without (at the same time) violating the curse. Had the Bible simply been the compilation of men, such prophecies would most certainly have created an impassible contradiction. As a matter of fact, given the number of biblical authors and the time-span of its writing (thousands of years), it is almost impossible to think that the Bible could be anything more than a book filled w/HUGE contradictions! Hence (again) is why I say that seeing how God solved this apparent problem bears witness to His transcendent control. That the Bible is truly God's Word (2Ti 3:16 – "God-breathed"; 2Pe 1:21)

##### **3.1.1.2. God's ability to fulfill His promises even when things look hopeless.**

I am sure this is how many of the Jews living at the time (and after) God pronounces His curse against Jechoniah must have felt – like things were hopeless (All hope of their ever being a Messiah/Savior for God's people was lost!). Yet God (in His infinite genius and wisdom) knew all along how he was going to fulfill THIS PROMISE to His people. And that is still the case. It doesn't matter how dire our situation or circumstances may be (or become), as long as we remain God's people, His promises of purpose, provision, pardon, protection and paradise later, are all things He will see come to pass in our lives. This is really the basis behind Paul's words in (Rom 8:28). This is why also we are called NOT to fret or worry in such situations, but remain faithful knowing He loves us (and nothing can keep Him from fulfilling His promises to us (Rom 8:31-39 = it doesn't matter how hopeless it seems, God's loving promises will be realized; Heb 13:5-6; Psa 37:1-5; this also is what the priests are getting at in Neh 8:10 = If God is happy w/you, you have nothing to worry about, your life w/ secure and strong).

**In closing then, put these two things together – what do they tell us? That life (or the key to a happy life) is simple: Trust God and Obey His Word.**