

ORTHODOX JESSE TREE NATIVITY

INTRODUCTION

One of the purposes of the detailed listing of genealogy is to show he was a real person, human flesh and bone, and not just a spirit being that hovered on earth for 33 years and flew back to heaven. He was fully God and fully human.

We will focus on the lineage in the gospel of Matthew that takes the line back to Abraham. A second lineage occurs in Luke 3 which traces the generations back to Adam. Both of these lists emphasize that Christ truly did come in the flesh as one of us.

1 John 4:1-3

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

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Introduction

FOR CHILDREN



Jesus was born as a real baby, with a real person, Mary, as his mom. His family goes all the way back to Adam, the first man God made. All Christ's fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers and great-great grandfathers are listed by name in the Bible.

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Lesson 1

Matthew 11:1-17 gives us a detailed narrative of Christ's lineage back to Abraham.

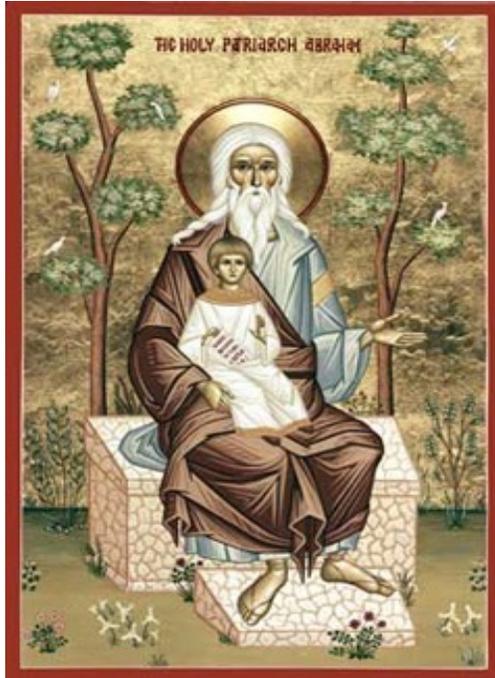
In **Genesis 22:18**, about 2000 years before Christ was born, God promised Abraham,

"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Abraham is the Father of all who have faith in the Son of God. Gentile believers are promised in **Galatians 3: 29**, *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Abraham is called the friend of God (**James 2:23**). This title is due in part because of his willingness to sacrifice his only son when commanded by the Lord (**Gen. 22**). This act of obedience foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ.

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Lesson 1

FOR CHILDREN

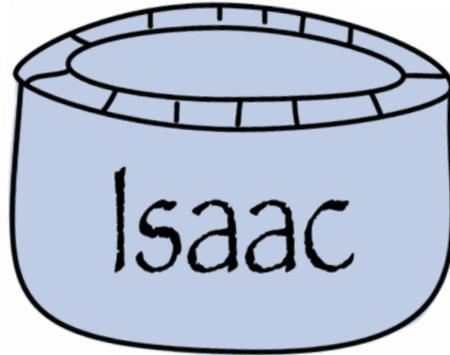
One of Jesus' very important ancestors (someone in his family who lived a long time ago) was Abraham. God told Abraham to leave his home and family and go to a new country where he didn't know anyone. At this time, Abraham was married and very old, but did not have any children. God promised to give Abraham a son and many grandchildren and great grandchildren - as many as there are stars in the sky! (Have you ever tried to count the stars?) God said He would Bless Abraham, and "in him, all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Abraham listened to God and obeyed Him. After waiting a very long time, Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had a son they named Isaac. God told Abraham to take his only son, whom he loved, and go to the top of a mountain and sacrifice the boy, as an offering to God. Abraham was very sad, but God had told him that he would have many grandchildren through Isaac so Abraham trusted God even when what he was told did not make sense to him.

Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, God told him to stop; and God himself provided the sacrifice. A ram was caught in a nearby bush by his horns. Abraham sacrificed the ram as an offering to God. About 2000 years later, God sacrificed His only son, Jesus, to open the way of salvation to us. Because

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of his faith and sacrificial obedience, Abraham is called the “friend of God”.



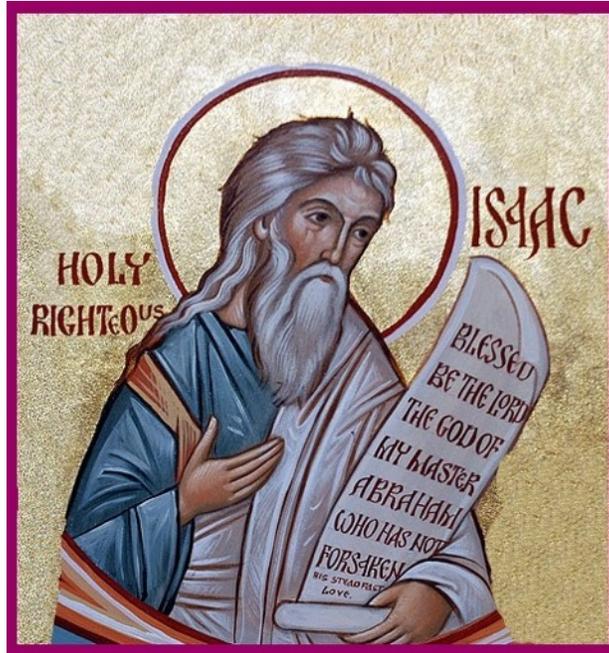
Lesson 2

Isaac was miraculously born to Sarah who was well past her ability to bear children. This foreshadowed the miraculous birth of Christ - born of a virgin. Also foreshadowing Christ, Isaac was an only son offered as a sacrifice and restored back to his father (**Gen 22:10-12**).

