



(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. The place to start (then) when assessing a person’s life and future is here, in the beginning, with their spiritual family tree (and “genes”).

### 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).

1.3. For further consideration regarding this belief: that your spiritual ancestry/gene pool establishes your potential, obligation and purpose see (Rom 2:29-3:2 – According to Paul, being Jewish, was ultimately a spiritual designation. And notice: Paul sees it as giving an “advantage”).

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

(One worth remembering) = Matthew’s list also represents our adopted spiritual family tree/genes (Gal 3:26,29) and therefore communicates our spiritual potential, obligation and purpose as well (i.e. what our life and future could and should be).

### 3. What does Jesus’ spiritual genes (or adopted family tree) tell us about His life and future (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, 6)

What this tells us about Jesus’ potential = that He had the potential to become the Messianic king. [DISCUSSED]

##### 3.1.2. Abraham (1-2)

What this tells us about Jesus’ potential =

Like David, Abraham is also considered one of the greatest and most important people within Jewish ancestry. And though his faith (and faithfulness) are often highlighted as the reason for such fame/greatness – especially w/in Christianity (e.g. Jam 2:20-24), his place in the Jewish Hall of Fame stems from things much more grand. The Bible views Abraham as both the Father of God’s chosen people, and the Fountainhead of all God’s spiritual and physical blessings. As such, to be eligible as a recipient of God’s good favor (both in this life and the life to come), one needs to be a descendant/offspring of Abraham (e.g. Luk 1:54-55, 68-75, 16:22, 19:9; Act 3:25, 13:26; Rom 4:13-16; Gal 3:8-9; Heb 2:16; Mat 3:9; Joh 8:39; We too then need to be offspring/descendants of Abraham to receive God’s blessings or favor). This is most likely the reason (then) that Matthew begins his prologue w/Jesus as “the son of Abraham”. This also is the reason Abraham starts the genealogical list (2 – “Abraham was the father of...”), rather than going back to Adam as Luke does (see Luk 3:38). Again, Matthew’s purpose in providing this genealogy, is spiritual not biological; to reveal Jesus’ spiritual genes: the potential, obligation and purpose of His life. And w/that agenda in mind, the place to start is w/Abraham - the Father and Fountainhead of God’s chosen people. There is however, more. The apostle Paul makes it clear that the promises made to Abraham’s offspring was ultimately concerned w/only one of his descendants – the one who w/b “the Christ” (Gal 3:16). In this sense then, what God was communicating through the mention of offspring, was the creation of a new fountainhead. IOW: This messianic descendant would now be the person one needed to be associated w/ if they were to receive the Abrahamic promises. He would be the new father of God’s chosen people (Isa 9:6 – “Everlasting Father”).

And since Jesus was a “son of David” (i.e. meeting the genealogical requirements to be “the Christ”/Messiah), this too was his potential. This (then) is also what Jesus is affirming as His new identity in (Joh 14:6 – “I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the father but through Me”)<sup>1</sup>. Jesus would replace Abraham as the new Abraham, the new fountainhead and father of God’s people (2Co 1:20). This was His potential.

### 3.1.3. Isaac (2)

What this tells us about Jesus’ potential =

Isaac also shares a special place as one of Israel’s fathers. Likewise, he along w/Abraham and Jacob comprise the memorial name of God (Exo 3:15). Matthew’s inclusion of his name however, most likely belongs to what makes him unique – and also most relevant to “Jesus (the) Christ”. Isaac was the original sacrificial son of resurrection according to (Gen 22:1-2 – “burnt offering” = sin offering, 9-12 w/Heb 11:17-19). Being connected to Isaac, meant then that Jesus had this as his potential as well: to give His life as a sin offering to God yet miraculously rise from the dead. The certainty of this being the reason Matthew includes him in the list increases dramatically once one realizes not only what Matthew records about Jesus’ death and resurrection, but what Jesus and others prophesy to be His destiny (e.g. Mat 1:21, 16:21, 20:28). This also becomes the main historical focus of the church’s gospel and argument for the cessation of OC cleans law – i.e. the resurrection proves that God has accepted the sacrifice of Christ as their replacement (Rom 4:25; 2Co 5:21; 1Co 15:1-4; Heb 10:5-9, 13:20). As such, Isaac’s relevance in this list sb obvious: it meant that Jesus had the potential to be our Savior from sin and death.