In **Genesis 26** beginning with verse 12, we learn of Isaac digging multiple wells and unstopping wells filled with earth by his enemies. He dug new ones after the first wells were taken from him. He did not fight or defend, but dug another and another until all his family was provided for, and water flowed freely.

This imagery of life giving water continues throughout the New Testament. When talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, Christ promised her water that led to everlasting life. (**John 4:13-14**) He cried out in the temple promising all those who believed in Him “out of your heart will flow rivers of living water.” (**John 7:38**). In **Revelation 22** we see living water flowing from the throne of God for the healing of all nations.

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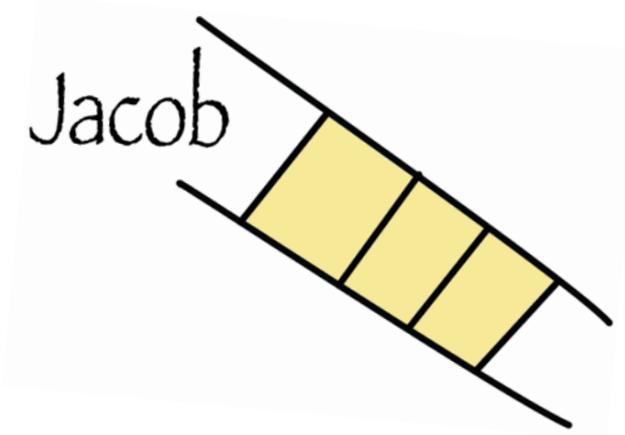


Lesson 2 FOR CHILDREN

Isaac was a miracle baby born to Sarah and Abraham when they were very old. When Isaac grew up, he lived in the land of the Philistines, whose king was Abimelech. He became very rich because the Lord God blessed him. Isaac and his servants dug wells for his flocks and herds, so they could drink and live. When his enemies stopped up the wells, Isaac did not fight, but moved away and dug more wells. Abimelech became jealous of Isaac and sent Isaac away. Much later, Abimelech came to Isaac and asked him to be his friend, and make a treaty with him. Isaac forgave Abimelech, prepared a feast, and made peace. Isaac forgave his enemy, Abimelech, in the same way that Jesus forgave his enemies. Jesus also wants to help us forgive our enemies.

Like Isaac and his sheep, we all need water to keep our physical bodies alive. But we also need Jesus' gift of "rivers of living water" to nourish our souls. Jesus once talked to the Samaritan woman about a "fountain of water springing up into everlasting life!" **(John 4:13)** Just as our physical body needs physical food and water, our souls also need spiritual nourishment to grow and thrive.

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Lesson 3

Jacob is most famous for his dream of the heavenly ladder:

Genesis 28:10-18

And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it ...

The stone Jacob uses as a pillow is significant. In the New Testament, Jesus compares a man who builds his life upon His words to a wise man who builds his house upon a rock (**Matt 7:24-25**). He calls Peter's confession the rock upon which he will build his church (**Matt. 16:18**). Most importantly, Christ refers to himself as the chief cornerstone in **Mark 12:10**.

In **John 1:51** Christ directly applies Jacob's heavenly vision at the beginning of his ministry by telling his disciple Nathanael,

"Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Jacob's vision foreshadows Christ's presence in heaven, on earth, and his cross as the ladder connecting the two. Christ is on earth in His church. (**Acts 22:7**) He is in heaven with the Father (**Acts 2:33**) and His cross is the ladder in between. (**John 14:6**)

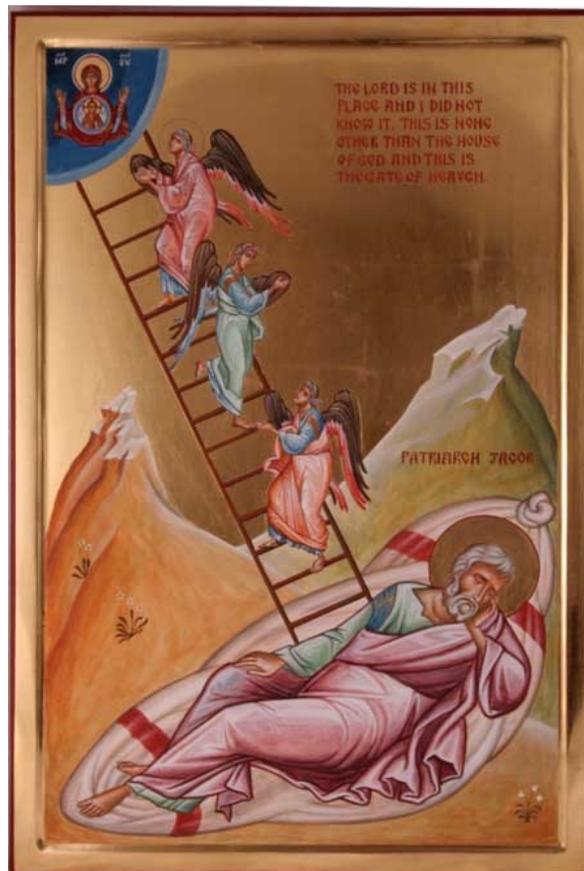
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Lesson 3

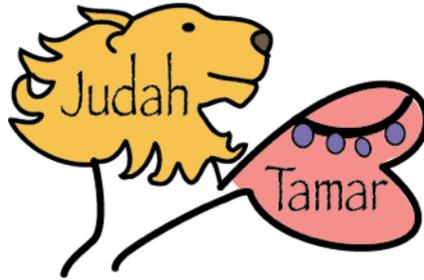
FOR CHILDREN

Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. God promised Rebekah that Jacob would lead the family even though he was the younger of the twins, but Isaac favored Esau. In order to get the blessing meant for the eldest son, Jacob tricked his father Isaac who was old and blind. Esau was very angry and planned to kill Jacob so Jacob was sent far away to live with his Uncle Laban. On the way to his uncle, Jacob spent the night alone, under the stars. He took a stone and used it for a pillow! A stone is an important symbol in scripture. Jesus compares someone who builds his life upon His truth to someone building his house securely on a rock. While Jacob was sleeping, God sent him a dream of a ladder, stretching up to heaven. Angels were going up and down on the ladder. Then the Lord stood beside Jacob and promised to be with Jacob and bless him.

A long time later Jesus spoke about Jacob's dream when He began his ministry. He said: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* Jesus is everywhere. He is in heaven. He is on earth in his Church. And His cross is the ladder that connects earth and heaven.



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Lesson 4

Judah is praised as "*a lion's whelp*" whose brothers "*shall bow down before thee,*" and "*the scepter shall not depart from Judah.*" (**Gen. 38:8-12**) This praise is taken from the prophecy of Jacob upon his death bed. Of his twelve sons, Jacob prophesied the kings of Israel would be in the lineage of Judah (**see also Psalm 78:68**). After his part in the treachery toward his brother Joseph (**Gen. 37**), Judah shrinks from his spiritual heritage. Though the details are unsavory, he is brought back to his senses by the pregnancy of Tamar, his daughter-in-law who, though a foreigner, values and pursues the blessing hidden in the Hebrew people (**Gen. 38**).

Tamar is one of five women listed in Christ's lineage, most of whom are not Jewish and are of questionable reputation. The listing of women in a lineage, very unusual in Hebrew culture, points to the redemption of all people. Tamar is rewarded for her tenacity with the birth of two sons, one of whom is a direct ancestor of King David.

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Lesson 4

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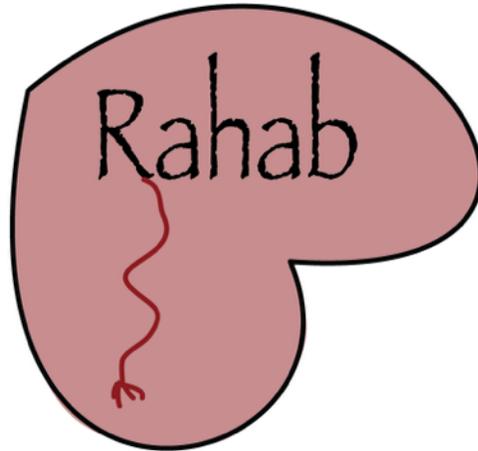
If we were going to choose someone to do something special, we would pick the best possible person. However, God sometimes chooses weak, flawed people to accomplish his purpose. He likes to show he can make good things happen in bad situations when people make bad choices.

Jacob's twelve sons became the leaders of Israel, spoken of in the Bible. The Bible prophesied (told in advance) that Judah would be a direct ancestor of the Messiah, Jesus. But Judah helped plot against his brother, Joseph, and allowed his father, Jacob to believe that Joseph was dead. He was not honorable.

Judah left his family and moved away. He married a Canaanite woman and had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. Er married Tamar but Er was wicked in God's sight and the Lord put him to death. Then Judah instructed Onan to marry Tamar so she could have a son to inherit Er's portion of the family estate (as was the Jewish law and custom). But Onan also displeased God, and was put to death. Judah sent Tamar back to her father's house with no babies. He told her to wait for Shelah to grow up so he could marry her. But Judah was deceitful, and did not plan to let Shelah marry Tamar. He believed it was somehow Tamar's fault that his first two sons had died.