### 3.1.4. Jacob (2)

What this tells us about Jesus’ potential =

Jacob, the third in Israel’s “trinity of great patriarchs” (as discussed above), is also the father of the 12 tribes who comprise her nation. In this respect, the name “Israel” also refers to Jacob the person. God changed his name to the aforementioned at the same time He gave His national promise (Gen 35:10-11). As such, it is this aspect that sets Jacob apart. It is what connects him to Jesus. During the days of the divided kingdom (Israel and Judah), the prophets spoke about a new Israel and a new nation. More specifically, that the coming Messiah (or Christ), would unify the two kingdoms and re-establish Israel as one (Eze 37:11-38). And this promise, is viewed by the Scriptures as realized through Jesus and His church. IOW: in establishing her, Jesus was re-establishing Israel. This time however, He wb her founder (not Jacob) and 12 apostles (not tribes) her foundation (Mat 21:43; Gal 6:16; Eph 2:20 w/ Rev 21:9-14). Based on such foreknowledge, Matthew’s stated purpose for including Jacob is confirmed. He gave to Jesus the potential to become the new Israel *and* establish a new nation (Luk 2:34).

### 3.1.5. Rahab and Ruth (5)

What this tells us about Jesus’ potential =

One of the things that makes Matthew’s genealogy different than others of his day, is the fact that it includes women. In ancient times, traditionally only men were included (e.g. Luk 3:23-38). As such, this further supports Matthew intentions in this first division (of 14): to provide a list of those spiritual ancestors who would most define Jesus in the area of spiritual potential. And that therefore included the women, Rahab and Ruth. Not however, because they were women, but something else. Because neither were Jews (Jos 2:1 = Rahab was Canaanite; Ruth 1:4 = Ruth was Moabite). In this sense then, they are also unique to Matthew’s list. They represent the glorious and glaring evidence that God’s plan of salvation had included Gentiles – and according Isaiah and Amos, would on a much grander scale in the future. Gentiles would one day possess an equal share in the new nation (the church). And the coming Messiah (or Christ), wb the Light that leads them there (Isa 2:1-5, 11:1-12, 42:1-16, 49:1-6, 52:9-15, 60:1-5, 61:1-11, 62:1-5; Amo 9:11-12). As a matter of fact, it was the words of these same two prophets that changed the Jerusalem church’s view regarding Gentile evangelism (Act 15:14-19)! As before then, this too was part of Jesus projected path. A path prepared by those who had gone before Him; those who were part of His spiritual lineage; those who made up His spiritual genes. It included two women. Two gentiles. And it gave Him this potential: to become the prophesied Light (of hope) for the Gentiles.

In summary (then) what the key names in this list essentially tell us is that through such spiritual genes, Jesus had the potential to be (and did become) God’s long promised Messianic king (or Christ), the New Father and Fountainhead of God’s spiritual and physical blessings, our Savior from sin and death, the new Israel and the Light of the Gentiles. These (IOW) were the things Jesus could hope to realize in His life. Which means that what Matthew records in the rest of the book (as to how Jesus’ life did turn out) is of no surprise. It turned out exactly according to His spiritual genes. His life was simply the product of His potential. And as it has already been mentioned, the same is true for us. Our lives can and should turn out according to our spiritual genes and potential (even God is shocked when it doesn’t. It goes against the natural expected order according again to (Jer 18:11-17).

The only question left to answer (then) as just that: what is the Christian’s spiritual potential? Since (as mentioned also) this list is our adopted family tree as well, what does it say about us? What do the key names say about our own lives?

IOW: What does Matthew’s list of spiritual genes tell us about what our life and future could/should be in the category of POTENTIAL?

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<sup>1</sup> The radical and shocking nature of Jesus’ words in (Joh 14:6) cannot be overstated. To the Jew, Abraham was “the way...” to the Father.