When Tamar realized Judah was not going to keep his promise, she tricked Judah into being the father of her babies, twin boys Perez and Zerah. Judah then said of Tamar, "She has been more righteous than I." Perez was a direct ancestor of King David. In this story we see that God can accomplish His will, even through disobedient people.

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Lesson 5

Rahab lived about 1500 years before Christ and her story is found in Joshua chapters 2 and 6. She is a hero during the battle for Jericho, hiding and saving the lives of the Hebrew spies. She risked all for loving the children of Israel more than her own nation and recognizing their God for the true one.

[Rahab] said to the men:

*"I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. ... And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath **(Joshua 2:9-11)**.*

Rahab hangs a red cord in her window, saving her family from destruction when the walls fall. The red cord symbolizes the blood of Christ; and Rahab, who marries the Hebrew noble - Salmon, is a picture of the bride of Christ being led out of the world. A foreigner of questionable reputation is redeemed and then included in the blood line of the Messiah.

*By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. **(Hebrews 11:31)**.*

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Lesson 5 FOR CHILDREN

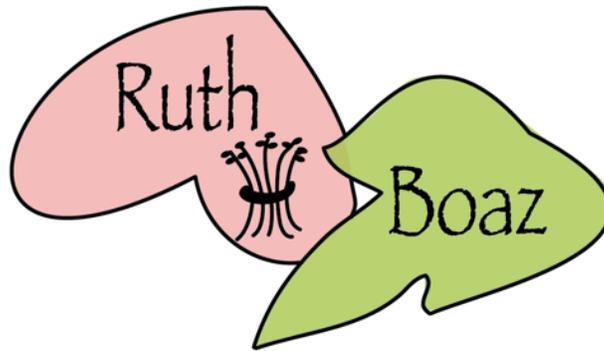
When Moses died, his assistant, Joshua, became the leader of the Children of Israel. Joshua was to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River to conquer the land that God promised to give them. This is the land that He promised long ago to give to Abraham and his descendants.

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho where they spent the night in the house of Rahab. The King of Jericho commanded Rahab to turn the spies over to him so he could kill them. Instead of obeying the king, Rahab hid the two men and told the king that the spies had left the city just before dark. The king's soldiers believed Rahab and left her house to hunt the men outside the city.

Rahab told the spies that she had heard of how their God had given the land to His people. She had heard how God had dried up the Red Sea so Moses and the Israelites could cross and how the Egyptian soldiers were drowned when they chased them. She said she believed their God is the one true God. She asked, because she had helped the spies, that her family be saved when Israel conquered Jericho.

Rahab's house was built into the wall which surrounded the city, so after dark she let the spies down by a rope through a window. The spies told Rahab to tie a red cord in the window of her house, and gather all of her family there. When Jericho was attacked, whoever was in her house would be spared and not killed. After Jericho fell, Rahab married Salmon, a prince of Israel, and became the mother of Boaz, an important ancestor of King David.

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Lesson 6

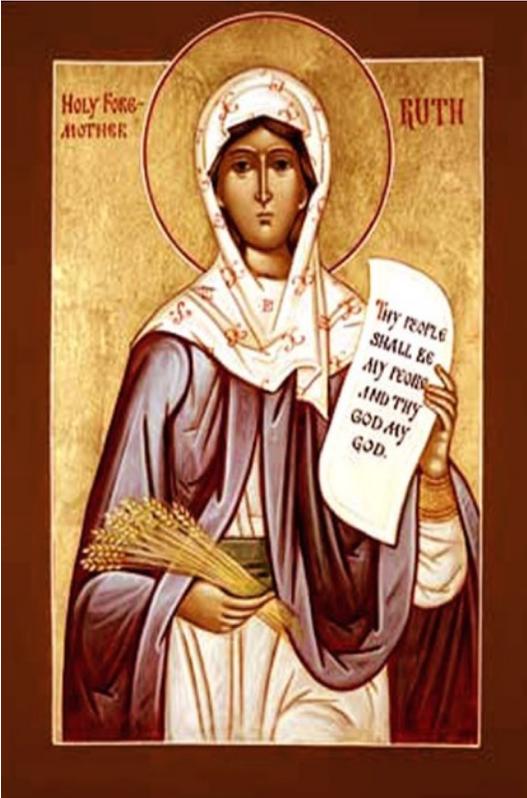
The book of Ruth, covering history around 1300 BC, tells of the third and final female foreigner included in Christ's lineage. Unlike Tamar, and Rahab, she is of noble reputation. Ruth forsakes her nation, her parents, her native land and joins herself to a poor widow, her mother-in-law Naomi. She is motivated by love for Naomi and the recognition of the Hebrew God as being worthy of worship. She, like Christ, stands by the deserted, poor, and outcast. The fact she is a Moabite, not a Jew, prefigures the Gentile Church who is grafted into the tree of salvation.

Boaz, her future husband is a type of Joseph, the adoptive father of Christ. He was an old man who took a wife for God.

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Lesson 6

FOR CHILDREN



There was a famine (not enough food) in Bethlehem in Judah, so Elimelech and his wife Naomi, and their two sons went to live in Moab. There the sons married Moabite women. Orpah and Ruth. Sadly Elimelech and his two sons died in Moab.

When Naomi heard that there was food again in Judah, she decided to return home to Bethlehem.

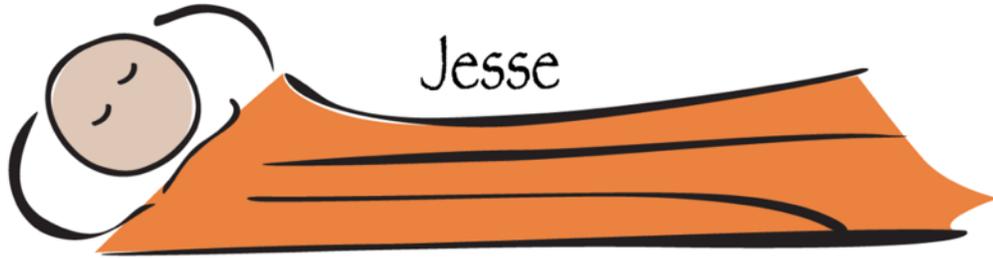
She told Orpah and Ruth to return to their families so they could marry again and be happy. Orpah went back to her mom and dad, but Ruth clung to Naomi and said she would not leave her. She said, *“Where you go, I will go; . . . your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”* So the two women went on to Bethlehem.

Ruth worked hard in the fields and took care of Naomi and made sure they had food to eat. Even though Ruth was a foreigner, she had a good reputation because of how hard she worked. She loved Naomi and provided for her.

The field Ruth worked belonged to a man named Boaz. He saw how much she loved Naomi and how hard she worked, and had his workers leave extra grain for Ruth to glean. Boaz fell in love with Ruth, they married, and had a son named Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was King David’s father.

Ruth was one of the foreigners who was an ancestor of Jesus. She shows that God loves and uses all people, not just the Jews. Jesus came as a Savior for ALL people.

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Lesson 7

Jesse is the father of David. Besides being a faithful Israelite and the father of eight sons, one of whom was David, very little is known about him. The *root of Jesse* from which the phrase *Jesse Tree* has its origin is mentioned twice in **Isaiah 11:1-10**.

*And there shall come forth a rod out of the **stem of Jesse**, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a **root of Jesse**, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*

Gentile Christians are grafted into this Jewish family line, the Jesse tree, through faith in Christ (**Romans 11:17-21**).

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Lesson 7

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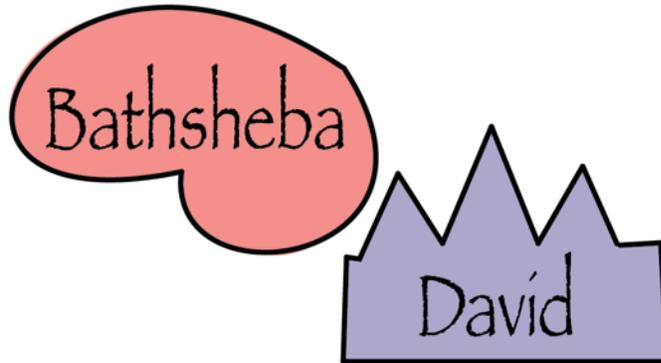
Jesse was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth. He was a farmer and shepherd who lived in Bethlehem of Judea. He had eight sons the youngest of whom was David who tended the sheep for the family. When the prophet Samuel came to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the next king, Jesse did not even think to bring David in from the fields. He was sure it must be one of his older brothers (1 Samuel / 1 Kingdoms 16).

When Jesse sent David to deliver food to his brothers who were fighting on the front lines for King Saul, David stayed, challenged and defeated the enemy champion, Goliath.

Jesse was a leader of his community and was so well known that David was often called Son of Jesse instead of by name, but later David becomes the most famous King of Israel.



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Lesson 8

David appears in Biblical history about 1000 years before Christ. His story is told in **1 & 2 Samuel (1 & 2 Kingdoms)** and he wrote a large portion of Psalms. Most famously he is known as a man after God's own heart (**Acts 13:22**). He was a prophet and king, strong in battle yet known for mercy, gentleness, and forgiveness. David's formative years were spent tending sheep, foreshadowing Christ the good shepherd (**John 10:1-16**).

Psalm 78:70-72 states:

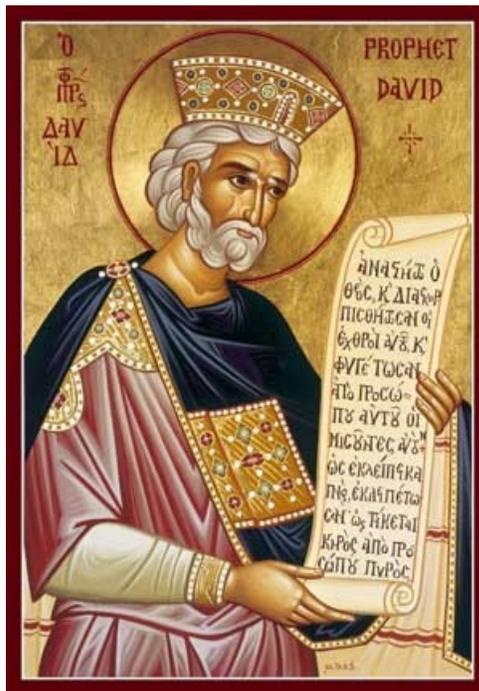
He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.

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Lesson 8

FOR CHILDREN

David did everything with his whole heart. His first job as a boy was to be a shepherd. Sheep are not able to take care of or defend themselves, but David was willing to risk his life to protect the sheep against bears and lions or anything else that might harm them. Jesus is our shepherd and is very willing to protect, defend and take care of us. As a shepherd, David spent much time alone. He saw God's



power and majesty in the things around him. He spent time praising God, writing praise songs, and learning to trust his Lord. Because David loved God and God loved David, God made David king over his nation Israel.

Although David loved God, he could be selfish. Once he used his power as king in a very bad way. He fell in love with another man's wife (Bathsheba) and had the man killed (Uriah) so he could marry Bathsheba. Thankfully, David repented and wept over his sin. There were terrible consequences but David was able to stay close to God. Because David was a good shepherd and a merciful king, the Bible says he was a "man after God's own heart."

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Lesson 9

Solomon's glorious kingdom is a foreshadowing of Christ's coming reign and a glance back to Adam's reign over creation.

King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. (1 Kings 10:23-24).

Solomon's name means peace and he was a true prince of peace. There never was before and never was again such a time of prosperity than under his rule (**1 Kings 2:20-21**). The spirit of wisdom had rested on no man like it did upon Solomon (**1 Kings 2:29-34**). The glory of the temple he built to God was like no other (**1 Kings 6:14-38**). The presence of the Lord was obvious and overwhelming (**1 Kings 8:10-13**).

Solomon is called God's son (**1 Chronicles 28:6**). Adam is called God's son (**Luke 3:23**). Both fell through temptation from lofty positions. Thanks be to God for sending Himself in Jesus Christ, a son perfect in obedience and without sin. Not only was he the Son of God (**Luke 1:35**), but God himself come in the flesh (**John 20:28**).

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Lesson 9

FOR CHILDREN

Solomon was the son of King David and his wife, Bathsheba. He became King of Israel when King David died. King David was a man of war and defeated all of the nations in the land God gave Israel. So when Solomon became King, he had peace.

God appeared to Solomon at night in a dream, and said, **“Ask! What shall I give you?”** Wow! What an offer from God!

(What would you ask God for?) Solomon could have asked for riches and power and long life. Instead, he asked God for wisdom to know how to be a good king. God was pleased with this request. He gave Solomon great wisdom and understanding with riches and long life too. King Solomon built a great and beautiful temple in Jerusalem where Israel worshipped God. When the temple was complete, the glory of God descended and filled it.

Solomon’s name means “peace”. He was an ancestor of our Lord Jesus, our “Prince of Peace”. Both Adam and Solomon are called God’s son in the Bible. Both were tempted and disobeyed. But God’s Son, Jesus, obeyed perfectly and was obedient to all of God asked, even death on the cross!

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Lesson 10

King Hezekiah ruled around 700 BC and was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah. His story is told beginning in **2 Kings (4 Kingdoms) 18**. He was the last righteous king of Judah.

*He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses **(2 Kings / 4 Kingdoms 18:5-6)**.*

Aphrahat, a Church Father of the third century, wrote of Hezekiah's life foreshadowing Christ in his work *Letter of an Inquirer*:

*Hezekiah was persecuted, and was reproached by Sennacherib his enemy; Jesus also was reproached by the foolish people. Hezekiah prayed and overcame his adversary; and by the crucifixion of Jesus was our Adversary overcome.... Because Hezekiah was sick, the sun turned backwards **(2 Kings / 4 Kingdoms 20:8-11)**; and because Jesus suffered, the sun was darkened from its light. The enemies of Hezekiah became dead corpses; and Jesus, His enemies shall be cast down beneath His feet.... Hezekiah said:-Peace and truth shall be in my days; and Jesus said to His disciples:-My peace I leave with you. Hezekiah prayed, and was healed of his sickness; Jesus prayed, and arose from the abode of the dead.... Hezekiah, after the prolongation of his life, death was given dominion over him; but Jesus, after that He rose, death shall not again have dominion over Him for ever.*

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Lesson 10

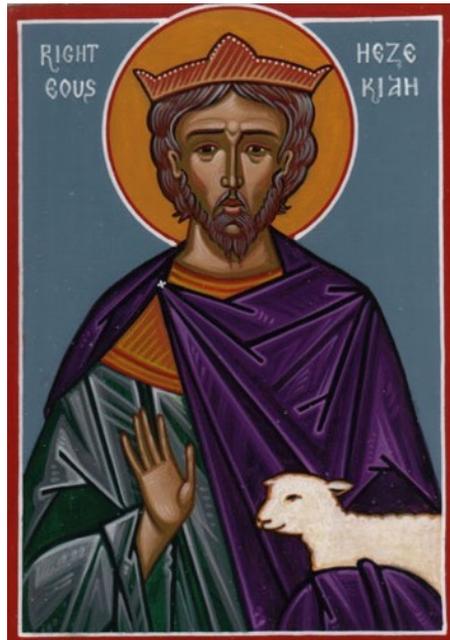
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King Hezekiah was the last righteous King of Judah. He ruled around 700 years before Jesus was born. He destroyed the pagan idols and reopened the temple for worship of the one true God. The Bible describes Hezekiah as a man who had a close relationship with God.

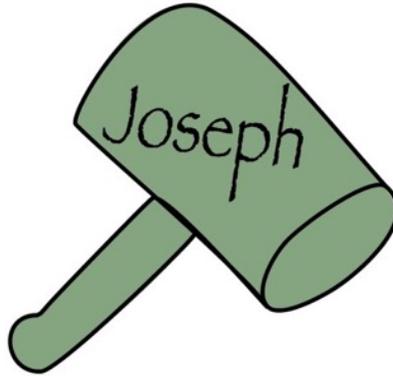
Hezekiah was attacked by the King of Assyria, who told him not to count on the power of his God to help him. But Hezekiah prayed to God and God delivered him from the army of Assyria.

Later, Hezekiah became very ill. The prophet, Isaiah, came to him, and told him he was going to die from the illness. Hezekiah was very sad. He cried and prayed to God to grant him a longer life. Isaiah then returned to Hezekiah, and said that the Lord had heard his prayer and would grant him fifteen more years of life! Hezekiah asked for a sign to prove that this was true. Then the Lord made the shadow on the steps go backwards in time!

Jesus prayed in the Garden before he was crucified. When he died on the cross, the world was darkened during noontime! He rose, not from a sick bed, like Hezekiah did, but from the grave. He won power over sin and death for himself and all who follow Him.



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Lesson 11

The genealogies in Matthew and Luke seem to point to Joseph instead of Mary. Joseph was Jesus's father according to the law. Though all the gospels are clear that Christ was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, it was through a father that a Jewish son's lawful decent was to be traced, adopted or otherwise.

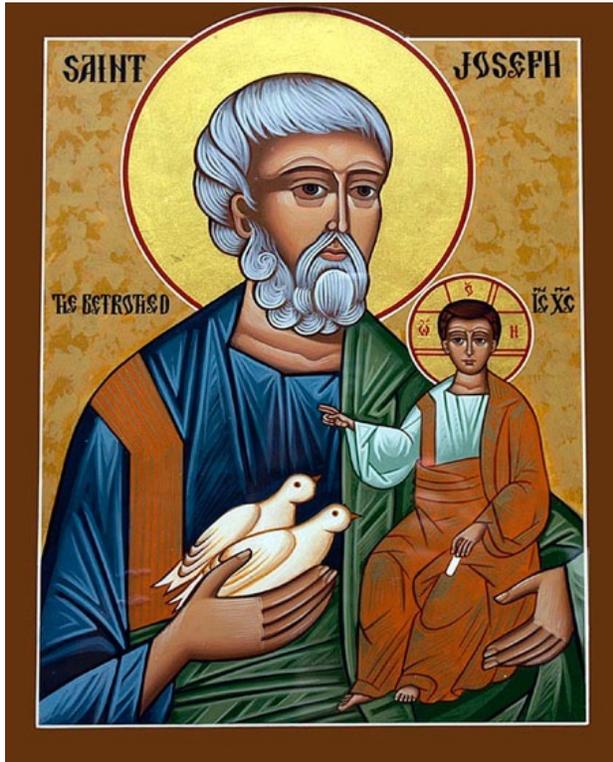
Joseph was a craftsman who taught his adopted son to work with his hands, hands which later healed. The scripture is clear that Jesus submitted himself fully to both his parents (**Luke 2:51**).

Joseph was a man who lived by faith, a true descendant of Abraham and though he was asked to shoulder responsibilities far from ordinary, he was a man of amazing serenity. Reardon notes that we find Joseph in multiple scenes in the gospel of Matthew, and each time he is sound asleep (**Matt.1:20-24;2:13:19,22**). Reardon surmises that Jesus was following his adoptive father's peace-filled example when he slept during the storm (**Mark 4:36-38**).

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Although God was Jesus' father, Joseph adopted Him, and taught Him. Joseph was a carpenter, a craftsman who worked with his hands. He taught Jesus how to be a skilled carpenter, too.

God spoke directly to Joseph in dreams while he slept. The first time was to tell Joseph that Mary was pregnant by God's Holy Spirit, and that Joseph was to marry her and take care of her and the child. The second time was to warn Joseph to take Mary and the baby Jesus to Egypt so the child would not be killed by bad king Herod. Then God spoke to Joseph again to tell him it was safe to return to Egypt. He was also encouraged by God to live in Nazareth, which fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.

Although Jesus was completely God and completely man, Jesus obeyed and honored Joseph as He grew up. Joseph taught Jesus to obey and honor God. Joseph took Jesus to the worship services at the synagogue and to the Temple in Jerusalem. The Bible tells us that "*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*" (**Luke 2:52**) When Jesus went with his parents to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem, he was missing when his family and friends were headed home. His parents found him in the temple, talking to the priests. Jesus submitted to his earthly parents and returned home with them. He was obedient to his adoptive father, Joseph, and to his heavenly Father, God.

ORTHODOX JESSE TREE NATIVITY



Lesson 12

Mary performed the first critical step in unleashing a chain of events that opened the path of salvation for the entire world. Her obedient response “*Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.*” (**Luke 1:38**), undoes the curse of disobedient Eve. Justin Martyr (165 AD) describes Mary as the “obedient virgin” who brings humanity their savior in contrast to Eve, “the disobedient virgin”, who allows death to enter the world of mankind. The Fathers join him saying, “death through Eve, life through Mary.”

Mary, surely the first and greatest among Christians, is also the most silent. Until pursued and interviewed by the gospel writer Luke, she truly “*kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.*” (**Luke 2:19**) For an example of Christian humility, believers need to look no further than the mother of the Church, the virgin Mary.

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NATIVITY
Lesson 12
FOR CHILDREN**



Have you ever wondered what angels look like? They don't look like the lovely girls with wings and long hair that you sometimes see on Christmas cards. They are mighty glorious warriors. Usually when angels appears in the Bible, the first thing they must say is, "Don't be afraid".

God sent one of his chief angels, Gabriel, to a young teenager, Mary. The first thing Gabriel says is, "*Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!*" Mary was troubled not by the angel but by his words.

She did not understand how she would have a baby when she was not married. Then the angel told her that the Holy Spirit would be the father of the baby and she should name him Jesus. Mary did not question God's decision, but was completely obedient to Him. Her response was, "*Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.*" The first woman God created was Eve and she had the choice to obey God or not. She chose to disobey. Through Eve's disobedience, sin and death entered the world. Through Adam came the fall of man. The very opposite happened with Mary. Through Mary's obedience, salvation entered the world. Through her son, Jesus, sin and death were conquered by the cross and the resurrection. We can choose, like Mary, to listen to God and obey Him or we can choose, like Eve, to cooperate with God's enemy.

When we celebrate Christmas, the birth of Christ, we are celebrating the first critical step in our salvation.

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Final thoughts -

In **Matthew 1**, Christ's genealogy is told in three cycles:

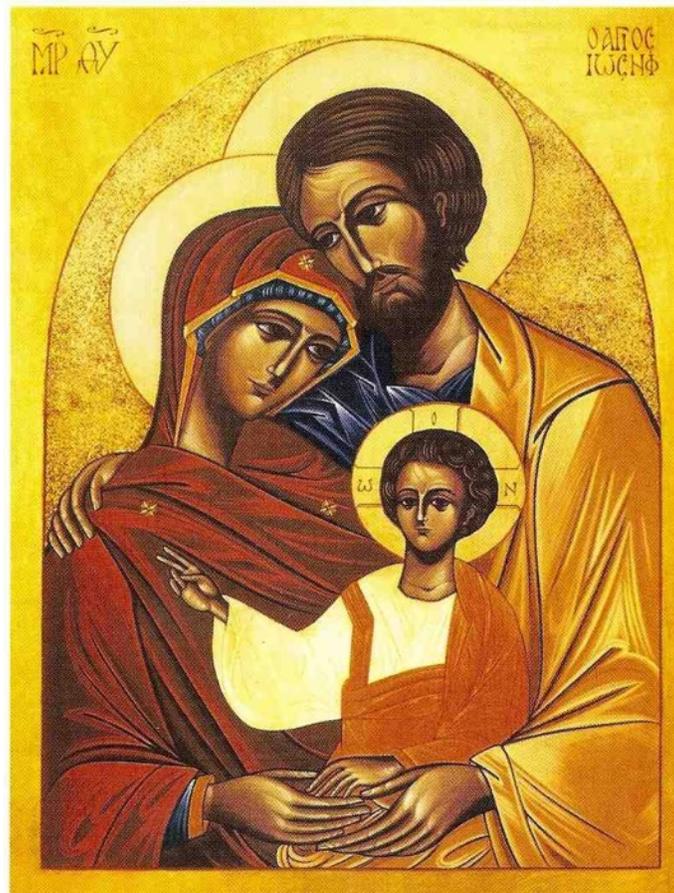
- Abraham through David - Israel is ruled by judges.
- David through the exile - Israel is ruled by kings.
- The exile until Christ - Israel is ruled by priests.

Jesus is the first who is legitimately judge (**1 Cor. 4:5**),

and king (**1 Timothy 6:14-16**),

and high priest (**Heb. 4:14-16**)

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.



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Matthew 1:1-17

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: ² Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴ Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵ Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷ Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. ⁸ Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. ⁹ Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. ¹⁰ 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. ¹³ Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. ¹⁴ Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. ¹⁵ Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. ¹⁶ And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

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